9-2018

The Exegetical Function of the Conductus in MS Egerton 2615

Dongmyung Ahn

The Graduate Center, City University of New York

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Follow this and additional works at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

Recommended Citation

https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/2929

This Dissertation is brought to you by CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Dissertations, Theses, and Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact deposit@gc.cuny.edu.
THE EXEGETICAL FUNCTION OF THE CONDUCTUS IN MS EGERTON 2615

by

Dongmyung Ahn

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2018
The Exegetical Function of the Conductus in MS Egerton 2615

by

Dongmyung Ahn

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Date

Steven Kruger
Chair of Examining Committee

Date

Norman Carey
Executive Officer

Supervisory Committee:

Anne Stone

Susan Boynton

Janette Tilley

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

The Exegetical Function of the Conductus in MS Egerton 2615

by

Dongmyung Ahn

Advisor: Anne Stone

MS Egerton 2615, produced in thirteenth-century Beauvais, is well known for its curious contents. Interspersed within the liturgy of the Feast of the Circumcision (Feast of Fools) and the Ludus Danielis, this manuscript presents twenty conductus—newly composed, non-liturgical non-biblical Latin songs. The purpose of these songs has not been understood. This dissertation draws on a long history of scholarship on the Ludus Danielis, the Beauvais Cathedral, and most recently, the conductus, in seeking to understand how these songs functioned in this local setting. Through an interdisciplinary approach that relies on patristic and medieval exegesis, I demonstrate that these songs functioned liturgically, framing and shaping the Beauvais Feast of Fools message and performance of theology to a degree that has so far remained unexplored.

In the Office and Mass, fifteen conductus appear in conjunction with liturgical readings, rituals, and the opening and closing of the feast. The conductus that open and close the feast at First and Second Vespers function as bookends to the feast, framing the feast from their respective perspectives. The conductus that appear directly before a reading frame the hearing of the reading. Finally, the conductus that accompanies a wine ritual at Lauds gives context for the ritual. The five conductus in Ludus Danielis accompany characters and actions.
This dissertation seeks to study the conductus in its liturgical context, paying close attention not only to the position that each conductus occupies, but also the cumulative effect each conductus has on the message of this twenty-four-hour feast.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project had its beginnings in my participation as a rebec player in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s production of the *Ludus Danielis* in the winter of 2008. At the encouragement of Susan Hellauer, I had spent the fall semester playing the rebec as co-director of the Queens College Collegium. When Susan heard of the upcoming production of *Daniel*, she advised me to audition. Little did I know that these experiences would take me on an extended detour to thirteenth-century Beauvais.

Were it not for the guidance, encouragement, and support of so many, this dissertation would not have been completed. Anne Stone’s acute comments provoked and challenged me to make this dissertation more readable and accessible. Susan Boynton’s sharing of her knowledge and expertise as well as her steadfast shepherding ensured that this dissertation would come to fruition. Steven Kruger carefully corrected the translations and his insightful comments have caused me to ponder future projects. Jeanette Tilley’s editor’s eye put me on the straight and narrow path to fine formatting. Mark Everist’s generosity in sharing his pre-publication copy of *Discovering Song: Latin Poetry and Music in the Conductus* allowed me to situate my work within current studies on the conductus.

I have been blessed with a community of friends and family whose many kindnesses allowed me to finish this dissertation with my cup full. Yiheng Yang performed the initial task of literally and proverbially moving my computer monitor off the floor. Vita Wallace listened, read and edited Chapters 2 and 3, and encouraged me at every stage and over many cups of tea. Amy Newman and Eric Repanshek provided both victual and spiritual nourishment. The parish of All
Angels Church, NYC, reminded me week after week of the beauty and reality of liturgy. Heather Ohaneseon went beyond what is expected of a writing partner; her final act, reading Foucault on my couch during the three weeks before distribution, allowed me to reach that goal. Daniel S. Lee’s laser vision, Sibelius tech support, and all-around formatting wizardry prepared the document for deposit. Though he warned me of the perils of pursuing a PhD, my brother, David, remained happily curious about my venture. My dad’s love of music and literature formed me for this dissertation in ways that he (nor I) will ever know. And finally, my mom’s loving and unwavering support was the footing upon which I was able to complete this project.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS vi

TABLE OF CONTENTS vii

LIST OF EXAMPLES xi

LIST OF TABLES xiii

LIST OF FIGURES xiv

MANUSCRIPT SIGLA AND ABBREVIATIONS xv

NOTES xvii

## INTRODUCTION

1

## CHAPTER 1

First Vespers: *Orientis partibus*—The Donkey and the Subdeacon 37

Appendix 1.1 *Orientis partibus* 98
Egerton 2615, fols. 1r–2r

Appendix 1.2 Allocution from *Missale Francorum* 101

## CHAPTER 2

Matins: Eight Conductus/Lesson Pairings 102

Appendix 2.1 *Dies ista colitur* 158
Egerton 2615, fols. 18r–19r

Appendix 2.2 *Gratulemur in hac* 161
Egerton 2615, fols. 19r–19v

Appendix 2.3 *Nostre quod providerat* 163
Egerton 2615, fols. 22v–24r

Appendix 2.4 *Nostri festi* 166
Egerton 2615, fols. 24v–25v
### Appendix 2.5
*Quanto decet honore*
Egerton 2615, fols. 26r–26v  168

### Appendix 2.6
*Lux optata*
Egerton 2615, fols. 29v–30v  170

### Appendix 2.7
*Eva virum dedit in mortem*
Egerton 2615, fols. 31v–32v  173

### Appendix 2.8
*Ex Ade vitio*
Egerton 2615, fols. 33r–34r  177

### CHAPTER 3
*Ludus Danielis: Conductus vs. Prosa*  118

#### Appendix 3.1
*Astra tenenti*
Egerton 2615, fols. 95r–95v  225

#### Appendix 3.2
*Jubilemus Regi nostro*
Egerton 2615, fols. 96r–96v  227

#### Appendix 3.3
*Cum doctorum et magorum*
Egerton 2615, fols. 97v–98r  230

#### Appendix 3.4
*Hic verus dei famulus*
Egerton 2615, fols. 99r–99v  232

#### Appendix 3.5
*Solvitur in libro Salomonis*
Egerton 2615, fol. 101r  234

#### Appendix 3.6
*Regis vasa referents*
Egerton 2615, fol. 101v  236

#### Appendix 3.7
*Congaudentes celebrernus natalis sollemnina*
Egerton 2615, fols. 103v–104v  238

### CHAPTER 4
*Lauds: Kalendas ianuarias*  240

#### Appendix 4.1
*Kalendas ianuarias*
FSEm 46, fols. 27v–28r  266
### CHAPTER 5

Mass: *Orientis partibus* and the farsed Epistle  

Appendix 5.1 *Orientis Partibus*, Edition  
Egerton 2615, fols. fols. 43r–44v

Appendix 5.2 Farsed Epistle (Isaiah 9:2, 6–7)  
Egerton 2615 fols. 44v–46v

### CHAPTER 6

Mass: *Salvatoris hodie* and *Natus est*

Appendix 6.1 *Salvatoris hodie*  
F-Plut 29.1, fols. 201r–202v and 307r–307v

Appendix 6.2 *Natus est*  
Egerton 2615, fols. 49r–49v

### CHAPTER 7

Vespers: *Regis natalicia* and *Alto consilio*

Appendix 7.1 *Regis natalicia*  
Egerton 2615, fols. 66v–67r

Appendix 7.2 *Alto consilio*  
Egerton 2615, fols. 67r–68r

### CONCLUSION

### BIBLIOGRAPHY
LIST OF EXAMPLES

3.1 Astra tenenti from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 95r

3.2 Jubilemus Regi nostro from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 96r

3.3 Orientis partibus (from the three-part version sung in the Mass), Egerton 2615, fol. 44v

3.4 Pater ejus destruens (CD) from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 96r

3.5 Iste potens from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 96v

3.6 Omnes ergo from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 97r

3.7 Pater ejus spoliavit from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 96r

3.8 Cum doctorum from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 97v

3.9 Opening motive from Conductus I (Cum doctorum) from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 97v

3.10 The nobles’ melody from Conductus II (Hic verus) from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 99r

3.11 The nobles’ 4th segment from Conductus II (Hic verus) from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 99v

3.12 Daniel’s melody from Conductus II (Hic verus) from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 99r

3.13 The nobles’ 5th segment from Conductus II, Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 99v

3.14 The conclusion of Daniel’s melody from Conductus II, Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 99v

3.15 G’en vois al Roi sung by Daniel to the legates from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 103v

3.16 en vois al Roi par vos sung by Daniel in Conductus II (Hic verus) from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 99v

3.17 Conductus V (Congaudentes celebremus) from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fols. 103v–104r

3.18 In hoc natalitio, Conductus V (Congaudentes celebremus) from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 104r
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td><em>Orientis partibus</em>, Egerton 2615, fols. 43r–44v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td><em>Quem creasti</em> (line 13) from <em>Laudem deo</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 45r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td><em>Vidit lucem magnum</em> (lines 14–17) from <em>Laudem deo</em>, Egerton 2615, fols. 45r–45v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td><em>O stupenda nativitas</em> (lines 19–20) from <em>Laudem deo</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 45v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td><em>Ab arce summa</em> (line 25) from <em>Laudem deo</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 45v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td><em>Ut celos regat</em> (line 27) from <em>Laudem deo</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 45v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td><em>Modified punctus organi on mundus</em> in <em>Salvatoris hodie</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td><em>cuius in prepudio</em> from <em>Salvatoris hodie</em>, F-Plut 29.1, fol. 202r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td><em>mundus</em> from <em>Salvatoris hodie</em>, F-Plut 29.1, fol. 202r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td><em>immundus</em> from <em>Salvatoris hodie</em>, F-Plut 29.1, fol. 307v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.11</td>
<td><em>O quanta leticia</em> from <em>Natus est</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 50v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>Opening of <em>Natus est</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 49r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.13</td>
<td><em>Sed carnis</em> from verse 2/lines 2–3 of <em>Natus est</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 49v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.14</td>
<td><em>Quando flos iste</em> from verse 3/lines 5–6 of <em>Natus est</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 49v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.15</td>
<td><em>Est inclinata deitas</em> from verse 5 of <em>Natus est</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 50v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.16</td>
<td><em>O, processit</em> from verse 2/line 6 into <em>O, flos de Iesse</em> from Verse 3 of <em>Natus est</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 49v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.17</td>
<td><em>Et moritur mors</em> from verse 3 of <em>Natus est</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 49v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>The hymn <em>Ave maris stella</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>The opening phrase of <em>O stella maris</em> from verse 6 of <em>Natus est</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 50v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Verse 1.1 from <em>Alto consilio</em>, Egerton 2615, fols. 67r–67v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Verse 1.2 from <em>Alto consilio</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 67v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Verse 2 from <em>Alto consilio</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 67v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Verse 3 from <em>Alto consilio</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 67v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Verse 4 from <em>Alto consilio</em>, Egerton 2615, fol. 67v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.1</td>
<td>Conductus in Circumcision Office and <em>Ludus Danielis</em></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.2</td>
<td>Diagram of the Primary services in the Beauvais Circumcision Office</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Conductus with Multiple Marian Images</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Conductus associated with readings</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Rubrics in the <em>Ludus Danielis</em></td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Paired Versicles compared to Musical Material in <em>Jubilemus Regi nostro</em></td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Polyphonic pieces in MS Egerton 2615</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Original sources for farses in <em>Laudem Deo dicam per secula</em></td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>The three texts on the three lights in parallel view</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Lines of <em>Salvatoris Hodie</em> and Placement/Length of Caudae and Punctus organi</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Historiated Initial “D,” *F-Plut* 29.1, fol. 14r 61
1.2 Historiated Initial “V,” *F-Plut* 29.1, fol. 99r 64
1.3 Raganaldus Sacramentary, Autun, Bibliothèque municipale, S19, fol. 1v 95
6.1 Historiated Initial “F” from *Salvatoris hodie*, *F-Plut* 29.1, fol. 201r 308
6.2 Synagoga in the Tucher window at Freiburg Cathedral 319
6.3 Ecclesia in the Tucher window at Freiburg Cathedral 319
6.4 *Omnis in Lacrimas* in *F-Plut* 29.1, fol. 415v 352
6.5 *Stella Maris*, *F-Plut* 29.1, 449v 358
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISM-Sigla</th>
<th>Full Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGu 409</td>
<td>Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, 409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGu 756</td>
<td>Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, 756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWn 2565</td>
<td>Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, 1565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH-Bu B.XI 8</td>
<td>Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, B XI 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH-BM II.C.2</td>
<td>Beromünster, Stiftsbibliothek, C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH-EN 102</td>
<td>Engelberg, Stiftsbibliothek, 102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH-EN 314</td>
<td>Engelberg, Stiftsbibliothek, 214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH-MSbk 231</td>
<td>Mariastein, Benedikterkloster, 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH-SGs 382</td>
<td>Saint Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, 382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMu cim. 100</td>
<td>München, Universitätsbibliothek, 2o Cod. 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMbs clm. 5539</td>
<td>München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm. 5539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSI HB I Asc. 95</td>
<td>Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, HB I, Asc. 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW Guelf. helm. 1099i</td>
<td>Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Helmstedt 1099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW Guelf. helm. 628ii</td>
<td>Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Helmstedt 628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMn 289</td>
<td>Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMn 20486</td>
<td>Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 20486, olim HH 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FG 4413</td>
<td>Bibliothèque municipale, Grenoble, 4413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLA 263</td>
<td>Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[i \mathcal{W}_2\]
\[ii \mathcal{W}_1\]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISM-Sigla</th>
<th>Full Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F-Plut 29.1</td>
<td>Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pluteo 29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-Pn lat. 1139</td>
<td>Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, latin 1139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-Pn lat. 9383</td>
<td>Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 9383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-SEm 46</td>
<td>Sens, Bibliothèque municipale, 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T 1471</td>
<td>Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 1471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Cu Ff.1.17</td>
<td>Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, University Library, Ff.i.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ctc B.1.16</td>
<td>Cambridge, Trinity College Library, B.1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-LBl add. 36881</td>
<td>London, British Library, Add. 36881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-LBl Egerton 2615</td>
<td>London, British Library, Egerton 2615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl Harl. 1010</td>
<td>London, British Library, Harley 1010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-Fl Plut. 29.1</td>
<td>Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Pluteus 29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-Nn VI.G.34</td>
<td>Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuelle III, VI.G.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-Tn Cod. F.1.4</td>
<td>Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Cod. Bobbiense F.I.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Biblical citations

The Latin texts from the Bible are taken from the Vulgate and the English translations are taken from the Douay-Rheims. Psalms are numbered according to the Vulgate.

Notes on translations

Texts and translations of all twenty conductus, two prosae, and farsed Epistle appear in the appendices that are found at the end of each chapter. I am deeply grateful to Susan Boynton and Steven Kruger for heavily correcting and editing my translations of these items. Translations adapted from already published works are indicated.

Notes on editions of conductus and prosae

The songs are newly edited after MS Egerton 2615, F-SEm 46, and F-Plut 29.1. I chose to render all the editions except one in a rhythmically neutral manner. For Salvatoris hodie (Appendix 6.1), I chose to rhythmically notate the sine littera sections while keeping the cum littera sections without rhythmic notation. I interpreted this conductus in imperfect tempus/major prolation, leaving “tick” marks instead of full bar lines.
INTRODUCTION

“Whatver belongs to the liturgical offices, objects, furnishings of the Church is full of signs of the divine and sacred mysteries, and each of them overflows with a celestial sweetness when it is encountered by a diligent observer who can extract honey from rock and oil from the stoniest ground [Deut. 32:13].”

— Prologue from William Durand’s *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*¹

The conductus is a non-biblical Latin song that does not typically have a specific liturgical function. The majority of the conductus repertoire survives in the manuscripts which transmit Notre Dame polyphony of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but do not give a sense of the context of the performance of the songs.² The conductus in MS Egerton 2615, a thirteenth-century Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision (Feast of Fools) manuscript for January 1, however, are used liturgically in the context of the Office and the Mass.³ While scholars stress the importance of these liturgical conductus in the Circumcision Offices of northern France, no one has yet to examine what that importance is.⁴ I argue that the conductus serve the exegetical purpose of

---


² The largest number of conductus is found in the three principal manuscripts that transmit the Notre Dame repertory: 1) *F*Plut 29.1 from the mid-thirteenth century contains 344 conductus; 2) *W*₁ (Wolfenbüttel 628 from the thirteenth century) contains 118 conductus ; 3) *W*₂ (Wolfenbüttel 1099 from c. 1250) contains 44 conductus. Other important manuscripts that contain conductus are: 1) *EMn* 20486 (originally from Toledo Cathedral) containing 67 conductus; 2) *EMn* 289, a troper from Sicily c. 1140 contains 20 conductus, one of which is probably the earliest surviving source of *Orientis Partibus*, the conductus that opens the Office of Circumcision in Beauvais.

³ In Sens, Bibliothèque de la Ville, MS 46, a Circumcision Office from thirteenth-century Sens, twelve conductus are found in the liturgy, seven of which are accompanied with rubrics indicating their specific use.

⁴ The entry for “conductus” in New Grove makes this statement: “Songs called conductus had an important place in Circumcision Offices that were compiled in the thirteenth century for
conveying the principal theological messages of the feast performatively by contextualizing and amplifying the readings, rituals, and characters they precede or accompany. In one case, in the Mass, a conductus even frames another conductus. Through this “performative exegesis,” the theology of the feast is reinforced, subverted, nuanced, and staged.⁵

In his forthcoming book on the conductus, Discovering Medieval Song, Mark Everist warns that “it is dangerous to assume the functional indications found in the manuscripts that transmit the offices [The New-Year liturgies from Sens⁶, Beauvais, and Le Puy-en-Velay] speak to any wider repertory than to the ceremonies themselves.”⁷ I agree with this statement, yet propose that the examination of the conductus in MS Egerton 2615 offers a window into the local function of conductus for a specific time, place, and feast. Their role in the performance of the liturgy is as vehicles for the interpretation of the readings, lessons, and rituals to which they are connected. Although we have assumed the conductus to be processional in this liturgy, its more significant purpose is exegetical.⁸ Ultimately, I will use my findings to propose how these songs underscored

the northern French Cities of Laon (FLA 263), Sens (FSEm 46), and Beauvais (GBLbl Eg. 2615)...these pieces relate to a variety activities” (Janet Knapp). Grove Music Online (accessed August 19, 2018), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.queens.ezproxy.cuny.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000006268. In his discussion of Feast of Fools liturgy in northern France, David Hiley writes, “the most important characteristic they share is the inclusion of conductus.” See David Hiley, Western Plainchant (New York: Clarendon, 1993), 41. ⁵ “Performative exegesis” is a term coined by Susan Boynton for how liturgical drama can function as exegesis. See below, p. 11.

⁶ The Circumcision Office from thirteenth-century Sens Cathedral (F-Sem 46) has been transcribed by Henri Villetard in Office de Pierre de Corbeil (Office de la circoncision) improprement appelé “Office des fous” (Paris: A. Picard & fils, 1907).

⁷ I am grateful to Mark Everist for sharing a pre-publication copy of his forthcoming monograph. See Mark Everist, Discovering Medieval Song: Latin Poetry and Music in the Conductus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 56.

⁸ Mark Everist writes that “they seem to fill a sonic space that accompany movement of various types before the lectio itself. This does not however necessarily involve the movement of
the messages of the Beauvais’ Feast of Fools, offering a new understanding of the religious, social, and performative meanings of this feast.

I theorize that the conductus in the Beauvais manuscript are conduits for the clerics gathered to “perform exegesis” in a two-fold process. First, while singing or hearing the conductus, the clerics are compelled to exercise the art of memory in the recollection of patristic and medieval exegesis associated with the images found in the conductus. Writing about the Bible and patristic commentary, Beryl Smalley states that these “two kinds of authority were inseparable.”9 In her analysis of Albertus Magnus’ commentary on Aristotle’s De memoria et reminiscencia, Mary Carruthers explains medieval memory in this way: “[Albertus] defines reminiscence or recollection as the rational discovery (investigatio) of what has been set aside (obliti) through and by means of the memory.”10 Second, through the exercising of his investigatio, each cleric creates a composite exegesis for each conductus which is then applied to the hearing of the lesson or ritual. As Jean Leclercq writes in The Love of Learning and the Desire for God, “reminiscences are not quotations, elements of phrases borrowed from another. They are the words of the person using them; they belong to him. Perhaps he is not even conscious of owing them to a source.”11

With their composite exegesis, clerics map new meanings onto the subsequent or accompanying liturgical items, informing, deepening, and enriching the juxtaposition of the conductus with lessons, readings, or rituals in the Circumcision Office and the Ludus Danielis. The singers, who could just as easily have been static during the movement—which was not a formal procession in the sense commonly understood.” See Ibid., 55.

degree to which the medieval cleric, steeped in the Bible and its accompanying commentary, can
practice his recollection determines how and if the cleric, in the words of William Durand, is “a
diligent observer who can extract honey from the rock and oil from the stoniest ground.” I propose that this dissertation’s imaginative reconstruction of a medieval cleric’s exegetical thought
process or “performative exegesis,” though not definitively provable, is critical for the modern
student of liturgy to understand how a medieval cleric could have deciphered the hidden meanings
of the liturgy. As Margot Fassler writes, medieval liturgy’s “components were always arrayed in a
seemingly haphazard mixture of old things and new things, layer and layer of texts and music.” It
is the work of the scholar to determine not only how these layers interact with each other, but to
then determine the message being delivered by the juxtapositions.

By the twelfth century, a shift occurred in the study of Scripture from the allegorical
exposition of Scripture or sacra pagina to an approach based on the science of theology or
scholasticism. Of the four senses of Scripture—allegorical/typological (how the Old Testament
relates to the New Testament), anagogical (how the visible leads to the invisible), tropological
(moral), and, historical (literal)—, the tropological and historical senses were favored over the
allegorical and anagogical in the scholastic method of studying Scripture. Incorporated into this
study of Scripture was the introduction of Quaestiones that allowed for “theological discussions...in

---

12 See Durand/Thibodeau, 1.
14 Marcia Colish argues that modern scholars like Henri de Lubac and Beryl Smalley tended to skew modern understanding of the twelfth century away from the scholastic bent of twelfth-century exegesis. Colish argues that particularly in regards to St. Paul, the scholastics were mainly interested with the historical reading of the text. See Marica L. Colish, “Peter Lombard as Exegete,” in Ad Litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers, ed. Mark Jordan and Kent Emery, Jr. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 72.
dialectical form."  

15 By the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, Peter Lombard’s Sententiae, which studied various topics of theology in a systematic way, was recognized as the standard textbook for theology, demonstrating this shift towards scholasticism. 16 Anna Sapir Abulafia has, however, argued that the interest in the historical sense was “as the prerequisite stepping stone to deeper layers of scriptural meaning.” 17

While monasteries had been the place of spiritual formation and exegetical learning, the cathedral schools and universities emerged as the principal site for biblical studies. 18 Even though the clerics would not have engaged with Scripture in as “spiritual” a sense as their monastic counterparts, their absorption of the material would have been just as deep. The “encyclopaedic mentality of the twelfth century,” as evidenced by the rise in concordances and “thematically and alphabetically organized handbooks of moral theology,” testifies to the inclination for categorization and memorization of such material. 19

Still, patristic commentary did not lose its importance to biblical understanding in the wake of the scholastic movement. This is perhaps most evident in the Glossa Ordinaria, compiled by Anselm at his cathedral school in twelfth-century Laon. The organization of the Glossa was such that patristic commentary from Carolingian compilations was placed in the margins of the Bible as

---

16 Ibid., 412.
17 See Anna Sapir Abulafia, Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance (London: Routledge, 1995), 70
well as between the lines of text, allowing the individual to study both concurrently. Margaret Gibson calls the Glossa “the junction between traditional patristic exegesis and modern scholastic method.” According to Lesley Smith, “in the twelfth century, numbers of manuscripts [of the Gloss] outpaced production of manuscripts of the plain Bible text.”

That this exegetical way of thinking was a way of life for the clerics who participated in the liturgy is demonstrated by the liturgical use of tropes. In Medieval Music as Medieval Exegesis, William Flynn notes that tropes were part of the sacra pagina tradition because they “borrow[ed] their language and many of their techniques from scriptural exegesis.” Clerics who were trained in the grammatical and rhetorical study of Scripture as well as the theory of ornamental language could compose their own tropes or “scriptural glosses” that interfaced with traditional liturgical items. In Augustine’s De doctrina christiana, he argued for the study of grammar because it facilitated the “method of discovering (modus inveniendi) its [scripture’s] meanings” which in turn, led to exegesis. Flynn’s examination of the eleventh-century cathedral liturgy at Autun for the third mass of Christmas, for example, demonstrates how tropes amplify and comment on such items as the Introit, Kyrie, Gloria, Offertory, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei, calling the liturgical

---


23 Ibid., 16–17.

24 William Flynn notes that Aelius Donatus’ (fl. 350) book on ornamental language was the primary book studied by eleventh-century clerics; when it was criticized in the fourth and fifth centuries, figures like Augustine argued for its relevance. Ibid., 26.
program “the liturgical sacra pagina.” By quoting Old and New Testament texts line by line, tropes provide the sung exegesis for the readings and chants of the mass. In Margot Fassler’s work on Introit tropes, she shows how tropes can recast Old Testament narratives in New Testament terms.

Another piece of evidence that the allegorical understanding of Scripture was still significant in the interpretation of Scripture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the flowering of newly composed poetry for the liturgy, such as sequences. In these pieces, systematic theology took a subsidiary role in the understanding and/or singing of theology. I take the sequences of the Abbey of St. Victor as an example. In her work on twelfth-century Victorine sequences, Margot Fassler notes that these sequences use Old Testament typology like that found in the exegesis of the church fathers; she argues that this is a shift from sequences of earlier times. The favoring of Old Testament typology gives witness to the fact that the allegorical sense of Scripture was still relevant in the performance of liturgy. The conductus of the Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision align with sequences as they also feature allegorical imagery.

However, in order to claim that the conductus’ way of guiding clerics to “perform exegesis” was distinct from the sequence, trope, and other exegetically-minded additions to the liturgy, I argue that the conductus functioned in a particularly open-ended and freer manner than these other additions. First, the other pieces offered biblical verses or Old Testament typology with

---

25 Ibid., 139–208.
27 See Margot Fassler, Gothic Song, 58 and 70.
explicit New Testament commentary. For instance, the responsory, a chant sung after each lesson in Matins, was, according to William Durand, “called a ‘responsory’ because it ‘responds’ to the lessons; that is, it must be in accord with it, so that if by chance, the lessons are from the Acts of the Apostles, the Responsories are similarly from the same place.”28 This is in contrast to the conductus that were not so obviously “in accord” with the lessons they precede; they were not based on biblical texts.29

On a smaller scale, antiphons or farses added to existing chants or lessons also function in an explicit, compact, exegetical manner. Boynton and Fassler note that antiphons sung before and after a psalm in any and all of the Divine Office on ferial days “constituted a form of exegesis on the meaning of the psalms with which they were sung.”30 Farses, whether full strophes or single

28 Durand/Thibodeau, 5.2.53. In “A Guide to the Responsories of the Ambrosian Office,” Terence Bailey comments that the “original intention” of the responsory was not to comment on the reading just heard as “in Antioch, a responsory was sung after every two readings.” Furthermore, he notes that “responsorium refers to the akrostichon, a refrain used in recitation, never meant to be a reply, introduction, or commentary on the associated reading.” See Terence Bailey, “A Guide to the Responsories of the Ambrosian Office,” Plainsong and Medieval Music 25, no. 1 (April, 2016): 9.

29 According to the eighth century Ordo romanus XIII, the responsory texts are taken from various books of the Old Testament except in the days from Christmas to Epiphany, where they are taken from the Gospels or Christian ecclesiastical literature; the texts correspond to the readings. See “Responsory,” Grove Music Online (accessed on August 19, 2018), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.queens.ezproxy.cuny.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.e-0000023247?rskey=wOmHQ7&result=1. In Brad Maiani’s study of the responsories that were also used as communion chants in Paschaltide, he notes that 60% of the songs are taken from gospel texts. While the texts of communion chants were usually taken from the gospel text of the mass, this was not the case with responsories. See Brad Maiani, “The Responsory-Communions for Paschaltide,” Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae T. 39, Fasc. 2, no. 4 (1998): 236.

phrases, similarly offer focused and continual commentary on lessons or readings. In Chapter 5, we shall see how the linear farsing of the Epistle keeps the listener’s attention focused on the interplay between biblical text (in this case Isaiah 9) and the New Testament-oriented farse. On the other hand, the fact that the conductus is a full length song gives the listener and singer the time and space to fully enter into the imagery and ideas of the song before determining how they frame an often one-dimensional lesson.

The sequence, sung before the Gospel reading, is perhaps most closely related to the conductus because it is also a self-standing song and uses non-biblical, newly composed texts. But exegetically speaking, it is closer to exegetical songs other than the conductus because it too presents a complete commentary on the imagery, while the conductus usually presents Old Testament images without explicit explanations of their New Testament significance; the exegesis must be completed by the cleric. In Victorine sequences, New Testament ideas and commentary are superimposed on Old Testament typology. For example, *Laudes crucis*, a twelfth-century sequence discussed by Margot Fassler in *Gothic Song*, is a tour-de-force of exegesis. As Fassler writes, it contains “an historical exposition of the cross, based on exegetical commentary of the sort found in the writings of the fathers;” it both references and explains the Old Testament typology found within it.

---


32 As Margot Fassler writes in *Gothic Song*, the Abbey of St. Victor “sought ways of...heightening devotion to the liturgy by means of commentary.” See Margot Fassler, *Gothic Song*, 213.

33 Ibid., 70; 71.
Archa natans super aquas
saluat formas animatas
quam noe composit.

The ark swimming on the water
saves the living species
the ark which Noah built;

Archa crucem noe christum
signat unda hunc baptismum
quem christus exhibuit.

The ark signifies the cross; Noah, Christ;
the waves this baptism
which Christ conferred.

Ligna legens in sarepta
spem salutis est adepta
pauper muliercula

Gathering sticks in Zarephath
the poor woman
obtained the hope of salvation:

Sine lignis fidei
nec lechitus olei
ualet nec farinula

Without the sticks of faith
neither the cruse of oil
Nor the little pile of meal is any good.

The sequence does not leave it up to one’s imagination (as the conductus often does) to explain
the image; rather, it literally states that “the ark signifies the cross; Noah, Christ; the waves the
baptism which Christ conferred.” Furthermore, the sticks gathered by the “poor woman” in
Zarephath are referred to as the “sticks of faith,” another example of complete exegesis in the late
sequence that contrasts with the much more open-ended reference to the widow of Zarephath in
the Matins conductus Dies ista colitur in Egerton 2615. In the Beauvais conductus, the widow makes
an appearance (albeit, I will argue, for a different exegetical purpose), but there is no explicit
“connecting-of-the-dots,” if you will, as to what she categorically signifies:34

Diem hanc leticie fecit homo deus
dono cuius gratie suscitatur reus,
cum de domo vidue exit Heliseus.
Felix est egressio,
per quam fit remissio.

The Man of God, made this day of joy
by the gift of whose grace the sinner
is awakened
when Elijah exits the home of the widow.
Happy is the birth
through which comes forgiveness.

34 See chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of the conductus.
Granted, some of the Beauvais conductus acknowledge the concept of Old Testament typology, but they do not necessarily reveal what the typology is.\textsuperscript{35} That task of “performative exegesis” is rather left to the cleric’s \textit{investigatio} and imagination.

\textbf{Critical Approach}

My dissertation employs an interdisciplinary approach, combining musicology and liturgical studies, in the study of the conductus in MS Egerton 2615. It has been nearly fifty years since Wulf Arlt transcribed the Circumcision Office of MS Egerton 2615, yet no one has taken his work and examined any of the genre of songs in the Office to illuminate the meaning of the feast. I argue that this study of the conductus can point toward a reading of the message of the feast, for the conductus are the sermonizing thrust of the feast, functioning as “performative exegesis,” the interpreting and staging of theology, in the words of Susan Boynton.

Traditionally, exegesis or commentary takes the form of written (and sometimes orally delivered) texts such as sermons and theological writings. In her work on the twelfth-century Fleury \textit{Interfectio Puerorum} (The Massacre of the Holy Innocents), Boynton has, however, shown how the performance and structure of a liturgical drama can also function as commentary or exegesis of a biblical event, in this case one found in Matthew 2:16–18.\textsuperscript{36} By studying homiletic literature and patristic and medieval commentary on this biblical passage, Boynton uncovers the primary themes for the feast and exegesis for the biblical event; she then demonstrates how the “chant, scriptural

\textsuperscript{35} See the discussion of \textit{Nostre quod providerat} in chapter 2 and \textit{Lux optata} in chapter 2.

citations, non-scriptural poetry, and prose” work together to communicate the commentary for this event.37

Similarly, I will make close readings of the conductus in the Beauvais Circumcision Office and the Ludus Danielis, engaging with patristic and medieval exegesis to uncover the meaning of the allegories, typologies, and imagery in the conductus texts. This approach is critical for understanding how a conductus exegetically and theologically prepares and intersects with a lesson, reading, or ritual.38 Though the medieval cleric could have understood the hidden meanings in the texts or at least “diligently observ[ed]” them, according to Durand, the modern reader may not necessarily understand all of the references. Since the patristic and medieval exegetical trove is so deep, my decision to choose from Western, more standard exegetical texts that could have been known by the clerics at Beauvais Cathedral draws parameters to their recollection and keeps my imaginative reconstruction from becoming a “choose your own adventure” piece.

First Vespers opens with Orientis Partibus (the Song of the Ass) sung to a donkey processional, inscribing the character of the donkey on the subdeacon feast. The readings of Matins are each introduced by a conductus that direct the clerics to reflect on specific theological ideas. These readings in conjuction with the printed Beauvais breviary of 1497 include Lectiones 1–6 from homily XVI by Pseudo-Maximus “De Calendis Januariis” and Lectiones 7–9 from homily X “In die festo circumcissionis domini” by Bede. A conductus guides those gathered in the multi-sensory

37 Ibid., 48.
38 In Rachel Golden Carlson’s study, “Devotion to the Virgin Mary in Twelfth-Century Aquitanian Versus” (2000), she considers the versus from the perspective of the text and the relationship of the music to the text in order to determine the versus’ significance and function. See Rachel Golden Carlson, “Devotion to the Virgin Mary in Twelfth-Century Aquitanian Versus” (PhD, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2000).
wine ritual at the church door at the end of Lauds. Both the Epistle and Gospel readings at Mass are prepared by conductus. The Feast concludes at Second Vespers with *Alto consilio*, a conductus from the *Ludus de Antichristo*. Ultimately, this study will both teach the modern student of liturgy how a medieval cleric could have made sense of the conductus/reading pairings as well as offer an interpretation of the message of the Feast of the Circumcision for Beauvais Cathedral.

**Scholarly Background**

The conductus has undergone a renaissance in the past decade, exemplified by the project at the University of Southampton which has been the context for the *Canticum pulcriorem invenire* database by Mark Everist and his team, with 869 conductus catalogued according to source and with texts, the numerous recent articles on the genre, and Everist’s monograph *Discovering Medieval Song: Latin Poetry and Music in the Conductus*. In *Discovering Medieval Song*, Everist gives much-needed clarification of the musically syntactical aspects of the conductus such as *rithmus*, its rhythmic performance—*musica cum littera* (he argues that these conductus should be performed metrically and not modally) vs. *musica sine littera*—cadential formulas like caudae and punctus organi, poetic borrowings, and sources, among other things. He also considers the conductus and its overlap with the motet and its relationship to the liturgy via “quasi-liturgical cues such as the ‘Iube dom[i]ne’ formula” in the poetic text. Outside of the purview of his study, however, is the semantic study of conductus texts, the study that this dissertation aims to undertake.

---

39 See Mark Everist, *Discovering Medieval Song*.
40 Ibid., 89.
Everist’s work is the first major contribution to the study of the conductus since Gordon Athol Anderson’s ten-volume edition of conductus in *Notre Dame and Related Conductus* (1981)\(^{41}\) with transcriptions, editions, and annotated translations of conductus. Anderson died before publishing volume 7, which would have included twelve conductus from the Circumcision Office in MS Egerton 2615. These conductus are found in Wulf Arlt’s transcription of the Circumcision Office of Egerton 2615 (1970), though without Anderson’s insightful annotations.\(^{42}\) Arlt’s edition does include some observations on the conductus texts that begin to uncover the richness, hidden meanings, and symbols in the texts, but does not consider how these texts interacted with the surrounding liturgical material. In fact, in 2000, Arlt enjoined scholars to investigate the connections between the conductus and the subsequent lessons in Matins in the Circumcision Offices, but no one has yet done so.\(^{43}\) Also in 2000, Mark Everist stated “the function of the conductus is the most open of all the questions that surround the genre, and...few proposals approach a workable definition for the genre as a whole.”\(^{44}\)

More recently, in *Discovering Medieval Song*, Mark Everist reiterates his statement that “the search for a single, all-encompassing function for the conductus...look[s] like an exercise in

---


futility.” He concedes that “one of the best-documented functions for the conductus is as a substitute for the ‘Benedicamus domino’” as “around twenty conductus engage with the ‘Benedicamus domino’ versicle.” While he acknowledges that conductus are “occasionally associated with the introduction of a reading within the liturgy...by the integration of the introductory formula ‘Dic: ‘Iube Dom[i]ne’ into the end of the poem,” pointing to seven conductus with this formula in the repertoire, he does not consider that to be a credible “function.”

None of the Beauvais conductus that precede readings includes this formula, yet ten conductus are positioned before readings or lessons. The closest indication of a preparatory reading in a Beauvais conductus through the text is *Nostri festi gaudium*: its final line is *Legatur in gaudio lectio*. Could the twenty-three conductus in Table 2.1, conductus from the CPI database that include *lectio, lege, lector*, merit a reconsideration of a more credible preparatory reading function for conductus that do not include the introductory “Iube Dom[i]ne” formula? Everist does consider the possible link between the performance contexts of conductus and *lectio publica*, or public reading. He compares the conductus *Naturas Deus regulis* to an extract from the Chronicle of the Benedictine Abbey of Abingdon to show the “shared ideas and specific vocabulary” between the poem and prose texts, hypothesizing their shared performance context, the monastic refectory.

Thomas Payne and Anne-Zoé Rillon-Marne’s studies on conductus texts attributed to Philip the Chancellor have furthered the understanding of how the music and text of conductus function as discourse in relation to thirteenth-century homiletic literature, not only exegetical

---

46 Ibid., 61.
works.47 Payne’s insightful paper (2000) on the conductus Aurelianis civitas, which commemorates a riot between students and townspeople in Orleans in 1236, shows that similarities in language between this conductus (1236) and the sermon given by Philip six years earlier must have been more than coincidental: “when Philip wrote Aurelianis civitas, his memory triggered modes of expression similar to those that he had used in his sermon.”48

In Homo considera, Anne-Zoë Rillon-Marne systematically examines how the twenty “moral” monophonic conductus of Phillip the Chancellor function as sermons, delivering a specific message about reforming behavior by using particular rhetorical devices such as the apostrophe, exclamation, and rhetorical questions [repetitio and annominatio] and their musical parallels.49 She eloquently argues in her article “Convaincre et émouvoir” that the moral message of these conductus is delivered because the distinctive shape of the melodies allows the text to be transmitted while imprinting certain sonorous images in the listener’s mind.50

---

47 See Thomas Payne, “Poetry, Politics, and Polyphony: Philip the Chancellor’s Contribution to the Music of the Notre Dame School” (Ph.D. diss. University of Chicago, 1991). This study lays the foundation for further research on the conductus of Philip the Chancellor by examining the poetic forms and musical styles of the conductus attributed to Philip the Chancellor as well as the historical events referred to in some of these conductus.

48 See Thomas Payne, “Aurelianis civitas: Student Unrest in Medieval France and a Conductus by Philip the Chancellor,” Speculum 75 (2000): 608. The conductus gives a particular viewpoint on the riot that is not found in the account of the event in Matthew Paris’ Chronica majora. The editorializing of the riot of 1236 in Aurelianis civitas had parallels to the events of the Great Dispersion of 1229–1231 for which Philip’s sermon was delivered. The Great Dispersion was instigated by a dispute over a liquor tab at a tavern, leading to a great divide between students and townspeople (papal bull Parens scientiarum). Ibid., 598


Sonorous Framing of the Congregation,” Rillon-Marne considers how the hierarchy and structure of rhyme, melody, textual and melodic repetitions in the polyphonic moralizing conductus *Heu he heu quam subditis* cause the listener to understand and remember the moral lesson of the conductus.\textsuperscript{51}

I hope with this dissertation to contribute to this resurgence of interest in the conductus by responding to Arlt’s nearly twenty-year old call to examine the connections between the conductus and Matins’ lessons, as well as to address Everist’s statements about the futility of determining a single function for the conductus by determining, instead, a local, liturgical function for the conductus in MS Egerton 2615.

**Manuscript MS Egerton 2615**

Egerton 2615 is a manuscript from thirteenth-century Beauvais that is housed in the British Library. It contains twelve gatherings (the sixth one, the beginning of the Mass, according to David Hughes, is missing, and the twelfth one is not indicated by Roman numeral).\textsuperscript{52} The British Library website states that MS Egerton 2615 is a parchment codex that is 220 mm x 140 mm, the binding is pre-1600, it has wooden boards and is rebanked.\textsuperscript{53} The general consensus is that the manuscript dates from 1227–1234, during the pontificate of Gregory IX. This determination was made because the text of the *Laudes Regiae* on fols. 41v–42 refers to the pope as


\textsuperscript{52} David Hughes, “Liturgical Polphony at Beauvais in the Thirteenth Century,” *Speculum* 34, no. 2 (1959), 185–186.

Gregory ("Gregorio summo pontifici et universali pape vita" fol. 41v) and the King as Louis ("Ludovico serenissimo et a deo coronato magno et pacifico regi vita et victora" fol 42r). Gregory IX’s pontificate was from 1227–1241 and Louis IX reigned from 1226–1270. Since Louis IX married Marguerite of Provence in 1234 and her name is missing in the Laudes, the possible dates of the manuscript are limited from 1227–1234. The script is Gothic and the scribes are multiple. The bookplate of the chapter of Beauvais is found on fols. 78 and 110v and the text on fol. 95 reads “In Belvaco [Beauvais] est inventus.” Mark Everist suggests that the bookplate appears to date from the eighteenth century.

The manuscript is divided into three parts: the Circumcision Office for New Year’s Day (Feast of Fools) with additional polyphony (fols. 1–77/8), a section of polyphony (fols. 79r–94v), and the Ludus Danielis (fols. 95r–108r). The polyphonic section (fols. 79r–94v) appears to be independent from the original manuscript. Based on the contents of this section (Parisian polyphony such as organum triplum and quadruplum, conductus, and early Latin motet), David Hughes argues that it was probably copied near the beginning of the thirteenth century. Mark Everist argues that the contents of this section have much in common with I.Fl Plut. 29.1.

Currently, the entire manuscript is available for view through the British Library’s website. Folios 1–78 have been edited by Wulf Arlt in a publication from 1970. Folios 79–94v are

---

54 The Laudes are “the acclamatory chant for the crown-wearing of the ruler, sung after the Gloria on the highest feasts of the year.” David Hiley, Western Plainchant, 591.
56 Hughes, David “Liturgical Polyphony at Beauvais,” 188.
57 See Mark Everist, French 13th c. Polyphony in the British Library, 47.
58 See Wulf Arlt, Ein Festoffizium des Mittelalters aus Beauvais, vol. 1.
available in a facsimile edition by Mark Everist from 1988.\textsuperscript{59} Noah Greenberg, A. Marcel J. Zijlstra, and David Wulstan have made editions of the \textit{Ludus Danielis}.\textsuperscript{60}

The twenty conductus that will be the focus of this study are scattered throughout the Circumcision Office and the \textit{Ludus Danielis} in Egerton 2615 (See Table I.1). One conductus appears in First Vespers; eight appear before eight of the nine lessons in Matins; one conductus accompanies a drinking ritual at Lauds; three appear in the Mass (one before the Epistle reading and two before the Gospel reading); two appear in Second Vespers; and five appear in the \textit{Ludus Danielis}. Eighteen are monophonic and only two that appear in the Mass—the second appearance of \textit{Orientis partibus} in the feast (during the Mass) and \textit{Salvatoris hodie}—are polyphonic. In this dissertation, I will demonstrate how the conductus become the primary sermonizing and message-shaping tool in the Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision/Feast of Fools by framing the feast as a whole at First Vespers and Second Vespers, the readings they precede in Matins and the Mass, the drinking ritual of Lauds, and the characters they introduce in the \textit{Ludus Danielis}.

\textsuperscript{59} See Mark Everist, \textit{French 13\textsuperscript{th}-Century Polyphony in the British Library}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conductus</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Folio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientis partibus</td>
<td>First Vespers</td>
<td>Conductus quando asinus adducitur</td>
<td>1r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dies ista colitur</td>
<td>Matins: 1st Nocturn</td>
<td>Sequitur Conductus</td>
<td>18r–19r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratulemur in hac</td>
<td>Matins: 1st Nocturn</td>
<td>Sequitur Conductus</td>
<td>19r–19v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostre quod</td>
<td>Matins: 2nd Nocturn</td>
<td>Conductus</td>
<td>22v–24r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostri festi gaudium</td>
<td>Matins: 2nd Nocturn</td>
<td>Sequitur Conductus</td>
<td>24v–25v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quanto decet honore</td>
<td>Matins: 2nd Nocturn</td>
<td>Sequitur Conductus</td>
<td>26r–26v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lux Optata</td>
<td>Matins: 3rd Nocturn</td>
<td>Conductus</td>
<td>29v–30v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva virum dedit</td>
<td>Matins: 3rd Nocturn</td>
<td>Conductus</td>
<td>31v–32v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex Ade vitio</td>
<td>Matins: 3rd Nocturn</td>
<td>Conductus</td>
<td>33r–34r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalendas ianuarias</td>
<td>Lauds</td>
<td>Quorum unus canonicus incipiat Kalendas ianuarias. (music not included)</td>
<td>40v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientis partibus</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Conductus subdiaconi ad Epistolam</td>
<td>43r–44v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvatoris hodie</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Hic dicatur. Salvatoris (music on fols. 86r-87v)</td>
<td>49r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natus est</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Conductus ante Evangelium</td>
<td>49r–49v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igitur, igitur (second half of Natus est)</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Redundo ad altare antedicto, Conducto</td>
<td>50r–50v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regis natalicia</td>
<td>Second Vespers</td>
<td>Conductus</td>
<td>66r–67r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alto consilio</td>
<td>Second Vespers</td>
<td>Conductus</td>
<td>67r–68v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cum doctorum</td>
<td>Ludus Danielis</td>
<td>Conductus Reginae venientis ad Regem</td>
<td>97v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hic verus Dei</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>Conductus Danielis venientis ad Regem</td>
<td>99r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solvitur in libro Salmonis</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>Conductus Reginae</td>
<td>101r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regis vasa referents</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>Conductus referentium vasa ante Danielem</td>
<td>101v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congaudentes celebremus natalis solemnia</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>Conductus Danielis</td>
<td>103v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appropriation, subversion, and reformation in the New Year’s Day feasts

In order for us to understand the function of the conductus in the Feast of the Circumcision, we must understand how the conductus appropriate, subvert, and in some cases, reiterate the symbols, themes, and prejudices of New Year’s Day. By the twelfth century in northern France, three feasts converged on January 1—the Kalends, a pagan feast, the Feast of the Circumcision, and the Feast of Fools. Sermon literature and papal documents attest to the anxiety the Church had with abuses at all of these feasts. In fact, the Feast of the Circumcision was instituted by the Second Council of Tours (567) for January 1 “in order to stamp out the customs of the pagans [Kalends].” But even the Feast of the Circumcision developed practices that worried the Church. Through the conductus in MS Egerton 2615, we see how Beauvais Cathedral took forbidden elements of each these feasts and reformed them to create a theologically and liturgically appropriate celebration.

I must acknowledge that while the Kalends and the Feast of the Circumcision both fell on January 1 in the thirteenth century, the exact date of the New Year could have fallen on three

---

61 The Second Council of Tours states this:

...quod calcandam gentilium consuetudinem patris nostris statuerunt, priuatas in kalendas Ianuarii fieri letanias, ut in ecclesia psalletur et ora octava in ipsis kalendis circumcissionis missa Deo propitio celebretur.

in order to stamp out the customs of the pagans [i.e. the Kalends, New Year’s festivals], our fathers established that special services should be held on January 1, so there may be chanting in the churches, and on the eighth hour on that same day a Mass of the Circumcision may be celebrated as is fitting to God.

possible dates: 25 December (Christmas), 1 January (Circumcision), and 25 March (Easter). It was not until 1563 that Charles the Ninth decreed the official New Year to fall on January 1 in France. Still, as Mary Caldwell has noted, January 1 was accepted as the New Year to many including Durand: "For, in January, in which the New Year is begun, the time is understood from the flood, where the world is renewed." Refrain songs such as Anni novi prima die (twelfth-century Hortus deliciarum) demonstrate that the New Year was understood to be on the Circumcision (1 January).

Anni novi prima die, On the first day of the New Year,  
Filius virginis Marie The Son of the Virgin Mary  
Morem gessit natilie Bore the custom of his birth.  

R Dum, dum, dum circumcidi sustinuit  
In quo non fuit dignum quid abscedi.  
Anni novi die prima  
When, when, when, the circumcision he endured  
In which what was not necessary was cut away.  
On the first day of the New Year

During the Christmas octave, the week following Christmas, each day was devoted to one of the orders of clergy: December 26 for the deacons, December 27 for the priests, December 28 for the acolytes and choirboys, and January 1 for the subdeacons. By the twelfth century, January 1, the Feast of the Circumcision or the subdeacons’ feast, also became the occasion for the Feast of Fools, according to Paris theologian John Beleth’s Summa de

---

63 Ibid., 784.
65 Trans. Mary Caldwell, “Singing, Dancing, and Rejoicing,” 657. Caldwell includes a table of other “New Year’s” songs that place the New Year on 1 January. Ibid., 656.
Margot Fassler writes that through these “officially sanctioned” festivities, “a tightly organized and carefully governed community won the psychological release that allowed the rest of the year to turn smoothly.” Some note that the ideological essence of the feast was the *Deposuit* from the *Magnificat*, as the *Deposuit*—“he has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly”—specifically speaks to the paradoxical nature of the Feast of Fools where the lowly subdeacons are lifted up.” In the Beauvais feast, the climax of this inversion occurs during the Mass as the Gospel, the centerpiece of the liturgy of the Word, is prepared not by the sequence, a lofty genre that “mystically articulates the praises of eternal life,” but rather by the conductus, a genre not typically associated with the liturgy, let alone the Gospel.

Margot Fassler has argued that the feasts of the Christmas Octave regulated disgruntlement in the community. The existence of hierarchical resentment in Beauvais lends support to this

---


67 Ibid., 70.

68 E. K. Chambers calls the *Deposuit* the “keynote” of the feast and Max Harris has called the feast the “literal acting-out of the Magnificat.” See E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, vol. 1, 278. See also Harris, Max, “A Reassessment of the Feast of Fools: A Rough and Holy Liturgy,” *Ritus Sacer–Sacrum Risible: Interaktionsfelder von Sakralität und Gelächter im kulturellen und historischen Wandel*, ed. Katja Gvozdeva and Werner Röcke (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 83. Meg Twycross and Sarah Carpenter comment that the allowing of this “symbolic moment of freedom and recognition within the church hierarchy” for the subdeacons symbolizes “the specifically Christian assertion that the birth of the Saviour *Deposuit*. See Meg Twycross and Sarah Carpenter in *Masks and Masking in Medieval and Early Tudor England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 40.

69 Durand/Thibodeau, 4.22.3.

70 See Margot Fassler, “The Feast of Fools and Danielis ludus,” 70.
theory. First, in a document from the twelfth-century Beauvais chapter to Bishop Philip of Dreux, bishop just prior to the production of MS Egerton 2615, the chapter demands that the bishop reverse the seizing of their homes and restore their rents.\(^{71}\) The fact that they address their discontentment to their Bishop demonstrates the idea of the lowly rising up. Second, the comparison of Bishop Miles Nanteuil, bishop during the production of MS Egerton 2615, to the proud Nebuchadnezzar in a nineteenth-century account of thirteenth-century Beauvais also captures the discontentment (and judgment) of the lowly.\(^{72}\) The featuring of the downfall of Nebuchadnezzar in the *Ludus Danielis* brings more politicized meanings to its performance at the Feast of Fools. Furthermore, as Margot Fassler states, the story of Daniel, the young Hebrew man who is exalted, is a theological representation of the inversion of hierarchies in the feast. The Beauvais chapter’s conflicts with their authority figures could demonstrate that the celebration of the Feast of the Circumcision/Feast of Fools in MS Egerton 2615 is not only indicative of the conventional overturning of hierarchies of the Christmas octave, but also an artistic, liturgical response to the ecclesiastical and political climate of thirteenth-century Beauvais.

---

\(^{71}\) “...you have encouraged the king our seigneur, to seize and hold our rents, our houses, and other things, and you have allowed him to usurp episcopal rights, as a result of which your church is clearly disenfranchised in several ways. We require you, then, to stave off, as is your duty, the secular arm and the royal power. We also require you, in the name of the cathedral, of the church of Saint-Lucien, of Saint-Quentin and the monastery of Beaupré, and of Froidmont, to restore the rents and houses that you have seized, both on the part of the king and on your own part [and] to make full amends for the damages you have caused to churches, both by your deeds and by your defaults.”


\(^{72}\) “Et à la vérité dire, cil estoient pris par lor orguel et par l’esliut de Biauvais qui plus avoit d’orguel en lui que n’ot Nabugodonosor qui par son orguel fu mues 7 ans en bieste.” See Stephen Murray, *Beauvais Cathedral*, 35.
Sermons from the early period rebuking Christians for participating in the Kalends celebrations also criticize them for wearing animal masks.\footnote{A homily probably wrongly attributed to Maximus of Turin comments that during the Kalends the faithful were “masking...aut in pecudes, aut feras, aut in portentas (‘as farm animals, or as wild animals, or as monsters.’) Maximus of Turin, Homilia 16, De Calendis Ianuarii, PL 58: 255; quoted from and trans. Meg Twycross and Sarah Carpenter, \textit{Masks and Masking in Medieval Europe}, 26. Isidore of Seville (seventh century) protested that “even the faithful assume monstrous appearances and are changed into the character of wild animals” during the Kalends. See Max Harris, “A Reassessment of the Feast of Fools,” 21–22.} Yet, at First Vespers in Beauvais, the conductus \textit{Orientis partibus} (Song of the Ass), sung to a donkey processional, opens the feast, superimposing the figure of the humble, burden-bearing beast on the subdeacon. The conductus recurs in the Mass as the subdeacons process to read the Epistle, solidifying the association. That a human-animal crossover, so censured for its overt display in the Kalends, becomes the vehicle through which the theology of the Feast of Fools is communicated is subversive. But the exalting of the donkey does not just happen through \textit{Orientis partibus}. In Bernard of Clairvaux’s third sermon on the circumcision of Christ, he exhorts the faithful to be like the donkey, comparing Christ’s humility in enduring the circumcision to the donkey’s gentleness and faithfulness: “I beg you not to become like horse and mule, but rather like the loyal beast that says, \textit{I have become like a beast in your presence, and I am always with you}. Such beasts know their owner and their master’s manger.”\footnote{“...Sicut pium jumentum, quod ait: ‘Ut jumentum factus sum apud te, et ego semper tecum.’ Talia enim jumenta cognoscunt possessorem suum, et praesepe domini sui.” PL, 183: 137. Trans. Irene Edmonds, Wendy Mary Beckett, and Conrad Greenia in \textit{Sermons for the Advent and Christmas Season}, in \textit{Cistercian Fathers Series} 51, ed. John Leinenweber (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2007), 145.} Considering Bernard’s influence on Bishop Henry, the bishop of Beauvais in the mid-twelfth century, one can imagine that that this sermon could have been known by the Beauvais chapter.

73

74
Of course, animal imagery was often used for a more pejorative sense of circumcision. John Chrysostom (fourth century) views the covenant of circumcision God made with Abraham as a punitive one by comparing it to putting “a bit in their mouths.” Cyril explains that the redemption necessary for the guilt of Adam’s transgression was accomplished by Jesus humbly “yield[ing] His neck to the law.” This yielding of Jesus’ neck to the law brings to mind the ass.

The excessive drinking, theater, and irreverent singing, singled out as abuses in the Kalends by Augustine, are also transformed at Beauvais, as evidenced through the conductus. Augustine writes: “They entertain themselves with debauched singing; find your entertainment in the words of the Scripture! They run to the theater; you go to church! They get drunk; you practice fasting!” I suggest that the wine ritual sung to the conductus Kalendas ianuarias at the end of Lauds could be considered a reformed drinking ritual (see chapter 4). Profane and holy drinking are distinguished by Caesarius of Arles’ quotation of Saint Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians in his sermon on the Kalends, “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and also the cup of demons.”

---

78 In De ecclesiasticis officiis 1.40, Isidore of Seville even states that the faithful become “out of their mind with wine” (furens vino) CCSL 113: 47; trans. Thomas Knoebel in Isidore, Isidore of Seville: De Ecclesiasticis Officiis, ACW 61: 63.
Regarding the *Ludus Danielis’* place in the Feast of Fools (Augustine’s argument for church over theater), Margot Fassler has argued that it is no coincidence that the very chapters chosen from the Old Testament story to make up the play allow for many of the abuses cited by Richard of St. Victor and other twelfth and early thirteenth-century reformers. Here is a crowd of pagans who hold a drinking bout, here are mysterious divinations which must be interpreted; here are instruments, rhythmic singing, bizarre behavior.\(^80\)

As William of Auxerre writes in *De officiis ecclesiasticis* (cited by Fassler), “‘in the same way,’ he says, ‘ludi, which are against the faith, [are] changed into ludi which are not against the faith.’”\(^81\)

A passage from a sermon by Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173) also cited by Fassler complains about the feast, specifically against the “foolish rhythmic poetry” sung in church:

> Today, having been seized up by the furies of their bacchant-like ravings and having been inflamed by the fires of diabolical instigation, they flock together to church, and profane the house of God with vain and foolish rhythmic poetry (*rhythmicis*) in which sin is not wanting but by all means present, and with evil sayings, laughing, and cacophony.\(^82\)

The complaint against rhythmic poetry could refer precisely to genres like the conductus. While the Babylonian context of the *Ludus Danielis* may allow for “rhythmic singing,” this does not necessarily account for the other twelve conductus sung at the Circumcision Office. In Bishop Odo of Sully’s edict (1198) against the excesses of the Feast of the Circumcision in Paris, he forbids rhythmic poetry: “We forbid there to be *rimos*, mummeries, and hearse lights unless on

\(^80\) Margot Fassler, “The Feast of Fools and Danielis ludus,” 86.


iron wheels and on a candle stand if he who shall take the cope [the lord or cantor of the feast] shall wish it.... While Chambers and Wright translate *rimos* as “chansons,” Fassler translates it as “rhythmic poetry.” Was it the conductus’ para-liturgical or non-liturgical status that allowed them to transmit the messages of this topsy-turvy feast?

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, documentary evidence views the namesake of “The Feast of Fools” in a negative light. A mandate by papal legate Pierre de Capuano (twelfth century), testifies to the profanity of the Feast of Circumcision/Fools at Notre Dame, Paris:

On the feast of Circumcision of the Lord, so many egregious and flagrant acts were commonly committed, that the holy place...is frequently defiled not only by foul language but even by bloodshed; and this practice has grown so pernicious and brash that the most holy day in which the Savior of the world wished to be circumcised generally has come to be called, and not without good reason, the feast of the fools.  

A letter from Adam of Perseigne to a colleague in Rouen in 1210 specifically indicates that the wisdom of Christ is being shunned by the people during the Feast of Fools:

This most abominable and execrable infamy, a kind of theatrical representation and masked demonry...is properly called the Feast of Fools, that is of madness, not because they truly lose their minds, but because, as friends and familiars of demons, they diligently shun the wisdom of Christ.

---


84 Ibid., 73: “...in festo circonsionis Dominice, in eadem ecclesia tot consueverunt enormitates et opera flagiosa committi, quod locum sanctum...non solum feditate verborum, verum etiam sanguinis effusione plerumque contingit inquinari; et eatenus adinventio tam pernitiouse temeritatis invaluit, ut sacratissima dies, in qua mundi redemptor voluit circumcidi, festum fatuorum, nec immeritor, generaliiter consueverit circumcidi.” as translated in Wright.

Pope Innocent III’s letter from 1207 states that “in the three feasts of the year which follow immediately after the Nativity, deacons, priests, and subdeacons, in turn, exercising their scandalous stupidities, through the obscene revellings of their behavior, make clerical dignity worthless, in the sight of the people.”

The inchoate beginnings of the negative association of “fool/foolish” with the Kalends can be found in the sermons of Augustine and Caesarius of Arles. In Augustine’s first New Year’s Day sermon (De Calendis Januariis, contra Paganos 197), he writes that even those who do see and recognize God do not glorify him and thus, “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22). In his sermons on the Kalends, Caesarius of Arles (sixth century) repeatedly uses the word “foolish” to describe those who participate in each of the practices of Kalends criticized by the Church, including cross dressing, transformation into beasts, drunkenness, profligate dancing, the playing of games, and the singing of “immodest” songs. He also highlights the inversional aspect of the Feast of Fools when he writes that “men at that time, truly foolish [italics added] and ignorant of God, esteemed as gods those whom they perceived to be more exalted among men.”

Harris suggests that the “lack of specific detail” could mean that Adam, an envoy of Innocent III and a Cistercian abbot, “was probably a mouthpiece than an eyewitness.” Ibid., 93.


In *Sacred Folly* (2011), Harris sets out to rehabilitate the predominately negative perception that the Feast of Fools was a feast of chaos, arguing that the “foolishness” of the Feast of Fools was Christ’s “foolish’ willingness to humble himself by taking human flesh and so to suffer the physical pain of circumcision and crucifixion,” and not the idea of the fool who “denies God’s existence and authority.” He suggests that the fools’ feast was rooted in liturgy, albeit with some “youthful exuberance.” Harris quotes from Saint Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians—“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God”—to demonstrate the inverted nature of wisdom in Christian theology.

Let us remember that the Feast of the Circumcision (no longer celebrated today) celebrates the Jewish ritual of Christ’s circumcision. How did the Church reconcile the celebration of such a ritual? Origen (third century) explains the reason for Jesus’ circumcision in the earliest known commentary on it from Luke 2:21. (These ideas are found in Bede’s sermon on the Circumcision, which is read at Matins in Beauvais.) In this commentary, he quotes Saint Paul’s letter to the Galatians to defend Christ’s circumcision with the concept that Jesus was, “born from a woman, subject to the Law” and was therefore, subject to the law of circumcision. Cyril (fifth century) of Alexandria frames the “Law” in more prophetic terms: “like the Jews, He is circumcised when eight days old, to prove His descent from their stock, that they may not deny Him. For Christ was expected of the seed of David.” What did this mean for the Church that did not practice the

---

88 Ibid., 67–68.
89 See Max Harris, *Sacred Folly*, 91.
90 2 Corinthians 3:19.
92 “Circumciditur octava a nativitate die cum Judaeis, ut generis cognitionem affirmet, necque eum postea velint negare. Namque ex Davidis stirpe Christus exspectabatur.” Cyril of
ritual of circumcision? Origen explains that the ritual of baptism replaces circumcision for the Church, again quoting Saint Paul, the “circumcision done without hands” referring to baptism. The duality of circumcision and baptism is presented in a pair of Matins conductus (Nostri festi and Quanto decet).

Perhaps it is Christ’s divine yet corporal body, being “born of a woman,” (one that is subject to circumcision) that is a reflection of the inversional ideology of the Feast of Fools. Bede (eighth century) identifies Christ with a more human nature writing that he “put on the true weakness of a mortal nature, which he did not have;” and by being born under the law, Christ “by his compassion” may help others under the law. Bernard of Clairvaux’s (twelfth century) call to the faithful in his sermon on the circumcision—to “recognize the mediator between God and humankind who from the very beginning of his birth joins what is human to what is divine, the lowest to the highest”—summarizes this high/low dichotomy.


93 “In quo et circumcisi estis circumcisione sine manibus, in exspoliatione corporis carnis, in circumcisione Christi, consepulti ei in baptismate, in quo et conresurreximus per fidem operationis Dei, qui suscitavit eum a mortuis.” Origen, Homilia 14 in Lucam 1.1 (quoting Colossians 2:11–12), SC 87: 216; “in him you have been circumcised by a circumcision done without hands, when the body of the flesh was despoiled in the circumcision of Christ. We were buried with him in Baptism, and we have risen up with him through faith in the work of God, who raised him from the dead.” Therefore, his death, his resurrection, and his circumcision took place for our sake. Origen’s Homilies on Luke were translated into Latin by Jerome in the fourth century. See Andrew Jacobs, Christ Circumcised, 122 and 124.


95 “...sed ut eos qui sub lege positi legis onera portare nequiverant, sua compassiones juvaret.” Bede, Homilia 10, PL 94: 54. trans. ibid., 104.

96 “Sed agnosce mediatorem Dei et hominum, qui ab ipso nativitatis suae exordio divinis humana sociat, ima summis.” Bernard of Clairvaux, PL, 183: 133; trans. Irene Edmonds, Wendy
Still, the Church’s anxiety with Judaism is palpable in a few of the Beauvais conductus. First, the association of Jews with blindness, a persistent theme in Christian ideology towards Jews, is heard in the Gospel conductus *Salvatoris hodie*. While the association of blindness and Judaism can be found in the writings of St. Paul, writers quickly appropriated it for the occasion of the Circumcision of Christ. John Chrysostom repeatedly criticizes the Jews as “ungrateful” and “unresponsive” for continuing to circumcise, writing that “despite the light of truth, [they] are still seated in darkness.”

He points to their “characteristic blindness” in not seeing Christ as the fulfillment of the Law. In Augustine’s first New Year’s Day sermon (*De Calendis Januariis, contra Paganos* 197) he specifies that ungodliness is specific to the Jews for the Law was given to them and yet they chose to ignore it; he blames this on blindness. A verse in *Salvatoris hodie* includes the statement that “in whose [Christ’s] circumcision the blindness of the Law found its end,” implying that Christ’s circumcision was the circumcision to end all circumcisions. On the other hand, the Matins conductus *Lux optata* states outright that “Judea, gens rea/Judea, the guilty nation” did not believe the Messiah. Then the final conductus of the feast *Alto consilio* includes a verse about the Law not saving man, and thus requiring the Incarnation.


Chapter Outline

My dissertation is organized according to the services of the Divine Office. It is my hope that the structure of the dissertation will enable the reader to experience the rhythms of the feast, both the levity and the gravity, through the exegetical framing of the conductus. While some of the conductus are inclined towards “play”—the remarkable donkey at First Vespers, Daniel at a Babylonian feast in the *Ludus Danielis*, or the drinking ritual in *Kalendas ianuarias*—others like those sung at Matins and the Mass require the utmost concentration of those gathered to recall and create exegesis. See Table I.2 for the liturgical elements found in the primary services of the Beauvais Circumcision Office.
### Table I.2. Diagram of the Primary services in the Beauvais Circumcision Office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Liturgical elements included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Vespers</td>
<td>before dark</td>
<td><strong>conductus Orientis partibus,</strong> 5 antiphons/psalms, capitulum, responsory, prose, versicle, antiphon + Magnificat, Benedicamus/Deo gratia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compline</td>
<td>before retiring</td>
<td>1 antiphon/psalm, hymn, capitulum, versicle, psalms, responsory, Benedicamus, Domino [no conductus]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matins</td>
<td>eighth hour of the night</td>
<td>Three noxturns with three lessons each, eight of the nine lessons introduced by a <strong>conductus</strong> and followed by a responsory, <em>Ludus Danielis</em> with five <strong>conductus</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauds</td>
<td>daybreak</td>
<td>5 antiphon/psalms, capitulum, hymn, versicle, prosa, antiphon, Benedicamus/Deo gratia, <strong>conductus Kalendas iauumarías</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASS</td>
<td>morning</td>
<td>Kyrie, Gloria, <strong>conductus Orientis partibus</strong> as the subdeacon process to read the Epistle, farsed Epistle, responsory, prosa, Alleluia, prosa, <strong>conductus Salvatoris hodie</strong>, <strong>conductus Natus est</strong>, Gospel, Credo, Offertory, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, sermon, <em>Ite missa est</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Vespers</td>
<td>before dark</td>
<td>hymns, 5 antiphon/psalms, prosa, capitulum, responsory, Benedicamus/Deo gratias, <strong>conductus Regis natalicia</strong>, <strong>conductus Alto consilio</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Chapter 1 begins at First Vespers with *Orientis partibus*, the Song of the Ass. I examine patristic and medieval commentary for the donkey and the subdeacon, ultimately arguing that donkey is the proto-subdeacon and the subdeacon the clerical ass. This relationship becomes the lens through which the rest of the feast is experienced. Chapter 2 moves to the night office of Matins, examining the “performative exegesis” created in the juxtapositions of the eight conductus and lessons of the three nocturns. This is the densest of the chapters because of the multitude of imagery in the conductus. As William Durand notes, “the time for the night [Office] signifies the time in which the Law was given to Moses.” This giving of the Law constitutes an extensive service.

In Chapter 3, we see how the likely performance of the *Ludus Danielis* at the conclusion of Matins brings relief to the clerics whose minds and imaginations were probably spinning with the entangled theological ideas of the three nocturns. Chapter 3 examines how the tension between wisdom and folly, central to the Feast of Fools, is staged through the conductus and prosae in the *Ludus Danielis*. Included in this chapter is an analysis of Daniel’s speech to Belshazzar that demonstrates Feast of Fools themes. Chapter 4 focuses on the wine ritual sung to *Kalendas ianuarias* at Lauds, discerning how the sensory experience directs the clerics to recall exegesis for the images and symbols represented and thus, create their own composite exegesis of the ritual. Chapter 5 takes us to the Mass to study how the polyphonic setting of *Orientis partibus* prepares those gathered to hear the farsed Epistle from Isaiah 9 (the child bearing the government on his shoulders) from the perspective of a burden-bearing beast. This moment serves as the feast’s exegetical pivot from the lowly child to the lofty king. Chapter 6 remains in this liminal space between lowliness and loftiness as the typical lofty sequence is replaced by two extensive conductus to prepare for the Gospel reading on Christ’s circumcision, a vestige of the Old Law. The
conductus reconcile his lowly human nature that requires circumcision to his lofty divinity that redeems the world. **Chapter 7** concludes the feast at Second Vespers with *Alto consilio*, a lofty, strong conductus sung for the *Ludus de Antichristo*. This chapter theorizes how this conductus, in stating that the Old Law (i.e. circumcision) does not save man, serves as the bookend to the exegetical framework begun at First Vespers with *Orientis partibus*. 
CHAPTER 1

First Vespers: *Orientis partibus*—The Donkey and the Subdeacon

On New Year’s Eve in thirteenth-century Beauvais, the Feast of the Circumcision commenced outside the cathedral doors with the procession of a donkey to the chanting of the conductus *Orientis partibus*, the Song of the Ass (British Library, MS Egerton 2615), at First Vespers. This Feast of the Circumcision, part of the Christmas Octave and known colloquially as the Feast of Fools, was dedicated to the subdeacons, the lower clerics responsible for the Eucharistic vessels.\(^1\) While we cannot be definitely sure that it was a live donkey, the rubric, “*Conductus quando asinus adducitur,*” gives the implication that an actual donkey was led to the church. In heralding this subdeacons’ feast through this remarkable performative gesture, the figure of the burden-bearing donkey is superimposed on the subdeacon, framing the entire feast through the lens of the donkey. The conductus recurs during the Mass the next morning, as the subdeacons process to read the Epistle from Isaiah prophesying the child who will bear the government on his shoulder. In this chapter, I suggest that the pairing of the donkey and the subdeacon through the appearances of *Orientis partibus* in MS Egerton 2615 points to the Christian paradox—the exaltation of the lowly and the loftiness of burden-bearing. The donkey and

---

\(^1\) During the Christmas octave, the week following Christmas, the liturgical calendar featured feasts devoted to various groups in the church—December 26 for the deacons, December 27 for the priests, December 28 for the acolytes and choirboys, and January 1 for the subdeacons.
the subdeacon are both liminal figures, ordinary yet extraordinary, foolish yet wise, cursed yet blessed.\(^2\)

Donkeys were no strangers to liturgical events in the medieval church (as witnessed by crèche scenes and Palm Sunday processions), but the honoring of the donkey with the *asinaria festa* (Feast of the Ass), as this occasion was known, was curious. This was not simply a humble, burden-bearing donkey but rather a donkey on a lofty mission to Bethlehem. Briefly, the opening stanzas of *Orientis partibus* praise the ass for its strength, beauty, and speed.\(^3\) The fourth and part of the fifth stanzas briefly return the ass to its beastly level, bearing heavy burdens and chewing on thistle. In the fifth stanza, the ass remarkably engages in a Christ-like activity, the separating of the chaff from the wheat.\(^4\) This task was precisely what John the Baptist declared was Christ’s mission on earth. In closing, the ass assumes a priestly role, saying “Amen,” albeit with a mouth stuffed with grass, and overlooking past sins.

Crossing the boundary between the human and the animal was not seen favorably by medieval church writers.\(^5\) Hence, the performance of *Orientis Partibus* at this feast is subversive as


\(^3\) Full text and translation appear in Appendix 1.1.

\(^4\) “Whose fan is in his [Christ’s] hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire” (Matthew 3:12).

not only is the boundary between the animal and cleric blurred in the performance of the
conductus throughout the feast, but also, as the text of the song attests, the boundary between the
animal and the divine. Peter Chrysologos’ (fifth century) sermon about Kalends criticizes blurring
of this boundary: “They made themselves similar to animals, they made themselves equal to beasts
of burden, they fitted themselves to cattle, they shaped themselves into demons” (se bestiis
comparunt, exaequarunt iumentis, aptauerunt pecudibus, daemonibus formauerunt). 6 Caesarius of Arles
(sixth century) comments that when some transform into wild beasts, “they show that they have
not only the appearance of beasts, but also their feelings.” 7 Isidore of Seville (seventh century)
protests that “even the faithful, taking on strange appearances, are transformed into the
appearance of wild beasts” during the Kalends. 8 In this chapter, I will closely examine the text of
the song to determine how it elevates the donkey, turning the negative perspective on
human/animal boundaries into a theologically appropriate concept.

This lifting up of the humble donkey and the lowly subdeacon could be understood as a
metaphor for the Christian paradigm and of Christ himself. As Augustine commented: “Ponder
how profound this is...He [Christ] intended to precede loftiness with humility and, only through

---

6 Chrysologos, Sermo CLV, CCSL 24B: 965. Quoted in Meg Twycross and Sarah
Carpenter, Masks and Masking in Medieval and Early Tudor England, Studies in Performance and
Early Modern Drama (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 28.
7 “...non tam se habitum beluinum habere quam sensum.” Caesarius of Arles, CCSL 104:
780; trans. Mary Magdeleine Mueller in Caesarius of Arles, Sermons: Volume 3 (187–238), FC
66:27.
8 “...etiam fideles sumentes species monstruosas in ferarum habitu transformantur.”
Isidore’s De ecclesiasticis officiis 1.41, CCSL 113: 47; trans. Thomas L. Knoebel in ACW 61: 63.
humility, to ready the way for loftiness itself.”9 An examination of the nature, duties, and images of the donkey in the Bible, patristic commentary and medieval exegesis, as well as those of the subdeacon in ordination rites and in the liturgical commentaries of Amalarius of Metz (ninth century) and William Durandus (thirteenth century) reveal why this particular beast and this particular clerical order are paired in this Feast of Fools liturgy and how their juxtaposition presents an uncanny metaphor for the Christian paradigm.

Three tropes that reflect on the donkey’s and subdeacon’s embodiment of the Christian paradox will be addressed in this chapter. The first trope reveals that the donkey’s and subdeacon’s pedestrian roles as “beasts of burden”—the donkey carrying Christ during key events in his life and the subdeacon bearing the sacramental object that is Christ during the Eucharist—is not ordinary, but rather extraordinary. The second trope demonstrates that though the donkey and subdeacon are associated with foolishness, they are actually used as vessels of wisdom and teaching in paradigm-shattering moments. Lastly, their very identities are transformed during their participation in Christian rites, becoming central actors in the Christian drama of Redemption that is re-enacted in the Eucharistic liturgy.

Before addressing Orientis partibus, I will briefly examine a thirteenth-century text from the orbit of Orientis partibus that begins Asinus etiam Christus. This text explicitly lays out the comparison of the ass to Christ by citing the animal’s and Christ’s humble and rejected states and

their respective burden-bearing; the same themes are explored in *Orientis partibus* and in the Feast of Fools as a whole:

Asinus etiam Christus.  
Asinus enim ad litteram humile animal est et abjectum:  
et de Christo ait Isaias:  
“Nos reputavimus eum quasi abjectum et novissimum virorum.”  
Asinus aptum animal est ad onera portanda:  
et ipse Christus onera peccatorum nostrorum in cruce portavit.  
Asinus pabulo quod ipse fert, reficitur postmodum: et Christus in onere peccatorum nostrorum, quae ipse tulit, refectus fuit admodum et delectatus.  
Nonne reficiebatur et delectabatur ex ipso onere suo, quando oblatus est, quia ipse voluit?  
Asinus etiam stolidum et imprudens animal reputatur: de Christo Paulus:  
“Quod stultum est Dei, sapientius est hominibus.”  
Immo et quodam modo imprudens erat, quia, juxta quod ait Paulus, “quae stulta sunt mundi elegit Deus, ut confunderet fortiæ.”

The ass is also Christ.  
For the ass is literally a humble and dejected animal:  
and Isaiah said of Christ:  
“We consider him like the abject and youngest/newest of men.”  
The ass is an animal suitable for carrying burdens:  
and Christ himself carried the burdens of our sins on the cross.  
The ass himself carries his fodder, and is restored afterwards: and Christ in the burden of our sins, which he took, was still refreshed and delighted.  
Was he not being refreshed and delighted because of the burden itself, when he was offered, because he himself wished it?  
The ass indeed is considered a stupid and foolish animal:  
concerning Christ, Paul wrote:  
“That which is foolish of God is wiser than men.”  
On the contrary, in a manner it was foolish because, according to Paul, “the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong.”

The final quotation in the text is from St. Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians: “the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong.” This explains the notion of godly foolishness and can be understood as the motto for the inverted nature of the Feast of Fools and the paradox of Christian theology.

---

The equivalence of the ass with Christ also appears in iconography from the early Christian period. According to Thomas Matthews, examples of amulets and glass bowls surviving from the early Christian period portraying the ass are labeled both *asinus* and *Iesu Christus*. The boundary between the donkey and Christ is further blurred in a graffito from the Palatine in Rome that shows a crucified ass-headed Christ.

**Liturgical appearances of the donkey**

Other liturgical instances of the donkey demonstrate how unique the use of a live donkey would have been in the Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision. The most obvious use of a live donkey would be for the procession on Palm Sunday, but the accounts of these processions only describe the use of images of an ass, not an actual ass. Saint Ulrich’s account (982–992) of the Palm Sunday procession in Augsburg is one of the earliest surviving records of a Palm Sunday image of Christ that offers a detailed account of the ceremony, but only includes an image or icon of Christ seated on an ass (*cum effigie sedentis domini super asinum*). The Palm Sunday image became life-sized carved wooden representations of Christ seated on an ass in churches in Germany and Switzerland.

---


in the later Middle Ages; they were called Palmsonntagchristus, Palmchristus, or Palmesel. In “the Palm Sunday Procession in Medieval Chartres,” Craig Wright presents evidence from ordinals, sacramentaries, and other manuscripts from northern France—Paris, Cambrai, Reims, Rouen, Amiens, Bayeux, Laon, Sens, Metz, and Chartres—of Palm Sunday processions, but there are no references to carved or live asses.

The only documented presence of a live ass in a liturgical ritual besides MS Egerton 2615 is found in the Liber Politicus, written sometime between 1140 and 1143 by Benedict, a canon of Saint Peter’s Basilica, Rome. According to Benedict, on the Feast of the Horns or Laudes Cornomannia (the first Saturday after Easter), the pope would join the crowd as people from each diaconate would form a circle and sing “the songs of acclamation to the pope” while the sacristan of each diaconate “danced in a circle, ringing his phinobulum and bending back his horned head.”

After this song and dance, the archpriests would each try to sit backwards on an ass while the archpriests would each try to sit backwards on an ass while the

---


15 See Craig Wright, “The Palm Sunday Procession in Medieval Chartres,” in The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography: Written in Honor of Professor Ruth Steiner, ed. Ruth Steiner, Margot Elsbeth Fassler and Rebecca A. Baltzer, 344–371 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). One of the panels from the central Incarnation Window depicting Christ’s Entry to Jerusalem at Chartres does include a Christ on the donkey, but it was not used in any specific liturgical way. Ibid., 350.


17 See Max Harris, Sacred Folly, 35. Max Harris notes that this laudes was “something of a parody of the conventional papal laudes.” The laudes occurred outside the pope’s residence following a procession of clergy and people. Ibid., 34.

18 A phinobulum was a bronze wind instrument that was embellished with bells. Ibid., 34.
chamberlain balanced a basin with coins on the ass’s head. As the archpriest tried to take coins from the basin, the delicate balance between the ass, basin, and rider would be upset, causing the archpriest to fall off the beast to the delight of those gathered.\textsuperscript{19} Giorgio Brugnoli places \textit{Cornomannia} at New Year’s in January, potentially making it part of the Kalends masquerades that could have served as a model for the Feast of Fools.\textsuperscript{20} Presumably the sacred yet joyful nature of the text of \textit{Orientis partibus} would have influenced a more solemn liturgical procession of the donkey at First Vespers of the Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision than the raucous ritual above; the processional would have been an extraordinary event for liturgy, ascribing the qualities of the lowly donkey to the feast and making \textit{Orientis partibus} the anthem, if you will, of the feast.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{Sources for \textit{Orientis partibus}}

The first known source containing \textit{Orientis partibus} is Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional MS 289 (Mn 289), folios 146v–147r, a troper from the Cappella Palatina in Palermo (1140).\textsuperscript{22} It is included in a section with nineteen other conductus. While six out of the fifteen conductus in Mn 289 have

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 34.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{21} Though there is no indication in MS Egerton 2615 that the donkey processional at Beauvais was supposed to be comical, Craig Wright states this: “the Christological impetus behind this Vespers procession was the desire to praise the humble creature that had carried Mary and the Christ Child to safety in Egypt.... In reality, however, the procession usually degenerated into a caricature of this event.” See Craig Wright, \textit{Music and Ceremony at Notre Dame of Paris: 500–1550} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 240.

some sort of refrain, *Orientis partibus* appears without a refrain in *Mn 289*.\(^{23}\) The next known source is Sens, Bibliothèque de la Ville, MS 46 (FSEm 46), a Circumcision Office from Sens (1200–1220); on folio 1r, it is accompanied with the rubrics *conductus ad tabulam* and it appears with its refrain.\(^{24}\)

**Text of *Orientis partibus*** (For the complete text, translation, and edition, see Appendix 1.1)\(^{25}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 1</th>
<th>Out from the lands of Orient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adventavit asinus</td>
<td>was the ass divinely sent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulcher et fortissimus</td>
<td>Fair and most strong was he,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcinis aptissimus</td>
<td>Bearing burdens most suitably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hez hez sire asnes hez</td>
<td>Heigh, sir ass, oh heigh.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The opening phrase *Orientis partibus* or “from the Eastern regions” hints at Messianic expectation by drawing parallels to the phrase *Ex Aegypto vocavi filium meum* (Out of Egypt have I called my son), from Matthew 2:15, a reference to Hosea 11:1.\(^{26}\) In Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies* “Orientis” is listed as one of the names for Christ because Christ “is the source of light.”\(^{27}\) In 1856, Felix Clément argued that the *Orientis* of this song points to the Christmas antiphon, *O oriens, splendor lucis aeternae et sol iustitiae: veni et illumine sedentes in tenebris et umbra mortis*. He connected

\(^{23}\) *Omnis mundus iocundetur, Virgo dei genitrix* (an abbreviated refrain: *Eia obsecra*), *Dei patris unice, In hoc anni circulo, Novus Annus dies magnus*, and *Dies ista gaudium* are the six *conducti* with refrains in *Mn 289*.


\(^{25}\) This oft-used, rhyming translation is by Henry Copley Greene, “The Song of the Ass,” *Speculum* 6, no. 4 (1931): 535. It has been slightly adapted.

\(^{26}\) All biblical references are taken from the Douay-Rheims translation of the Vulgate.

\(^{27}\) “Oriens, quia luminis fons et inlustrator est rerum, et quod oriri nos faciat ad vitam aeternam.” Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 7.2.27, PL 82: 266; trans. Stephen Barney W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, Oliver Berghof with the collaboration of Muriel Hall in Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 156. Hereafter, this will be referred to as Isidore’s *Etymologies*/Barney.
this antiphon to the prophecy from Zacharias 6:12: Ecce vir, Oriens nomen ejus, et subter eum orietur, et aedificabit templum Domino (Behold a man, the Orient is his name: and under him shall he spring up, and shall build a temple to the Lord). But expectations are immediately subverted as the phrase continues with adventavit asinus. It is the ass, not the Christ child, who emerges from the East with such purpose. While the donkey is the protagonist in this song, Christ looms large.28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 2</th>
<th>Hic in collibus Sichen</th>
<th>In the hills of Sichem bred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iam nutritus sub Ruben</td>
<td>Under Reuben nourished,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transiit per Iordanem</td>
<td>Jordan stream he traversed,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salit in Bethlehem</td>
<td>Into Bethlehem he sped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hez, hez.</td>
<td>Heigh, heigh.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verse two’s inclusion of places where the donkey is raised or visited associates it with the pedigree attached to each place. It begins by sharing where this donkey was raised: Hic in collibus Sichen/Iam nutritus sub Ruben. Sichem, in the hill country of Ephraim, was the site of covenants God made with Abram:

And the Lord said to Abram: Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of they father’s house, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and magnify thy name, and thou shalt be blessed.... So Abram went out as the Lord had commanded.... And they went out to go into the land of Chanaan. And when they were come into it, Abram passed through the country into the place of Sichem, as far as the noble vale: now the Chanaanite was at that time in the land. And the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him: To thy seed will I give this land. And he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.29

and with Joshua:

And Josue gathered together all the tribes of Israel in Sichem... “Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him with a perfect and most sincere heart; and put away the

---

28 See Wulf Arlt for Felix Clément’s comparison of the ass to Christ in Orientis partibus as well as Arlt’s own assessment of this reading. Arlt, Ein Festoffizium des Mittelalters aus Beauvais, vol. 1, 57–60.

gods which your fathers served in Mesopotamia and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.”\textsuperscript{30}

Joshua’s speaking out against foreign gods at Sichem intersects with the lessons from Matins that challenge the community of Beauvais to set aside idols and instead pursue holy living. Thus, it is significant that the donkey was bred in the hills of Sichem where such foundational promises were made between God and the Israelites, aligning the donkey with God’s chosen people.

The significance of Reuben to the donkey is the association with the firstborn. Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob, the father of the people of Israel. In Genesis 49:3, Jacob declares to Reuben that he is his “firstborn, thou art my strength, and the beginning of my sorrow; excelling in gifts, greater in command.” The firstborn enjoyed special status in families, receiving a double portion of the inheritance.\textsuperscript{31} That Orientis partibus places the donkey within the context of Ephraim, via Sichem, and Reuben is an invitation to the listener to correlate the donkey with the firstborn son. Ultimately, this comparison extends to Christ for Christ was declared to be primogenitus omnis creaturae (the firstborn of every creature)\textsuperscript{32} by Saint Paul in his letter to the Colossians and to be the primogenitum (firstbegotten)\textsuperscript{33} in Saint Paul’s letter to the Hebrews. The firstborn donkey was also singled out in Leviticus for redemption by a sheep, a law that will be discussed in greater detail later.

The second half of this verse has the donkey traveling over the Jordan River, the site of Christ’s baptism, to Bethlehem, the site of Christ’s birth. Washing one’s sins in the Jordan River is

\textsuperscript{30} Joshua 24:1 and 14.  
\textsuperscript{31} Deuteronomy 21:15–17.  
\textsuperscript{32} Colossians 1:15.  
\textsuperscript{33} Hebrews 1:6.
a central image for *Quanto decet*, one of the Matins conductus. As noted in the introduction, baptism was considered the New Covenant alternative to circumcision.

**Verse 3**
Saltu vincit hynnulos
Higher leaped than goats can bound,

Damnas et capreolos
Doe and roebuck circled round,

Super dromedarios
Median dromedaries’ speed

Velox Madyaneos
Overcame and took the lead.

Hez, hez.
Heigh, heigh.

The donkey’s remarkable speed is extolled, how it is faster than even the dromedary. That an ass can be so completely unburdened and unfettered to run as swiftly as the dromedary seems a feat. In Isaiah 60:6, the dromedary camels of Madian and Epha are to join the multitude of camels and those from Saba bringing gold and frankincense to praise God. This represents the most joyous of journeys, perhaps foretelling the wise men’s visit to Jesus in Bethelehem in the Gospel account from Matthew 2:11 and aligning the song to the Christmas Octave: “And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down them adored him: and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

In the version in Sens 46A, a different fourth verse ties the dromedary camels carrying gold and frankincense to the *uirtus asinaria*, perhaps suggesting that the ass was wise like the magi:

- *Aurum de Arabia*  
  Gold from Arabia
- *Thus et myrram de Sabba*  
  Frankincense and myrrh from Saba
- *Tulit in ecclesia*  
  brought into the church
- *Uirtus asinaria.*  
  By the power of the ass.

This differs from the verses 4 and 5 of *Orientis partibus* from MS Egerton 2615:

**Verse 4**
Dum trahit vehicula
While he drags carriages

Multa cum sarcinula
With many baggages

Illius mandibula
He, with jaws insatiate,

Dura terit pabula.
Fodder hard doth masticate.

Hez, hez.
Heigh, heigh.

48
Verse 5

Cum aristis ordeum
Comedit et carduum,
Triticum a palea
Segregate in area.
Hez, hez.

He chews the ears with barley corn
Thistle down with thistle corn.
On the threshing floor his feet
Separate the chaff from wheat.
Heigh, heigh.

The exultant donkey who was faster than a dromedary camel, more agile than a doe,
abruptly returns to his conventional beastly vocation of burden bearing multa cum sarcinula, not in
an aptissimus way, as in verse 1. The donkey’s burden-bearing here in verse four can be compared
to Christ’s own bearing of burdens in Christian theology, a concept explicitly mentioned in the
thirteenth century text attributed to Petrus Capuanus discussed earlier. But when Christ invites his
followers to take on his burden in the Gospel of Matthew 11:30, he paradoxically comments that
his burden is light.

The donkey’s separating the chaff from the wheat on the threshing floor in verse five is
precisely what John the Baptist notes is Christ’s mission on earth: “His winnowing-fork is in his
hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff
he will burn with unquenchable fire.”34 Donkeys, in fact, were used in a traditional method of
threshing grain, a concept alluded to multiple times in the Matins conductus. The Christ-like ass
blurs the boundary between the animal and the divine.

Verse 6

Amen dicas, asine,
Iam satur ex gramine,
Amen, amen itera,
Aspernare vetera.
Hez va hez va hez va hez
Biax [sire asnes] car allez
Bele bouche car chantez

Stuffed with grass, yet speak and say
Amen, ass, with every bray :
Amen, amen, say again :
Ancient sins hold in disdain.
Heigh ho, heigh ho, heigh ho, heigh
Fair Sir Ass, you trot all day ;
Fair your mouth, and loud your bray.

34 Matthew 3:12.
While the first five verses could be read as an innocent song about a particularly extraordinary donkey, the sixth verse explicitly transforms the donkey into a priest, who speaks, saying “Amen,” and holds ancient sins in disdain.

Though it cannot be expected that the allusions in this Latin text would have been understood by all in attendance, the French refrain—*hez, hez, sire asnes*—would have made it easy to recognize that the song centered on a donkey. While some understand *hez* to be the braying of an ass, *hez* in fact has its roots in *huer* or “to hoot,” and was a command used to move beasts of burden. This French refrain, coupled with the visual aid of the live ass, would have firmly affixed the spirit of the ass on the subdeacon.

A verse that only appears in the earliest surviving source of the song MS Madrid 288/289 fols. 146v–147r, could more clearly link the subdeacon to the ass, according to Wulf Arlt. The verse is as follows:

Eia, frater asine,  
Hey, brother ass  
Unum quod vis elige,  
one thing you want to ask  
Carduos vel commode  
thistle or convenience?  
Vel dic: Iube domine  
or say, the Lord orders

Arlt comments that this phrase, *lube domine*, asking God for the Benediction, was associated with deacons and subdeacons, and thus connected the subdeacon to the *frater asine*. *Iube domine* was a phrase recited to introduce readings at Matins. Considering that the subdeacons’ function at the Feast of Fools was to introduce Matins lessons via the conductus, this verse becomes more significant.

---


36 See Arlt, *Ein Festoffizium des Mittelalters aus Beauvais* vol. 1, pg. 60.
Hans Spanke, in 1934, connects the ass to the subdeacon via a Benedicamus trope from the early thirteenth century, *Gregis pastor Titirus* found in MS London, British Library, Add. 36881 (GB-LBl add. 26881) fol. 13v, and in München, Universitätsbibliothek, 20 Cod. Ms. 156, folio 232r (D-Mu Cim. 100).\(^{37}\) The first two verses, from the Moosburger Gradual, are as follows:

| Gregis pastor Tytirus,       | Tityrus, the shepherd of the flock,       |
| Asinorum dominus,            | the lord of the asses                    |
| Noster est epicopus.         | is our bishop.                           |
| Eya et eya                   | Eya and eya,                             |
| Vocant nos ad gaudia         | the feast of Tityrus                     |
| Tytiri cibaria               | summons us to joy.                       |
| Ad honorem Tytiri            | In honor of Tityrus,                     |
| Festum colant baculi         | celebrate the feast of the staff,        |
| Satrape et asini.            | satraps and asses.                       |

The phrase *Festum colant baculi Satrape et asini* connects the satraps to the ass in a unique way in the *Ludus Danielis* as the satraps bring to King Balthasar the vessels stolen by his father from the Temple of the Jews while singing a brief derivation of the melody from *Orientis partibus* in the prosa *Jubilemus regis nostro* (fol. 96r). Since the subdeacon in the medieval church was responsible for the Eucharistic vessels, Margot Fassler argues that the satraps could be “subdeacons in disguise;”\(^ {38}\) furthermore, Fassler shows that the melody for the prosa *Jubilemus regis Nostro* sung at this moment in the play was sung at the Matins of Epiphany, the day designated for honoring the subdeacons at Laon.\(^ {39}\) Yet another layer is pointed out by Mary Caldwell who notes that this verse

---


\(^{38}\) Fassler, “The Feast of Fools and Danielis ludus,” 89.

“combines two meanings of baculus: the staff carried by shepherds and the staff carried by the subdeacons in the Feast of Fools/Asses.”

Chapter 5 will examine Orientis partibus’ recurrence the next day during the mass in a three-part setting as the subdeacons process to read the Epistle reading from Isaiah 9: 2, 6–7 (fols. 43r–44v). One can imagine a moment of confusion for the observer who sees subdeacons processing but hears the donkey processional song from First Vespers the night before. The reading from Isaiah, one of the cornerstones of Messianic prophecies, features the child who will bear the government on his shoulders. In juxtaposing this procession with Isaiah’s proclamation of a topsy-turvy kingdom, the exalting of the lowly and the loftiness of burden-bearing converge.

The donkey as an extraordinary beast of burden

It remains to be explored why this man and this beast were paired in the Feast of Fools. A close study of the three themes outlined earlier—beast of burdens, foolish yet wise, cursed yet blessed—will demonstrate how the donkey and subdeacon reflect the paradoxical nature of Christianity and the theology of the Feast of Fools.

The donkey plays an integral, if unsung, role in accounts of Christ’s life in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, the Protoevangelium of James, and in the four canonical Gospels, bringing a specifically lowly character to the lofty figure of Christ. As a lowly beast of burden, the ass appeared in numerous foundational events in biblical history—Abraham’s and Isaac’s ascent to Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22:2–8), Joseph’s brothers’ return to Canaan (Genesis 42:26–38), and Moses’ and his family’s journey back to Egypt (Exodus 4:20). But Christ was the ass’s most acclaimed burden

to bear. The donkey was present in three seminal moments in the life of Christ: the Nativity, the
Journeys to Bethlehem and Flight to Egypt in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew and the
Protoevangelium of James, and in the Entry into Jerusalem in the canonical Gospels. Had a more
conventionally noble and royal animal like the horse been present at Christ’s birth and used to
carry Christ, a different symbolism would have been attached to Christ.

Moment I: Nativity

In the Nativity, the presence of the donkey inscribes lowliness on the Incarnation, the very
expression of the paradox of Christian theology (and the Feast of Fools). While the donkey is not
specifically mentioned in the Nativity narrative in the canonical gospels, its place (along with the
ox) in homiletic literature, sermons, iconography, and liturgical drama has been firmly fixed since
the early Middle Ages. The presence of the ass at the manger can be attributed to medieval
interpretations of two passages from the Old Testament: 1) Isaiah 1:3 — the ox knoweth his owner,
and the ass his master’s crib; 2) Habbakuk 3:2—“between two animals you were made manifest”
(Septuagint/LXX). The Vulgate translation emends “animals” (found in the Septuagint) to “years”
based on the Hebrew text—Domine, opus tuum, in medio annorum vivifica illud; in medi annorum notum
facies (O Lord, thy work, in the midst of the years bring it to life; In the midst of the years thou
shalt make it known). However, the Septuagint’s mistranslated version of the passage remained
current in the Latin Middle Ages through the Old Itala version from the second century: In medio
duorum animalium innotesceris.41

41 According to Bogdan Bucur and Elijah Mueller, “one of the main reasons for this type of
conservatism was the ongoing liturgical use of Habbakuk 3 (“the canticle of Habakkuk”) as part of
the so-called biblical odes—a series of biblical hymns that became part of the Daily Office of both
In the 3rd century, Origen was the first to identify the manger from Isaiah 1:3 with the Nativity manger where the infant Christ was born, promoting the idea that ox and ass were integral figures in this event.


Thus they [the shepherds] found Joseph, who arranged matters for the Lord’s birth, and Mary, who bore Jesus in childbirth, and the Savior himself, ‘lying in a manger.’ That was the manger of which the inspired prophet said, “The ox knows his owner and the ass his master’s manger.”

A late fourth-century sermon for Christmas Day also repeatedly refers to the Isaian passage, “the ox knoweth His owner, and the ass His master’s crib” as evidence of Christ’s birth in the manger surrounded by these beasts. In chapter XII of the pseudo-Augustinian sermon Legimus sanctum Moysen, Habakkuk’s testimony combines Habakkuk 3:2 and Isaiah 1:3 as evidence that Christ was surrounded by the ox and the ass at his birth:

Let now another witness come forth: thou, too, O prophet Habakkuk, bear witness unto Christ. “O LORD,” saith he, “I have heard thy speech and was afraid. I have

---


44 The sermon, originally attributed to Augustine but now thought to have been written in fifth- or sixth-century France or Italy, uses prophecies from biblical figures as Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, and Habakkuk to argue that Christ was the “Son of God” and born of a virgin birth. Augustine, Legimus sanctum Moysen, PL 39: 2196–8. See also Robert Lagueux, “Glossing Christmas,” 242n46.
considered they works, and trembled.” What works of God did he behold, and tremble? Did he tremble beholding the fabric of the universe? Nay, verily; but hear whereat he trembled: “In the midst of the two beasts,” saith he, “shalt thou be recognized. Through they work, O God, the Word hath been made flesh. In the midst of two beasts shalt thou be recognized.” Who art thou? How far art thou descended? Thou hast made me to tremble, because thou, the Word, through whom were all things made, hast lain in a manger! “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib.” In the midst of the two beasts shalt thou be recognized.\textsuperscript{45}

This sermon was widely read during the Advent liturgy and dramatized in the liturgical drama \textit{Ordo prophetarum} from Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 263, a troper-proser from twelfth-century Laon (F-LA 263).\textsuperscript{46} The liturgical drama \textit{Ordo stellae} from F-LA 263 also contains this understanding of the manger and is further evidence of the idea’s broad influence in medieval Christianity.\textsuperscript{47} A thirteenth-century conductus, \textit{Vide prophetie}, poetically juxtaposes the lofty and


\textsuperscript{46} In the drama, Habakkuk recites his prophecy from Habakkuk 3:2, but does not refer to Isaiah 1:3. Habakkuk, upon being called upon by two summoners to show how he testifies to the regis celistis, recites the passage from Habbakuk 3:2: “Opus tuum, Inter duum, Latus animalium, It cognovi, Mox expavui, Metu mirabilium/When I perceived/Thy deed [of incarnation?]/Between the two flanks/Of two beasts,/I was straightway terrified/With fear of thy wondrous works. Trans. Robert Lagueux in “Glossing Christmas,” 695. See also Dronke, \textit{Latin Plays}, 44.

\textsuperscript{47} The Magi speak these words as they leave the manger: “Just as what the angel told us of that boy, we found the child wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger between two animals” [Secundum quod dictum est nobis ab angelo de puero isto, invenimus infan tem pannis

55
the lowly: 48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stabulo</td>
<td>In a stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parvulo</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deum iuxta brutum</td>
<td>God alongside a dumb beast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angulo</td>
<td>In a small corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacculo</td>
<td>In a small crib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regem involutum</td>
<td>The King lies hidden.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew (written in the eighth or ninth centuries), Habbakuk’s and Isaiah’s prophecies are both given as evidence for the ox and the ass, the beasts becoming the boundary by which God incarnate is made manifest. 49 But ox and the ass are not simply bystanders or prophetic discerners in this account; the author notes that these beasts “adored Christ.” 50 As active worshippers of the infant Christ, the beasts are elevated. Through these texts, we see how the manger becomes the site of the mingling between the lofty/royal and the lowly, between divine, human, and animal.

Medieval commentators elaborated on the significance of Christ’s birth in a lowly manger surrounded by an ox and an ass, to note other paradoxes in the birth. By contrasting what a royal birth could have been with what Christ’s birth actually was, Bede highlights the paradox, involutum et positum in presepio in medio duum animalium]. See Robert Lagueux, “Glossing Christmas,” 263 and 315.

49 Ibid., 94.
suggesting that it was because of this lowly birth that Christ could take on humanity's baseness.

It should be noted that the sign given of the Savior’s birth is not a child enfolded in Tyrian purple, but one wrapped with rough pieces of cloth. He is not to be found in an ornate golden bed, but in a manger. The meaning of this is that he did not merely take upon himself our lowly mortality, but for our sakes took upon himself the clothing of the poor.  

In a sermon from New Year’s Day, Augustine reminds us that it is not just that Christ begins his life in a lowly manger surrounded by beasts, but that his entire plan of salvation was deployed through humble means.

But perhaps someone will say, “Even though He was born humbly, He wished to glory in the nobility of His disciples.” He did not choose these from among kings, or senators, or philosophers, or orators; no indeed, He chose men of the people—paupers, men unlearned, fishermens.

This idea could be extended metaphorically to encompass the elevation of the subdeacons in their clerical feast on January 1.

In the same vein, the poverty into which Jesus was born is also reflected in the offering that Mary and Joseph brought to Jesus’ presentation as an infant after his circumcision. Since Mary and Joseph could not afford the standard offering stipulated in Leviticus 12:8, they instead offered that permitted for the less fortunate. Bede notes the significance that:

The Lord commanded in the law that those who could were to offer a lamb for a son or daughter, along with a turtledove or a pigeon. But one who did not have sufficient wealth to offer a lamb should offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons.

---

51 “Et notandum solertius quod signum nati Salvatoris datus, infantem non Tyrio exceptum ostro, sed pannis squalentibus involutum, non in ornatis auro stratoriis, sed in praesepeibus inveniendum.” Bede, In Lucae Evangielium Expositio Book 1, Part 2. 1, PL 92: 333. 3, (Also in CCSL 120: 5); trans. Lawrence Martin and David Hurst, Cistercian Studies 110 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 56.

Therefore the Lord, mindful in everything of our salvation, not only deigned for our sake to become a human being, though he was God, but also deigned to become poor for us, though he was rich, so that by his poverty along with this humanity he might grant us to become sharers in his riches and his divinity.\textsuperscript{53}

Margot Fassler notes that medieval exegetes did find the irony in Mary’s offering: she could only afford two pigeons/turtle doves, but in presenting Christ, she still, in fact, offered a lamb, the Lamb of God.\textsuperscript{54} Perhaps Christian theology whose figurehead is born into such paradigm-shattering conditions could support the idea of a donkey being extraordinary and even a kind of symbol for the Feast of the Circumcision.

Visual Evidence of the animals at the Nativity

But it is not only textual evidence from the early-medieval period that supports the ox and ass at the Nativity, but also iconographic evidence. The earliest extant Nativity scene on a sarcophagus dates from third- or fourth-century Rome.\textsuperscript{55} In this piece of visual exegesis, the ox and ass are placed on either side of the crib that holds the infant Christ, suggesting their lofty role as watchful guardians over the infant. That Mary and Joseph are noticeably missing makes this


\textsuperscript{54} See Margot Fassler, “Musical Exegesis in the Sequences of Adam and the Canons of St. Victor” (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1983), 110.

\textsuperscript{55} See David R. Cartlidge and J. Keith Elliott, \textit{Art and the Christian Apocrypha} (New York, Routledge, 2001), 18. This piece now is found in the Church of Saint Ambrose in Milan. For a discussion of the exegetical program of the entire sarcophagus, see Adolf Katzenellenbogen, “The Sarcophagus in St. Ambrogio and St. Ambrose,” \textit{The Art Bulletin} 29 (December, 1947): 249–59.
reading even more significant in elevating the beasts to places of honor as both guardians and worshippers of Christ. A late fifth-century ivory diptych depicting the Nativity includes Mary and Joseph, but the greater size of the ox and ass and their proximity to the Christ child overshadow the presence of the human figures.56

Still the fact remains that the presence of the ox and the ass was not in the canonical Gospels, but only in the Apocryphal accounts. James Snyder comments that the dominant presence of the ox and the ass in this scene seems to complicate the fact that the diptych covers a Latin Gospel Book.57 Still, he acknowledges that some apocryphal stories were in circulation as early as the first to third centuries.58

The Nativity detail from the Maximianus Cathedra (sixth-century Ravenna) features the ox and the ass assuming the primary role in their close proximity to the Christ child in the upper half of the scene. While Joseph seems to be trying to get closer to the infant than the ox and ass (he is standing with his left hand in motion), Mary, on the other hand, is seen reclining in the lower part of the frame.59 Even later in the ninth century, the ox and ass seem to preside with greater importance over the Christ child than the humans. The cross reliquary in the Sancta Sanctorum of the Vatican, Inv. 1881 (ninth century) includes the Nativity scene with “the ox and the ass...leaning over the crib.”60 In his explanation for this representation of Mary, the animals, and the infant Christ in the thirteenth century (including a folio from Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 

57 See Snyder, Medieval Art, 94.
58 Ibid., 94.
59 See Weitzmann, Age of Spirituality, 454n65.
60 See Cartlidge and Elliot, Art and the Christian Apocrypha, 74–75.
MS. latin 17326, fol. 10r and a detail of the north portal on the west façade of the Laon, Cathedral of Notre-Dame), Emile Mâle explains this traditional depiction of Mary away from crib this way:

In this scene that was represented many times in stained glass windows, there is no tenderness, and one might say there is no humanity.... In the thirteenth-century scene, Mary reposes on a bed and seems to turn her head away so as not to see her son.... The Infant lies not in a crèche but, strangely enough, on a raised altar that occupies the entire central part of the composition.... From the very moment Christ is born, he must be given the aspect of a victim. The crèche in which he lies, the Glossa says, is the very altar of the sacrifice.... In the presence of such a mystery, human feelings are silenced, even maternal love. Mary keeps a religious silence; through her mind, the commentators say, pass the words of the prophets and of the angel, words that have just been realized.\footnote{See Emile Mâle, \textit{Religious Art in France: The Thirteenth Century, a Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources}, vol. 2, trans. Marthiel Mathews (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 191–192.}

In the middle panel of the illuminated initial for an organum triplum \textit{Descendit de caelis} in \textit{F-Plut} 29.1, we see this notion of Mary’s lack of interest or “religious silence,” as Mâle calls it (see Figure 1.1).
Figure 1.1. Historiated Initial “D,” F-Plut 29.1, fol. 14r
Moment 2: Flights to Bethlehem and to Egypt

In the Protoevangelium of James 17 (in the earliest extant Greek version from the third century), the Virgin, pregnant with Christ, arrives at Bethlehem sitting on a she-ass. In the Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Opelt notes that the scene of Mary, the infant Christ, and the ass appears on a vial from Smyrna dating from the fifth–sixth centuries. Though there is no mention of the ass in the account of the Flight to Egypt in Matthew’s Gospel or in any apocryphal text (as was the case for the Nativity scene), the ass appears as the integral fourth figure in medieval iconography of this event, carrying Mary and infant Christ. According to Cartlidge and Elliott, the earliest extant image of the Flight to Egypt including the ass is found on a sarcophagus fragment in Istanbul (fifth century, Arkeoloji Müzeleri). In Henri Leclercq’s entry on Âne in Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie, he notes a painting of the Flight to Egypt including an ass on the walls on an underground church from the sixth century at Deîr Abou-Hennys, near Antinoe in Egypt. An eighth century fragment of a Coptic tapestry shows the Virgin on an ass. An eleventh-century Gospel Lectionary at Mount Athos (Dionysiou, cod. 587, fol. 133v) shows Mary riding side-saddle on the ass. Johannes Tripps points out the scene with the ass on wheels in capitals

---

62 Elliott, 63.
64 See Cartlidge and Elliott, Art and the Christian Apocrypha, 98. See also Elliott, The Apocryphal New Testament, 86.
65 Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie, vol. 1, ed. Fernand Cabrol (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1920), s.v. “Âne,” by Henri Leclercq. In the Catholic Encyclopedia it states that important paintings, some apocryphal, were done in the 8th century by a coptic artist in this underground church.
67 See Cartlidge and Elliott, Art and the Christian Apocrypha, 98.
from a cathedral in Autun and a church in Saulieu in the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{68}

In F-Plut 29.1 fol. 99r, an illuminated initial on the “V” of Viderunt omnes has three scenes—
the Massacre of the Innocents, The Flight to Egypt, and a Presentation of Gifts from the Magi.

The donkey’s prominent role is seen as it is the largest figure in the initial (see Figure 1.2).

\textsuperscript{68} See Johannes Tripps, \textit{Handelnde Bildwerk in der Gotik: Forschungen zu den
Bedeutungsschichten und der Funktion des Kirchengebaudes und seiner Ausstattung in der Hoch- und
Figure 1.2. Historiated Initial “V,” F.Plut 29.1, fol. 99r
Moment 3: Entry to Jerusalem

The final chapter of Christ’s life begins as the ass carries Christ in his entry to Jerusalem, fulfilling the prophecy from Zechariah 9:9: “Behold thy king will come to thee, the just and saviour: he is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.” In Homily 33 of the Incomplete Work on Matthew (fifth century), the author observes the seeming contradiction of a king entering on a donkey:

Consider the image of his arrival. He does not sit on a golden chariot, shining with priceless purple. Nor is he mounted upon a foaming horse, the lover of discord and quarreling, which has a chest filled with glory’s boasting...Rather, he sits upon an ass of tranquility, a friend of peace.

Thomas Matthews notes that in John Chrysostom’s Homily 66 on the Gospel of Matthew, he contrasts Christ’s behavior with that of the princes of this world; Christ makes his advent, says, “not driving chariots, like the rest of the kings...but displaying his great meekness even hereby. Ask then, the Jew, what king came to Jerusalem borne on an ass? Nay, he could not mention but this alone.”

Just as one would have expected a more royal birth for Christ, the apparent king of the Jews, one also would have expected a king to make his entrance on a horse or stallion to symbolize his

---


royalty. As Matthews writes, “the adventus was a military parade designed to strike fear and awe into the hearts of the bystanders,” but this adventus was hardly a typical imperial event.\textsuperscript{72}

Thomas Matthews’ analysis of the Entry to Jerusalem on a sarcophagus in the Museo Nazionale delle Terme, Rome (c. 325), shows that not only are the key imperial details associated with an adventus missing from the scene like a chariot, armor, weapons, banners, but the donkey is portrayed in a particularly pathetic manner, as a “humble beast of burden...shown at reduced scale, plodding along with head down and her foal under her belly.”\textsuperscript{73} Byzantine iconography shows Christ riding side-saddle on the ass, a stance that Matthews notes was to show the “anti-imperial role of Christ, for no emperor ever rode side-saddle.”\textsuperscript{74}

Augustine points out that Christ’s humble stance in sitting upon a donkey reflects his final act of humility, obedience to death on a cross.\textsuperscript{75} Just as Christ’s birth in a manger surrounded by donkeys and oxen seemed incongruous to what a king’s birth should be, Christ’s entry to Jerusalem on a donkey also seems contrary to the notion of what a king’s entrance should be. But it is only fitting that Christ’s life—one marked by humility—begins and ends with a donkey, a lowly beast of burden. Augustine observes the donkey’s bookending of Christ’s life: “The Leader and Shepherd of shepherds is announced to shepherds, and the food of the faithful lies in the manger of the faithful beasts or burden...He sat upon the colt of a donkey when he entered Jerusalem

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 27.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 28.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 41–43.
\textsuperscript{75} Commenting on the Entry to Jerusalem in Mark 11, Augustine states “humilitatis enim magister est Christus, qui humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.”\textsuperscript{76} Tractatus in iohannes evangelium 51.3–4, PL 35: 1765. The translation—the master of humility is Christ who humbled himself and became obedient even to death, even the death of the cross—is by John W. Rettig in Augustine, Tractates on the Gospel of John 28–54, FC 88: 273.
amid the praises of the multitude surging around him.” Furthermore, Augustine’s exhortation that his reader “not be ashamed to be God’s beast of burden” reminds us of the paradoxical loftiness of burden-bearing.

**Donkey as the proto-subdeacon bearing the proto-Eucharist**

A symbolic moment of the donkey carrying bread and wine in 1 Samuel shows an instance where the donkey’s burden-bearing can be understood as a proto-Eucharist. In this historic moment from 1 Samuel 16, Jesse, the “shoot” from which Christ’s lineage originates and the father of David, the newly anointed king, sends David to meet Saul, the recently rejected king. Accompanying David on this journey is a donkey carrying bread, wine, and a kid of a goat. In various passages in the Old Testament, the donkey dutifully carries out its unremarkable role as the beast of burden, carrying goods, often bread and wine, or people. But this moment is particularly profound when considered for its Christological importance—the convergence of past, future, and ultimate kings. Essentially, the donkey, in carrying the bread and wine to this meeting, allegorically introduces the sacramental Christ to this meeting of earthly authorities, a very lofty duty for a very ordinary beast of burden. Three levels of kingship collide; Saul (the former king), David (the future king) and the bread and wine—the liturgical Christ (the ultimate king).


78 “Noli erubescere Dei esse jumentum.” Augustine, Sermo 189.4, PL 38: 1007; trans. ibid., FC 38: 22–23.

78 In a relief by Donatello (1450), an ass is seen kneeling before the sacrament. See Thomas Matthews, *The Clash of Gods*, 48.
instrumental in a significant Christological event in biblical history.

Donkey as ordinary beast of burden

While the above examples showed extraordinary moments of burden bearing by the donkey, we must remember that the general understanding of beasts of burden was far from exalted. In profane literature from antiquity, particularly in the Aesopic fables, the crux of the fables about donkeys usually revolve around the thankless nature of being a beast of burden.\footnote{Scholars have shown that Aesop could not have written the fables attributed to him because there are no fable collections dating from his time, sixth century B.C. See Jill Mann, \textit{From Aesop to Reynard: Beast Literature in Medieval Britain} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 2. Also see Niklas Holzberg, \textit{The Ancient Fable: An Introduction}, trans. Christine Jackson-Holzberg (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), 44–8.} In these fables, the asses were typically overworked, exhausted, and sore from carrying their burdens. Some try to find relief from their burdens by appealing to the gods as in “The Asses Appealing to Zeus.”\footnote{See Aesop, \textit{The Complete Fables}, trans. Olivia and Robert Temple. (New York: Penguin, 1998), 195.} In this story, the asses send representatives to Zeus to ask him to put a “limit on their workload” to which Zeus responds that he would do so only if they could make a river from their urine.\footnote{Ibid., 195.} In another fable, “The Ass and the Gardener,” Zeus gives to each supplicating ass a master that is progressively worse than the previous one.\footnote{Ibid., 203.} There is no glory here in being a beast of burden.

In \textit{The Golden Ass of Apuleius/Metamorphosis} (second century), a man, Lucius, is accidentally transformed into an ass by a potion. His ensuing adventures, or rather misadventures, also demonstrate the miserable aspect of being a beast of burden. But at the same time, his experience...
as an ass reveals similarities and contrasts between his character as a donkey and that of Christ.\textsuperscript{83} Danuta Shanzer notes the Christian overtones of one of Lucius’ early adventures, rescuing a girl from robbers. She points out the parallels to the Flight to Egypt in this incident, “visetur et infabulis audietur doctorumque stilis rudis perpetuabitur historia ‘asino vectore virgo regia fugiens captivitatem,’” commenting that the author refers to the girl as a virgo, not a puella, suggesting that it is not just any ordinary girl, but the Virgin Mary escaping on Lucius the ass.\textsuperscript{84}

Lucius’ response to his good deed demonstrates how he, however, is not like Christ. He believes his reward for assisting in this rescue is to “kiss my bags and bales and all my other burdens goodbye, and now that I’d gained my freedom, certain to find some roses somewhere...after I got my human face and form back, I would surely be held in greater esteem.”\textsuperscript{85} Lucius was not motivated to a life of more service, but rather the opposite, even believing that his return to the human form would afford him “greater esteem.” This raises the question of whether Lucius viewed his human-animal transformation in a different light from the way Christ saw his own divine-human incarnation. When faced with the prospects of bearing the sin of the world through the crucifixion, Christ did not seek respect, but rather “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even death of the cross.”\textsuperscript{86} Christ traverses the divine and the human categories while symbolically taking on the additional category, that of the burden-bearing ass. And ultimately, Christ transcends being a burden bearer on the cross through the


\textsuperscript{84} See Danuta Shanzer, “‘Asino vectore virgo regia fugiens captivitatem,’” \textit{Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik} 84 (1990): 223.

\textsuperscript{85} See Apuleius, \textit{The Golden Ass or A Book of Changes}, 145.

\textsuperscript{86} Philippians 2:7–8.
resurrection. In the Beauvais feast, we see how Orientis Partibus disrupts and challenges the human, animal, and divine categories.

Still, Lucius’ sufferings as an ass are compared to the sufferings of Christ. Lucius did not see such fairer pastures after his rescue of the virgo, but rather was subject to “new crucifixions that sadistic Fortune betrayed me, bloodied and bowed by such trials and tribulations.” With regards to its duties as burden-bearer, the indignities the ass endures were simply unbearable. In one instance, he is assigned to a slave-boy to carry firewood down a mountain, a journey that its hooves were not prepared for, all the while being “cudgeled to death...by never-ending wallops of his club, so that the anguish of the beatings settled deep in my bones.” In addition, the weight of the wood was such that “you’d think that the massive mound of bundles of lumber had been assembled for an elephant, not an ass. Still more, whenever [its] top-heavy bundle would slip to one side—well, instead of removing some branches from this toppling tonnage and fixing [the ass] by lightening the load a little bit...he’d pile on rocks in addition.”

Perhaps Lucius’ strongest resonance with Christ is his other primary task as an ass: harvesting grain. This passage below details what the separating of the wheat from the chaff entails.

His wife, you see, a greedy woman to be sure, loathsome and foul, straightaway put me to work at grinding mill, making me a slave to the yoke; she was forever and a day beating me with a stick—the leaves and branches still on—and making bread for herself and her family out of my hide. And she didn’t stop at just wearing me out for the sake of her own food, she ground the grain of her neighbors as well, with me going round and round in mercenary circles, and even the daily rations that were assigned for such heavy labor were denied me, fool that I was. For the barley, my barley, that I ground, that I pulverize under that same millstone in my endless circuits, she would sell to the farmers round about, while I—bound to my mechanical labor by day—I got hulls and chaff at eventide, unsifted and unsanitary,

87 Ibid., 145.
88 Ibid., 7:17, 146.
89 Ibid., 7:17, 146–7.
rough with grit and gravel."\(^{90}\)

Nam protinus uxor eius avara equidem nequissimaque illa mulier molae machinariae subiugum me dedit, frondosque baculo subinde castigans, panem sibi suisque de meo parabat corio. Nec tantum sui cibi gratia me fatigare contenta, vicinorum etiam frumenta mercenariis discursibus meis conterebat. Nec mihi misero statuta saltum cibaria pro tantis praestabantur laboribus: namque hordeum meum frictum et sub eadem mola mei quasi satum ambagibus colonis proximis venditabat, mihi vero per diem laboriosae machinae attento sub ipsa vespere furfures apponebat incretos ad sordidos, multoque lapide salebrosos.\(^{91}\)

This separating of the grain from the chaff was not an easy task but a very arduous and thankless one—Christ’s metaphorical separating of the wheat from the chaff was equally challenging and drove him to the cross; it is referenced in Orientis partibus. In Chapter 2, the separating of the wheat from the chaff emerges as one of the themes of the lessons in Matins.

Needless to say, an ass’s occupation was far from enviable.\(^{92}\) Isidore of Seville, in his Etymologies, writes that “beasts of burden derive their name from the fact that they assist our labor and burdens by their help in carrying or plowing.”\(^{93}\) A rather pejorative use of the term “beast of burden” found its way into the liturgical commentaries. In the prologue of William Durand’s Rationale Divinorum Officiorum, Durand explains that one reason for his writing of this liturgical commentary was that the priests of his time “in presenting the sacred loaves at the table of the Lord…neither see nor understand these mysteries…as though they were mere beasts of burden

\(^{90}\) See Apuleius, The Golden Ass or a Book of Changes, 145.


\(^{92}\) Though in The Ass Pronouncing the Horse Happy #268, the ass, who is initially slightly bitter about his situation when compared to a well-fed and well-groomed horse, recognizes that his occupation is much better than the horse whose master forces him into battle, only to be killed. See Aesop, The Complete Fables, 200.

\(^{93}\) “Iumenta nomina inde traxerunt, quod nostrum laborem vel onus suo adiutorio subvectando vel arando iuvent.” PL, 82: 425. Isidore’s *Etymologies*/Barney, 12.1.7.
carrying bread for others." A more positive view of the ass as symbolizing the “simple-minded” in
the Church comes from a commentary on Job 1:14 by Hugh of St. Victor:

There came a messenger to Job, and said: The oxen were ploughing, and the asses
feeding behind them.

Such are the simple-minded in Holy Church who believe in the more perfect
believers and knowers, who are truly saved in their simplicity...For the simple-minded
in Holy Church, although they are unable together with the perfect to search out the
hidden things in the sacraments of God, yet since they do not separate themselves
from their society, placed as it were near them they feed themselves on the same faith
and hope by operating well.

The foolish yet wise donkey

In sacred and secular medieval literature, the ass was aligned with foolishness and stupidity.
The trope *asellus*, often used to mean “stupid boy” in ancient Roman literature, was popular in the
Middle Ages. In the *Aesopic Fables*, the donkey’s foolishness is often at play. “The Ass and the
Cicada” tells of an ass who loved to hear the singing of cicadas. After the cicadas tell him that
they sing so beautifully because they eat dew, the ass, waiting for this dew, ends up dying of

---

94 “…ferentes siquidem panes propositionis ad mensam Domini, atque misteria, que neque
intelligunt, neque uident; tantum inde nimirum iusto Dei iudico habituri, quantum et iumenta
panes ad usum portantia aliorum.” Durand/Thibodeau, Prologue, 3.
95 Job 1:14
96 “Tales sunt simplices in sancta Ecclesia qui perfectioribus credentibus et cognoscentibus
credunt, qui nimirum in sua simplicitate salvantur, nec ab illorum merito alieni sunt, quamvos ad
cognitionem illorum non pertingunt. Scriptum est: ‘Boves arabant et asinae pasebantur juxta eos
(Job 1).’ Simplices quippe in sancta Ecclesia quamvis cum perfectis occulta sacramentorum Dei
rimari non valeant; qui tamen se ab illorum societate non dividunt o uasi juxta eos positi in eadem
fide et spe bene operando se pascunt.” Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei* 1.10.3, PL
(Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1951), 169. As quoted in Margot Fassler, *Gothic
Song*, 232.
97 See Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals*, 146
starvation. Another instance of the ass’s foolishness that leads to death is told in “The Ass, the Cock, and the Lion.” In this story the ass is rescued from the jaws of a lion by the crow of a cockerel that frightens the lion. But the ass, thinking that it had something to do with the fleeing lion, ends up pursuing the lion only to be eaten by the lion.

Two other stories about the ass in secular literature demonstrate the donkey’s attempts to shed himself of his foolish persona by trying to convince other animals to learn from him (ninth-century verse Latin verse speech, Disce, leo), and in trying, but failing to gain an education for himself (Nigel of Longchamps, Speculum Stultorum [1190–1197]). Each of these examples teaches us what the standard assumptions about the ass were, and how in one case, the ass was able to overcome them, and in the other was not.

In the ninth-century Latin verse speech Disce, leo, an ass tries to convince a lion to become his student. Reversals are at the heart of this story as it is unlikely that a royal lion would ever learn from a foolish donkey. Yet, this donkey is unlike your typical donkey. Rather, it shows enterprise and wisdom by choosing to better its lot in life through mastery of the alphabet (albeit with difficulty) and thus, sparing itself from being a “wretch flogged with many a rod.” Sensing the lion’s contempt for the ass and the preposterous notion of learning from an ass even after the ass demonstrates “professional competence,” the ass reminds the lion of the honor it deserves, considering its proximity to Christ.

---

99 Ibid., 200.
101 Ibid., 135.
Don’t look down on me, you who are proud with your puffed-out neck, for the Lord of Heaven mounted upon the back of an ass, He trod down the savage lion with His own heel.¹⁰²

Not only does this ass remind the lion that the “Lord of Heaven” rode the ass, but it also notes that this same Lord “trod the savage lion.” Jan Ziolkowski comments that “the humor... lies in the incongruity of making an ass, a beast that symbolized stupidity, into a teacher.”¹⁰³

In the Speculum Stultorum (Mirror of Fools), a medieval Latin beast epic by Nigel of Longchamps (1130–1200), we meet an ass named Burnellus whose desire for a longer tail leads him to the schools of Paris. Burnellus spends seven years studying at the schools of Paris, but learns nothing.¹⁰⁴ Although the ass has the ambition for learning, he is unable to change his asinine nature. Burnellus recognizes this early in the poem.

I’m not the wise Brunellus, but a dolt
An ass forever, prince of fools, a dunce.
A fool I was when born, a fool before,
And nothing but a fool shall always be.
A fool my father was, a perfect fool
    My mother; nature has made a fool of me.
What nature gave, what’s fixed by course of time,
The same abides, holds fast, and is unchanged.¹⁰⁵

Though he acknowledges that what nature has made cannot be altered—particularly his foolish nature—he still resolves to go to Paris to learn the liberal arts and to Bologna to learn the law, Scriptures, and the decretals. But since “his mind was dull” and his “brain harder than a rock,” even after seven years of studying in Paris, he could only say “heehaw.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Ibid., 135.
¹⁰³ Ibid., 135.
¹⁰⁴ Speculum Stultorum is based on Avianus’ fable of The Ass and the Lion’s Skin.
¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 85 and 87.
Jill Mann points out that “the teacher’s attempts to beat learning into him [Burnellus] result in a comically physical realization of the struggle between ars and natura...The power of nature outlasts the evanescent overlays of learning.” But even after this experience in Paris, Burnellus, foolish donkey that he is, dreams that he is destined to become a bishop. But he seems more concerned with how to affix the miter on his head as he has such pointy ears, than with the matters of the office.

For Gregory the Great, the ass represents “the inertness of fools.” He allegorically interprets this verse from Deuteronomy—Non arabis in bove simul et asino (Thou shall not plough with an ox and ass together)—as a warning not to “associate fools and wise men together in preaching, lest by means of him who has no power to accomplish the work, you hinder him who has abundant power.”

In Isidore of Seville’s Etymologies, the entry for the ass is as follows: “a slow animal and balks for no reason; it allowed itself to be domesticated as soon as mankind wished it.” Yet these standard assumptions about the “dumb” ass are turned upside down in some very telling accounts in sacred and secular literature. We will begin with the three sacred stories—one of Balaam’s ass in

---

107 See Jill Mann, *From Aesop to Reynard*, 107.
108 Wireker, 90.
111 Fatuos sapientibus in praedicatione non socios ne per eum qui implere rem non uelat, illi qui praeualet obsistas.” Gregory the Great, CCSL 143:1.16.23. Ibid., 44. Ironically, in his Prologue to the *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, Durand mentions this verse from Deuteronomy as being an example of ceremonial law “for which no clear reason can be given why they were decreed in the Law.” “Cerimonialia sunt de quibus ratio reddi non potest quare ad litteram precepta fuerunt.” Durand/Thibodeau, Prologue, 7.
112 “Asinus...quippe tardum, et nulle ratione renitens, statim ut voluit sibi homo substravit.” PL 82: 429. Isidore’s *Etymologiae*/Barney, 12.1.38.

In the biblical story of Balaam’s ass (Numbers 22) a donkey is used as a vessel of wisdom, recognizing the angel of God before his master does, and is given voice to speak as he saves his master from death. Balaam, renowned for his skills of divination, has been lured by the princes of Moab to curse the Israelites. God, angry with Balaam for accepting the Moabites’ appeal, stations an angel with a drawn sword on the road to block his path. Balaam does not see the angel. It is his donkey, rather, that sees the angel and veers off the road three times to save his master from being slain. Each time, Balaam strikes his donkey. Finally, when the angel corners the pair, the donkey opens its mouth and indignantly talks back to his master. The ass asks, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me three times?” Balaam replies that it is because the donkey has “served [him] ill.” The ass has, in fact, served him well and Balaam appears the fool, not for having a recalcitrant donkey, but rather for being blind to the angel.

In this passage in the Glossa Ordinaria, an excerpt of a homily by Origen is included that states this:

Asina cui Balaam sedebat, etc., usque ad major autem his charitas, quae sola nunquam cedit...sed quod illi placuerat ex illa sonare fecisset ad illius vesaniam cohibendam; illud forte praefigurans: Quia stulta mundi elegit Deus, ut confunderet sapientes, pro spirituali et vero Israel.\(^\text{113}\)

The ass on which Balaam was sitting, and so forth; “but the greater of these is charity, which alone never falls” (1 Cor. 13),...but since it had pleased him, he [God] had made the speech to come out of her her to speak for the purpose of restraining his (Balaam’s) madness, this perhaps prefigures: “For God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise” (1 Cor. 1), for the spiritual and the true Israel.

\(^\text{113}\) PL 113: 420–421.
Since Origen felt the ass’s speaking prefigures the verse from Saint Paul’s letter to the Corinthians—but the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise—the ass is precisely aligned with the message of the Feast of Fools.\footnote{1 Corinthians 1:27.}

In his late sixth-century exegesis on this passage, Gregory (c. 540–604) betrays his discomfort that an ass could outsmart a man.\footnote{“Quod recte Balaham—si tamen uocem Dei subsequi oboediendo uoluisset—in ipsa eius itineris retardatione signature. Balaham namque peruerine ad propositum tendit, sed eius uotum animal cui praesiderat praepedit. Prohibitione quippe immorata asina angelum uidet, quem humana mens non uidet.” Gregory, SC 382: 12.96–106; trans. Henry Davis in Gregory, \textit{Pastoral Care}, (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1950), 123–24.} While he does acknowledge that the ass recognized the angel that Balaam did not, he chooses a flesh-mind analogy to express this. He states that the ass, “the flesh,” revealed to Balaam, “the mind,” something that Balaam could not see. In establishing this dichotomy between the ass and Balaam, Gregory keeps the boundary line between the human and the animal clear. Noticeably missing from Gregory’s exegesis is any explanation of the talking ass. Origen, however, praises the donkey. He writes:

\begin{quote}
I marvel at Balaam’s ass and heap blessing on it, because it was worthy not only to see the angel of God but even to have its mouth opened and break into human speech.\footnote{“et quomodo asinam Balaam miror et felicitate accumulo, quia digna fuerit non solum videre angelum Dei, sed etiam ore reserato in humanum sermonem erumpere.” Origen, \textit{Lucam Homilia 14}, PG 13: 1837; trans. Joseph T. Lienhard in Origen, \textit{Homilies on Luke; Fragments on Luke}, FC 94: 61.}
\end{quote}

This story demonstrates how the ass not only was wiser and more discerning than its master, but how it transcended its beastly nature in being given the gift of human speech. The only other animal in the Bible to speak was the serpent, and that was before the Fall.
The incredulity of the talking donkey is revisited in the Second Epistle of Peter where Balaam is singled out as an example of a false prophet who had to be rebuked by a donkey in order to stop his foolishness.

Leaving the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam of Bosor who loved the wages of iniquity, But had a check of his madness, the dumb beast used to the yoke, which, speaking with man's voice, forbade the folly of the prophet.117

But Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) writes in the Summa Theologica, Q 96, Article 1, Reply to Obj. 4 that “all animals by their natural instinct have a certain participation of prudence and reason.”118

This story of Balaam and his ass captivated medieval readers, finding its way into the Ordo prophetarum, one of the three liturgical plays found in MS Laon 263 that is based on the sermon Legimus sanctum Moysen.119 Yet, in the drama the events are reversed. Robert Lagueux explains the reversal of events in the drama in this way:

The short dialogue at the end of the play, so atypical of the rest of the drama, was necessary in order to depict the donkey talking. The animal could not be summoned as the other prophets were, but Balaam could be. He could then provoke the donkey to speak miraculously, a miracle on a par, as Legimus sanctum

---

117 2 Peter 2:15–16
Moysen insisted, with the virgin birth.  

The rubric at this moment reads *puer sub asina respondet* (literally, “a boy in the guise of an ass answers”). There is a question whether this rubric indicates that a boy gives voice to a live ass or that someone impersonating a donkey speaks. But perhaps more significant is that this drama concludes with Balaam’s ass speaking these words:

- Angelus cum gladio
- Quem adstare video
- Prohibit ne transeam
- Timeo ne peream.

An angel with a sword  
Whom I see standing there  
Keeps me from proceeding;  
I fear I will be killed.

To conclude the drama with the speaking ass seems provocative, favoring a beast’s words over a human’s words.

Perhaps for the Beauvais Feast of Fools, the most significant account of a foolish person whose life, but not his being, is transformed into one of a beast is found in the book of Daniel, the story told in the *Ludus Danielis*. After a banquet held by King Belshazzar where vessels stolen from the temple in Jerusalem were used, writing appears on the wall. In addition to interpreting the writing on the wall, Daniel shares this with King and his court:


---

120 Lagueux, “Glossing Christmas,” 264.  
121 Max Harris reviews the various readings on the meaning of this rubric in *Sacred Folly*, 124n61.  
123 Daniel 5:18–21
O king, the most high God gave to Nabuchodonosor, thy father, a kingdom, and
greatness, and glory, and honour. And for the greatness that he gave to him, all
people, tribes, and languages trembled, and were afraid of him: whom he would, he
slew: and who he would, he destroyed: and who he would, he set up: and whom he
would, he brought down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit hardened
unto pride, he was put down from the throne of his kingdom, and his glory was
taken away. And he was driven out from the sons of men, and his heart was made
like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses, and he did eat grass like an
ox.

This story demonstrates how the human/animal distinction is disrupted and placed squarely
within the context of the Feast of Fools’ theme—the overturning of hierarchies as an expression of
the Deposuit from the Magnificat. The king is cast down, and not even to the lowest of humanity,
but rather condemned to a beastly life. Picturing a powerful king humbling himself, eating grass
like an ox, is a striking image of human/animal transformation. And yet, it is the positive picture
of the Christ-like ass in Orientis partibus that opens the Beauvais Feast of Fools.

In his analysis of Gregory of Nyssa’s anthropology, Gerhart Ladner notes this about the
difference between the form/stance of a human and that of an animal:

For the body’s share in divine image-likeness consists essentially in man’s upright
posture which in an indigenous adaptation of Posidonian ideas Gregory of Nyssa
links directly to the function of the hands.... Man is upright and his gaze directed
toward heaven. This symbolizes his royal dignity, his power over the other animalic
creatures. But there is more: Because man stands erect, he does not need forelegs
and could develop hands. Only because he has hands, which besides being put to a
thousand other uses can serve for the provision and preparation of food, could his
mouth, his lips, his tongue, and the other related parts of his face and throat be
shaped for the purpose of the articulation of words rather than for such animalic
needs as the tearing of grass from the ground or the tearing apart of raw meat. ¹²⁴

This description of what separates man from beast is telling when considering that

Nabuchodonosor was one whose upright posture would have symbolized “royal dignity, his power

¹²⁴ See Gerhart B. Ladner, “The Philosophical Anthropology of Saint Gregory of Nyssa,” in
over other animalic creatures.” Daniel states that Nabuchodnosor was consigned to “eat grass like the ox,” implying that he ate without his hands, cutting off any parts of his upper body that could aid in the “articulation of words.” For a king, one could not imagine a more humiliating fate.

The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas (third century) present another perplexing instance of a talking ass who astonishes a wise man with its discerning words. In the Fourth Act Concerning the Colt, a talking ass declares the paradox of Christianity before a large crowd gathered to hear the apostle Thomas.125 This ass boldly approaches the apostle Thomas and after identifying him, declares that Christ, “though free, has been a servant, and, being sold, has brought many to freedom, kinsman of the great race which condemned the enemy and redeemed his own.”126 This concise statement of Christian theology is startling coming from anyone, let alone a donkey. The ass follows this statement of theology with a request (or rather, a forward invitation) for the apostle to sit on him. The apostle is initially left speechless. His subsequent response seems to be a non-sequitur. Instead of addressing the ass, he praises Christ for being the savior, nourisher, helper, defender, etc.127 He indirectly acknowledges the ass when he includes in his acclamations of Christ that Christ was one “of whom even the unreasoning animals speak,” as this ass just did.

The text implies that it is only after collecting himself through some sort of “communication” with the heavens that Thomas can speak directly to the ass. The apostle asks the

---

125 See J.K. Elliott, The Apocryphal New Testament, 464. Judas Thomas, the purported author of this text, is apparently the twin brother of Jesus according to the text (ch. 11) but Elliott notes that “modern scholarly opinion is skeptical about the historicity of the Thomas story.” Ibid., 440. The earliest version of the Acts of Thomas was apparently a Latin version from the fifth century that Turribius of Astorga testifies of. The oldest extant Greek text dates from the ninth century.
126 Ibid., 464.
127 In the Third Act Concerning the Serpent, Thomas encounters a talking serpent that admits to killing a man who had had intercourse with a woman the serpent had fallen in love with. But unlike his exchange with the ass, Thomas directly responds to the serpent without taking a moment to call on Christ. Ibid., 460.
ass who it is and to whom it belonged for “surprising and strange is that which is spoken by you. These things are also hidden from many.” In alluding to Christ’s own words—“thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones”—Thomas seems to support the idea that this very incongruity of a talking and insightful beast is precisely what is so unique about the kingdom that Christ represents. In this case, the “little ones” can be replaced with the “foolish ones.” Again, as it is written in St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, “but the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise: and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong.”

The ass declares that he is from the lineage of both Balaam’s ass and the colt of the ass that Christ rode in his Entry to Jerusalem. The ass defines himself as being a beast of burden, repeatedly telling the apostle that in order for him to serve the apostle and, ostensibly fulfill his duty and receive a reward, the apostle must allow the ass to carry him. The apostle assures the ass that the one who gave him the gift of speech could certainly give him the reward, regardless of whether or not the apostle himself rode the ass. Still, the ass insists the apostle mount him, for it would bless the ass. The apostle agrees and when the ass has taken the apostle to the gates of the city, the apostle leaves the ass with a missive to “be kept safe where you were.” The ass promptly dies at that very moment, the implication being that its reason to live was to serve, and having completed the specific task of bearing the apostle, could die. Both the story of Balaam’s ass and the Fourth Act Concerning a Colt demonstrate how the donkey could first exercise human speech, and second exercise it with wisdom and discernment.

---

129 1 Corinthians 1:27.
131 Ibid., 464.
Two stories about asses and priestly matters demonstrate the ridiculousness of lofty donkeys. In the Testamentum Asini (thirteenth century), we find an ass who seems to think so highly of himself that he declares that when he dies, “I give my cross to the papal officials, ears to cardinals, and tail to the minor orders.” This is, of course, a satire of clerical property. Of course, though, when he does die, none of those lofty things happen; he simply becomes wolf food.\footnote{See Winthrop H. Rice, The European Ancestry of Villon’s Satirical Testaments (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1941), 37–75.} In the story of “The Ass Brought Before the Bishop” preserved in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 7972, an ass who believes himself to be lofty is consecrated as a priest only after the bishop notices the bar of gold that the ass’ sponsor has attached beneath its tail.\footnote{See Appendix 17 in Jan Ziolkowski, Talking Animals: Medieval Latin Beast Poetry, 69.}

Cursed/Blessed

The Physiologus, a teaching text from the early Middle Ages whose first Latin version dates from AD 496, portrays a rather negative image of the ass by comparing it to the Devil.\footnote{First Latin version dates from AD 496. Trans. Michael J. Curley in Physiologus, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), 38–39. “There is another nature to the wild ass…. The wild ass represents the devil since, when he knows that night and day are equal…then he brays day and night, hour by hour, seeking the food which he as lost. Now the wild ass brays only when receiving food, as Job said, “Never without cause does the wild ass bray but only when wanting fodder” [cf. Job 6:5]. Similarly, the apostle Peter says of the devil, “Our adversary prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8) } Richard de Fournival’s Bestiary of Love (1201–1260) also gives a negative picture of the ass, but in this case, the ass’ bray:

The reason that the despairing man is louder of voice is found, I believe, in the beast that puts most effort into braying, and which has the ugliest and most horrendous voice: The WILD ASS. For its nature is such that it never brays unless

\footnote{See Appendix 17 in Jan Ziolkowski, Talking Animals: Medieval Latin Beast Poetry, 69.}
it is ravenously hungry and cannot find that wherewithal to satisfy itself. But then it puts such effort into braying that it bursts asunder.\textsuperscript{135}

While Richard de Fournival does not use the word “obscene” to describe the sound of ass, the superlatives “ugliest” and “most horrendous,” indicate the repulsion the ass’ bray causes.\textsuperscript{136}

The donkey’s identity as being an “unclean” animal is transformed in a ritual found in a perplexing passage from the book of Exodus. The passage from Exodus 13:13 states, “The firstborn of an ass thou shalt change for a sheep; and if thou does not redeem it, thou shalt kill it. And every firstborn of men, thou shalt redeem with a price.”\textsuperscript{137} On one level, the passage seems unremarkable. According to Levitical law, the ass was an unclean animal while the lamb was a clean animal.\textsuperscript{138} Hence it was reasonable for the ass to be exchanged or redeemed for a lamb. But a deeper look into the context surrounding this reveals something more profound, namely, how this story can be understood in light of the Christian narrative of redemption. As Jean Leclercq writes, “all of the Old Testament participated in the Redemption which is clearly revealed in the New, and in reality inaugurated it.”\textsuperscript{139}

Two seminal and interdependent events that are crucial to our understanding of this

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Regarding the actual sound produced by an ass, Elizabeth Eva Leach notes that “in medieval classifications, the braying of an ass is a sound that...is \textit{vox confusa}; it cannot be written down and it does not mean anything. It is thus the kind of indiscreetly pitched sound that is not proper to music.” Furthermore, she points out the entry on the ass in Johannes Aegidius de Zamora’s \textit{Historia naturalis} (1226–1234) that uses the word \textit{rudere} for the sound the ass makes and she notes that “the resulting cry is usually described as ‘\textit{horribilis},’” as quoted in Elizabeth Eva Leach, \textit{Sung Birds} (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 46–47.
\item Exodus 13:13. This law is reiterated in Exodus 34:20 where the law of the first-born is applied to all unclean animals in Numbers 18:15.
\item Leviticus 11:26: “Every animal that has divided hoofs but is not cloë-footed or does not chew its cud is unclean for you.” The ass belonged to this category.
\item See Jean Leclercq, \textit{The Love of Learning and the Desire for God}, 81.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
passage and particularly to the donkey’s unique place in it, occur just prior to this curious directive. The first event is the final of the Ten Plagues (Exodus 12) that Moses uses to convince Pharaoh to release the Israelite slaves from their forty years of bondage. This plague, which effectively breaks Pharaoh’s resolve, is the plague of the firstborn where all the firstborn, man and beast, in the land of Egypt were slain. God declares the nation Israel to be “his firstborn;” thus, the inflicting of the plague of the firstborn seems an appropriate exchange when Egypt does not release God’s “son” from captivity. The passage is as follows:

Thus saith the Lord: Israel is my son, my firstborn. I have said to thee: Let my son go, that he may serve me, and thou wouldst not let him go: behold I will kill thy son, thy firstborn.  

The importance of the firstborn is seen as Saint Paul declares Christ to be the “firstborn of all creation.” In the second verse of Orientis partibus, the donkey is said to have been bred in regions associated with the firstborn, hence assigning some sort of implied firstborn status to the donkey.

The firstborn of the Israelites are spared in this plague because of the blood of a lamb placed on the doorposts. Medieval commentators interpreted this lamb as a precursor of Christ. John Chrysostom (fourth century) writes, “Now if its type [the lamb’s blood] had so much power, both in the temple of the Hebrews and in the midst of the Egyptians, when sprinkled on doorposts, how much more power does the reality [Christ’s blood] have.”

---

140 Exodus 4:22–23.
141 Colossians 1:15. In the context of the New Testament, Mary and Joseph observe this commandment by bringing the infant Christ to be presented at the temple. “When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord.” (Luke 2:22). This event is preceded by the circumcision of Christ on the eighth day (Luke 2:21), the very occasion which MS Egerton 2615 celebrates.
142 “Quod si ejus figura tantam vim habuit in Hebraeorum templo, in media Aegypto, liminibus aspersus, multo majorem ipsa veritas habet.” John Chrysostom, Joannem Homilia 46.3,
century) notes that the foreheads of Christians are marked with the blood of Christ just as the
doorposts of the Jews were marked with the blood of the lamb.  

The commemoration of this Passover is the second event that will help explain Exodus
13:13 regarding the donkey’s redemption. Together with the instruction to celebrate the Passover
annually in Exodus chapter 13, is the instruction to consecrate every firstborn male, human or
animal. The chapter opens with the statement from God to Moses that holiness is to be conferred
on the firstborn of men and beasts: “Sanctify unto me every firstborn that openeth the womb
among the children of Israel, as well of men as of beasts: for they are all mine.” The inclusion of
animals as being worthy of sanctification or holiness is discussed by Origen.

Therefore let us draw together from the divine Scriptures instances in which we
find “holy” used, and discover not only persons but also mute animals that are
called “holy.” Indeed, among the brute animals it is commanded through the law
that “the firstborn” of calves or cattle be sacrificed to the Lord, and it says. You will
not do any work with them because they have been consecrated to the Lord.

Moses then reiterates what God has told him, saying this:

Thou shalt set apart all that openeth the womb for the Lord, and all that is first
brought of they cattle: whatsoever thou shalt have of the male sex, thou shalt
consecrate to the Lord.

the Apostle and Evangelist*, FC 33: 469–70.

143 “Sanguine occisi pecoris Judaeorum postes signati sunt; sanguine Christi fronte nostrae
signantur.” Augustine, *Tractatus in iohannem* 50.2, PL 35: 1759; trans. John W. Rettig in

144 Congregamus ergo de Scripturis divinis, super quibus sanctum diei invenimus et
deprehendemus non solum homines, sed etiam muta animalia sancta appellata, invenimus et vasa
ministerii sancta appellata, invenimus sanct diei et loca nihilominus, quae in urbis vel
suburbibus posita sunt, et sacerdotibus deputata; ex mutis quidem animalibus primogenita boum,
vel pecorum sanctificari per legem Demino jubentur, et dicitur: Ne facias in eis opus ul’um quia

145 Exodus 13:12
What follows is verse 13:13: “The firstborn of an ass thou shalt change for a sheep: and if thou do not redeem it, thou shalt kill it. And every firstborn of men thou shalt redeem with a price.” The firstborn ass is the only non-human animal singled out for redemption. In “The Ceremonial and Symbolic Significance of Donkeys in the Biblical World,” Kenneth Way theorizes that the donkey is singled out because: 1) it “serves as a wealth/capital...as a status-indicator...and as a beast of burden...in ancient Israelite culture;” 2) “the donkey may be exceptional due to its special relationship with humanity” in the “symbiotic partnership between humans and donkeys” expressed in “caravaneering, riding, and agricultural work;” 3) “the donkey may be exceptional because of its association with foreign religious practices;” 4) “the donkey may be exceptional because of its former sacrificial status in early Israel.” I argue that the donkey may be also exceptional because of its proximity to man, both in its ability to speak as Balaam’s ass and in its sharing of characteristics of Christ.

Directly following Exodus 13:13, Moses reiterates the plague of the firstborn in Egypt. But in this case, he notes that God will redeem all the firstborn of his sons, excluding animals, particularly the ass who had just been paired with man for redemption.

When thy son shall ask thee tomorrow, saying “What is this?” thou shalt answer him: With a strong hand did the Lord brings us forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. For when Pharaoh was hardened, and would not let us go, the Lord slew every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of man to the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all the openeth up the womb of the male sex, and all the firstborn of my sons I redeem. (Exodus 13:14–15).

Regardless, the implication of Exodus 13:13 is both startling and profound. As the donkey’s redemption is accomplished through the sacrifice of a lamb in this passage, mankind’s redemption

is ultimately accomplished through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the lamb of God. This suggests the donkey to be a type of man, both in need of redemption, and the lamb as a type of Christ. As Gregory the Great writes,

> For, by an ass is designated uncleanness, but by a sheep, innocence. To exchange then the firstling of an ass for a sheep, is to convert the beginnings of an impure life into the simplicity of innocence; in order that a sinner, after having committed those deeds which the Lord rejects as unclean, may now display such conduct, as He can offer to God as a sacrifice. Because then a sinner is converted after his sins, and is brought back at last from the darkness of his misdeeds, at the end of his life, it is now rightly said, And His light is over the ends of the earth.\(^{147}\)

The ass stands in for the sinner, whose life is returned to the “simplicity of innocence” when the exchange is made with the sheep. According to Amalarius, “he is the one through whom every sacrifice is offered to God, because in him all things that are in heaven and on earth were created.”\(^{148}\) Thus, the donkey, like man, is actually blessed because its uncleanliness required redemption. This conversion from unclean to clean is also described in Ambrose’s commentary on Zacharias 9:9. Ambrose equates Christ to grain because Egypt was a fertile, grain-producing land and Christ, coming out of it, was the grain. He writes, “moreover, this grain is carried by the ass,


which before was unclean according to the law but now is clean by grace.”

I suggest that the featuring of *Orientis partibus* at First Vespers of the Feast of the Circumcision at Beauvais could encourage a parallel to be made between the donkey’s purification ritual in Exodus 13 and the circumcision ritual.

**The subdeacon: the clerical beast of burden**

With the medieval image of the lowly yet exalted donkey in mind, how may the subdeacon be perceived as a “beast of burden”? Just as the donkey was responsible for carrying the living Christ, the subdeacon, as keeper of the chalice and paten, is responsible for carrying the liturgical Christ. The transformation required of the subdeacon to reverently perform this duty is reflected in ordination rites. In the *Apostolic Constitution* (fourth century) the bishop lays hands on the subdeacon, invoking the Holy Spirit to make him “worthily handle your liturgical vessels.” The laying on of hands was usually reserved for the major orders, but in this case, the gravity of the subdeacon’s duty to care for the liturgical vessels seems to trump any need to keep orders distinct.

What is accomplished through the imposition of hands is given rhetorical power in an allocution from the *Missale Francorum* from eighth-century Rome (Appendix 1.2). The bishop essentially charges the subdeacon to reverse his conduct, setting forth a list of negative traits that

---


must be shed. The empty chalice and paten set before the subdeacon serve as a visual reminder of the subdeacon’s duty. Only after this allocution is complete are the chalice and paten given to the subdeacon, as if to symbolize the subdeacon having crossed the threshold from profane to sacred.

In a Jacobite ordination ritual of the twelfth century, the connection between the subdeacon and the liturgical vessels is made very tangible as the bishop goes through an elaborate ritual of touching the chalice and paten before placing them on the subdeacon’s temples.152 Paul Bradshaw interprets this careful effort not to lay on hands but yet still have some physical contact through the touching of the temples of the subdeacon’s head, as a “compromise” that shows “some unease” about the imposition of hands on minor orders.153 I propose that what is most significant about this ritual is the subdeacon’s connection to the chalice and paten.154

In Isidore of Seville’s Etymologies, which are quoted by the Parisian theologian Peter Lombard in The Sentences, Book 4 (c. 1150), what is written about the subdeacon confirms the centrality of the chalice and paten to their office:

> It pertains to the subdeacon to bring the chalice and paten to Christ’s altar, to give them to the deacon and assist the later...When these are ordained, they are taken from the bishop’s hand an empty paten and chalice.155

In addition to being in charge of the chalice and paten, the subdeacon, in William Durand’s Rationale divinorum officiorum (1291–1296) carries the cushion that the Gospel rests on. Durand

152 Paul Bradshaw, Ordination Rites of the Ancient Churches of East and West (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1990), 175–177.
153 Ibid., 95.
154 In the Rite of the Consecration of the Patriarch of Alexandria (Coptic) from 1364, there is no laying on of hands, per se, but the rubric instructs the bishop to “take hold of [the subdeacon’s] temples and pray.” Included in the prayer is that the candidate be filled with the Holy Spirit “that he may worthily handle the liturgical vessels.” Ibid., 141–2.
comments that that “this cushion is placed under the Gospel book to note that the yoke of Christ is sweet, as it is the burden of the Gospel, for those who carry it.”

Foolish yet wise subdeacon

Though the subdeacons were synonymous with “fools,” the allegorical commentaries of Amalarius’ *Liber Officialis* (d. ca. 850) and William Durand’s *Rationale divinorum officiorum* (1291–1296) show the subdeacons’ alignment with wisdom in the liturgy. Durand considers the subdeacons to represent the wise men in the opening procession of the Mass. Amalarius comments that the subdeacon precedes the deacon (prophet) because in order for prophecy to be soberly laid out and understood by its listeners, it must be preceded by the wisdom of the subdeacons. Durand notes that the subdeacons carrying the Scriptures in the procession are “wise enough to take care of the Lord’s vessels.” Amalarius states that “the subdeacons, who know how to arrange the Lord’s vessels in good order, and what should be brought first and what later, play the role of the wise men.”

Because the *Lectio* was primarily instructional, like many of the Old Testament readings, the subdeacon, in reading the *Lectio*, becomes associated with great teachers or preachers according

---

156 “Rursus, puluinar supponitur euangelio ad notandum quod suauae est iugum Christi, siue onus evangelii, illud portare volentibus, unde in Matheo: Iugum meum suauae est et onus meum leue.” Durand/Thibodeau, 4.24.11.
157 “…sapientes subdiaconi.” Durand/Thibodeau, 4.6.17.
158 “…ut moderate prophetia disponatur, habeat ante se subdiaconorum sapientiam, scilicet ut congruo tempore prophetent et ita ordinate, ut possit capi ab auditoribus quod dicitur.” Amalarius/Knibbs, 3.5.18.
159 “…in locum scribarum premissit pontifex seu sacerdos subdiaconorum portantem Scripturas, qui sapiens sit dominica disponere uasa.” Durand/Thibodeau, 4.6.3.
160 “Subdiaconi in loco sapientum, qui sciunt ordinate vasa Domini disponere, et quod primum ferendum sit quodque posterius.” Amalarius/Knibbs 3.5.15.
to Amalarius. For Durand, since “the Epistle comes before the Gospel, for the Epistle designates the duty performed by John [the Baptist]...it is as if John was the subdeacon for Christ.” Since the “figurative” aspect of the “Word of God” corresponds to the Old Testament, the “doctrine of the preachers of the Old Testament is declared by the subdeacons,” states Durand. In addition, Durand writes that in carrying the cushion that the Gospel rests on as well as the Gospel book, the subdeacon “signifies that the preacher ought to offer his life to God with good works.” Like Balaam’s ass who teaches his master, the subdeacon symbolically teaches the worshippers through the reading of the Epistle or the Lectio.

Cursed yet blessed

As the liturgy transitions from the foremass to the canon of the Eucharist, the arrangement of the subdeacons and deacons around the altar shifts to represent the Christian idea of inversion. According to Amalarius, the subdeacons stand facing the celebrant, while the deacons stand behind the celebrant for this mirrors Christ’s words to his disciples at the Last Supper: “he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger: and he that is the leader, as he that

---

162 “Premittitur autem epistola euangelio; epistola namque designat officium quod Johannes ante Christum exercuit...Johannes ergo quasi subyaconus fuit et subminister illud qui de se dicit.” Durand/Thibodeau, 4.16.3.
163 “…doctrina uero predicatorum ueteris testamenti proponitur per subdyaconos.” Durand/Thibodeau, 4.16.8.
164 “Ad hec subdyaconus, librum et puluinar reportans, signifcat quod predicator bono opere debet iutam suam Deo offerre.” Durand/Thibodeau, 4.24.11.
serveth.” (Luke 22:26). The subdeacons, at this moment, represent both the disciples and the women (of low social status in Christ’s time) who ministered to Christ at His passion. It is during the consecration of the elements that we see the subdeacon’s allegorical role in the liturgy dramatically transform from cursed to blessed. During the celebrant’s prayer, the subdeacons stand up at the words nos peccatores, identifying themselves as “us sinners.” As Christ said, “They that are well have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. For I came not to call the just, but sinners.” Thus, even though the subdeacons are allegorically the most miserable in representing sinners, they are also the most blessed in receiving the sacraments of grace and forgiveness through the Eucharist. Amalarius notes this movement that the subdeacons undergo, from cursed to blessed, from desolation to consolation:

Morally, we can understand that we, as sinners, as the subdeacons; we show the face, or the conscience of our sins, to the priest, that he may offer our confession to God. When this has been done, we do not immediately leap to the place of the teachers; rather, after a long humiliation, as the heart of the Holy Spirit grows, our hearts are enlarged, like the paten, to receive the sacraments of the church.

We see the subdeacon’s liminal place between the major and minor orders in the Raganaldus Sacramentary from Autun, Bibliothèque municipale, S19, fol. 1v (ninth century) (See Figure 1.3). This portrait of the ecclesiastical hierarchy clearly depicts the divide between the

---

165 Amalarius/Knibbs, 3.21.11.
166 “Hos credimus designari per subdiaconos, qui in facie stant...sive mulieres quae perseveraverunt in passione Domini.” Amalarius/Knibbs, 3.21.13.
167 Mark 2:17.
major and minor orders. The major orders—the presbyter, the bishop, and the deacon—are in one frame, and are opposed to the minor orders— the doorkeeper, the lector, the subdeacon, the exorcist, and the acolyte—which are in the lower frame. Though the subdeacon is clearly in the lower tier of clergy, he is given a place of prominence, being centrally located and standing on a higher step than the others.
Figure 1.3. Raganaldus Sacramentary, Autun, Bibliothèque municipale, S19, fol. 1v
Perhaps, it was the subdeacons’ ambiguous higher/lower status reflected in texts before the eleventh century that contributed to their inferior image. Though considered sacred because of his celibate lifestyle, the subdiaconate was not considered a major order by some because the office itself, according to Theodore of Mopsuestia (sixth century), was not included in the New Testament church which Paul wrote about to Timothy. The passage from 1 Timothy is as follows:

It behoveth therefore a bishop to be blameless, the husband of one wife, sober, prudent, of good behavior, chaste, given to hospitality, a teacher.... Deacons in like manner: chaste, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre.

As if to emphasize the subdeacon’s lower status, Amalarius twice states the obvious in the Liber Officialis: “The subdeacon is so-called because he is under the deacon” and “the subdeacon is so-called because he is placed under the deacon.”

It was not until the eleventh century when the notion of subdiaconal celibacy began circulating more widely that the subdeacons began their transition from minor to major orders, allowing for a “new concept of the subdeacon’s cultural role to form.” In 1207, a papal decree officially upgraded the subdeacons to the major orders. Yet even in the late thirteenth century, William Durand notes that the subdeacons were the “lesser ranks” and part of the “weaker units,”

---

170 Roger Reynolds, Clerics in the Middle Ages: Hierarchy and Image (Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate, 1999), 4: 7-8.
171 1 Timothy 3:2 and 8.
172 “Subdiaconus ideo dicitur, quia sub diacono est.” Amalarius/Knibbs 2.11.3. “Subdiaconus...quia sub diacono est positus.” Amalarius/Knibbs 2.11.4.
173 From 1049-1149, there were twenty-five councils condemning the marriage of subdeacons. See Roger Reynolds, Clerics in the Middle Ages, 4: 4-12.
174 This decree is attributed Pope Urban II in Decretales Gregorii, Lib 1., tit. xiv, c. 9 and discussed in ibid., 4: 1-3.
attesting to the fact that having occupied the lower rungs (or at least the liminal space between the higher and lower space) of ecclesiastical hierarchy. 175

Conclusion

At First Vespers, Orientis partibus frames the entire feast through the blurring of the figures of the donkey and the subdeacon. As demonstrated in this chapter, this beast-cleric pairing subversively illustrates the message of the Feast of Fools as the donkey and subdeacon emerge as metaphors for the inversion of hierarchies and the loftiness of burden-bearing. Thus begins the uncovering of the meanings behind the liturgical gestures tied to the conductus and the creation of their exegesis. The conductus’ broad preparatory, yet playful purpose at First Vespers will be balanced by the more concentrated, framing function of the conductus preceding the lessons of Matins in Chapter 2.

175 “...minores autem quasi debiliores.” Durand/Thibodeau, 4.6.14.
APPENDIX 1.1

Orientis partibus, Text and Translation
Egerton 2615, fols. 1r–1v

1 Orientis partibus
   Adventavit asinus
   Pulcher et fortissimus
   Sarcinis aptissimus
   Hez hez sire asnes hez.

Out from the lands of Orient
was the ass divinely sent.
Fair and most strong was he,
Bearing burdens gallantly
Heigh, sir ass, oh heigh.

2 Hic in collibus Sich
   Iam nutritus sub Ruben
   Transiit per Iordanem
   Saliiit in Bethlehem
   Hez, hez.

In the hills of Sichem bred
Under Reuben nourished,
Jordan stream he traversed,
Into Bethlehem he sped.
Heigh, heigh.

3 Saltu vincit hynnulos
   Damnas et capreolos
   Super dromedarios
   Velox Madyaneos
   Hez, hez.

Higher leaped than goats can bound,
Doe and roebuck circled round,
Median dromedaries’ speed
Overcame and took the lead.
Heigh, heigh.

4 Dum trahit vehicula
   Multa cum sarcinula
   Illius mandibula
   Dura terit pabula.
   Hez, hez.

While he drags long carriages
Loaded down with baggages
He, with jaws insatiate,
Fodder hard doth masticate.
Heigh, heigh.

\[176\] This oft-used, rhyming translation is by Henry Copley Greene, “The Song of the Ass” Speculum 6, no. 4 (1931): 535.
Cum aristis ordeum
Comedit et carduum,
Triticum a palea
Segregate in area.
Hez, hez.

Amen dicas, asine,
Iam satur ex gramine,
Amen, amen iteras,
Aspernare veteras.
Hez, hez va hez va hez

Chews the ears with barley corn
Thistle down with thistle corn.
On the threshing floor his feet
Separate the chaff from wheat.
Heigh, heigh.

Stuffed with grass, yet speak and say
Amen, ass, with every bray:
Amen, amen, say again:
Ancient sins hold in disdain.
Heigh ho, heigh ho, heigh ho, heigh
Fair Sir Ass, you trot all day;
Fair your mouth, and loud your bray.
Orientis partibus

Conductus quando asinus adducitur

| O - ri - en - tis par - ti - bus | ad - ven - ta - vit a - si - nus, |
| Hic in col - li - bus Sy - chen | iam nu - tri - tus sub Ru - <ben> |
| Sal - tu vin - cit hym - nu - los, | dam - nas et ca - pre - o - los, |
| <D>um tra - hit ve - hi - cu - la | mul - ta cum sar - ci - nu - la, |
| Cum a - ris stis - or de - um | com - e - dit <et car - du - um, |
| A - men di - cas, a - si - ne, | iam sa - tur ex gra - mi - ne, |

trans - i - it per Ior - da - nem, | sa - li - it in Beth - le - em. |
su - per dro - me - da - ri - os | ve - lox Ma - di - a - ne - os. |
tri - ti - cum a pa - le > a | se - gre - gat in a - re - a. |
a - men, a - men, i - te - ra | a - sper - na - re v - te - ra. |

Refrain

| Hez, hez sire as - nes, hez. |

Refrain 6

| Hez, hez va, hez va, hez biax <sire a> s-nes car a - lez be - le bou - che car chan tez. |
[Let the empty paten and chalice be displayed in the sight of the bishop and let the bishop say to him:]

“And thus, if until now you have been late to church, from now you ought to be constant; if until now sleepy, from now alert; if until now a drunkard, from now sober; if until now dishonorable, from now pure. May the offerings which come to the altar be called the bread of the presence. Of the offerings themselves only as much ought to be placed on the altar as is able to suffice for the people, lest anything decaying remains in the sanctuary. The underlying cloths ought to be washed in one vessel, the corporals in another. Where the corporals have been washed, no other linen ought to be washed there; the water itself ought to be poured out in the baptistery. Thus I admonish you: so conduct yourself, that you are able to please God.”

[And you hand him the chalice and paten.]

---

CHAPTER 2

Matins: Eight Conductus/Lesson Pairings

The hour of Matins, which could start as early as 2am, was one of the most elaborate services of the Divine Office. The greatest number of conductus in MS Egerton 2615 are performed at Matins, preceding eight of the nine lessons. Matins was, according to Durand, “the time in which the Law was given to Moses,” hence, the nine lessons in the service.¹ The conductus distill, diffuse, and enrich the “Law” by incorporating biblical images and concepts that prepare, shape, challenge, and deepen the understanding of the lesson. The biblical images in the conductus along with clerics’ recollected patristic and medieval exegesis add dimension and richness to the otherwise often one-dimensional and didactic lessons, yielding new interpretations in song.² As the clerics sing and listen to each conductus, they recall exegesis related to the poetic imagery which, in turn, predisposes them to hear the subsequent lessons through a composite exegetical lens. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the poetic, highly refined, evocative language of the conductus with the narrowly concentrated prose lessons brings the lesson into greater focus. As Isidore of Seville writes, “A lesson (lectio) is so called because it is not sung, like a psalm or a hymn, but only read. In singing we look for tunefulness; in a lesson, only enunciation.”³

¹ “Tempus nocturnum significat tempus legis date Moysi.” Durand/Thibodeau, 5.3.1.
² Ruth Steiner, Thomas Forrest Kelly and Mario Righetti have written on how responsories serve similarly to comment on lessons, but by providing a final reflection. See Ruth Steiner, “Music for a Cluny Office” in Monasticism and the Arts, ed. Timothy Gregory Verdon (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1984), 81–113.
³ Isidore/Barney, Etymologies, 6.19.9.
The fact that I am presenting each conductus/lesson pairing successively, without any of the connective material that was part of the actual service—hymns, antiphons, versicles, responsories, etc.—and only textually means that the material can feel artificially dense, challenging the reader to truly become that “diligent observer...who can extract honey from rock,” in the words of Durand. Also, since I am imaginatively reconstructing what the clerics could have recalled exegetically for a myriad of allegories and symbols in the texts of eight, extensive conductus, the chapter can feel actually dense. But, I propose that this is the scholarly work that must be undertaken to understand how the conductus uniquely prepares the clerics for the hearing of each lesson through a particular lens and to determine what the message of Beauvais Cathedral’s Feast of the Circumcision actually was.

The eight conductus of Matins are dispersed in the following way: two in the first nocturn, three in the second nocturn, and three in the third nocturn. The first lesson of the first nocturn is the only lesson not introduced by a conductus, and thus the total number of lessons is nine while the total number of conductus is eight. Of these eight conductus, only two appear particular to the Beauvais Office of the Circumcision. Four are also part of the Feast of the Circumcision at Sens Cathedral (1200–1222) and two are found in a manuscript from Saint-Martial de Limoges, F-Pn lat 1139 (ca. 1100). The lessons for the first and second nocturn are taken from a sermon De Calendis Januariis that has been misattributed to Maximus of Turin (c. 380–465),⁴ while the lessons for the third nocturn are taken from a sermon by Bede (672/73–735).⁵ Since these eight conductus were

---

⁴ See Rudolph Arbesmann, “The ‘Cervuli’ and ‘Anniculae’ in Caesarius of Arles,” Traditio 35 (1979): 89–119. Arbesmann notes that of the fifty homilies attributed to Maximus in the homiliary compiled by Paul the Deacon, only fourteen are actually by Maximus of Turin. Arbesmann comments that the other sermons may be by another bishop named Maximus.

⁵ These Homilies on the Gospels were probably from the 720s.
not conceived as a cohesive ensemble of songs, nor were the lessons taken from a single sermon intended solely for the Office of the Circumcision, it is necessary to understand how those gathered created a composite exegesis in the performance of these conductus/lesson pairings.

Through an examination of patristic commentary and medieval exegesis associated with the biblical imagery in the conductus texts, this chapter will demonstrate how each of the conductus prepared those assembled for the lessons. As stated in the introduction, clerics relied on commentary to understand Scripture and thus would have been well-versed in patristic and medieval sources. In the Rule of St. Benedict, Benedict notes that “besides the inspired books of the Old and New Testament, the works read at Vigils should include the explanations of Scripture by reputable and orthodox catholic Fathers.6 If such “explanations” were not read at Matins, I propose that they would have been recollected by the clerics through their investigatio. The 2am hour ensures that clerics would “arise with their food fully digested,” as Saint Benedict writes in the Rule of Saint Benedict, and thus, possess an alertness (and flexibility of mind) that could be expected from a not completely satiated monk.7 Some of their recollections of exegesis would amplify the lesson while some would contextualize the lesson, but they would all bring greater depth and clarity to the readings.

First Nocturn

---

7 Ibid., 8.1. Saint Benedict also notes that any time remaining after Matins can be used by the monks to study the psalter or lessons; again, an implication that the middle of the night was a time to be watchful and vigilant.
While the stark perspective on the life of faith in the lessons of the first two nocturns (Pseudo-Maximus sermon on Kalends) is negotiated in a non-linear fashion by the conductus, the first lesson stands alone. This lesson situates the lessons in the liminal place between the Kalends and the Feast of the Circumcision. It explicitly warns against the vanities associated with the festivities of the Kalends and tangentially references the context of the Circumcision through its final quotation: “Brothers, to write the same things to you certainly is not wearisome for me, but rather necessary for you.”\(^8\) Directly following this quote in its original context in Saint Paul’s letter to the Philippians is a warning to “Beware of dogs: beware of evil workers: beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, who in spirit serve God and glory in Christ Jesus, not having confidence in flesh.”\(^9\) This quotation suggests that participation in Kalends is as serious an offense as false circumcision; but it also assures the reader that circumcision, the sign of the covenant, represents the people of the covenant. By introducing this lesson without a conductus, the lesson is presented without external influences of biblical imagery (unlike the other eight lessons), allowing those gathered to hear a relatively uncomplicated call to refrain from celebrating the Kalends.

**Lectio I**\(^{10}\)

Quanquam non dubitem vos, fratres carissimi, per paternam sollicitudinem instructione divini sermonis edoctos universas calendarum supervenientium vanitates declinare penitus et horrere: ad perfectioris tamen emendationis argumentum non me piguit usitatum vestris auribus inferre sermonem, sit ait \(^8\)

---

\(^8\) Philippians 3:1. All Latin biblical quotations will be taken from the Vulgate version of the Bible. All English translations will be taken from the Douay-Rheims Bible.  
\(^9\) The sentiment behind this statement is harsh, to say the least. Philippians 3: 2–3.  
\(^{10}\) Though all translations of the Matins lessons are by the author, they have been heavily edited by Susan Boynton and Steven Kruger.
beatissimus Paulus: Fratres, eadem vobis scribere mihi quidem non pigrum, vobis autem necessarium.\textsuperscript{11}

Dearest brothers, although I would not doubt that you (trained with fatherly care in the discipline of divine speech) thoroughly avoid and dread the general frivolousness of the coming Kalends, nevertheless, in the interest of greater improvement I don’t mind bringing the customary sermon to your ears, as most blessed Paul says: Brothers, to write the same things to you certainly is not wearisome for me, but rather necessary for you.

The Juxtaposition of Conductus I \textit{Dies ista colitur} and Lectio II

Lectio II is preceded by a conductus with refrain, \textit{Dies ista colitur}. Implicit in the conductus’ refrain—\textit{Felix est egressio, per quam fit remissio} (happy is the birth through which comes forgiveness)—is the celebration of the Nativity (it was, after all, the Octave of the Nativity) and the celebration of circumcision since circumcision was the remedy for sin. (See Appendix 2.1 for the text, translation, and edition of \textit{Dies ista colitur}.\textsuperscript{12}) To the clerics gathered, this recurring refrain could be the subject of \textbf{Lectio II}:

Necessarium, dilectissimi, nec superfluum reor, si pro commonitione sancta dudum habita, praecedentium patrum vobis repetantur alloquia. Et revera quid fastidii, quid oneris habet pro salutis profectu utilia ac Deo placita saepe dicere, frequenter audire?

I think it necessary, dearly beloved, and not superfluous that the admonitions on formerly holy living by fathers that preceded you are repeated. And in fact, what harm is there and what burden is there in often saying, and frequently listening to things useful for the progress of health and that are pleasing to God?

While the refrain is not an “admonition,” listening to it “frequently” could make it “useful for the progress of health.” In a sense, the lesson’s primary charge to the faithful to actively attain

\textsuperscript{11} Pseudo-Maximus, PL 57: 255–256.

\textsuperscript{12} Translation from Mary Caldwell’s “Singing, Dancing, and Rejoicing,” 331. The question of the purpose and effect of refrain songs has been studied most recently by Caldwell in “Singing, Dancing, and Rejoicing.”
the “progress of salvation” could be understood as an appropriate textual response to the conductus’ passive, yet joyous refrain. The narrowing of range and tessitura between the conductus with its high tessitura and declamatory setting and the subsequent lesson with its steady reciting tone also focuses those gathered on the hearing of the lesson.  

The work of exegesis performed by the clerics would occur as they reflected on three lofty images in the conductus that amplify the lesson and the exegesis associated with them. The first image to capture the attention of those gathered is the lone, lumbering, larger-than-life giant who prepares the way for the birth of this boy—the iuxta prophetiam with the phrase ut gigas egreditur, ad currrendam viam (as the giant marches, to hurry the way), a reference to Psalm 18:6. The cleric who chants the psalms weekly would have recalled the entire psalm verse this phrase was taken from—in sole posuit tabernaculum suum; et ipse tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo. Exultavit ut gigas ad currrendam viam (he hath set his tabernacle in the sun: and he as a bridegroom coming out of his bridechamber, hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way)—as well as the commentary associated with it. In Augustine’s (354–430) sermon on the Feast of the Nativity, he considers the contrasts between the bridegroom and the giant: “comely as a bridegroom, strong as a giant; amiable and terrible, severe and serene, amiable and evil—remaining in the bosom of His Father, He took the possession of the womb of his Mother.”  

Augustine connects these figures to the Incarnation just

---

13 Charles Brewer has noted that Dies ista colitur was one of three songs in the Moosburger Gradual that was “designed to teach the Moosburg scholars proper grammar by demonstrating the correctly changing declension of a single word in different stanzas.” See Charles Brewer, “The Songs of Johannes Decanus,” Plainsong and Medieval Music 20, no. 1 (April, 2011): 44. Dies ista colitur is found in Terce as the Conductus ad presbyterum in FSEm 46.

as this conductus does through the interaction of the verse with the refrain (Felix est egressio, per quam fit remissio). That such a magnificent and awe-inspiring figure as a giant was sent to prepare for Christ’s human, frail birth in a manger perhaps points to the absurd sentiment that this birth captures. While there does not seem to be anything particularly Circumcision or Kalends-focused about the song, this nod to the incongruity associated with the fragile birth of Christ juxtaposed with the striking giant mirrors the idea of inversion characteristic of the Feast of Fools.

While verses two and three praise Christ in a more generic fashion, verse four’s presentation of the awakened sinner and the image of Elijah exiting the home of the widow juxtaposed with the refrain gives an example of the refrain’s declaration of forgiveness provided through the birth of Christ. In this biblical story, the prophet Elijah is sent by God to a widow to be fed, but the widow has very little flour or oil and is resigned to the fact that she and her son will die. Still, Elijah instructs her to make him a morsel of bread and assures her that her jar of flour and oil will not run empty. While this does come to pass, later the widow’s son becomes ill. The widow asks Elijah, “art thou come to me, that my iniquities should be remembered, and that thou

15 Ambrose’s fourth-century hymn Veni, Redemptor gentium also includes this idea:

Procedit e thalamo suo, Proceeding from his bridal chamber
Pudoris aula regia, the royal home of purity
Geminae gigas substantiae a giant in twofold substance one,
Alacris ut currat uiam. Rejoicing now His course to run


16 See 1 Kings 17. This biblical story would have been recalled by those present not only because of its importance to the Old Testament but also because the Gospel of Luke recounts Christ speaking about it at the synagogue on a sabbath day. The Gospel of Luke 4:25–26 states “and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.” Christ continues, saying,

In truth I say to You, there were many widows in the days of Elias of Israel, when heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there was a great famine throughout all the earth. And to none of them was Elias sent, but to Sarepta of Sidon, to a widow woman.
should kill my son?” The conductus’ refrain, “happy is the birth through which comes forgiveness,” can be deftly and retroactively applied to the widow and her son. Applying a Christological perspective allegorically to an Old Testament passage was customary in patristic commentary and medieval exegesis.

The light imagery in verses five and six, though not connected to circumcision or the Nativity, is significant for Matins. Durand writes that “night time signifies our life in sin. The night Office is the servitude of our exile.” So essentially, the light imagery—tu lumen in tenebris...splendor cuius diluit noctem tenebrarum—illuminates the lesson and the darkness of Matins, facilitating the joyous refrain to resound through the nocturn.

While the images in the verses and the refrain encourage the clerics to reflect on the Nativity (and tangentially the circumcision) that brings forgiveness, I propose that the images could also inspire those present to strive towards the lesson’s call to actively pursue salutis profectu.

The Juxtaposition of Conductus II Gratulemur in hac die and Lectio III

The juxtaposition of the Marian-focused, heavenly, otherworldly imagery of Gratulemur in hac die with the diabolical-focused, practical, grounded, and realistic lesson could cause those gathered to transition from thinking about the lofty images of the conductus to focusing on the lesson’s practical call to walk the religious journey. (See Appendix 2.2 for the text, translation, and edition of Gratulemur in hac.) Again, the narrowing of scope between the conductus and lesson contributes to this clarifying effect.

17 “Ingressus es ad me, ut rememorarentur iniquitates meae, et interficeres filium meum?” 1 Kings 17:18.
Lectio III

Et ideo, carissimi, fide ac devotione solita religiosi itineris vias, ac veritatis semitas gradientes, magis magisque errorum devia, et diabolica calcate figmenta. Nec enim debet fidelis anima, quae angelorum consortia concupiscit, daemoniorum lusibus delectari.

And therefore, most beloved, with faith and wonted devotion, climbing the ways of the religious journey and the steps of truths, more and more trample the deviations of errors and diabolical fictions. Nor truly must the faithful soul who desires to consort with angels delight in the games of demons.

The three Marian images in the song would have captured the clerics’ imaginations and would inform the hearing of the lesson. These images are the rubus ardet (the burning bush from Exodus 3), florem dedit virgula (the shoot that yields the flower from Isaiah 11), and the vellerea rorifera, sicca manens area (the dewy fleece that remains dry on the threshing floor from Judges 6:33–40). They would each cause the clerics to reflect on Mary’s journey of faith, preparing them to hear the lesson’s exhortation to walk the “religious journey” with faith and devotion. In addition, the idea of Mary bearing Christ would provide an overarching resonance with the exaltation of burden-bearing in the feast.

Honorius of Autun (1080–1151) connects the burning bush to Mary’s virginity “through the fire of the Holy Spirit.”

Moyes namque vidit rubum igne comburi, nec tamen flamma consumi. In quo Dominus apparuit, cum populum suum ab Aegyptiaca servitute eripuit. Hoc beatam Virginem praesignavit, quam ignis Spiritus sancti prole illuminavit, nec tamen flamma concupiscentiae violavit.19

For Moses beheld the bush burning with fire but not consumed by flame, in which the Lord appeared, when he delivered his people from Egyptian bondage. This

---

19 Honorius’ Speculum Ecclesiae in PL 172: 904.
miracle prefigured the Blessed Virgin, whom the fire of the Holy Spirit illuminated through her son while the flame of concupiscence harmed her not.\textsuperscript{20}

One can imagine the kind of faith Mary must have possessed to allow the Holy Spirit to “illuminate” her. As is affirmed later in the conductus, castitas virginæ nova dant miracula (maidenly chastity produces new miracles). St. John of Damascus’s (c. 675/6–749) statement in On Divine Images, that the burning bush was allegorically “an image of God’s Mother...the Theotokos,” would remind the clerics of Mary’s lofty burden-bearing responsibility.\textsuperscript{21} (Mary was declared the Theotokos or Christothokos, the bearer of Christ, by the Council of Ephesus in 431).

Jerome (c. 347–420) considered the florem dedit virgula (the shoot has yielded a flower) or the root (or shoot) of Jesse from Isaiah 11 to be the Virgin Mary herself who “had no shoot connatural to herself” and whose flower was Jesus.\textsuperscript{22} This theological idea finds its musical statement in the responsory Stīps Jesse attributed to Fulbert of Chartres which is sung following


the fifth lesson in Matins. The responsory, found on 25v–26r and somewhat altered from Fulbert’s, is below:

* Stirps Jesse virgam produxit
  Hec est virga non irrigata, sed dei gratia florigera,
* Virgaque florem
  Et florebit
* Et super hunc florem requiescat
  Spiritus sanctus procedens a throno
  * Spiritus almus
  * Virga dei genitrix virga est, flos filius eius.
* Et super hunc florem requiescat
  spiritus almus.

The shoot of Jesse produced a staff
This is the staff not watered
but bearing flowers by the grace of God,
And the rod a flower
And it will flourish.
And over this flower may rest
the Holy Spirit proceeding from the throne
the nurturing spirit
The shoot is the virgin Genetrix of God,
the flower of her son.
And over this flower may rest the nurturing spirit.

[Asterisks indicate Fulbert’s original material.]

Though the image of the fleece has other valances, its primary one is as a Marian image. In the story, Gideon lays a fleece on the threshing floor, asking God for a sign that Israel would be successful in battle (Judges 6:36–40). If it was full of dew, but the threshing floor was dry the next morning, he would take it as a sign from God that the Israelites would be successful. Maximus of Turin compares Mary to Gideon’s fleece, writing that, “from her tender womb came forth the Lamb who himself, bearing his mother’s wool (that is flesh), covers the wounds of all peoples with a soft fleece.” Her obedience in bearing Christ shows her faith and devotion to God. These Marian images give way to literal statements of the virgin bearing God and the handmaiden bearing the Lord (Virgo deum...et ancilla dominum) that conclude the conductus.

---

23 See Margot Fassler, *The Virgin of Chartres: Making History through Liturgy and the Arts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 325–328. Fassler also includes an appendix of sequences found in Chartres that have themes related to Stirps Jesse. See ibid., 387–419.
24 In the original setting, the line Virga dei was placed in between Et florebit and Et super.
The most compelling interpretation of the fleece, for its juxtaposition of the lesson’s exhortation to the faithful to “climbing the ways of the religious journey...trample the deviations of errors and diabolical fictions,” is Ambrose’s (c. 340–397) allegorical reading that the fleece with its “heavenly dew” prefigures Christ’s washing of his disciples’ feet. With this reading, the conductus quite deftly prepares the clerics for the lesson’s religious journey by proverbially washing their feet through the image of the fleece. Ambrose writes:

Let us now come to the gospel of God. I find the Lord stripping himself of his garments and girding himself with a towel, pouring water into the basin, and washing the disciples’ feet. That heavenly dew was this water, this was foretold, namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ would wash the feet of his disciples in that heavenly dew.²⁶

It was at the Last Supper before Christ’s betrayal and crucifixion that he washed the feet of his disciples. Origen writes this on the significance of foot washing: “Now the feet of those proclaiming good news became beautiful, so that, when they were washed and cleansed and dried by Jesus’ hands, they might be able to walk on the holy way.”²⁷

The holy and religious journey, prepared by the foot washing, intensifies as the lesson states that the beloved must trample on errors and devilish fictions. The lesson’s rhetoric reveals the seriousness with which the homilist views Kalends as a danger. It is not an innocuous climbing, but one of purpose and commitment that battles fictions. Ambrose reflects this idea in


the Sacraments: “Since Adam was overthrown by the devil and the venom was poured out on his feet, this is why you wash the feet, so that in this part in which the serpent lay in wait, the greater aid of sanctification can be added so that he cannot conquer you later.”

The image of trampling upon dangerous elements would have produced many associations for the clerics. In Psalm 90:13, it is written that “thou shalt walk on the asp and the basilisk: and thou shalt trample underfoot the lion and the dragon.” This implication that the faithful can trample on such wild beasts without being harmed is correlated with the authority with which the homilist tells his listener to walk on diabolical fictions. In Saint Paul’s letter to the Romans, he states that “the God of peace crush Satan under your feet.”

In his commentary on this passage, Pelagius cites a passage from the Gospel of Luke: “The Lord has given us power to tread upon scorpions and snakes and every power of the enemy [Luke 10:19] so that he may not prevail over us and so that we can walk over him with all our members free and unfettered.”

Again it is under the feet and by the feet that adversaries are destroyed and freedom is attained. In the conductus, the feet that have been figuratively washed by Gideon’s dewy fleece are ready to be deployed to trample any opponents to the walk of faith, perhaps most pointedly those who celebrate the Kalends and not the Feast of the Circumcision.

---


29 Romans 16:20.

30 Trans. Theodore de Bruyn in Pelagius’s Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 152–153. In his commentary on this reference to Luke 10, Maximus of Turin notes that it is the “malicious desire of the scorpion” and the “spiritual serpents of our souls” that will be crushed, a more metaphorical way of looking at this trampling.
For a medieval cleric, the reference to the fleece, the threshing floor, and the trampling could also have conjured the donkey, the image through which the Beauvais community experiences this feast. The donkey, after all, tramples the wheat to separate out the chaff. Ambrose notes that it was not “without reason” that the fleece was lain “neither in a field, nor in a meadow, but in a threshing floor, where the harvest of wheat is,” combining the image of the dewy fleece with that of the harvesting and separating of the wheat from the chaff. 31 Severus of Antioch (465–538) associates the trampling of the donkey on palm leaves with the trampling upon one’s enemies. In his commentary on the Entry to Jerusalem, he writes:

Indeed, on one hand, the fact that the donkey walks on the branches and leaves of palm trees would make it clearly known that not only he who was mounted upon it but also those who would believe in him were going to subdue all their enemies, trample them under their feet and win a glorious victory. For the branches and leaves of palm trees are the emblems of the victory. 32

These Marian images of the burning bush, Gideon’s fleece, and the root/shoot of Jesse are found (in some combination or another) in other thirteenth-century conductus hailing Mary. The conductus in the table below share some of these examples.

---


### Table 2.1. Conductus with Multiple Marian Images

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  <em>Ave, gloria virginum regina</em>&lt;sup&gt;33&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Tu vellus Gedeonis</td>
<td>Thou the fleece of Gideon,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tu rubus visionis.</td>
<td>Thou the burning bush of vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  <em>Ave virgo virginum</em>&lt;sup&gt;34&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Celi rorans pluvia,</td>
<td>Distilling heavenly showers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vellus Gedeonis;</td>
<td>Gideon’s fleece;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O filio</td>
<td>O to thy son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tu nos reconcilia,</td>
<td>Reconcile us,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mater Salmonis.</td>
<td>Mother of Solomon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virgo, tu Mosaic</td>
<td>Virgin, thou bush of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rubus visionis</td>
<td>Mosaic vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  <em>Gedeonis area</em>&lt;sup&gt;35&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Gedeonis area</td>
<td>Gideon’s ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Celitus perfusa rore</td>
<td>Was sprinkled with heavenly dew;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flammam rubus ignea</td>
<td>The bush with fiery flame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radiat absque calore</td>
<td>Shone forth without heat;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Granum exit palea,</td>
<td>The grain leaves the chaff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oleastra olea,</td>
<td>Oil runs from the olive,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liquitur petra liquore.</td>
<td>And the rock runs wet with water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virga vernat arida</td>
<td>A dry stick grows green,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enixit fructum cum flore</td>
<td>And it bears the fruit with the flower;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virgo verbo gravida</td>
<td>A virgin grows heavy with the Word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


<sup>35</sup> See F15 in Ibid., (text) xvii, (music) 29–30.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 <em>Parit preter morem</em></td>
<td>Retiens pudorem; Virgineumque florem; Sic floruit; Nec respuit; Omnem virga rorem</td>
<td>Retaining her chastity; And the virginal flower; Thus the twig flourished; And did not reject; The fullness of the dew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 <em>Sine matre genitus</em></td>
<td>Ros divinus vellus irrigavit; Sicca Iesse virga pullulavit; Tuum natum dum Maria gignis; Iubar vitro, rubo parcit ignis.</td>
<td>A divine dew moistens the fleece; A dry twig of Jesse sprouts forth; When, O Mary, thou giv’st birth to thy Son; Radiance spares the crystal, the fire the bush.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 <em>Verbum bonis et suave</em></td>
<td>Ave, veri Salomonis; Mater, vellus Gedeonis; Ave, sponsa verbi summi, Maris portus, signum dumi, Aromatum virga fumi, Angelorum domina.</td>
<td>Hail, of the true Solomon; Mother, Gideon’s fleece; Hail, bride of the highest Word; Harbour of the sea, sign of the burning bush; Branch of the fuming aromatic spices, Mistress of the angels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


Another important image presented in Gratulemur in hac die that precedes Lectio III is the *lapis absque manu cesu* (the stone cut apart from the land from Daniel 2:34).

According to Augustine, this allegorically refers to Christ because Christ was born without a human father.\(^40\) Honorius of Autun explains that “the stone which was cut out of the mountain without the hands of any one breaking it off is Christ, born of a Virgin without the hands of any one embracing her.”\(^41\) The thirteenth-century conductus *De monte lapis scinditur*\(^42\) contains this idea as does another conductus *In natali summi regis*:\(^43\)

\(^{39}\) See A9 in *Four- and Three-Part Conductus in the Central Sources*, vol. 1, (text) xi, (music), 16–19.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>De monte lapis scinditur</em></td>
<td>From a mountain a stone is cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mirabili miraculo</em></td>
<td>In a wonderful miracle,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ab illo cum disiungitur</em></td>
<td>When it becomes separated from that hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Non manus amminiculo:</em></td>
<td>Without the aid of hands:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lapis hic intelligitur</em></td>
<td>This stone is understood to be that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Quem Salomon in angulo</em></td>
<td>Which Solomon placed in the corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Templi perfecti dicitur</em></td>
<td>Of that perfect temple which he is said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Corde locasse sedulo.</em></td>
<td>To have founded with zealous heart.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In natali summi regis (verse 3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Prophetia Danielis</em></td>
<td>Daniel’s prophecies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Promissumque Gabrieliis</em></td>
<td>And Gabriel’s promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Complentur in virgine</em></td>
<td>Are fulfilled in the virgin:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lapis ille preëlectus</em></td>
<td>That stone preëlected,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Monte sine manu sectus</em></td>
<td>Is cut without hands from the mountain,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mons crevit in homine</em></td>
<td>And the mountain in man is born.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both the conductus’ Marian imagery and the concluding direct statements of the virgin’s offspring—*ubera puerpera dat regenti secula, terram, mare, cetera vera salus*—elevate the thoughts of those gathered to loftiness while also providing the perspective through which the lesson’s narrow, focused, and realistic message—a call to action—provokes the clerics to think of their own personal and practical religious journey.

In this nocturn, we see a gradual movement towards the interplay of conductus and lesson that is the function of the conductus in Matins. While the first lesson stood alone with no conductus preceding it, the preparation of the second, somewhat prosaic, lesson by a refrain in praise of the Nativity and extraordinary images of giants, and miraculous, bottomless jars of flour and oil, functions to inspire the clerics to (as the lesson directs) progress towards their salvation, bringing a greater depth to the lesson. The pairing of the second conductus and third lesson

---

creates an even richer connection as a particularly curious exegesis of a Marian image directly prepares those gathered for the cogent call to trample on diabolical fictions while walking the religious journey.

The Second Nocturn

Though the lessons of the second nocturn are a continuation of the first, the emphasis in these lessons and the conductus’s shaping of the lessons is quite different. While the first nocturn focused on salutis profectu by walking in the way of truth and trampling on devilish fictions (both physically active pursuits), the conductus/lesson pairings in the second nocturn call upon those assembled to reflect on their faith in a more inward fashion. The three conductus, interestingly enough, build upon each other liturgically. They progress from pointed (and passing) reflections on the Annunciation and the Nativity in Nostre quod to the circumcision in Nostri festi, and finally to baptism in Quanto decet. Regarding the circumcision/baptism dichotomy, Cyril of Alexandria (fifth century) takes an allegorical approach—“when we have crossed the Jordan, Christ circumcises us with the power of the Holy Spirit, not purifying the flesh, but rather cutting off the defilement that is in our souls”—and later speaks definitively about the replacement of circumcision with baptism for Christians—“But after His circumcision, the rite was done away with by the introduction of that which had been signified by it, even baptism; for which reason we are no longer circumcised.”44 This appropriately guides the clerics through the Christmas octave and beyond, to baptism.

44 “Is enim primus filios Israelis trans Jordanem tuit: deinde ibi subsistens, statim eos lapideis gladiis circumcidit. Ergo postquam Jordanem trajecimus, tune Christus nos circumcidit Spiritus sancti virtute, haud carnem quidem purgans, sed animarum potius maculas eluens...Verumtamen
The Juxtaposition of Conductus III *Nostre quod providerat* and Lectio IV

I suggest that the juxtaposition of the conductus’ gently paradoxical, yet deeply human-focused language with the lesson’s clear, unambiguous, yet abstract polarities in the lesson brings great clarity to the hearing of the lesson.\(^{45}\) (See Appendix 2.3 for the text, translation, and edition of *Nostre quod.*) The evocative images that the clerics would reflect on while listening to the conductus are abruptly cast aside by the direct and somewhat harsh tone of the lesson, a lesson whose message of the incompatibility of idols and the Temple is yet another unequivocal indictment of clerics tempted to celebrate the Kalends instead of the Feast of the Circumcision.

The paradoxes presented in the conductus concerning the Annunciation and the Nativity shape the clerics’ mindset for the striking dichotomies in the lesson. Though the conductus opens with lofty language placing the virgin on a throne, it then acknowledges that Mary is afraid when greeted by Gabriel. The conductus states that Christ is born on earth, yet worshipped in heaven. The conductus also calls Christ the *sanctorum decus* /glory of the saints, yet his *panis circumligatur* or swaddling cloths humanize his infant body.\(^{46}\) A play on *pannis*, the cloths that wrapped the infant Christ, and Christ as the *panis* or the liturgical bread, juxtaposes the human aspect of Christ with the mystical aspect of Christ. Finally, the image of Christ being weaned in the cradle (*cunis ablacatur*) leaves those gathered imagining the vulnerability of the exalted one, the one who will in eight days (January 1) be circumcised according to Jewish law.

---

\(^{45}\) *Nostre Quod* is found in Terce in FSEm 46.

\(^{46}\) *Sanctorum decus* is also used in the hymn *Christe sanctorum decus* for feasts of saints.
This paradoxical language is augmented by a brief catalogue of Marian images including Gideon’s fleece, the burning bush, and Aaron’s rod. The Aaron virga floruit (flourishing rod) is central to the incident where some amongst the Israelites rebelled against Moses and Aaron because the tribe of Levi was chosen for priesthood.\(^47\) In order to settle the matter, rods from each of the twelve tribes of Israel were collected to see whose would sprout; the one that sprouted would be chosen as the tribe of priests. The following day, the rod of Aaron that he had given to the Levites had sprouted and borne almonds. While Aaron’s rod exegetically could represent the fertility of Mary,\(^48\) Christ’s birth, Eve,\(^49\) and the cross,\(^50\) its most significant exegetical interpretation that situates it in the Feast of the Circumcision is related to circumcision.

Before addressing the circumcision reading of Aaron’s rod, I will share one homiletic example and one song that explain the most traditional exegesis of the rod as Mary and the flower

\(^{47}\) See Numbers 17.


\(^{49}\) Susan Boynton has shown in the sequence Aurea Virga that Eve is closely associated with the rod of Aaron while the flower is associated with Mary. The opening verse is as follows:

*Aurea virga prime matris eue florens rosa processit maria.*

From the golden rod of the first mother, Eve, came forth the flowering rose, Mary. See Susan Boynton, “Rewriting the Early Sequence,” 31. For the text and translation see ibid., 38–39. Boynton also notes that this rod’s golden characteristic was probably because the rod is included amongst other golden objects in the description of the contents of the Holy of Holies in Saint Paul’s letter to the Hebrews 9:4.

\(^{50}\) On the other hand, Caesarius of Arles (468/70–542) compares Aaron’s rod to the cross of Christ:

“Just as Aaron’s rod sprouted among the Jewish people, so the cross of Christ flowered among the Gentiles...he [Christ] is the only one whose rod of the cross not only sprouted but also blossomed and produced the fruit of all believers./Sicut enim virga Aaron germinavit in populo Iudaeorum, et a crux Christi floruit in populo gentium...verus pontifex Christus est, ipse solus est, cuius virga crucis on solum germinavit, sed et floruit, et omnium credentium populorum fructus exhibuit.”

as Christ. Fulbert of Chartres’ (c. 960–1028) well-known sermon, *Approbate consuetudinis*, affirms that the rod’s miraculous budding is part of a larger mystery, that of Christ’s birth. Margot Fassler points to the pertinent passage from the sermon where Fulbert connects verses from Isaiah to offer the explanation for Aaron’s sprouting rod in the context of Christ’s birth, noting that its obscurity needed explanation.⁵¹ The passage is as follows:

The sons of Israel had been instructed by the presence of the rod to seek carefully what such a miraculous deed might signify; long after, proceeding to disclose this, blessed Isaiah said: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him” (Isa. 11.1–2). At these words it is as if his hearers were to say, “O father Isaiah, you speak obscurely; we beg you, tell us this thing openly!” Isaiah then added an explanation and said: “Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son and his name shall be called Emmanuel” (Isa. 7.14).... What God, then, pointed out by a miracle, this prophesying revealed from its secret counsels, and what the prophet celebrated in song, subsequently the conclusion of the matter confirmed. For just as the rod without a root, without any support of nature or artifice, bore fruit, so Mary the Virgin, without the act of marriage, brought forth a son, a son surely denoted by the flower and the fruit, by the flower in accord with beauty.⁵²

On the other hand, the twelfth-century Victorine sequence *In excelsis canitur*, which also could have been known by the thirteenth-century cleric from Beauvais gives the exegesis in song:

| V.1       | Solitudo floreat       | Let the wilderness bloom         |
|          | Et desertum gaudeat    | and the desert rejoice;          |
|          | Uirga iesse floruit;   | the rod of Jesse has blossomed;  |
| V.2       | Radix uirgam uirga florem | The root brings forth the rod,     |
|          | Uirgo profert saluatorem | the rod the flower, the virgin the saviour |
|          | sicut lex precinuit.   | just as the law foretold.         |


⁵² Ibid., 410. Translation by Margot Fassler.
VI.1 Radix dawid typus gessit
Urja matris que processit
Ex regali semine

VI.2 Flos est puer nobis natus
Iure flori comparatus
Pre mira dulcetine

The root manifested the type of David
the rod the type of the mother
who came from the royal seed;
the flower is the boy born for us,
justly compared to a flower
for its marvelous sweetness. ⁵³

Still, the most interesting and curious intersection between Aaron’s rod and the Feast of the Circumcision is found in exegesis by Caesarius of Arles. Caesarius comments that the bitterness of the first layer of the almond from the sprouting rod is analogous to the bitterness of the letter that commands circumcision; the layer of the almond must be removed to gain access to the third layer where "you will find hidden...in the nut the secret meaning of the mysteries of God’s wisdom and knowledge." ⁵⁴ That God’s wisdom is proverbially hidden in the heart of the almond and can only be obtained through the removal of layers as in circumcision, brings two ideas central to the Feast of the Circumcision/Feast of Fools together: circumcision and wisdom.

After the presentation of these Marian images and the acknowledgement that they are prefigured with mysticis umbraculis or mystical shadows, the conductus presents its concluding paradoxes—vagit et non loquitur dei sapientia/vix creator omnium habet diversorium/inter animalia (the wisdom of God wails and does not speak; the creator of all things scarcely has a lodging among animals)—by prefacing them as a res miranda geritur or a “wondrous thing” displayed. Musically, both dei sapientia and inter animalia are set to melismatic lines in an otherwise syllabic setting. This

---

⁵³ Translation by Margot Fassler, Gothic Song, 287.
elongating of these words encourages those gathered to reflect on the profundity of the text. That the *dei sapientia* wails is reflective of Christ’s humanity as an infant, but it could also conjure the image of Christ’s death on the cross—“And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.” This event was immediately followed by the temple curtain tearing into two. This association could prepare those gathered for the lesson’s statement that there is no place for idols in the temple of God.

Furthermore, that the lofty creator of all things scarcely has a lodging among animals reiterates the paradox of God’s dwelling place. As commentators wrote, this paradox is in accordance with Christ’s divinity. Bede offers this explanation: “he who sits at the right hand of the Father goes without shelter from the inn, that he may for us get ready many mansions in the house of his heavenly Father...because through the mystery of the incarnation he is become the Way by which he guides us to our home.”

---

55 Matthew 27:50.
56 “In testiuitatibus etiam nouem lectionem Quadragesime uelum ipsum eleuater uel retrahitur. Sed hoc non habetur de primaria Ecclesie institutione quia tunc nullum festum celebrabatur in Quadragesim sollemniter. Sed si aliquod festum occurrebat, quacumque die occurreret, in sabbato et in dominca de eo commemoratio fiebat, prout in canone Matini pape habetur et in Burcado liv. XIII et hoc totum propter temporis illius tristitiam. Postea usus in contrarium obtinuit, ut uidelicet festum nouem lectionum in suo die sollemniter celebretur et nichilominus ieiunetur.” Durand/Thibodeau, 1.3.38
Lectio IV

Neque vero luci ac tenebris, veritati atque mendacio, turpitudini et honestati apud Dei servos ulla potest esse communio, sicut nos Ecclesiarum doctor instruit dicens: Quae conventio Christi ad Belial? Qui autem consensus templo Dei cum idolis?58

For neither truly can there be any communion of light with darkness, truth with lying, turpitude with honesty among the servants of God, just as the teacher of the church instructs saying: What accord has Christ with Belial? And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols?

The richly nuanced texture created by the paradoxes and Marian imagery in the conductus starkly contrasts with the rather forthright, unambiguous lesson that lays out striking dichotomies of mutually exclusive realities. This lesson comes across as a stern rebuke, leading to the ultimate question from Saint Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians: Quae conventio Christi ad Belial? Qui autem consensus templo Dei cum idolis? (What does Belial have to do with Christ? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?).59 Though the image of the Christ child wrapped in swaddling clothes could still be circulating in the clerics’ minds, this very pointed question removes any of the conductus’ Nativity haze as the lesson’s temple of God exudes strength and permanence.

As this lesson ends, the listener is left to answer the questions for himself. For those familiar with the epistle from which they are taken, these questions would serve as prompts to which they would silently recite the following verse, vos enim estis templum Dei vivi, sicut dicit Deus:

58 II Corinthians 6:16–17.
Quoniam inhabitabo in illis, et inambulabo inter eos (For you are the temple of the living God: as God saith: I will dwell in them and walk among them). ⁶⁰

The Juxtaposition of Conductus IV Nostri festi and Lectio V

The juxtaposition between Nostri festi and its ensuing lesson highlights the dissonance of tone between the song and the prose text, again bringing the lesson into clearer focus. Nostri festi gaudium opens with a lofty, adulatory tone as it sings of the son sent from the throne of heaven (celi solium) who is the lumen et consilium gentium (light and counsel of the nations) while the lesson quite negatively warns the faithful to not become monuments of demons. (See Appendix 2.4 for the text, translation, and edition of Nostri festi.) ⁶¹ But the heavenly scope of the conductus—the son from the throne of heaven—is brought earthbound when the son (referred to as the verbum and the imago) travels a journey through life and death, opened and closed gates. The gate of life (vite porta) alludes to Christ who in the Gospel of John, twice states that he is the gate: Ego sum ostium. Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur (I am the door, By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.) ⁶² Theodore of Mopsuestia writes that Christ “calls himself the gate of the sheep because he is the primary access to the truth for everyone...He is also the reason [Logos] through which all might come to

---

⁶⁰ II Corinthians 6:17.
⁶¹ Translation from Charles Brewer, “The Songs of Johannes Decanus,” 34–35. It also appears in the Moosburg Gradual [D-Mbs Cim. 100] (c. 1360) on fol. 244r. John Perchausen’s preface to the section in the gradual beginning on folio 232 containing Nostri festi among other songs, indicates that these songs were songs from antiquity, modern songs, and songs by Perchausen himself. Perchausen writes that he included these particular songs “for the special reverence of the infant Saviour so that in the time of His Nativity, with these songs by the new little clerks, as if from the mouths of infants and suckling children, praise and devotion by singing hymns to Him would be able to be displayed both decently and reverently.” While Nostri festi is not indicated to be a conductus per se, its association with the Feast of Circumcision is clearly indicated with the rubric “In circumcisione Domini” in the Moosburg Gradual.

⁶² See John 10:9.
know the Father.” We shall see a more focused consideration of the importance of the door to the Beauvais celebration of the New Year in the singing of Kalendas ianuarias at Lauds in Chapter 4.

Perhaps most extraordinary about this conductus is its invitation to those gathered to join in the circumcision—Dei circumcisio nos emundet vitio (May the circumcision of God purify us from sin). As noted earlier, Origen wrote of the communal aspect of the symbolic circumcision when he quoted Saint Paul’s letter to the Colossians that “in him you have been circumcised.” Up until this point in Matins, the conductus have focused primarily on the Nativity, but with Nostri festi, the perspective shifts clearly to circumcision. This shift in perspective orients the listener to the lesson’s call for the clerics to be the temple of God. The conductus’ final line—Legatur in gaudio lectio (May the lesson be read in joy)—significantly states the function of the conductus. Below is a table of other conductus that include references to reading.

### Table 2.2. Conductus associated with readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Rubrics</th>
<th>Textual references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Anni novi circulus</td>
<td>E-Mn 289</td>
<td>c.1100</td>
<td>Tu sacerdos precipe Tuque lector, incipe, Lectionem arripe, Audientes reprise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W1 (628)</td>
<td>1. Auctor vite, virgine... 2. Cuius vita lectio nobis et instructio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E-Mn 20486</td>
<td>13th c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F-Plut 29.1</td>
<td>13th c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Auctor vite virgine</td>
<td>CH-MSbk S 231</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Virginis cum virgine Nos cernui cantamus,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Christi sit nativitas</td>
<td>D-Mu Cim 100</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Rubrics</th>
<th>Textual references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Congaudentes Laudem Domini</td>
<td>E-Mn 289</td>
<td>c.1100</td>
<td>Lector lege</td>
<td>Nec lector, desine Laudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hoc de rege Qui regit omne <em>Lice Domine</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Ecce iam celebria</td>
<td>D-Mu Cim 100</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td><em>Lice Domine</em></td>
<td>Et tu lector incite <em>lube domine</em> incipe, Laudem hic in parvulus Qui emerunt iugulis, Ut transirent ad gloriam Terrenam per victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Exultemus et letemur</td>
<td>GB-Cu Ff.1.17</td>
<td>12th c.</td>
<td><em>Lice Domine,</em> dicat lector,</td>
<td>Datus tibi sit hic clamor Nicholae, noster amor! Iam et noster quis sit rector Et suef aelis. <em>'lube Domine,'</em> dicat lector, Et si m'entendeiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Gaudens in Domino</td>
<td>A-Gu 756</td>
<td>1345</td>
<td><em>Lice Domine!</em></td>
<td>Et tu progredere, O lector, incipe. In primo carmine <em>Lice Domine!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CH-EN314</td>
<td>14th c.</td>
<td>Tropus super primam lectionem de nativitate Domini</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D-Mbs Clm 5539</td>
<td>15th c.</td>
<td>In nativitate Domini in matutinam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Iam missum est per angelum</td>
<td>A-Gu 756</td>
<td>1345</td>
<td>Lector surgeris de sedibus Lector consurget gentibus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 In hac die gloriae</td>
<td>I-Tn F.1.4</td>
<td>14th c.</td>
<td><em>Lice Domine,</em> dicat leta Voce lector, iam impleta Sunt, que dixerat propheta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 In natali summii regis</td>
<td>A-Gu 409</td>
<td></td>
<td>Propheta Danielis...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D-Mu Cim 100</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td>Lectionem incipe!</td>
<td>Sed lecturus de hoc monte, Leto corde, leta fronte Mentis cum devotione Data benedictione</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GB-Cu F.f.1.17</td>
<td>12th c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Iubilemus cordis voce</td>
<td>A-Gu 409</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cane presul presul cane Deus adiuva me <em>Lege, lector, lector, lege</em></td>
<td>Cane presul presul cane Deus adiuva me <em>Lege, lector, lector, lege</em> Profer <em>lube domine.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Rubrics</td>
<td>Textual references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mater summi Domini</td>
<td>A-Gu 756</td>
<td>1497</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ergo lectio Cum tripudio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Legatur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostri festi gaudium</td>
<td>D-Mu Cim. 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Legatur cum gaudio...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lectio...Dei circumcisio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova gaudia et nova studia</td>
<td>A-Wn 1565</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Legatur lectio, lacente conductore, Benedicto lectore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pater ingenitus a quo sunt omni</td>
<td>A-Gu 756</td>
<td>1519</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ut nulla fuerit Pudors lectio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrem parit filia</td>
<td>CH-Bu B.XI 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ante ewangelium</td>
<td>Lector, librum accipe, Profer lube domine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Munda sit, Pura sit Hec ergo contio. Audiat, Sentiat,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quid dicat lectio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resonet intonet fidelis</td>
<td>E-Mn 289</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revirescit et florescit</td>
<td>D-SI HB I Asc 95</td>
<td>13th c.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inde letus Noster cetus Laudes Deo intonet Et devotus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lector noster lube Domine resonet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

130
Nos queamus Redemptori Laudes cuncti reddere.

F-G 4413
F-Lpsem s.n.

19 Tribus signis Deo dignis A-Gu 258

Lector, lege, Summo rege Tibi benedictio Sit in celis Et fidelis Amen dicat contio

CH-SGs 382 14th c.
D-Mu Cim.100

20 Umbrae destruxit penitus A-Gu 258

Accede, lector, et lege, Tibi salus sit a rege, Qui mundo principatur, Eterne vite premium Dabit omni, qui Sibi famulatur. Apparuit

A-Gu 409

21 Universi populi CH-EN 314

Ergo tu progredere, Lector prophetie, Iube benedicere In laudem Marie.

22 Virgo parit filium A-Gu 756

Ergo, lectore, optime, Hoc, de rege glorie Evangelium incipe.

Lectio V

Quicunque ergo credentium vel est templum Dei, vel esse desiderat, sollicite caveat, ne mortua et vana sectando, desinens esse templum Dei, fiat habitatio tenebrarum, fiat daemonis monumentum. Ait gloriosissimus prophetæ David: Beatus vir cuius est nomen Domini spes ipsius, et non respexit in vanitates et insanias falsas.⁶⁴

Therefore, anyone believing either is the temple of God or desires to be, [but] let the concerned one beware of pursuing dead and vain things, ceasing to be the temple of God; he might become the habitat of darkness, he might become a monument of demons. The most glorious prophet David says: Blessed is the man

⁶⁴ Psalm 39:5.
whose trust is in the name of the Lord; and who hath not had regard to vanities, and lying follies.

As noted earlier, the conductus’ invitation to circumcision orients those gathered to think on the corporeal nature of faith. The purifying aspect of circumcision leaves those gathered thinking of the embodied son of God and the physical reality of a life of faith, preparing them for the lesson’s directive that the listener take care to be the temple of God, a temple of flesh and blood. But the clerics are not simply exhorted to be the temple of God; they are also exhorted to avoid dead and vain things that can lead to becoming a *habitatio tenebrarum* or a *daemonis monumentum*. Perhaps because the temple is no longer a far-off, inaccessible place, but resides within the individual, these alternatives could be particularly offensive or unimaginable and thereby an incentive to abide faithfully to the way of truth.

How would the thirteenth-century cleric have viewed the call to be the temple of God? The idea of the body as the temple was developing in the twelfth century. While Saint Paul clearly wrote in his second letter to the Corinthians that the believer was the temple of God, Jennifer Harris in “The Body as Temple” notes that the “somatic temple of every believer was a neglected doctrine for the first millennium of the Christian tradition.”65 She charts the progression of the idea of the body as the temple from the Greek fathers of the Church to Adam of Dryburgh (ca. 1140–1212). For the Greek Church fathers, the material body was “at best a garment covering the spiritual body, or at worst a regrettable consequence of sin and the Fall.”66 In “The Philosophical Anthropology of Saint Gregory of Nyssa,” Gerhart Ladner writes, “Basil’s doctrine of man” was such that “in spite of its admitted excellence as a vehicle of the soul, the body remains simple a

---

66 Ibid., 246.
shackle, a prison.” Ladner also notes that Origen “assumed that corporeal life was only a punitive, pedagogical, and redemptive consequence of creatures’ lapse from pure spirituality.”

On the other hand, Harris comments that Augustine’s view of the body was that it “[bore] the enduring imago dei, freed through the Crucifixion to be fully revealed in the general resurrection.” By the eleventh century, the attitude towards the body began to improve as incarnational theology became more prevalent. Harris points to Anselm of Canterbury’s (1033–1109) treatise Cur Deus Homo (“Why God became Man”), stating that “the human body, associated with the divinity in the Incarnation, fed on the eucharistic body of Christ, and bearing the image of God, takes up a more important position in the economy of salvation.” Beginning in the eleventh century, the consideration of Christ and Mary as being the templum Dei allowed Christians to see “by extension their own material bodies...as sharing the same human nature as Jesus.” Harris notes that in Rupert of Deutz’s (ca. 1075–1129) study of Solomon’s Temple, Deutz points to each part of the building as representative of Jesus’ body. According to Harris, the idea of Christ and Mary as temples extends to the monastic community in the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux (1090/91–1153):

Therefore, dearest brethren, let us endeavor with all ardor of desire and with all thanksgiving to build a temple to the Lord in us. Let it be our first solicitude that

---

68 Ibid., 828.
69 Harris, “The Body as Temple in the High Middle Ages,” 247.
70 Ibid., 248.
71 Ibid., 247.
72 Ibid., 239.
He dwell in each of us singly, and then let us induce Him to make His abode in us as a community also.\textsuperscript{73}

Harris also points to Adam of Dryburgh (ca. 1140–1212) as a twelfth-century witness of the body of Christ as a Temple. He wrote:

we should remain with one mind and by no thought or desire should you depart. For to remain with the mind in that temple, which we have called the body of Christ, is a pious devotion as well as a fruitful experience. Certainly it is the fullness of every piety to discern the human body in the Word; [and to discern] the flesh in divinity, the man in God.\textsuperscript{74}

By instructing the reader to “remain with the mind in that temple,” Adam recalls the passage from John 15. In the community at St. Victor in twelfth-century Paris, Fassler writes that “Hugh’s art is meant to initiate transformation, to help remake the observer in God’s image, a goal stated in the Rule of St. Augustine: ‘So all of you live with one soul and one heart, and honor in one another God, whose temples you were made to be.’”\textsuperscript{75} The idea of the material, bodily temple was also reinforced by the Eucharist and the notion that in the eucharistic liturgy, Christ’s body became a “portable, ingestible temple.”\textsuperscript{76} This also reflects the shift in “identification of the Eucharist rather than baptism as the most important sacrament in the church.”\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 249.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 237.
\textsuperscript{75} See Fassler, \textit{Gothic Song}, 218.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 242.
The Juxtaposition of Conductus V *Quanto decet honore* and Lectio VI

**Lectio VI**

Itaque qui sperat in Deum, ac toto corde in ejus gloriam luminum suorum defigit aspectum; ad densissimas vanitates consecratos semel non debet oculos retorquere; quia ut ait Dominus: Nemo mittens manum ad aratrum, et respiciens retro aptus est regno Dei.78

Thus, whoever hopes in God, and with the whole heart focuses the vision of their eyes (lights) on his glory; must not ever turn back their consecrated eyes to the most dense vanities; since, as God says: no one, casting the hand towards the plow, and looking back is suitable for the kingdom of God.

The juxtaposition of *Quanto decet* and the sixth lesson is a consonant one; the unity between the song and lesson validates and enriches the message. (See Appendix 2.5 for the text, translation, and edition of *Quanto decet honore.*) While the conductus calls on the Church to rejoice with heart, mouth, voice, and mind, the lesson reiterates and expands the call to include the whole heart (*toto corde*) and the consecrated eyes. The intersection of the conductus’ image of washing sins in the Jordan River with an Old Testament story of washing in the Jordan River prepares the clerics for the final statement of the lesson.79

While it may seem peculiar that on the occasion of the Circumcision the song features baptism (washing one’s sins away in the Jordan River), one must remember that while the Jordan river was most famous as the site of Christ’s baptism, it was also the site of Joshua’s circumcision of his men in the Old Testament.80 The two rituals were connected as circumcision, the ritual necessary for purification in the Old Testament, was rendered obsolete by the ritual of baptism.

---

80 See Joshua 5:2–9. Allegorically, Joshua was considered “that Jesus of old,” a type of Christ, by Cyril of Alexandria, thus implying that Christ was present or even carrying out this ritual.
that was instituted by Christ. As Cyril of Alexandria writes, “after His circumcision, the rite was 
done away by the introduction of that which had been signified by it, even baptism...circumcision 
figured in itself the grace and efficacy of Divine baptism.”\footnote{81 “Verumtamen post ipsius 
circumcisionem, cessavit circumcisio, subintrante eo quod ab illa portendebatur, id est 
baptismate...divini baptismatis typum, gratiam atque virtutem in se portendebat.” Cyril of 
Alexander, Homilia 3, PG 72: 499, trans. R. Payne Smith in Cyril of 
as a metaphor for spiritual circumcision: “So when we have crossed the Jordan, Christ circumcises 
us with the power of the Holy Spirit, not purifying the flesh, but rather purging and cleaning the 
defilement that is in our souls.”\footnote{82 “Ego postquam Jordanem trajecimus, tunc Christus nos 
circumcidit Spiritus sancti virtute, haud carnem quidem purgans, sed animarum potius 
maculas eluens.” Cyril of Alexander, Homilia 3, PG 72: 498. Adapted from R. Payne Smith in Cyril of 
Alexandria, \textit{Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke}, 57.} The reference to the Jordan River would also have brought 
\textit{Orientis partibus} to mind, for the donkey traverses the Jordan River en route to Bethlehem.

According to patristic and medieval commentators, allegorical readings of Old Testament 
stories of washings in the Jordan River prefigure baptism. The clerics, hearing this call to wash 
yourself in the Jordan River, might recall the story of Naaman, the general of the Syrian army who 
was plagued with leprosy, a story that Christ recounted in the Gospel of Luke: “And there were 
many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet: and none of them was cleansed but 
Naaman the Syrian.”\footnote{83 See 2 Kings 5 and Luke 4:27.} In this story, Elisha, the prophet of Israel, tells Naaman to wash in the 
Jordan River seven times to receive healing. Though he was reluctant, upon doing so, “his flesh 
was restored, like the flesh of a little child; and he was made clean.”\footnote{84 2 Kings 5:14.} Caesarius of Arles 
allegorically reads Naaman’s healing in the Jordan River as a product of Christ’s baptism: “Elisha sent 
Naaman to the river Jordan because Christ was to send the Gentiles to baptism...Naaman

\begin{footnotes}
\item[84] 2 Kings 5:14.
\end{footnotes}
prefigured the Gentiles, recovering his health in the same river that later Christ consecrated by his baptism.”⁸⁵ This idea can be traced to Isidore of Seville’s Allegoriae.⁸⁶ After receiving healing, Naaman promised fidelity to the God of the Israelites.

The clerics could notice how the story intersects with the lesson as the lesson concludes with this statement from the Gospel of Luke: “God says: no one, casting the hand towards the plow, and looking back is suitable for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). Rather than rejoice in Naaman’s healing, Giezi, Elisha’s servant, takes it upon himself to ask Naaman for both money and clothing as he feels his master Elisha has not been properly thanked. In an ironic stroke, Elisha pronounces Naaman’s leprosy on Giezi and his descendants. Giezi proverbially looks backwards though “his hand is on the plow.” Cyprian (c. 200–258) cautions that Christ warns us of looking backwards “lest we return to the devil again and to the world.”⁸⁷ The hand on the plow could also remind those gathered of the donkey’s role in separating the wheat from the chaff; since the donkey was known for its obedience, it presumably would not have “looked back.”

Symbolically, the conductus’ emphasis on the Jordan River and the allusion to baptism (and circumcision) sanctifies the listener for service in the kingdom and prepares those gathered to hear the admonition from the Gospel of Luke. The fifth lesson’s call to be a temple for God

---


⁸⁶ “Naaman Syrus significat populum ex gentibus, maculis delictorum pollutum, atque a Christo per sacramentum baptismi purificatum.” Isidore of Seville, Allegoriae, PL 83: 113.

progresses in the sixth lesson to an active call to service, with one’s hand to the plow, building on the second lesson’s exhortation that one must strive towards the progress of salvation.

Third Nocturn

At the third nocturn, the lessons switch from Pseudo-Maximus’ sermon on the Kalends to a Gospel homily on Luke 2 by Bede for the Feast of the Circumcision. The three lessons are very short; the first two introduce the text of Luke 2:21 on circumcision while the third presents a much-quoted verse from Saint Paul’s letter to the Galatians 4 as the reason for Christ’s circumcision, a verse first quoted by Origen in his sermon on Luke 2. These lessons are prepared by very substantial and theologically dense conductus. The first, *Lux optata*, emphasizes the regal, powerful yet servile nature of the child to be born, concluding with triumphal anti-Jewish language. The second, *Eva virum*, explores Eve’s role in original sin. The third, *Ex Ade*, acknowledges the reality of life under the yoke of sin and offers the antidote in the “*Deum in virgine*.” While the subject of sin and forgiveness appears in earlier conductus, the close look that *Eva virum* and *Ex Ade* take on the fundamental aspects of sin prepares those gathered for these lessons, since circumcision was, after all, considered a ritual of purification of original sin.

The donkey, whose appearance was more embedded in the story of Gideon’s fleece in the conductus of the First Nocturn and implied in *Nostre quod* (Second Nocturn) as one of the animals abiding with the Christ child, returns in this final nocturn through a reference to the threshing floor and winnowing fan. In *Ex Ade*, the final conductus of the Third Nocturn, the donkey’s and Christ’s task of separating the wheat from the chaff stands on its own.
The Juxtaposition of Conductus VI *Lux optata* and Lectio VII

Though *Lux optata* opens by referencing the Christmas light and the Palm Sunday processional—“*Lux optata claruit, Gaude Syon filia*” (The desired light shone, Rejoice daughter of Zion)—its refrain—*Hoc in hoc, hoc in hoc, hoc in sollemnio/Conciat hec concio* (On this solemn feast, let the company sing)—calls those gathered to sing and contextualize the words and images of the song through the lens of this, the Feast of the Circumcision. (See Appendix 2.6 for the text, translation, and edition of *Lux optata*.) The verses offer various images, ideas, and phrases from which the refrain gathers and focuses those assembled. In the first two verses, different phrases remind those gathered of various feasts and the donkey’s place in those feasts. In the first verse, the Christmas light could be a reminder of the ass’s presence at the Nativity manger while *Gaude Syon filia* could prompt the cleric to recall Christ’s Entry to Jerusalem on an ass on Palm Sunday. The second verse’s articulation of the paradoxical nature of the Christian paradigm—*induit servitia superna regalitas* (royalty clothed lofty servitude)—could be contextualized through the paradoxes of the Feast of Fools.

Particularly significant for the theory that the conductus functioned as a conduit for clerics’ recollection of exegesis is the fact that the premise of mystical typology and exegesis is stated in the third verse: *quidquid fuit mysticum testamento veteri, quidquid fuit typicum, Moyses et ceteri, fructum per Daviticum decret patefieri, cum gloria* (whatsoever was mysterious from the Old Testament, whatsoever was figurative, Moses and others, It is fitting that the fruit of David [Christ] reveals it with glory). The typology is left a “mystery” except that the “fruit of David” reveals it. Perhaps this revelation

---

88 This phrase is loosely taken from Zacharias 9: *jubila, filia Jerusalem: ecce rex tuus veniet tibi justus, et salvator: ipse pauper, et ascendens super asinam et super pullum filium asinæ* (Shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold thy king will come to thee, the just and saviour: he is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass).
could come in the form of the clerics’ recollection of exegesis connected to the images in the
conductus. Specifically directed by the refrain, the Old Testament mystery for this feast could be
understood as the circumcision. Additionally, this verse could serve as a reminder for the cleric to
stay attentive to the commentary tradition for how it prepares those gathered for a certain
perspective in the hearing of the lesson.

The final phrases of verse three leave little room for mystery or even exegesis. It directly
addresses the Jewish nation as *Iudea gens rea* (guilty people of Judea) who must *rege
crede celicum, per quem [ius potestia] sumus liberi* (believe the heavenly king by whom we are liberated). They are
called *gens digna supplicio* (people deserving of suffering). The guilt the song affixes to the Jews is
the blame placed on them for the crucifixion. In a sermon on the Epiphany, Maximus of Turin
reminds the listener that the Jews “persecuted the Lord and Savior within the governor’s palace
and condemned Him with the judge’s approval. In the governor’s palace, then, innocence is
oppressed by the Jews.”Bernard of Clairvaux writes that “the Jews...not unmindful of the hatred
with which they hate the Father, bring it to bear against the Son.... What have the ungodly done,
then for whom ever to see this is grievous?.... They killed the Lamb of God, to their own ruination,
but to our salvation.”

---

89 “Nam olim jam et Dominum Salvatorem intra praetorium persecuti sunt, et praesidis
eum judico condemnarunt. In praetorio ergo a Judaeis innocentia opprimitur, secretum proditur,
religio condemnatur.” Maximus of Turin, Sermo 63 *De calendis Januarii*, PL 57: 544; trans.
Boniface Ramsey in AWC 50: 156.

90 “Judaie vero non immemores odii quo oderant Patrem, exercent illud in Fillium...Quid
ergo fecerunt impii, quibus gravis erat etiam ad videndum? ...Sic ergo occiderunt Agnum Dei, in
suam quidem perniciem, sed in salutem nostram.” Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermo 3, PL 183: 137;
Advent and Christmas Season* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2007), 144.
The refrain’s reminder that it is “on this solemn feast” that the company sings brings this condemnation of the Jewish nation into the context of the Feast of the Circumcision. It makes the refrain sound like a triumph over the Jews, and possibly also over circumcision. Patristic and medieval writers faulted Jews for practicing circumcision after the advent of Christ. John Chrysostom writes in Homily 39 on Genesis 17 that “the ungrateful and unresponsive Jews...even now when the right time has passed, insist on keeping circumcision and betray their juvenile attitude.”

Lectio VII

Luc II. In illo tempore, cum consummate essent dies octo ut circumcideretur puer, vocatum est nomen ejus Jesus. Sancta venerandamque praesentis festi memoriam paucis quidem verbis evangelista comprehendit, sed non pauc a coelestis mysterii virtute gravidam reliquit.

At that time, after eight days were accomplished, that the child should be circumcised, his name was called JESUS. The evangelist comprehends in a few words, the holy and venerable words the memory of the present feast, but leaves it pregnant with no small power of heavenly mystery.

Having been directed by the conductus to both reflect on what is mystical in the Old Testament and to regard the Jewish nation pejoratively, Bede’s statement about the “heavenly mystery” of the circumcision seems to straddle the tension between the Old Law and the New Law. Commentators note that although Christ, a sinless man, did not need the purification offered by circumcision, he nevertheless participated in this ritual of circumcision because he was born under the law, and was thus subject to the rituals in the Jewish tradition. While the Jewish belief on

circumcision (as prescribed by God to Abraham in Genesis 17:12–14) recognizes that it is so the person’s “soul is not destroyed out of his people,” the Christian belief was that it removed original sin.

Furthermore, William Durand and others note that Christ underwent circumcision “on account of perfect humility.” But it is not just the lowliness that circumcision produced, but loftiness. Cyril of Alexandria notes that Christ was circumcised on the eighth day because it was “on the eighth day Christ rose from the dead and gave us the spiritual circumcision.” Bede also connects the eighth day to “that blessed day of resurrection itself...when, as the true glory of every sort of circumcision shines forth.” For Bernard, the eighth day “offered hope of the heavenly kingdom, because, when the cycle of days has come around again to its beginning, it would seem to present a kind of likeness to a crown.” Perhaps Bernard puts the paradox of Christ, the king

92 Genesis 17:14.
93 “Propter perfectam humilitatem, tanquam esset peccator uluit hoc fieri, licet non indigeret; sicut et ex humilitate uluit baptizari, subdendo se minori.” Durand/Thibodeau, 6.15.11. Bernard acknowledges this: “Itaque in majore quidem aetate, patientiae et humilitatis, et super omnia charitatis, caeterarumque virtutum manifesta dedit Salvator exempla, in infantia vero figuris velata.” That “in his maturity the Saviour gave us clear examples of patience and humility...in this infancy these were veiled as symbols.” Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermo III, PL 183: 137; trans. Irene Edmonds, Wendy Mary Beckett, and Conrad Greenia in Bernard, Sermons for the Advent and Christmas Season, 144.
95 “Quod desideratissimum tempus coelestis introitus illa dies octava, qua circumcisio celebratur...Octava autem aetas ipsa est dies resurrectionis sine ullo temporis fine beata.” Bede, Homilia, PL 94: 56; trans. Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst in Bede, Homilies on the Gospels, 108–9.
96 “Nam quod haec circumcisio octava die fiebat, spem commendabat regni coelestis, quod videlicet ad primum reflexum dierum circulius praeferre quamdam coronae speciem videtur.” Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermo 2, De varis Christi nominibus, PL 183: 135; trans. Irene Edmonds, Wendy Mary Beckett, and Conrad Greenia in Bernard, Sermons for the Advent and Christmas, 134. (calls it sermon 1, but in the PL, it is sermon 2).
who subjected himself to circumcision, best when he writes, “but recognize the mediator between God and humankind who from the very beginning of his birth joins what is human to what is divine, the lowest to the highest.”

The Juxtaposition of Conductus VII *Eva virum dedit* and Lectio VIII.

Since circumcision was “provided as [a] grace [s] for taking away the first transgression,” according to Bede, *Eva virum*’s snapshots of the events of the Fall would have been an appropriate introduction to the lesson on the Nativity and Jesus’ circumcision and naming. (See Appendix 2.7 for the text, translation, and edition of *Eva virum.*) The tension between the lofty and the lowly is played out within the conductus through the relationship between Eve and Mary while the juxtaposition between the more somber tone of the conductus and more joyful tone of the lesson depicts the progression from the despair of the Fall in the conductus to the hope of the Nativity, the circumcision, and the naming in the lesson.

The contrast between the very human and lowly Eve and the loftier Virgin Mary in the song demonstrates a dichotomy between the two figures that was recognized throughout Christianity. The conductus states that Eve is the one who gave man unto death, the “wife” who gave the apples, the mother who gives birth in sadness. According to John Chrysostom, Eve’s curse is a reminder that “through the distress and pain of each birth” the magnitude of this sin of

---


disobedience is remembered.\textsuperscript{99} On the other hand, the Virgin Mary has been presented on the throne (in \textit{Nostre quod}) or elevated as a star (in \textit{Gratulemuer}), and as various Old Testament typologies (the burning bush, Gideon’s fleece, and Aaron’s rod). In \textit{Eva virum}, the Virgin Mary is presented in her lofty function: in verse two as the \textit{alvo virginis} (womb of the virgin) and the \textit{alvus sacra} (sacred vessel) that would bear Christ and in verse three as the \textit{genitrix}.\textsuperscript{100}

This dichotomy between Mary and Eve, according to Rachel Golden Carlson, was earliest explained by Justin Martyr (d. 165) in chapter 100 of the \textit{Dialogue with Trypho}.\textsuperscript{101}

[Christ] has become man by the Virgin in order that by the same way in which the disobedience caused by the serpent took its beginning, by this way should it also take its destruction. For Eve being a virgin and uncorrupt, conceived the word spoken of the serpent, and brought forth disobedience and death. But Mary the Virgin receiving faith and grace, when the angel Gabriel brought her the good news that the Spirit of the Lord should come upon her, and the power of the Highest should overshadow her, wherefore also that Holy Thing that is born of her is Son of God, answered, Be it unto me according to thy Word.\textsuperscript{102}


\textsuperscript{100} On a more exalted note, Jennifer Harris posits that Ambrose of Milan (d. 397) was the “first Latin Christian author to equate Mary with the Temple because she bore the Incarnate God in her womb.” See Jennifer Harris, “The Body as Temple in the High Middle Ages,” 244.

\textsuperscript{101} See Rachel Carlson, “Devotion to the Virgin Mary,” 165.

\textsuperscript{102} “…et ex Virgine hominem esse factum, ut qua via initium orta a serpente inobedientia accepit, eadem et disolutionem acciperet. Eva enim cum virgo esset et incorrupta, sermone serpentis concepto, inobedientiam et mortem peperit. Maria autem Virgo, cum fidem et gaudium percepisset, nuntianit angelo Gabrieli laetum nuntium, nempe Spiritum Domini in eam superventurum et virtutem Altissimi ei obumbraturam, ideoque id quod nascetur ex ea sanctum, esse Filium Dei, respondit: ‘Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.’” Justin Martyr, \textit{The Dialogue with Trypho} 100, PG 6: 710–711; trans. Thomas B. Falls in Justin Martyr, \textit{The Dialogue with Trypho}, FC 3:
Mary’s redemption of what Eve has ruined is heard in *Aureo flore*, a sequence from Pa 1138/1338 fol. 111r (an eleventh-century proser-troper) that Susan Boynton translates in “Rewriting the Early Sequence.” 103

Porta que clausa fuerat per euam paradisi reserata precelse meritis marie o quam benedicta. 104

The gate of paradise, that had been closed because of Eve, has been reopened by the merits of Mary, O how blessed.

Mary’s redemption of Eve’s sin can also be seen in the relationship between the words *Eva* for Eve and *Ave*. Frederic Raby comments that the angel Gabriel “in forming his ‘Ave’ out of the letters which make up the word ‘Eva’ was announcing the redemption of man from the curse of Eve.” 105

The transformation of the lowly to lofty can also be evoked by the image of thorns and thistles coming from Eve’s punishment for Adam’s consumption of the forbidden apple. The passage from Genesis 3:17–18 is as follows:

And to Adam he said: Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of they wife, and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in they work: with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth.

Tertullian contextualizes the thorns and thistles in Christ’s crown at the Passion:

To what kind of a crown, I ask you, did Christ Jesus submit for the salvation of both sexes! ...It was made from thorns and thistles. They stood as a symbol for sins that the soil of the flesh brought forth for us but that the power of the cross removed, blunting every sting of death since the head of the Lord bore its pain. 106

---

103 See Susan Boynton, “Rewriting the Early Sequence,” 21–42.
104 Ibid., 36–37.
106 “…quale oro te, sertum pro utroque sexu subiit? Ex spinis opinor et tribulis, in figuram delictorum quae nobis protulit terra carnis, abstulit autem virtus crucis, omnem aculeum mortis in
The thorns find redemption in the second half of *Castitatis liliun* (in Egerton 2615, fol 10r, designated as a *Deo gratias*). In this song, Mary sprouts grapes from the thorns—*Tu de spinis uva decens pululas, benedicta super omnes feminas*—implying the redemption Mary brings to the consequences of original sin. In the version found in *F.Pn* 1139, the eighth verse also states this about Mary—*Tu fecunda ficus es ex tribulis* (You are a fertile fig tree out of thistle). On a lighter note, thistles appear as the donkey’s food in *Orientis partibus*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin Phrase</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cum aristas ordeum</td>
<td>He chews the ears with barley corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedit et carduum</td>
<td>Thistle down with thistle corn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triticum a palea</td>
<td>On the threshing floor his feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segregate in area</td>
<td>Separate the chaff from the wheat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hez, hez.</td>
<td>Heigh, heigh!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In verse three, the juxtaposition of the images of Abel’s bitter death and Christ’s death on the altar of the cross brings the figure of the lamb to the forefront. According to Levitical law, lambs were offered as sacrifices when redeeming first-born animals. Cain murdered his brother Abel out of jealousy because Abel’s offering of firstlings from his flock of sheep were better received by God than Cain’s. While Abel offered the best of his lambs for the offering, Christ himself was the sacrificial lamb. As John the Baptist states upon seeing Christ, *Ecce agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi* (Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world). After Adam, Abel was considered to be the next type of Christ, according to Isidore of Seville’s


108 John 1:29
Allegoriae: Abel pastor ovium, Christi tenuit typum\textsuperscript{109} That the conductus states that Christ dies on the cross of the altar reinforces the idea that Christ was indeed the sacrificial lamb. But rather than continue to explore the necessity of the sacrifice, the conductus alters its perspective, steering the clerics towards a more favorable mindset that the lesson will bring. The phrase *Botrum Iudas exprimit, vinum dat, quod redimit* conveys that Judas’ supposedly treacherous act of symbolically squeezing the grapes (that is, Christ’s blood) actually produces wine that redeems, the Eucharistic wine.

The conductus ends by singing that *plebs redempta gentium, obsequium et gaudium* (common people of the Gentiles, having been redeemed, gain obedience and joy.)

Lectio VIII

Exposita namque nativitate Dominica, cujus gaudia mox angeli dignis laudibus exteterunt, pastores devota visitatione celebrarunt, omnes qui tunc audiere mirati sunt, nos quoque pro modulo nostro, prout potuimus, Christo Domino largiente, congruis missarum hymnorumque solemniis exegimus, subjunxit atque ait: Et postquam consummati sunt dies octo ut circumcideretur puer, vocatum est nomen ejus Jesus, quod vocatum est ab angelo priusquam in utero conciperetur.

The angels proclaimed the joys of the Lord’s nativity with praises worthy of its glory; the shepherds celebrated [the occasions] by visiting devoutly; all who then heard marvelled at it, and we also have recently taken time to [celebrate] it to the best of our abilities with fitting solemnities of masses and hymns, as the Lord has granted us to do. After his explanation of the Lord’s nativity, [the evangelist] added this statement: And after eight days were over, so that the boy might be

\textsuperscript{109} See Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Thirteenth Century*, 2: 159. Mâle points out that Adam and Abel are types of Christ in Isidore of Seville’s *Allegoriae*. “Adam figuram Christi gestavit; nam sicut ill exa die formatus ad imaginem Dei, ita sexta mundi aetate Filius Dei carnis formam induit, hoc est, formam servi accepit, ut reformaret hominem ad similitudinem Dei.... Abel pastor ovium, Christi tenuit typum, qui est verus, et bonus pastor, sicut ipse dicit: Ego sum pastor bonus, qui pono animam meam pro ovibus meis, venturus rector fidelium populorum. Cain, frater eju, aetate major, qui eundem Abel occidit in campo, priorem significat populum qui interfecit Christum in Calvariae loco.” Isidore of Seville, *Allegoriae*, PL 83: 99–100.
circumcised, his name was called Jesus, which is what he was called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Though the conclusion of the conductus begins to redeem the rather negative consideration of the wretched life of toil and suffering found in the first two verses of the conductus, the eighth lesson’s joyful opening with angels and shepherds jubilantly praising and celebrating the Nativity could more instantaneously wipe away the thoughts of the fallen life. This is immediately followed by another recitation of Luke 2:21.

The Juxtaposition of Conductus VIII Ex Ade vitio and Lectio IX

What is stated implicitly and poetically in the final conductus of Matins, Ex Ade vitio, is made explicit in the final lesson. The juxtaposition of the conductus’ joyful Marian images with the lesson’s quotation from Galatians about the redemption of those under the law by the Son born of a woman guides the listener from the metaphorical images of the Virgin Mary bearing Christ to the understanding that Christ’s being “born of a woman” brought redemption. (See Appendix 2.8 for the text, translation, and edition of Ex Ade vitio.) The conductus’ opening from the perspective of Adam—ex Ade vitio nostra perditio traxit primordia (out of Adam’s sin our destruction derives its origins)—pairs well with Eva virum, which began from the perspective of Eve.

After the opening call to rejoice, the song recalls what life was like subiugaverat or “under the yoke” in the second stanza—burdensome suffering, the reign of slavery, and the denial of freedom. The clerical audience, already acclimated to asinine references in this donkey-centric Feast of Fools, could hear this phrase “under the yoke” and identify themselves with the beasts of burden. The donkey informs this “life under the yoke” as Cyril of Alexandria’s homily on the Feast of the Circumcision expands on the quotation of Galatians
4:4–5 by explaining that Christ was not only under the law, but “yielded his neck to the law.”

A beast of burden must yield its neck to be outfitted with a yoke and burden to do agrarian work, so in a sense, we are again invited to compare Christ with the donkey. Furthermore, the idea of slavery was heard in John Chrysostom’s and Bernard of Clairvaux’s sermons on the circumcision of Christ. John Chrysostom (fourth century) views the covenant of circumcision God made with Abraham as a punitive one by comparing it to placing “shackles on their feet.”

Though Bernard notes that Jesus is born “under the law,” like the other writers on the circumcision, he equates the law more strongly to “chains and fetters.” He writes:

> a few days ago, we celebrated his coming into the prison of this world—that is, the day of his birth; today we celebrate because he took on our chains and fetters. Today he who committed no sin put his innocent hands into the fetters of the guilty so as to set them free; today the One who gave the Law was born under the Law.

The rest of the second stanza discusses the Incarnation, the solution to this theological problem, quite literally—*Mariam per spiritum paraclitum fecundari et Deum in virgine pro homine humanari* (Mary, by the spirit, the counselor, was made fruitful and to make human God in the virgin on behalf of man). The opening of the third stanza discusses the Incarnation prophetically—

> Styrps Isse virgulam secreti baiulam et florem virgula producit unicum flosque mirificum fructum per secula (The shoot of Jesse having separated the palm branch and the flower from the shoot/rod brought forth a singular and amazing flower, fruit for eternity.)

---


It is fitting that the final conductus in the final nocturn of this service of Matins concludes with a nod to the donkey via the winnowing fan and threshing floor. The final verse of the conductus opens with this line, *paleam retulit ad aream ventilabrum* (the winnowing fan moved the chaff to the threshing floor), a reference to Matthew 3:12. This line gestures to Christ’s and the donkey’s task. Considering the crucial role that the figure of the donkey has in this feast, it is appropriate that the liturgical authors chose this conductus as the final one. As noted earlier, the idea of the donkey’s separating of the wheat from the chaff had already been explicitly stated in the final verse of *Orientis partibus*: *Triticum a palea segregate in area*. Two more indirect allusions to this activity came in the references to Gideon’s fleece on the threshing floor in *Gratulemur in hac die* and *Nostre quod* in the First Nocturn. This statement of the winnowing fan concludes, in the Gospel of Matthew, with the phrase that *paleas autem comburet igni inextinguibili* (the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire), bringing to mind the burning of the branches that do not abide in the grapevine—a theme consistent with the call to devout living in this service of Matins.

The conductus and its corresponding lesson culminate in a pairing that masterfully turns the conductus’s statement of life under the yoke on its head through the biblical passage quoted in the lesson. On this Feast of Fools, it is apt that the overturning of paradigms is celebrated in the final conductus/lesson pairing.
Lectio IX

Haec sunt festivitatis hodiernae gaudia veneranda, haec sacrae solemnitas diei, haec illa supernae pietatis munera sacrosancta, quae fidelium cordibus commendans Apostolus ait: Quia ubi venit plenitudo temporis, misit Deus Filium suum factum ex muliere, factum sub lege, ut eos qui sub lege errant, redimeret, ut adoptionem filiorum recipemus.\footnote{Galatians 4:4–5.}

These are the joys of today’s feast which are to be venerated, this is the solemnity of the sacred day, these are the most sacred gifts of heavenly benevolence which the Apostle commends to the hearts of the faithful when he says, When the fullness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law: That he might redeem them who were under the law: that we might receive the adoption of sons.

The lesson responds to the all-encompassing conductus with an equally complete yet incredibly succinct verse from Saint Paul’s letter to the Galatians. The biblical passage quoted in the lesson is as follows: Quia, ubi venit plenitudo temporis, misit Deus Filium suum factum ex muliere, factum sub lege, ut eos qui sub lege errant, redimeret, ut adoptionem filiorum recipemus (When the fullness of time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive adoption of sons.)\footnote{Ibid.} While the conductus discussed the Incarnation without any explicit mention of the Son being “born under the law,” it did present a picture of what life under the law could have been like—an existence that was “under the yoke” where burdensome suffering and servitude reigns.

How can one born under the law have any power to redeem others under the law? Cyril of Alexandria acknowledges this conundrum when he writes in his commentary on the Gospel of Luke, “we have seen him who is obedient to the laws of Moses, or rather we have seen him who as
God is the Legislator subject to his own decrees.”¹¹⁴ Later in Bede’s homily, he comments that Christ was born under the law so that he might have compassion on those unable to carry the burdens of the law.¹¹⁵ But it is not just for compassion that Christ was born under the law. Cyril writes that, though Christ was born under the law, he was able to redeem those “from the curse of the law by fulfilling the law...in order that He might expiate the guilt of Adam’s transgression, He showed Himself obedient and submissive in every respect to God the Father in our stead.”¹¹⁶

Thus, it is precisely the fact that Christ was born under the law that he was able to redeem “burdensome suffering,” “life under the yoke,” and slavery. The clerical audience would be expected to recall the biblical passages that overturn the conventional, negative understandings of burdens and yokes. The most memorable one would be Christ’s words from the Gospel of Matthew. The passages reads:


Come to me, all who labor and are burdened and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart: And you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden is light.¹¹⁷


¹¹⁵ “...factum sub lege, Filium suum misit Deus in mundum...ut eos qui sub lege positis legis onera portare nequiverant, sua compassione juvaret, ac de servili conditione.” PL 94: 54; trans. Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst in Bede, *Homilies*, 104.


It is not that Christ promises to share the yoke or burden, but rather he proposes to replace the worldly yoke and burden—consequences of life under the law—with his sweet yoke and light burden. A sweet yoke and a light burden may seem like an oxymoron, particularly considering agrarian practices, but it is precisely this idea of paradox that is so integral to Christian theology and this feast.

While Ex Ade states that slavery and servitude were features of “life under the yoke,” the lesson overturns these negative notions into positive ones through Christ’s example. Since Christ was also under the law, he was also subject to the same servile conditions and yet in Saint Paul’s letter to the Philippians, Christ *qui cum in forma Dei esset...sed semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens* (being in the form of God...emptied himself, taking the form of a servant). Christ’s servitude takes on new meaning in the context of the Christian paradigm where the lowly are exalted. One must not forget that Paul then writes that “Therefore God has highly exalted him...” John Chrysostom explains this paradox:

> He was obedient to the uttermost, wherefore He received the honor which is on high. He became a servant, wherefore He is Lord of all, both of Angels, and of all other. Let us too not suppose then that we descend from what is our due, when we humble ourselves. For thus maybe we be more highly exalted; and with reason; then do we especially become admirable. For that the lofty man is really low, and that the lowly man is exalted, the sentence of Christ sufficiently declares.}

119 Philippians 2:9.
Some commentators make sense of Christ’s assuming the form of a slave by linking it to commiseration. Clement of Alexandria writes that Christ “became a slave so that he could share human suffering in the flesh.”  

Ambrosiaster writes that “his taking the form of a slave was not simply his becoming human but his profound identification with sinners, voluntarily taking the form of a slave.” But, most importantly, it is precisely Christ’s adopting the form of a slave that allowed him to redeem mankind from under the law. Augustine writes this: “The Lord Jesus Christ came in flesh and having accepted the form of a slave, became obedient even to death on the cross...that one may live, be saved, delivered, redeemed, illuminated, who had been dead in their sins.”

As we have seen, the conductus prepared the clerical community for the lessons by presenting biblical imagery with exegetical meanings that uniquely combined with the content of ensuing lessons. The separating of the wheat from the chaff (presented in the conductus via Gideon’s dewy fleece and the winnowing fork) served as perhaps the most constant metaphor for the divide between the faithful and faithless.

---

121 “...hincque formam servi sumpsisse dictus est, non solum carnem per praesentiam suam, verum etiam ex subjecto essentiam.” Clement of Alexandria’s Excerpts from Theodotus 19.4–5, PG 9: 667; trans. dir. Dennis McManus in ACCS NT 8: 245.


123 “Quibus appareat Dominum Jesum Christum non aliam ob causam in carne venisse, ac forma servi accepta factum obedientem usque ad mortem crucis...vivificaret, salvos faceret, liberaret, redimeret, illuminaret, qui prius fuissent in peccatorum morte.” Augustine, On What Is Due to Sinners 1.39, PL 44: 131; trans. directed by Dennis McManus and adapted in ACCS NT 8: 246.
Donkey’s Role in Matins

As was stated in Chapter 1, the heralding of the Feast with the conductus Orientis partibus associated the figure of the donkey and all it stands for with the Feast of the Circumcision/Feast of Fools. At the start of Matins, the most compelling narrative/exegesis presented, thus far, was of this lowly donkey whose burden bearing was a lofty vocation, and who was compared to Christ. Experiencing the feast though the Orientis partibus’s donkey was Beauvais Cathedral’s unique way of celebrating the feast. While the donkey’s presence at the opening of First Vespers was obvious, its presence at Matins was more implicit. There are no donkey songs in Matins, no explicit appearances of the donkey in any of the songs or lessons, and yet the donkey’s presence is felt in this service. It is the references to the area (threshing floor) via Gideon’s fleece in two of the conductus and to the actual process of separating the wheat from the chaff in the final conductus that bring the donkey to mind. It was precisely this task of the donkey’s that was mentioned in Orientis partibus. This separating of the wheat from the chaff could also be the most appropriate metaphor for the dividing of the faithful from the faithless during Kalends, and thus, particularly relevant to the teachings in the first and second nocturns. By examining the conductus/lesson pairings that contain references to this process, we can see how the lessons offer a tropological response to these images in the conductus, essentially exhorting and instructing the listener how to be the “wheat” and not the “chaff.”

A mention of the phrase inter animalia in the conductus Nostre quod, the third conductus in the second nocturn, also brings the donkey (and the ox) closer to the foreground of Matins, as it reminds those assembled of the ox and the ass at the Nativity (discussed in Chapter 1). The watchful, almost guardian-like quality of the ox and ass over the Christ child’s birth, brings a
different dimension of the donkey to the table, one that mirrors an abiding quality that is alluded to in Nastri festi, the fourth conductus of the second nocturn.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have seen how the conductus specifically introduce readings (as opposed to Orientis partibus’ introduction of the feast as a whole at Feast Vespers) and how the textual content of the conductus and lessons as well as the delivery of the conductus and lessons stand in relief of each other, contributing to the effectiveness of the hearing of each. The difference in pacing of the song as contrasted with the delivery of the lesson as well as the difference in focus of the content of each component shapes the clerics’ mindset as they hear and heed the message of each pairing. For instance, the dogmatic prose of the lessons of the first two nocturns both awakens and disrupts the conductus from their sea of poetic, metaphorical images as well as finds its own tone mitigated by the conductus. Conversely, the often bleak focus on the Old Law and the Fall in the conductus of the third nocturn is broken by the mystery, hope, and joy of the circumcision lessons.

Regarding the exegetical message the clerics could create in the performance of the conductus/lesson pairings, this chapter has shown how the trilogy of nocturns takes the cleric through an external and internal journey of faith. The first nocturn celebrates the external walk of faith and progress of health, all while celebrating the Octave of the Nativity with Marian imagery. The image of the fleece that prefigures Christ’s washing of his disciple’s feet in Gratulemur in hac deftly informs the hearing of the third lesson—to “walk the religious journey...trampling on errors and diabolical fictions.”
The conductus/lesson pairings of the second nocturn challenge those gathered to consider their fidelity to God, an appropriate question considering January 1 is also the Kalends, the pagan celebration that often drew the faithful away from the Church. The themes of these three conductus progress liturgically from the Nativity in *Nostre quod*, to the circumcision in *Nostri festi*, and finally to baptism in *Quanto decet*. By featuring each of these human, incarnate events in Christ’s life, the nocturn encourages the clerics to be that embodied “temple of God.”

The second nocturn’s general emphasis on the paradoxical nature of the Incarnation also anticipates the specific focus on the circumcision of Christ in the conductus/lesson pairings of the third nocturn. In the third nocturn, the conductus widen their scope to consider the Fall, the reason for the ritual of circumcision while the final lesson of Matins addresses the paradox that Christ, the son of God, would be subject to circumcision because he was “under the law.”

As we have seen in this chapter, Matins requires dedicated and diligent concentration on the part of both the medieval cleric and the modern reader to uncover the hidden meanings in the conductus/lesson pairings. But the performance of the *Ludus Danielis* at the conclusion of Matins (Chapter 3), brings an infusion of play to the feast; the conductus shift the clerics’ attention to the question of wisdom and folly as it was also the Feast of Fools.
Dies ista colitur, tange symphoniam, 
Nam puer, qui nascitur, iuxta prophetiam, 
Ut gigas egreditur, ad currendam viam. 
_Felix est egressio, per quam fit remissio._

_1_ He is worshipped this day, strike the instrument 
For the boy, who is born, according to the prophecy. 
As the giant marches, to hurry the way. 
_Happy is the birth through which comes forgiveness._

2 Diei sollemnisitas, ita celebretur, 
ut prudens simplicitas, bonum operetur, 
et non cesset caritas, que nos comitetur. 
_Felix est egressio, per quam fit remissio._

_Thus let the solemnity of the day be celebrated 
So that prudent simplicity may perform a good deed, 
And charity may not cease, and it may accompany us._

_Happy is the birth through which comes forgiveness._

3 Diei det gloriem homo iam renatus, 
qui per negligentiam olim exulatus 
per misericordiam redit liberatus. 
_Felix est egressio, per quam fit remissio._

_Let the Man already reborn give glory to this day, 
Who was formerly exiled through negligence 
Through mercy he returns liberated._

_Happy is the birth through which comes forgiveness._

4 Diem hanc leticie fecit homo deus, 
dono cuius gratie suscitatur reus, 
cum de domo vidue exit Heliseus. 
_Felix est egressio, per quam fit remissio._

_The Man, of God, made this day of joy 
By the gift of whose grace the sinner is awaken, 
When Elijah exits the home of the widow._

_Happy is the birth through which comes forgiveness._

---

124 Translation adapted from Mary Caldwell, “Singing, Dancing, and Rejoicing,” 300.
5 Dies o tam celebris, quam es admiranda, 
Tu lumen in tenebris, lux glorificanda, 
per quam vita funebris nobis est vitanda. 
Felix est egressio, per quam fit remissio.

Oh, as this celebrated day, You are also to be admired, 
are light in darkness, light glorified, 
Through which a mortal life is shunned by us. 
*Happy is the birth through which comes forgiveness.*

6 Die ista claruit lumen ilud clarum, 
quod nobis innotuit voce prophetarum, 
Splendor cuius diluit noctem tenebrarum 
Felix est egressio, per quam fit remissio.

This day is illuminated by that bright light 
which became known to us by the voice of the prophets 
whose brilliance diminishes the night of the darkness. 
*Happy is the birth through which comes forgiveness.*
Dies ista colitur

Sequitur Conductus

1. 
   Di - es i - sta co - li - tur,  tan - ge sym - pho - ni - am,
   Di - e - i sol - lemp - ni - tas  i - ta ce - le - bre - tur,
   Di - e - i det glo - ri - am  ho - mo iam re - na - tus,
   Di - em hanc le - ti - ci - e  fe - cit ho - m de - us,
   Di - es o tam ce - le - bris,  quam es ad - mi - ran - da,
   Di - e i - sta cla - ru - it  lu - men il - lud cla - rum,

2. 
   nam pu - er, qui nas - ci - tur  iux - ta pro - phe - ti - am,
   ut pru - dens sim - pli - ci - tas  bo - num o - pe - re - tur,
   qui per ne - gli - gen - ti - am  o - lim e - xu - la - tus
   do - no cu - ius gra - ti - e  sus - ci - ta - tur re - us,
   tu lu - men in te - ne - bris,  lux glo - ri - fi - can - da,
   quod no - bis in - no - tu - it  vo - ce pro - phe - ta - rum

3. 
   ut gi - gas e - gre - di - tur  ad cu - ren - dam vi - am.
   et non ces - set ca - ri - tas,  que nos co - mi - te - tur.
   per mi - se - ri - cor - di - am  re - dit li - be - ra - tus.
   cum de do - mo vi - du - e  ex - it He - li - se - us.
   per quam vi - ta fu - ne - bris  no - bis est vi - tan - da.
   splen - dor cu - ius di - lu - it  noc - tem te - ne - bra - rum.

4. 
   Fe - lix est e - gres - si - o,  per quam fit re - mis - si - o.
   Fe - lix est e - gres - si - o,  per quam fit re - mis - si - o.
   Fe - lix est e - gres - si - o,  per quam fit re - mis - si - o.
   Fe - lix est e - gres - si - o,  per quam fit re - mis - si - o.
   Fe - lix est e - gres - si - o,  per quam fit re - mis - si - o.
   Fe - lix est e - gres - si - o,  per quam fit re - mis - si - o.
APPENDIX 2.2

Gratulemur in hac, Text and Translation
Egerton 2615, fols. 19r–19v

1a Gratulemur in hac die
   nova dantes gaudia

Let us rejoice in this new day,
giving new joy

1b Dei patris verbum Dei
   nostra sonent studia

May our efforts devotedly sound
the word of God the Father

1c Respice gratia vice,
   Dei patris unice,
   tibi gratos effice,
   quos hec habet curia.

Look with grace on our plight,
sole God of our Father,
make us pleasing to you,
we whom these things have.

2a Rubus ardet, sed illesus,
   florem dedit virgula,

The bush burns, but is unharmed,
the shoot has yielded the flower,

2b lapis absque manu cesus
   Christus implet secula.

the stone is cut without a hand;
Christ fills eternity.

2c Vellera rorifera,
   sicca manens area,
   castitas virginea nova dant miracula.

The “bringing dew” fleece,
the threshing floor remaining dry,
the maidenly chastity produces new miracles.

3a Virgo deum, stella solem
   et ancilla dominum,

A virgin bears God, a star bears the sun;
a handmaiden bears the Lord

3b digne parit novam prolem
   virgo manens virginum.

remaining a virgin, she fittingly bears
the new offspring of virgins.

3c Ubera puerpera dat regenti secula,
   terram, mare, cetera vera salus hominum.

The childbearing breast gives the rulers the world,
earth, sea, and the remaining things that are the
true salvation of man.
Gratulemur in hac

Sequitur Conductus

1a. Gratulemur in hac die nostra dan tes gaudia,
1b. Dei patris verbum piene nostra so nent studia.
2a. Ribus ar det sed il le sus, flo rem de dit vir gula,
2b. Lapis abs que manu cesus Chris tus im plet secula,
3a. Virgo de um, stela solem et an cil do minum,
3b. Digne patrit novam problem virgo manens vir ginum.

1. Res pice grata vi ce, dei patris uni ce, tibi gratios
2. Vele ra ro ri fe ra sic ca manens ar ea, ca stitas vir-
3. Ube ra pu er pe ra dat regenti se cu la, ter ram, ma re,

1. ef fi ce, quos hec habet curia
2. gine a nova dant mira culia.
3. cete ra vera salus hominum.
APPENDIX 2.3

Nostre quod providerat, Text and Translation
Egerton 2615, fols. 22v–24r

1 Nostre quod providerat salutis altitudo, temporis attulerat instantis plenitudo cum descendens aderat de celis fortitudo, Gabriel ad virginem, quia pulchritudinem rex eius cupierat, thronum hanc ut poneret atque fructus fieret, quod David iuraverat

The height which he provided of our salvation the fullness of the present time which he brought, while courage appeared, Gabriel descending from heaven to the virgin since the king desired her beauty so that he might place her as a throne which David had sworn

2 Gabriele nuntio Maria salutatur, que sit salutatio virgo pavens miratur et credens consilio per aurem impregnatur.

Mary was greeted with a message by Gabriel, the virgin afraid, wondered what the announcement might be, and trusting the counsel, is impregnated through the ear.

Beata, que credidit, concepit et edidit summi patris filium, nec pudor amissus est nec dolor admissus est per hoc puerperium.

Blessed, that she believed, conceived, and brought forth the son of the highest father; she neither lost her chastity nor experienced pain through this childbirth.

3 In terris qui natus est, in celis adoratur, qui sanctorum decus est, pannis circumligatur, qui que panis vivus est in cunis ablactatur. Aaron virga floruit, velus rore maduit Maria cum peperit, rubus inflammatus est nec tamen combustus est, nam virgo non deperit.

He who was born on earth is worshiped in heaven, he who is the glory of the saints is wrapped in swaddling cloths, he who is the living bread, in the cradle is weaned. The rod of Aaron flowered, the fleece became wet with dew, When Maria gave birth, the shrub was flaming yet neither the shrub burnedcon the other hand, for the virgin was not undone.
Mysticas umbraculis olim prefiguratum et multis oraculis, fuit prænuntiatum, quod nostris in seculis videmus declaratum. Res miranda geritur vagit et non loquitur dei sapientia, Vix creator omnium habet diversorium inter animalia.

That which we see revealed in our times was once prefigured with mystical shadows and foretold with many prophecies. The wondrous thing is displayed; the wisdom of God wails and does not speak; the creator of all things scarcely has a lodging among animals.
Nostre quod

Conductus

No-stre quod pro-vi-de-rat sa-lu-tis al-ti-tu-do, tem-po-ris at-
Ga-bri-e-le nun-ti-o Ma-ri-a sa-lu-ta-tur, que sit sa-lu-
In-ter-ris qui na-tus est, in ce-lis ad-o-ra-tur, qui sanc-to-rum
My-sti-cis um-bra-cu-lis o-lim pre-fi-gu-ra-tum et mul-ti-s o-
tu-le-rat in-stan-tis ple-ni-tu-do, cum de-scen-dens ad-e-rat
ta-ti-o vir-go pa-vens mi-ra-tur et cre-dens con-si-li-o
de-cus est, pan-nis cir-cum-li-ga-tur, qui-que pa-nis vi-vus est,
ra-cu-lis, fu-it pre-nun-ti-a-tum, quod no-stris in se-cu-lis
de ce-lis for-ti-tu-do, Ga-bri-el ad vir-gi-nem,
per au-rem im-preg-na-tur. Be-a-ta, que cre-di-dit,
in cu-nis ab-lac-ta-tur. Aa-ron vir-ga flo-ru-it
vi-de-mus de-cla-ra-tum. Res mi-ran-da ge-ri-tur
qui-a pul-chri-tu-di-nem rex e-ius cu-pi-er-rat,
con-ce-pit et e-di-dit sum-mi pa-tris fi-li-um,
ve-lus ro-re ma-du-it Ma-ri-a cum pe-pe-rit,
va-git et non lo-qui-tur de-i sa-pi-en-ti-a,
Thro-num hanc ut po-ne-ret at-que fruc-tus fi-e-ret,
Nec pu-dor a-mis-sus est nec do-lor ad mis-sus est
Ru-bus in-flam-ma-tus est nec ta-men com-bu-stus est
Vix cre-a-tor om-ni-um ha-bet di-ver-so-ri-um
quod Da-vid iu-ra-ve-rat.
per hoc pu-er pe-ri-um.
nam vir-go non de-per-it.
in-ter a-ni-ma-li-a.
APPENDIX 2.4

_Nostri festi, Text and Translation_¹²⁵
_Egerton 2615, fols. 24v–25v_

| 1 | Nostri festi gaudium celi tanget solium, | The joy of our festival touches the throne of heaven |
|   | a quo factor omnium <s>u-um misit filium, | from which, the maker of all things sent his son |
|   | lumen et consilium gentium. | light and counsel of the nations. |
| 2 | A celorum solio misso dei filio | The son, sent from the throne of heaven |
|   | nobis in exilio venit consolatio, | to us in exile, came as a consolation; |
|   | dulcius hoc gaudio nescio. | I know nothing sweeter than this joy. |
| 3 | Verbum patre genitum carnis sumens habitum | The word, begotten from the father accepting |
|   | iter per insolitum vite pandit adytum | the garment of flesh, |
|   | esum per illicitum perditum. | shows the way through the unaccustomed |
|   | | entry to life, |
|   | | eaten through the unlawful destruction. |
| 4 | Imago perierat, quam deus formaverat, | The image, which God had formed, died, |
|   | hostis qui nos leserat, | the enemy who wounded us, |
|   | vite portam claserat, | closed the gate of life, |
|   | solus hanc qui poterat reserat. | There was only one who could open it. |
| 5 | Vite porta panditur, iter mortis clauditur, | The gate of life has been opened, the journey of |
|   | deo hoc ascriptur, | death has been closed, |
|   | a quo caro sumitur | this is ascribed to God, |
|   | lura festum colitur igitur. | from which the flesh has been taken, |
|   | | Rightly, the festival has therefore been honored. |
| 6 | Dei circumcisio nos emundet vitio, | May the circumcision of God purify us of sin, |
|   | psallat nostra contio cuius deus portio. | Let our assembly, whose share God is, sing psalms; |
|   | Legatur in gaudio lectio. | May the reading be read in joy. |

¹²⁵ _In circumcisione domini_: rubric in _DMu Cim._ 100, fol. 244r.
Nostri festi

Sequitur Conductus

No-strī festī gau-di-um ce-li tan-get so-li-um,
A ce-lo-rum ge-ni-tum mis-so de-i fi-li-o
Ver-bum pa-tre ge-ni-tum car-nis su-mens ha-bi-tum
I-ma-go per-i-e-rat, quam de-us for-ma-ve-rat,
Vi-te por-ta pan-di-tur, i-ter mor-tis clau-di-tur,
De-i cir-cum-ci-si-o nos e-mun-det vi-ti-o,

a quo fac-tor om-ni-um <s>u-um mi-sit fi-li-um,
no-bis in e-xi-li-o ve-nit con-so-la-ti-o,
i-ter per in-so-li-tum vi-te pan-dit ad-i-tum
ho-stis, qui nos le-se-rat, vi-te por-tam clau-se-rat,
de-o hoc a-scri-bi-tur, a quo ca-ro su-mi-tur.

psal-lat no-stræ con-ti-o, cu-ius de-us por-ti-o.

lu-men et con-si-li-um. gen-ti-um.
dul-ci-us hoc gau-di-o ne-sci-o.
e-sum per il-li-ci-tum per-di-tum.
so-lus hanc qui po-te-rat re-se-rat.
lu-re fe-stum co-li-tur i-gi-tur.
Le-ga-tur in gau-di-o lec-ti-o.
APPENDIX 2.5

Quanto decet honore, Text and Translation
Egerton 2615, fols. 26r–26v

Quanto decet honore, quanta valet leticia
iubilet ecclesia corde simul et ore.

May the church rejoice with such great honor and
such great joy with heart and mouth together.

Summi patris filium summum decet gaudium.
Joy is appropriate for the son of the highest father.

A voce iocunda non dissonet mens letabunda.
A pure mind about to rejoice does not discord
with a joyous voice.

Chorus
Dies hec, dies hec meritos coronat
et crimina condonat.

Today, today, crowns the merits
and pardons faults

Ista dies sacrata, in qua libera crimine
Iordanus in flumine nostra lavit peccata.

That holy day, on which free of crime,
the Jordan washed our sins in the river.

Horum tamen venia sola datur gratia

Nevertheless, by their pardon alone is grace given

Homo non meretur, quod deus miseretur.

Man does not deserve that God is compassionate

Chorus
Aliter, aliter meritum humanum ineffectum
et vanum.

Otherwise, otherwise, human merit is ineffective
and useless.
Quanto decet

Sequitur Conductus

Quanto decet hono-re, quanta va-let le-ti-ci-a iu-bi-let
eccle-si-a cor-de si-mul et o-re Sum-mi pa-tris fi-
li-um sum-mun de-cet gau-di-um, A vo-ce lo-cun-da non dis-

CHORUS:

Di-es hec, di-es hec me-ri-tos co-ronat et cri-mi-na con-do-

-nat. I-sta di-es sa-cra-ta, in qua li-ber a cri-mi-ne

Ior-da-nus in flu-mi-ne no-stras la-vit pec-ca-ta. Ho-rum ta-men

ve-ni-a so-la da-tur gra-ti-a, Ho-mo non me-re-tur, quod

CHORUS:

de-us mi-se-re-tur. A-li-ter, a-li-ter me-ri-tum hu-man-num

in-ef-fi-cax et va-num.

169
APPENDIX 2.6

Lux optata, Text and Translation\textsuperscript{126}
Egerton 2615, fols. 29v–30v

1 Lux optata claruit, gaude Syon filia
Virga que iam aruit, virga suci nescia,
Virga lesse floruit iuxta vaticinea cum gloria.
Gignitur nascitur
Christus, sicut voluit divina clementia.
Hoc in hoc, hoc in hoc,
Hoc in sollemnio
Conciat hec concio

The desired light shone, rejoice daughter of Zion
The rod now dried up, the rod which knew no sap
The rod of Jesse has flowered according to the prophecies
With glory.
He is begat, he is born
Christ, just as he wished, by divine mercy.
On this, on this,
On this solemn feast,
Let the company sing.

2 Nascendi primordia subit \textit{<eternitas>}
Induit servilia superna regalitas
Lactat patrem filia quem parit virginitas cum gloria.
Angitur, frangitur
Hostilis protervia et eius potentia
Hoc in hoc, hoc in hoc,
Hoc in sollemnio
Conciat hec concio

At the beginning of being born, he entered eternity
The heavenly regality put on servile things
The daughter suckles the father, whom the virgin bore
With glory.
He is vexed, he is broken,
By the violence of the enemy and his power.
On this, on this,
On this solemn feast
Let the company sing.

\textsuperscript{126} Translation from Mary Caldwell “Singing, Dancing, and Rejoicing,” 960, adapted from John Stevens, \textit{Words and Music}, 61.
| 3 | Quicquid fuit mysticum testamento veteri, | Whatever was mystical in the Old Testament |
|   | Quicquid esset typicum, Moyses et ceteri, | Whatever was the type of Moses and the others, |
|   | Fructum per Daviticum decet patefieri cum gloria. | The fruit of David is fittingly manifested with glory. |
|   | Judea, gens rea, | Judea, guilty nation, |
|   | regem crede celicum | Believe the heavenly king |
|   | Per quem sumus liberi | Through whom we are free |
|   | Hoc in hoc, hoc in hoc, | On this, on this |
|   | Hoc in sollemnio | On this solemn feast |
|   | Conciat hec concio. | Let the company sing. |

| 4 | Gens digna supplicio, Danielem legitis, | People deserving of suffering, You read in Daniel, |
|   | Quod deficit unctio pridem intelligitis, | That the anointing failed, A long time ago you understand, |
|   | Missum celi nuntio Messyam non creditis | You did not believe the Messiah that was sent from heaven, |
|   | Cum gloria. | With glory. |
|   | Oritur, Moritur, | He rises, He dies, |
|   | Pro mundi remedio | The remedy of the world. |
|   | Hoc in hoc, hoc in hoc, | On this, on this |
|   | Hoc in sollemnio | On this solemn feast, |
|   | Conciat hec concio. | Let this company sing. |
Lux optata

Conductus

Lux opta ta cal ru it, gau de Sy on fi li a, Vir ga que iam
Nas cen di prim or di a sub i it <e ter ni tas>, In du it ser
Quic quid fu it mys ti cum, tes ta men to ve te ri, Quic quid es set
Gens dig na su pli ti o, Da ni e lem le gi tis, Quod de fi cit

a ru it, vir ga suc ci nes ci a, Vir ga Ies se flo ru it
vi li a su per na re ga li tas, Lac tat pa trem fi li a,
ty pi cum, Mo y ses et ce te ri, Fruc tum per Da vi ti cum
unc ti o pri dem in tel li gis tas, Mis sum ce li so li o

iux ta va ti ci ne a cum glo ri a. Gig ni tur, nas
quem pa rit vir gi ni tas cum glo ri a. An gi tur, fran
de cet pa te fi e ri cum glo ri a. Iu de a gens
Mes sym am non cre di tis cum glo ri a. O ri tur, mo

ci tur Chris tus si cut vo lu it di vi na cl men ti a. Hoc in
gi tur ho sti lis pro ter vi a et e ius po ten ti a. Hoc in
re a, re gem cre de ce li cum, per quem su mus li be ri. Hoc in
ri tur pro mun di re me di o. [No Music or text verse 4] Hoc in

hoc, hoc in hoc, hoc in hoc sol lem ni o con ci nat hec con ti o.
hoc, hoc in hoc, hoc in hoc sol lem ni o con ci nat hec con ti o.
hoc, hoc in hoc, hoc in hoc sol lem ni o con ci nat hec con ti o.
hoc, hoc in hoc, hoc in hoc sol lem ni o con ci nat hec con ti o.

172
APPENDIX 2.7

Eva virum dedit in mortem, Text and Translation
Egerton 2615, fols. 31v–32v

1 Eva virum dedit in mortem,
omnes eam sequimur sortem.
Perdidimus celi cohortem,
Gemit homo se hinc exsortem
Pulsus in hanc patriam patitur miseriam.
Proh dolor, proh dolor,
In sudore corporis cursum agens temporis
Et temporis et corporis
Surgunt spine, tribuli operanti exsuli.
Humillimo, Simillimo.
Eva mater parit in tristica
terribili data sententia
Sorte degunt misera,
quos vipera letifera
Trusit in infera sede de supera

Eve gave man unto death.
All men follow his fate.
We destroyed the court of heaven
Henceforth, man laments
Having been driven out of the father’s land, he suffers misery.
Alas, alas
In the suffering of the body traveling the course of time
And of time and of the body
Thorns and the thistles rise up laboring for the exiles
Lowly, very similar
Eve the mother gives birth in sadness given a terrible feeling
They live a wretched fate, those whom the deadly snake
Thrust into hell from a heavenly home.

2 Primus homo spe lusus vana
consilia credit prophana
Que mulier dat male sana
Unde lues crevit humana
Sed divina gratia cadit hec molestia
Et labor et labor

The first man having been tricked with false hope,
trusts in secular advices
The wife gives the healthy apples
Whence determines affliction on human affairs
But the divine favor ceases with this trouble
And toil and toil

173
Exsulantis hominis, dum in alvo virginis
Conceptus est, qui Deus est
Carnis tectus trabea redempturus terrea,
Visibilis, passibilis
Qui cum patre manet invisibilis
Alvus sacre virginis non hominis sed
Accessu tumuit ut Deus voluit.

Of exiling man while in the womb of the virgin
He who is God is conceived
The flesh has been covered with a mantle about to redeem the terrestrial beings
Visible, capable of suffering
who with the father remains invisible
near God and passionless
The womb of the holy virgin not of man but of woman
Swells with the entry as God wished it.

Morte cadit Abel amara
Christus obit crucis in ara
Unde fluunt bona preclara
Que genitrix postulat clara.
Botrum Judas exprimit,

Abel died a bitter death
Christ died on the altar of the cross
Whence the greatest good flows
Which the noble mother claims.
Judas squeezes the cluster of grapes,

And scent and scent
The saints preaching in the ends of the earth
Expanded, while having tread
It is poured forth while the balm of the one rising again is smoothed through bone and pen.
On islands and among the people
Faith increases, the spiritual gifts increase,
and of faith divine doctrine
The redeemed population of the Gentiles brings obedience and joy
to the king of all and to the god of the gentiles.

Regi fert omnium et Deo gentium.
Eva virum

Conductus

E-va vi-rum de-dit in mor-tem, om-nes e-am se-qui-mur sor-tem,
Pri-mus ho-mo spe lu-sus va-na con-si-li-a cre-dit pro-phana,
Mor-te ca-dit A-bel a-ma-ra Christus o-bit cru-cis in a-ra

Per-di-dimus ce-li co-hor-tem, ge-mit ho-mo se hinc ex-sor-tem,
Que mu-li-er dat ma-le sa-na, un-de lu-es cre-vit hu-ma-na,
Un-de flu-un-t vi-na pre-cla-ra que ge-ni-trix po-stu-lat ca-ra,

pu-lsus in hanc pa-tr-am, pa-ti-tur mi-se-ri-am, proh do-lor
sed di-vi-na gra-ti-a ca-dit hec mo-le-sti-a et la-bor
bo-trum Ju-das ex-pri-mit, vi-na dat que red-i-mit Et o-dor

proh do-lor in su-do-re cor-po-ris cur-sum a-gens tem-po-ris,
et la-bor ex-u-lan-tis ho-mi-nis, dum in al-vo vir-gi-nis
et o-dor, in ter-ra-rum fi-ni-bus sanc-tis pre-di-can-ti-bus

et tem-po-ris et cor-por-is sur-gunt spi-ne, tri-bu-li
con-cep-tus est, qui de-us est, car-ne tec-tus tra-be-a
dif-fun-di-tur, dum te-ri-tur re-sur-gen-tis bal-sa-mum

red-emp-tu-rus ter-re-a, vi-si-bi-lis, pas-si-bi-lis, Qui cum pa-bre
per os et per ca-la-mum. In in-su-lis et po pu-lis Cres-cit fi-des
pa - rit in tri - sti - ci - a, ter - ri - bi - li da - ta sen-ten - ti - a
ma - net in - vi - si - bi - lis et a - pud de - um im - pas - si - bi - lis
cres cunt et ca - ris - ma - ta et fi - de - i di - vi - na dog - ma - ta,

Sor - te de - gunt mi - se - ra, quos vi - pe - ra le - ti - fe - ra
Al - vus sa - cre vir - gi - nis non ho - mi - nis sed nu - mi - nis
Plebs red - emp - ta gen - ti - um ob - se - qui - um et gau - di - um

tru - sit in in - fe - ra se - de de su - pe - ra.
ac - ces - su tu - mu - it, ut de - us vo - lu - it.
re - gi fert om - ni - um et de - o gen - ti - um.
**APPENDIX 2.8**

*Ex Ade vitio, Text and Translation*¹²⁷  
Egerton 2615, fols. 33r–34r

1. Ex Ade vitio nostra perditio traxit primordia,  
   From the sin of Adam, our ruin derives its origin,  
   Dei et hominum per Christum Dominum  
   And a concord of God and men  
   Facta concordia  
   Has been made through Christ the Lord.  
   Eia,  
   Eya!  
   Gaudeat ecclesia fidelium  
   Church of the faithful, rejoice!  
   Nova mater filium  
   For the new mother has brought forth a son,  
   Humilium redeemptorem  
   The redeemer of the humble  
   virgo manens edidit,  
   while remaining a virgin,  
   Quod accidit preter morem.  
   An event that happened beyond custom

2. Diu miseria gravis et seria nos subiugaverat  
   regnabat servitus libertas penitus nos abrogaverat.  
   All day, serious and burdensome suffering  
   Had brought us under the yoke slavery reigned  
   servitus libertas penitus  
   Freedom deep within had taken us away  
   nos abrogaverat.  
   The boundary was present  
   Aderat  
   That had existed having been placed  
   Terminus, quo fuerat dispositum,  
   Mary by the spirit  
   Mariam per spiritum  
   the Comforter to make fruitful  
   Paraclitum fecundari  
   and God in the virgin  
   et Deum in virgine  
   On behalf of man to make human.  
   Pro homine humanari.

---

3  Styrps Iesse virgulam secreti baiulam et florem virgula
   The shoot of Jesse having separated the palm branch and the flower from the shoot/rod
   Produxit unicum flosque mirificum
   A singular and amazing flower brought forth
   Fructum per secula.
   fruit for eternity
   Sedula
   Attentive and trusting
   Personet plebs credula cum iubilo,
   Citizens may resound with joy
   qui sub quodam nubilo
   He has made all from nothing
   De nihilo cuncta fecit,
   Under a cloud
   sumpto [sub tenaci] nasci corpore
   the body having been taken up
   Sub tempore non abiecet.
   During the time was not abandoned.

4  Ut solis radius intrat innoxius
   Just as the harmless rays of the sun,
   fenestram vitream,
   penetrate the translucent/glass window
   without damaging it,
   Sic Dei filius immo subtilius
   Thus did the son of God, even more delicately enters
   Aulam virgineam
   The maidenly house.
   Paleam
   Chaff
   Retulit ad aream ventilabrum,
   The winnowing fan moved the chaff to the threshing floor
   Infra carnis [qui] velabrum
   even under the flesh of the maid
   candelabrum vere lucis ceu sol nube latuit
   Lamp stand, truth of light,
   as the sun hid from the cloud,
   Nec horruit moretem crucis.
   neither (the sun) shrank from the death of the crucifixion.
Ex Ade

Conductus

Ex A-de vi-ti-o no-stra per-dit ti-o tra-xit
Di-u mi-se-ri-a gra-vis et se-ri-a nos sub
Styrps Ies-se vir-gu-lam se-cre-ti ba-iu-lam flo-rem
Ut so-lis ra-di-us in-trat in-no-xi-us fe-ne-

prim-or-di-a, De-i et ho-mi-num
iu-ga ve-rat, Reg-na-bat ser-vi-tus,
que vir gu-la Pro du xit u-ni-cum
stram vi tre-am. Sic de-i fi-li-us

per Chris-tum do-mi-num
li-ber-tas pe-ni-tus
flos-que mi-ri-fi-cum
im-mo sub-ti-li-us

fac-ta con-cor-di-a.
nos ab-ne-ga ve-rat.
fruc tum per se cu-la.
au-lam vi-r-gi-ne-am.

E-y-a, gau-de-at ec-cle-si-a fi-de-li-um,
Ad-e-rat ter-mi-nus, qu-o fu-e-rat dis-po-si-tum,
Se-du-la per-so-net plebs cre-du-la cum iu-bi-lo.
Pa-le-am re-tu-lit ad a-re-am ven-ti-la-brum,
nova mater filium, humilium redemptorem, virgo mater
Mariam per spiritum paracclatum fedunram, et deum
Qui sub quodam nobilo de nichilo cuncta fecit, sump-to nasi
in fruncar-nis ve-la-brum can-de-la-brum verelucis ceusol nu-
nens edidit, quod accidit preter momentum
in virgine pro homine humanari
icirocre sub temper non ablecit
beatuit, nec, horruit mortem crucis.
CHAPTER 3

Ludus Danielis: Conductus vs. Prosa

Synopsis of the *Ludus Danielis*

The drama unfolds at the court of King Belshazzar, the son of King Nebuchadnezzar who destroyed the Jewish temple. King Belshazzar commands the satraps to bring him the stolen temple vessels for use in a banquet. But when the vessels are brought to him, handwriting appears on the wall that the court magi are unable to decipher. The Queen suggests a young Hebrew, Daniel, be brought to the court to interpret the writing. Daniel shares that the message is about the king’s demise. Horrified, Belshazzar returns the vessels to Daniel. The scene changes to King Darius, who has Belshazzar executed. A royal decree states that only Darius may be worshipped. Court inspectors tell King Darius that Daniel has been praying to his own God, so he is thrown into the lions’ den, but angels miraculously save him from their jaws. Habbakuk delivers Daniel a proto-Eucharist and the drama concludes with an angelic declaration of Christmas and the *Te Deum*.

Threaded through themes of loftiness and lowliness as well as burden-bearing explored in the conductus thus far is the tension between wisdom and folly presented through the conductus and prosae in the *Ludus Danielis*. The *Ludus Danielis* is a drama about the Hebrew youth Daniel, an exile in the Babylonian kingdom, who was exalted for his unusual display of wisdom. It was likely performed at the end of Matins even though it appears after the Circumcision Office in MS Egerton 2615.\(^1\) Much of the drama unfolds in a series of processions, some called conductus,

---

\(^1\) In 1865, Gustav Desjardins was the first to state that the *Ludus Daniel* was performed at Matins, but he did not give any reason for the statement. See Gustave Desjardins, *Histoire de la cathédrale de Beauvais* (Beauvais, France: V. Pineau, 1865), 121. In his 2005–7 edition of the drama, David Wulstan states that the drama was sung at the end of Matins because of the concluding *Te Deum*. But Margot Fassler states that the singing of the *Te Deum* is not necessarily an indication that the drama was performed at Matins since plays often ended with a *Te Deum* by the late twelfth century. See Margot Fassler, “The Feast of Fools and Danielis ludus,” 98n106. The *Officium Stellae* from eleventh-century Nevers has opening and closing rubrics that mention the lessons of Matins as well as a closing *Te Deum*: *Finitis lectionibus, Iubeat Domnus Presul preparare tres*
others called prosae (or sequences). Modern scholarship has long blurred the lines between the conductus and prosae in their use in the drama, calling them all conductus or processional songs and thereby disregarding the taxonomy used by the liturgical authors. While both genres do function superficially as processionals in the drama, I argue that the authors of the drama were careful to distinguish between the two genres; the conductus advance wisdom by accompanying the lowly yet wise Daniel, while the prosae advance folly by accompanying actions associated with the worldly yet exalted King. The wise Queen, a character who uses her exalted place in the court for wise actions, is the bridge between the lofty and lowly and is also accompanied by conductus. This dichotomy between the genres thematically links the drama to the tension between wisdom and foolishness in the Feast of Fools at large.

Subsidiary to this argument that the conductus and the prosa functioned exegetically and distinctly from each other is the argument that the strategies the authors used to convey wisdom and folly through the conductus and prosae reflected the irony and reversals at the heart of the Feast of Fools. The authors treated both genres in ways that overturned or undercut their conventional liturgical identities. If and when found in the Mass, the conductus preceded the Epistle reading. The prosa or sequence—a lofty genre that Durand says “mystically articulates the

clericos in trium transfiguratione Magorum, quos preparatos terque a presule uocatus ita./After the lessons, the three clerics are transformed into the Magi....Omnibus peractis, dicat presul Te Deum laudamus/Everyone having finished the bishop declares Te Deum laudamus. Trans. adapted from Karl Young, Drama of the Medieval Church (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 2: 50.

2 Andrew Tallon has noted that 41% of the lines in the play are “delivered in procession;” see “The Play of Daniel in the Cathedral of Beauvais,” in Resounding Images: Medieval Intersections of Art, Music, and Sound, ed. Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 205–220, at 212.
praises of the eternal life”—regularly preceded the lofty Gospel lesson. Yet in the *Ludus Danielis*, their purposes are reversed as the lowly conductus is used in an ironic manner to straightforwardly teach about wisdom while the more lofty genre of the prosa advances folly through an often dissonant construction of the text, context, characters, and music.

In this chapter, I will show how the conductus and prosa in the *Ludus Danielis* have been misclassified and misapprehended in modern scholarship in order to argue for the importance of their taxonomy in medieval music. I will turn to twelfth- and thirteenth-century liturgical commentators for their definitions and discussions of the genres to provide historically appropriate evidence as to how the conductus and prosa would have been understood by contemporary readers of the *Ludus Danielis*.

The largest part of the chapter will examine the five conductus and the two prosae in the drama. I will examine how these songs perform their exegetical purposes through three different approaches. The first is the use of multiple layers of irony between the content of the song and the context of the song that undercuts the general understanding of the prosa’s liturgical purpose. The second is a more straightforward approach that brings harmony between the context, content, and music of the conductus in promoting wisdom. The third suggests that just as the Matins conductus appealed to the clerics’ recollection of patristic and medieval exegesis by drawing connections beyond what is literally stated in the texts of the conductus, in connecting the Queen and Daniel through wisdom, I suggest the conductus symbolically invoke the relationship between Mary and Christ as would have been encountered through the ubiquitous *Sedes Sapientiae* (sculptures of the Virgin Mary as a throne upon which a small-sized, but adult-featured Christ child sits). Though

---

3 Durand/Thibodeau, 4.22.3.
neither Mary nor Christ are characters in the narrative, their presence is felt through the conductus’ featuring of the relationship between the Queen and Daniel; the adoration of Mary and Christ ultimately becomes a “devotional end” achieved through the performance of the drama.4

While Margot Fassler has argued for the play’s thematic appropriateness for the reformed Feast of Fools (“folly and discord...within an orthodox context”5), she has not argued specifically for its place in Matins. In the first part of the chapter, I will demonstrate how Fassler’s argument for the Ludus Danielis as a reformed Feast of Fools play aligns with the placement of the Ludus Danielis in Matins. This is based on the intersection of her argument—that Daniel was a model for the clerics of Beauvais to emulate—with my readings of the conductus/lesson pairings of Matins (Chapter 2). Furthermore, the play could have had politicized meanings for Beauvais: The Bishop Miles Nanteuil, the bishop in office during the production of MS Egerton 2615, was compared to Nebuchadnezzar for his pride during his participation in the failed fifth Crusade and, like Nebuchadnezzar, was condemned to life as a beast.6 According to Durand, Nebuchadnezzar personified the Antichrist, suggesting that the

---

4 In Sacred Folly, Max Harris writes this: “Although its characters are more well rounded and its dramatic and musical technique more sophisticated than those of the other ludi, it seems to me that the Play of Daniel was inspired, at least in part, by the same creative impulse to employ ludic means for devotional ends.” See Max Harris, Sacred Folly, 120.


6 “Et à la vérité dire, cil estoient pris par lor orguel et par l’esliut de Biauvais qui plus avoit d’orguel en lui que n’ot Nabugodonosor qui par son orguel fu mues 7 ans en bieste.” See Stephen Murray, Beauvais Cathedral, 35.
play has a dual purpose in reminding the people of the folly of Nebuchadnezzar and linking the king to their own bishop.\textsuperscript{7}

I. The purpose of the \textit{Ludus Danielis} in Matins

How does the \textit{Ludus Danielis}, a drama about the biblical Daniel who is single-minded in his devotion to God and endowed with extraordinary wisdom, complement both the content and method of the performative exegesis relayed in the conductus/lectio pairings of Matins? Margot Fassler’s point that Daniel is an “excellent model for clerical behavior” intersects with the exegetical purpose of the Matins conductus and the message they deliver for the Feast of Fools.\textsuperscript{8} The Matins lessons exhorted clerics to lead a life of fidelity to God alone. Fassler also notes that Daniel’s ability to interpret texts was precisely the skill a medieval cleric would have wanted to develop in order to secure work in secular institutions.\textsuperscript{9} The opening prosa (Fassler calls it a conductus, an issue that will examined in greater detail shortly) states this:

\begin{quote}
Sed Danieli scripta legenti mox patuere  
Que prius illis clausa fuere
\end{quote}

But to Daniel as he read the writing what had been hidden there in advance was soon revealed.\textsuperscript{10}

I suggest that this ability to uncover the mysteries in the writing could be comparable to the clerics’ exegetical participation in the feast, extracting “honey from the rock,” in the words of Durand.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{7} “Quintus erit eorum qui futuri sunt sub tempore Antichristi, in cuius figuram precessit Nabuchodonosor.” Durand/Thibodeau, 5.4.13.

\textsuperscript{8} See Margot Fassler, “The Feast of Fools and Danielis ludus,” 93.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 93.

\textsuperscript{10} All translations of the \textit{Ludus Danielis} are from Peter Dronke, \textit{Nine Medieval Plays} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), unless otherwise noted.
Second, Daniel’s unwavering devotion to worship God, and not the King as the Babylonian law required, is precisely what is exhorted by the Matins conductus/lessons. The fourth lesson states this: “What agreement does the temple of God have with idols?” Daniel did not worship idols, but remained steadfast to his God, thus adhering to the sixth lesson: “God says that no one, casting the hands towards the plow, and looking back is suitable for the kingdom of God.” Daniel, by no means, looked back and lost sight of his uncompromising hope in God. Rather, his worship went to the point of being thrown into the lions’ den (and in a fiery furnace earlier in the book of Daniel); similarly, Christ’s obedience to God went to the point of death (Philippians 2:8). Since the battle between polytheism and monotheism was central to the reformed Feast of the Circumcision, Daniel’s devotion to the God of Israel only underscores the message that Matins conveyed.

II. Modern scholarship on the conductus and prosae in the *Ludus Danielis*

Perhaps the earliest misclassification of the conductus for the prosa is found in an article called “L’harmonie au XIII siècle” in *Annales archéologiques* (1856); Victor Didron notes viewing the manuscript in Pacchiarotti’s collection. He comments that the “Prose d l’Ane” was already “fameuse” at that point.\(^{12}\) By designating *Orientis Partibus* a prosa, not a conductus as is clearly stated in the manuscript, Didron begins (or perpetuates) the confusion between the genres of the conductus and the prosa in MS Egerton 2615.

\(^{11}\) “Whatever belongs to the liturgical offices, objects, furnishings of the Church is full of signs of the divine and sacred mysteries, and each of them overflows with a celestial sweetness when it is encountered by a diligent observer who can extract honey from rock and oil from the stoniest ground [Deut. 32:13].” Durand/Thibodeau, Prologue, 1.

In grouping the conductus and prosae together and designating them all as conductus, modern scholars in musicology, drama studies, and art history for the past thirty years have essentially solidified the understanding that the conductus’s only defining feature is processional, to the degree that the prosae, by virtue of accompanying processionals in the Ludus Danielis, are also called conductus. I contend that this misclassification of the prosae as conductus and the restricting of the conductus to a solely processional function has made scholars overlook the distinctive ways that the conductus and the prosa are used to further the messages of foolishness and wisdom in this Feast of Fools drama.

While David Hiley carefully writes that “nearly every entrance or exit of characters is accompanied by vigorously rhythmic conductus,” he still implies that the second prosa Iubilemus regi nostro, the song sung as the satraps bring the stolen vessels to King Belshazzar, is a conductus, not a prosa as indicated in the manuscript. In “Prophetic ‘Play’ and Symbolist ‘Plot,’” Jerome Taylor erroneously calls the opening prosa Astra tenenti a conductus: “Called a conductus or conductus song, it is like the introitus or entry-song with which the servers and ministers conduct the priest or bishop to his seat at the beginning of a solemn Eucharist or liturgy while they sing the instructional themes of the Mass to come.” Margot Fassler and Peter Dronke both call Ecce rex, a processional song for King Darius midway through the drama, a conductus.

---


Davidson states that the opening prosa, *Astra tenenti cunctipotenti*, “though not marked in the rubric as a conductus, nevertheless functions similarly,” she does not account for the other functions the prosa could have.\(^{16}\)

Only Max Harris differentiates between a prosa and a conductus in his discussion of the *Ludus Danielis* in *Sacred Folly*.\(^{17}\) As one can see, the muddling of these genre names has led to a non-differentiated concept of these processional songs. Mark Everist has written with respect to the conductus in the Notre Dame manuscript that careful analyses “point to a more detailed level of planning in these manuscripts, and therefore to a sense that medieval musicians—composers, manuscript compilers and commissioners—were at least as sensitive to the subgeneric categorisation as modern scholarship.”\(^{18}\) I propose that the liturgical authors’ specifications of conductus and prosa have more to do with their exegetical functions, something that has yet to be examined in modern scholarship.

### III. Prosa vs. conductus in liturgical commentary

In the liturgy of the mass, the prosa (sequence) was sung after the Alleluia in preparation for the reading of the Gospel. In his *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, William Durand writes this: “The Sequence...is similar to the song of exultation...chanted by everyone in the choir at the same

---


\(^{17}\) See Max Harris, *Sacred Folly*, 117–122.

time to note the unity of charity, for such praise is pleasing to God.”\textsuperscript{19} Elsewhere in the \textit{Rationale}, when comparing the Alleluia, Gradual, and Sequence, Durand calls the sequence a “song of victory” as opposed to the Gradual that “symbolizes the conversion of the Jews; the verse, the conversion of the Gentiles,” or the Alleluia that symbolizes the “rejoicing in the faith of either people.”\textsuperscript{20}

In the \textit{Mitrale} (early thirteenth century), Sicard of Cremona also equates the sequence to a song of victory, but expands its understanding:

\begin{quote}
But the sequence designates the song of victory, for which reason it imitates through its neumes the beating of the victors’ drums. The tambourine player Miriam prefigured this exultation, who announced victory to the liberated people, saying “Let us sing unto the Lord” \cite{Exodus 15:1, 20–21} and with whom the people too rejoiced.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

This association of Miriam’s song to the sequence gives an even more specific sense to the genre; the victory the Israelites had in being delivered out of the hands of the Egyptians by God’s parting of the Red Sea, was one of liberation.

On the performance of the prosa, Johannes de Grocheio (late thirteenth century) contrasts it with that of the Responsory or Alleluia:

\begin{quote}
the Responsory and the Alleluia are sung in the mode of the stantipes or cantus coronatus, so that they may bring devotion and humility to the hearts of those who hear them. The sequence, however, is sung in the manner of the ductia that it may lead and make glad so that, in turn, they may rightly receive the word of the New Testament—that is the Holy Gospel—which are sung immediately afterwards.\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{19} Durand/Thibodeau, 4.22.1.
\textsuperscript{20} “...quia per graduale conuersio de Iudeis, per uersum conuersio de gentibus, per alleluya utriusque in fide letitia, per sequentiam canticum uictorie figuratar.” Durand/Thibodeau, 4.19.1.
\textsuperscript{21} See Margot Fassler, \textit{Gothic Song}, 63.
\textsuperscript{22} Trans. adapt. from ibid., 63 and Christopher Page, “Johannes de Grocheio on Secular Music,” in \textit{Poets and Singers: On Latin and Vernacular Monophonic Song}, ed. Elizabeth Aubrey
The performance of the second prosa, *Iubilemus Regi nostro*, is not met with gladness, but rather terror on the part of the King and his court, an example of the ironic use of the prosa in the *Ludus Danielis*. In the detailed analyses of the prosae in the *Ludus Danielis*, I will show how the standard liturgical commentaries’ understanding of the prosae was appropriated and ultimately subverted.

Unlike the prosa, the conductus lacked a clear function and purpose. When it appeared in the liturgy, it was generally associated with the subdeacons’ procession to the reading of the Epistle and the lections in Matins (in Egerton 2615). But there is no specific commentary from the twelfth or thirteenth century on the conductus’ function in the liturgy. What can be gleaned about the conductus’ identity can be taken from what has been written about the reading of the Epistle in the liturgy of the Mass. According to Durand, in the Epistle “is understood the preaching of the Old Testament, which is more lowly, while the Gospel is the New Testament, which is more lofty;”\(^\text{23}\) furthermore the Epistle “is read in a lower place, while the Gospel is read in a higher place.”\(^\text{24}\) Thus by association with the Epistle, perhaps the conductus in the liturgy could also be considered to have a lowlier purpose. However, in accordance with the inversions of the Feast of Fools, I propose that, like the characters they accompany (the Queen and Daniel), the conductus in the *Ludus Danielis* have a loftier, wiser purpose, not a lowlier one, in the story.

---


\(^{23}\) “Preterea per epistolam predicatio ueteris testamenti que humilior est, per euangelium noui testamenti, que excellentior est, intelligitur.” Durand/Thibodeau, 4.24.18.

\(^{24}\) “Dicitur quoque epistola in loco inferiori, euangelium in superiori.” Durand/Thibodeau, 4.16.2
Table 3.1. Rubrics in the *Ludus Danielis*\(^{25}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line/Folio</th>
<th>Latin Rubric</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
<th>Song</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 / 95r</td>
<td><em>Dum venerit Rex Balthasar, principes sui cantabunt ante eum hanc prosam:</em></td>
<td>When King Belshazzar makes his entry, his nobles shall sing in his presence this prosa.</td>
<td><em>Astra tenenti</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 / 96r</td>
<td><em>Satrape, vasa deferentes, cantabunt hanc prosam ad laudem Regis:</em></td>
<td>The satraps, bringing the vessels, shall sing this prosa in praise of the King.</td>
<td><em>Jubilemus Regi nostro</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54 / 97v</td>
<td><em>Conductus Regine venientis ad Regem</em></td>
<td>The conductus of the Queen as she comes to the King.</td>
<td><em>Cum doctorum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84 / 99r</td>
<td><em>Conductus Danielis venientis ad Regem</em></td>
<td>The conductus of Daniel as he comes to the King.</td>
<td><em>Hic verus Dei</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122 / 101r</td>
<td><em>Conductus Regine</em></td>
<td>The conductus of the Queen.</td>
<td><em>Solvitur in libro Salmonis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136 / 101v</td>
<td><em>Conductus referentium vasa ante Danielem</em></td>
<td>The conductus of the men bringing the vessels back to Daniel.</td>
<td><em>Regis vasa referentes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>193 / 103v</td>
<td><em>Conductus Danielis</em></td>
<td>Daniel’s conductus.</td>
<td><em>Congaudentes celebremus natalis</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROSA I—*Astra tenenti cuntipotenti*\(^{26}\)**

(See Appendix 3.1 for the text, translation, and edition of the song.)

Astra tenenti, cuntipotenti Turba virilis et puerilis contio plaudi For him who rules the stars, all powerful the crowd of men and throng of boys clap together

Nam Danielem multa fidelem Et subisse atque tulisse firmiter audit Because they hear that Daniel the loyal has endured many trials and borne them with steadfastness.

Convocat ad se Rex sapientes, Gramata dextre qui sibi dicant enucleantes The King summons the wise men to him, that they should tell him the explanation of the writing by a hand.

\(^{25}\) Andrew Tallon, “The Play of Daniel in the Cathedral of Beauvais,” 212.

\(^{26}\) Translations of all the songs from the *Ludus Danielis* are adapted from Peter Dronke, *Nine Medieval Plays* and David Wulstan, *The Play of Daniel: A Mediaeval Liturgical Drama* (Salisbury: Plainsong and Mediaeval Music Society, 2007).
Because the doctors were unable to solve this for the King, they at once, dumbly, lapsed into silence.

But to Daniel, as he read the writing, what had been hidden there in advance was soon revealed.

And as Belshazzar saw him surpassing those sages, He is said to have given him preferment in court.

A pretext that’s found, a far from just one, desirates Daniel to be torn apart in the lion’s jaws;

Yet you, God wanted those who’d been hostile before to Daniel then to become benign.

To him also bread (lest he be hungry) was sent by you, the swift-flying prophet, bringing him meals.

The opening prosa projects a sense of dissonance at the levels of genre, content, and context. While the text *Astra tenenti, cunctipotenti* (For him who rules the stars, all-powerful) opens in acclamation of the king, it quickly turns its focus away from the royal character it accompanies. Instead, it devolves into a summary of Daniel’s life and exploits at court. Daniel, not the king, becomes the protagonist of the song, while the King is featured in the physical procession. The confusion over who the prosa sings for, the King or Daniel, seems to contradict the function of the liturgical prosa, a song of exultation sung before the lofty Gospel or in this case, the lofty King. In the eyes of the court, the King is the exalted one, yet in the eyes of God and the thirteenth-century Beauvais audience, Daniel is the exalted one, a figure of Christ. Yet the disjunction between the text in praise of Daniel and the action in praise of the King is appropriate for the inversions at the
heart of the Feast of Fools. In a sense, the prosa fulfills a part of its “liturgical” duty by preparing those assembled for the hearing of the story of King Belshazzar and Daniel just as the liturgical prosa prepares those assembled for the hearing of the Gospel. Almost as if to quell any doubts of the King’s dominance in his kingdom, the prosa is immediately followed by the collective “Rex, in eternum vive” in honor of King Belshazzar.

The rhyming tendency of this prosa reflects the shift in sequence composition to rhyming, accentual poetry in the late twelfth century. The two internal rhymes in each line give a strong rhythmic quality to the song—*astra tenenti cunctipotenti, turba virilis et puerilis*. It is very much in line with the joyful quality that Grocheio writes of in the late thirteenth century. The melody has many thirds, “a new musical style” called “tertian melodic style,” that David Hiley writes often accompanies “the new style of the text (rhyme and regular stress-patterns)” in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (see example 3.1).27

**Example 3.1. Astra tenenti from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 95r**

![Musical notation](image)


**PROSA II—Iubilemus Regi nostro**

The prosa, *Iubilemus Regi nostro*, sung as the satraps bring the stolen vessels to the King for the royal banquet, also exhibits irony and conflict at multiple levels that teach about folly. The rubric accompanying the prosa is this: *Satrape, vasa deferentes, cantabunt hanc prosam ad laudem Regis*

---

27 See David Hiley, *Western Plainchant*, 238.
(the satraps bringing the vessels, shall sing this prosa in praise of the King;) yet, the song does not project a unified appearance of praise. In Part 2, Question 46, Article 2 of the *Summa Theologiae*, "Whether folly is a sin," Thomas Aquinas quotes Proverbs 1:32 that “the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.”28 I suggest the ultimate destruction brought upon the King for his foolish and wicked action is mirrored in the dissonant interactions of the elements of the prosa. These elements include 1) the genre and text; 2) the musical setting and 3) the context/character perspective vs. the audience perspective. With regards to the prosa’s conventional function and purpose, Lubilemus overturns each convention.

At the level of genre, disaccord occurs between the prosa’s identity as a “song of victory” for the Israelites and its actual function in this moment as a song of victory for the Babylonians over the Israelites. The exultations of the Lubilemus can almost be replaced with Miriam’s song of victory from Exodus 15. Miriam’s tambourine playing finds its musical and rhythmic parallel in a line from the prosa: *Cytharizent plaudant manus, mille sonent modis* (Playing harps and clapping hands to countless strains of music.) The prosa usurps the lofty genre for its own foolish means. While the prosa was to lead and gladden those gathered so that they might rightly receive the Gospel, in actuality, the prosa’s conclusion is met with fear as mysterious handwriting appears on the wall. Furthermore, the prosa’s representation of the parallel liturgy between heaven and earth, according to Boynton and Fassler, is obliterated in the prosa as it instead represents a completely antagonistic relationship between heaven and earth for Belshazzar’s request for the sacred vessels is

---

a flagrantly hostile action towards the heavenly realms. Though blaming Belshazzar’s intoxication for calling for the sacred vessels, Theodoret of Cyr still calls it an “insane action against God.”

Honorius’ statement that the “sequence represents the time when mortals will see the face of God” is also dissonant with this scenario. In fact, the victorious strain of the prosa accompanying Belshazzar’s request of the sacred vessels, in effect, curses God to his face, rather than worships God.

With regards to its normative function, the preparation for the hearing of the Gospel and by extension the Eucharistic feast, the prosa overturns conventions in accompanying the satraps’ delivery of the temple’s stolen vessels for King Belshazzar’s very un-holy feast, a distortion of the Eucharistic feast. This is a misappropriation of the prosa’s true liturgical purpose. The focus on the vessels is also significant as the feast of the Circumcision was celebrated in honor of the subdeacons, who were entrusted with the liturgical vessels. As Margot Fassler has argued, the satraps or governors in this biblical story could be “subdeacons in disguise,” put in charge of delivering the vessels to and from the opposing characters, Belshazzar and Daniel. The superimposition of the story of the subdeacons upon this drama brings the subdeacons to the forefront of the drama on this their feast day. The vessels become like a character in their own right as the “emblem” of the subdeacon.

---


31 Honorius’ Sacramentarium, col. 575 as quoted in Margot Fassler, Gothic Song, 61.

32 Ibid., 61.

33 See Margot Fassler, “The Feast of Fools and Danielis ludus,” 89.
IV. Dissonance between musical material and context

While depicting the jubilant and rejoicing text in the narrative of the drama, the musical setting sometimes seems to contradict the context of the song and what the audience knows of the King’s impending doom, resulting from his appropriation of the Temple vessels. The bright tertian melodies sound unaware of what is to come. Furthermore, I suggest that the lack of a clear, straightforward musical form could be interpreted as a breakdown of a prosa’s typical structure in the face of Belshazzar’s blasphemous, foolish act. Unlike other more typical prosae, *Jubilemus Regis nostro* does not reflect its paired versicles through a musically strophic setting. Rather, it unfolds in a series of paired versicles and solitary lines. Again, I propose that Thomas Aquinas’ quote from Proverbs 1:32—“the prosperity of fools shall destroy them”—can explain the collapse of the standard prosa’s form. The following musical analysis seeks to show how the music’s incongruity with the paired versicles is a reflection of folly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English Translation (adapted from Peter Dronke)</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Jubilemus Regi nostro magno ac potenti!</td>
<td>Let us jubilate for our King, the great and mighty one!</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resonemus laude Digna voce competenti</td>
<td>Let us proclaim the praise he merits, with harmonious voice.</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Resonet jocunda turba sollemnibus odis!</td>
<td>Let the joyous crowd proclaim it in ceremonial songs!</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cytharizent, plaudant manus, mille sonent modis!</td>
<td>Let their lutes play, their hands clap it, making it sound in a thousand ways!</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Pater eius destruens Iudeorum templamagna fecit, et hic regnat eius per exempla.</td>
<td>His father, destroying the temples of the Jews, did great deeds, and the son reigns following his example.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Pater eius spoliavit regnum Iudeorum; Hic exaltat sua festa decore vasorum.</td>
<td>Plundered was the kingdom of the Jews by his great father. Splendid vessels now adorn the festal scene before us.</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>English Translation (adapted from Peter Dronke)</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hec sunt vasa regia quibus spoliatur</td>
<td>These are the royal vessels of which Jerusalem has been despoiled and regal Babylon enriched.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iherusalem et regalis Babylon ditatur</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentemus Balthsar ista Regi nostro</td>
<td>Let us present them to our King Belshazzar.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qui sic suos perornavit purpura et ostro who has so greatly graced his men with purple and scarlet</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iste potens, ist fortis!</td>
<td>He is mighty, he is brave, he is glorious!</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iste probus, curialis, decens et formosus. He is gallant, courtly, seemly and handsome too.</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jubilemus Regi tanto vocibus canoris,</td>
<td>Let us jubilate for so great a King with tuneful voice,</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resonemus omnes una laudibus sonoris!</td>
<td>Let us make music all together with resounding praise!</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridens plaudit, Babylon, Iherusalem plorat</td>
<td>Babylon leaps laughing, Jerusalem weeps:</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hec orbatur, hec triumphans</td>
<td>she is bereft; the other, triumphant, pays Belshazzar homage</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balthasar adorat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omnes ergo exultemus tante potestati,</td>
<td>Let us all exult then at such mighty power,</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offerentes Regis vasa sue maiestati</td>
<td>offering the vessels to his royal majesty.</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows how varied and irregular the musical structure is. While melodies C and D recur the most, they do not do so in an expected fashion (see Table 3.2). (See Appendix 3.2 for the text, translation, and edition of *Jubilemus Regi nostro*.)

The disunity between the musical setting and the text demonstrates another layer of irony at work in the prosa. There are moments within the melody that contribute to the sense of irony. The text of the opening melody exults in the King, yet derives from the *Orientis partibus* melody (compare examples 3.2 and 3.3). The superimposition of the *Orientis partibus* melody, a melody that evokes the burden-bearing donkey, on this text brings an element of lowliness and godly foolishness to the otherwise lofty King. As noted in Chapter 1, the thirteenth-century text “*Asinus etiam Christus,*” while acknowledging the donkey’s lowly, foolish, and abject nature, reminds the
reader that the foolishness of God, according to St. Paul, is “wiser than men.”\textsuperscript{34} That the court
exults in its victory over the Israelites via a donkey song could seem comical and foolish for the
Beauvais audience who would have recognized the song from First Vespers, adding a layer of irony
between what the audience knows and what the characters know.

Example 3.2. \textit{Jubilemus Regi nostro} from \textit{Ludus Danielis}, Egerton 2615, fol. 96r

Example 3.3. \textit{Orientis partibus} (from the three-part version), Egerton 2615, fol. 44v

Margot Fassler has already noted that this melodic borrowing identifies the satraps with the
burden-bearing donkey. The satraps have the task of carrying the vessels to the King, becoming
beasts of burden. But while the carrying of the vessels was a lofty duty for the subdeacons, the
satraps carry them for a profane purpose, the King’s feast. Fassler has also shown that this melody

\textsuperscript{34} See Chapter 1, pp. 4-5.
is used in an Epiphany prosa *Jubilemus cordis voce* (sung at Matins) in F-LA 263 for Epiphany/Feast of Fools (twelfth century), further strengthening the association of this melody with the subdeacons. However, the connection between the melody and the goliardic song *Istud vinum bonum vinum generosum* (Such wine, good wine, noble wine) from *Carmina Burana*, shown by Susan Boynton and Margot Fassler, supports the merry-making for which the vessels are intended.\(^{35}\)

I propose that it is unlikely that actual liturgical vessels were used in the performance of the *Ludus Danielis*.\(^{36}\) In his *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, Book I, William Durand notes that that Council of Orléans even forbade the use of Eucharistic vessels in weddings “lest they be polluted by contact with the shameful things or the ceremonies of the world.”\(^{37}\) If Eucharistic vessels were forbidden in marriage ceremonies, would they have been allowed in a music drama? When discussing the sacredness of liturgical vessels, patristic and medieval commentators often mention King Belshazzar’s follies. Jerome exhorts the faithful to shield liturgical vessels even from impure gazes:

> Therefore I summon you before God and Jesus Christ and his elect angels to guard that which you have received, not readily exposing to the public gaze the vessels of the Lord’s temple...Unchaste eyes see nothing correctly...the very first things carried away to Babylon were these vessels of the Lord. We find Belshazzar at his feast and

---


\(^{36}\) Fletcher Collins hypothesizes that actual vessels were used, but that seems unlikely. See Fletcher Collins, *Production of Medieval Church Music Drama* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1972), 253.

\(^{37}\) “Porro prohibitum est in concilio Aurelianensi ne diuina misteria prestentur ad nuptiarum ornatum, ne improborum tactu uel pompa secularis luxurie polluantur, quo nimirum ostenditur quod ex ueste cuiuscumque persone fieri non debet casula uel aliquis sacris mysteriis deputandus ornatus.” Durand/Thibodeau, 1.3.47.
among his concubines (vice always glories in defiling what is noble) drinking out of these sacred cups.\textsuperscript{38}

John of Damascus (eighth century) reminds the reader of this:

> Obviously, patens, chalices, censers, candlesticks and altars should all receive respect. Remember how Belshazzar made his people serve wine in sacred vessels and how God brought his kingdom to an end.\textsuperscript{39}

Similarly, I argue that it would be unlikely that liturgical vestments would be used in dramatic performances. As Durand writes:

> Again, Pope Stephen decreed that ecclesiastical vestments cannot be put to other uses, nor can they even be touched unless by consecrated men [or clergy], lest the vengeance that struck Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, befall those who transgress this decree.\textsuperscript{40}

Still, Max Harris notes that “students misappropriated church vestments and other ornaments for use in festive processions through the city streets on the feast of Saint Nicholas (6


\textsuperscript{40} “Stephanus quoque papa statuit ne uestimentis ecclesie in aliis usibus quis fruatur, quodque nisi a sacratis hominibus tangantur, ne ultio que Balthasar regem Babilonie percussit super hoc transgredientes ueniat.” Durand/Thibodeau, 1.3.48.
And the presence of vessels of any kind in the drama’s narrative could, nonetheless, remind those assembled of the liturgical vessels.

The recurrent melodic fragment—a jubilant outlining of a C triad—sounds almost sneering when set to a text about the destruction of the Jewish temple (Pater ejus destruens, Judeorum templum) and of the weeping of Jerusalem, “Ridens plaudit Babylon, Jerusalem plorat. Hec orbatur, hec triumphans” (While Jerusalem laments, Babylon laughs, one is bereaved and the other is triumphant). Jerome Taylor’s assessment that this prosa is simply a “silly song of the satraps, high-pitched and jingly” seems to miss the irony at hand. For those gathered, but not for the characters in the drama, this could have seemed irreverent, for the tertian melodies seem to mock the Jews. Concurrently, I suggest that setting these anti-Jewish texts to such a melody could also have appealed to anti-Jewish sentiment. That this melody recurs four times makes it the most unifying aspect of this otherwise structurally complicated song. This melodic pair (CD) that sets the text on Belshazzar’s father’s destruction of the temples of the Jews, functions almost like a refrain in an otherwise disjointed structure, infusing its defiant and irreverent joy/mockery of the Israelites throughout the song (see example 3.4).

---

41 See Max Harris, Sacred Folly, 117.

42 Richard K. Emmerson points out that the Beauvais cathedral’s plate was stolen and sold by Philip I (1060–1108) in a particularly contentious relationship with Bishop Guy of Beauvais (1063–84); he states that the centrality of the sacred vessels in the Daniel drama could have reminded the audience of the looting of the Beauvais cathedral in recent history. See Richard K. Emmerson, “Divine Judgment and Local Ideology,” in The Play of Daniel: Critical Essays. Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series, ed. Dunbar H. Ogden and A. Marcel J. Zijlstra (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1996), 45–46. See also Elizabeth M. Hallam, Capetian France, 987–1328 (New York: Longman, 2001), 106.

43 See Jerome Taylor, “Prophetic ‘Play’ and Symbolist ‘Plot,’” 37.
The introduction of markedly new melodic material as the song celebrates the King’s attributes (midway through the song as the vessels are presented to the King) highlights the dissonance between the attributes mentioned—decency, honesty, goodness—and the figure they are actually being attributed to. Little do the satraps know that in a moment this supposedly *potens* and *fortis* king will *stupefactus clamabit* at the writing on the wall, not reflective of powerful, royal behavior. The small ornamental flourishes of the first phrase give a flair, nuance to the melodic contour of this declaration, the satraps completely unaware what is to come (see example 3.5).

**Example 3.5. Iste potens from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 96v**

The final moment of disjunction between the musical setting and the text occurs with the final paired versicle “*Omnes ergo exultemus tante potestati*” (Therefore let us all exult in his boundless power) (see example 3.6). Though the text projects strength and power, the accompanying melody has an element of sobriety. It does not exude the jubilant, vibrant ring of some of the other sections. Rather, the melody reaches up a fourth before descending down the octave, a contour that seems incongruous with this exulting text.
Example 3.6. *Omnes ergo* from *Ludus Danielis*, Egerton 2615, fol. 97r

One moment in the foolishly cheerful conductus does, however, hint at Belshazzar’s impending doom, making this contrast with rest of the song. As the fourth paired versicle (see example 3.7) sings about the plunder of the temple vessels, the melodic setting occupies a lower melodic range, sounding almost sinister after the vibrant tertian melodies in the first three paired versicles. Though the second half of each phrase does outline a seventh in thirds, the melody does not actually sound jubilant (compare tante *potestati* in example 3.6 with *regnii Judeorum* in example 3.7).

Example 3.7. *Pater ejus spoliavit* from *Ludus Danielis*, Egerton 2615, fol. 96r

The Babylonian merry-making is in fact cut short by the foreboding handwriting on the wall that leaves the King *stupefactus*. He calls for the astrologers, Chaldeans, diviners, and magicians to solve the riddle, but no one is able to interpret the writing on the wall. At this point
in the drama when all else has failed, the liturgical author calls for the first conductus as the Queen enters the court. The rubric is as follows: *Conductus Regine venientis ad Regem*.

**CONDUCTUS I—*Cum doctorum***

I will demonstrate how the conductus’ singular deployment at this moment in the drama, when matters at the court have come to a standstill, shows its function as an instrument of wisdom. (Though the text and translation appear below, I have included them as Appendix 3.3 along with the edition of the song.)

Cum doctorum et magorum
omnis adist contio
secum volvit neque solvit
que sit manus visio.

Though a whole throng of sages and magi is present here
They have pondered but not resolved the vision of the hand.

Ecce prudens, styrpe cluens,
Dives cum potentia
In vestitu deaurato
Coniunx adest regia.

Behold, the wise one, of renowned race
rich and mighty,
wearing a robe of cloth gold
The royal spouse draws near.

Hec altentem promet vatem
Per cuius indicium
Rex describi suum ibi
Noverit exitium.

She will bring out a prophet from hiding,
through whose unfolding
the King will know that his own death
Is written there.

Letis ergo hec virago
comitetur plausibus,
cordis, oris que sonoris
personetur vocibus!

So let this mighty Queen be accompanied by joyful clapping
in the heart’s and voice’s vibrant music
she shall be proclaimed!
Example 3.8. Cum doctorum from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 97v

The song opens singing of the floundering court sages and magicians and calling out to the Queen, Ecce prudens (Behold, the wise one) (see example 3.8). That wisdom is associated with the conductus through the Queen is telling, for wisdom is personified as female in Proverbs 8:1 (“Doth not wisdom cry aloud, and prudence put forth her voice?”) and Ecclesiasticus 24:1 (“Wisdom shall praise her own self, and shall be honoured in God, and shall glory in the midst of her people”). But the Queen is not only wise, but rich and mighty, a virago (“man-like woman” or a warlike or heroic woman). The Queen processes towards the King, confident that she can bring Daniel out of hiding to decipher the letters, thus bringing a wise solution to an otherwise hopeless situation.

The conductus’ association of the Queen with Daniel and wisdom invokes the connection to the Sedes sapientiae sculptures—sculptures of the Virgin Mary upon which a small-sized, but adult-featured Christ child sits—for just as the Queen bears Daniel to the Babylonian court, the

44 It should be noted that a male subdeacon would have played the Queen. While the practice of men playing female roles was common (see the three Marys in the Easter Visitatio Sepulchri), Max Harris notes that it would have had even more significance in this feast for cross-dressing was a feature of the celebration of the Kalends. See Max Harris, Sacred Folly, 120–121. For the Visitatio Sepulchri, see also Karl Young, The Drama of the Medieval Church (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 1: 239–410.
Virgin Mary, as Theotokos, bears Christ, the embodiment of wisdom, into this world. A sermon by Peter Damian (d. 1027) likens the Virgin Mary to the ivory throne of Solomon, the seat of wisdom. Ilene Forsyth writes about it in this way:

She herself is that glorious throne concerning which in the Book of Kings it is written in these words: “King Solomon made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with the best gold beyond measure...” Damian delineates the pacific, hortatory and glorious character of Solomon’s wisdom and elaborates on the justice and benevolence of his throne which is seen as the seat or tribunal for the Wisdom of God.45

In Adam of St. Victor’s (d. 1180) hymn Salve Mater Salvatoris, Mary is called thronus es Salomonis.46

The Sedes sapientiae sculptures had their origins in the Adoration of the Magi scene from the Gospel of Matthew 2:11, thus inscribing wisdom onto the iconic image.47 While the earliest images found in the catacombs in Rome probably date from the third century, mosaics from the seventh and eighth centuries depict the Virgin Mary and Christ child in the “same posture of


47 The passage from Matthew is as follows:

Et intrantes domum, invenerunt puerum cum Maria matre ejus, et procidentes adoraverunt eum: et apertis thesauris suis obtulerunt ei munera, aurum, thus, et myrrham.

And entering into the house, they [the magi] found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

See also Sarah Boss, ed., Mary: The Complete Resource, 163.
enthronement, but without the Magi…stripped now of their narrative element of the visitation” they “form a clear focal point for devotion.”

I suggest that the image of the Sedes sapientiae would have been encountered by clerics in a variety of forms, allowing those gathered to perceive the resonance between the Queen and Daniel in the Ludus Danielis. Freestanding sculptures depicting the image (more than one hundred French ones survive from the Romanesque period) would have been used in procession at Chartres and Le Puy. Stone tympana at the cathedrals of Laon, Chartres, Notre-Dame, Paris, and the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, and Reims contained Theotokos-sedes sapientiae.

Perhaps the most fascinating intersection with the Ludus Danielis is a reliquary in a wooden Sedes sapientiae described by Hugh of Poitiers (c. 1161–1165) After a fire at the Church of the Madeleine where the statue was kept, a lock of the Virgin Mary’s hair, clothing of Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego—the Hebrew youths who were sent to the furnace along with Daniel—and a piece of the robe Christ wore at the Passion were found in the statue. That relics from

48 Ibid., 161.

49 Ibid., 41–43. Also see Ilene H. Forsyth, The Throne of Wisdom, 152. The earliest known sculpture dates from 946 and is for the cathedral at Clermont in south-eastern central France. See Sarah Boss, Mary: The Complete Resource, 161.


51 “The wood statue of the blessed Mary, Mother of God, which was placed on the floor of the crypt, suffered nothing at all from the fire, but was only blackened...the occasion of its repair revealed an inestimable treasure lying hidden in it...the image...had a most secret little door between the shoulders...piously brave, he [Lambert, the restorer of the image] opened the little door...and found a lock of hair of the Immaculate Virgin, the like of which has not been seen before or after, and a part of the tunic of the same Mary, Mother of God...besides some clothing of the three young men Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego; and a fragment of the scarlet robe which the Lord Jesus Christ wore at his Passion.” Ilene H. Forsyth, The Throne of Wisdom, 33–34.
these individuals were found together in the Sedes sapientiae link them to each other and the Ludus Danielis.

In a version of the liturgical drama Officium Stellae performed on Epiphany (The Feast of the Three Wise Men on January 6) from eleventh-century Nevers, a rubric/text states this:

Ostendentibus illis imaginem dicant: Ecce puer adest quem queritis; iam properate, adorate, quia ipse est redemptio uestra. Ilene Forsyth argues that this would have indicated the presence of the Sedes Sapientiae for “the use of imaginem in the singular indicates that it is a combined image, Mother and Son together as they would be in the Sedes sapientiae formula.”

After this conductus, the Queen sings to the King that the Jew in captivity, Daniel, docebit quod celate visio (will teach us what the vision conceals). That a Jew living under the King’s rule would offer wisdom to decipher the handwriting is ironic, considering the jubilant anti-Jewish nature of the prosa Iubilemus. But the drama of this moment is more intriguing, considering the religious and intellectual climate of the thirteenth century; the occasion for a Jewish man to present his wisdom seems to be an expression of art imitating life, since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was a period in which the Jews of northern France were renowned as scholars of Scripture. Furthermore, a loose parallel could be made between the Jews’ status in the Babylonian kingdom and the Jews’ status in France around 1230: both ruling kingdoms protected and possessed them.

---

52 Ibid., 55.
53 Louis IX’s statute in 1230 determined the serf status of the Jews:

“Nor can anyone in the whole kingdom retain the Jew of another lord, and wherever anyone may find his Jew he may lawfully seize him just like his own serf [tanquam proprium seruum], no matter how long the Jew shall have stayed under another lord or in another kingdom.” See
The King, convinced by the Queen’s wise words, sends his nobles to find Daniel. The nobles find Daniel and entreat him to come to the King, promising him riches, a promise that Daniel rejects. The next rubric is as follows: *Conductus Danielis venientis ad Regem*.

**CONDUCTUS II—Hic verus dei famulus**

This conductus’ approach to promoting wisdom is more complex than the Queen’s processional. The two parties, the nobles and Daniel, converse as they sing in two different languages, Latin and French, respectively. Daniel’s singing in French reflects his humility, the embodiment of wisdom, while the nobles’ singing in Latin reflects their more exalted pedigree. (See Appendix 3.4 for the text, translation, and edition of *Hic verus*.) Dronke characterizes the use of Latin and French in this way:

> The content does not suggest a comic effect; rather, perhaps, the bridging of the high Latinate world of the court and the everyday, colloquial world outside it, from which Daniel is fetched. That everyday world, unlike the palace, is lowly.  

I will demonstrate that despite the disunity in language between the nobles and Daniel, their common objective in bringing Daniel to the king is demonstrated through the unity of melodic material.

> It is not just the language that displays the disparity between the two groups. The nobles begin each of the three strophes praising the *iuventutis* Daniel in Latin for *fama prudentie* (fame of wisdom) and for *virtute, vita, moribus* (excellence, life, refinement.) They also acknowledge that Daniel *hic est cuius auxilio solvetur illa visio* (he is the man with whose help that vision will be

---


54 See Peter Dronke, *Nine Medieval Plays*, 112.
explained). On the other hand, Daniel responds to each of these strophes with the phrases that he is *pauper et exulans*—the juxtaposition of the nobles’ high words of praise as compared with Daniel’s admission of his lowly state reveals the tension at play in this drama. Also, the emphasis by the nobles on Daniel’s model behavior could have been received by those gathered as an appeal to the clerics to strive towards this kind of behavior.

Each of the nobles’ melodies can be divided into five segments (transposed mode 1 on G). Audrey Ekdahl Davidson has shown that the opening motive, which recurs three times, is borrowed from the Queen’s conductus, underscoring “qualities of dignity and wisdom, possessed by both the Queen and Daniel”55 (compare example 3.9 from the Queen’s conductus with example 3.10 from the nobles’ melody).

**Example 3.9.** Opening motive from Conductus I (*Cum doctorum*)
from *Ludus Danielis*, Egerton 2615, fol. 97v

Example 3.10. The nobles’ melody from Conductus II (Hic verus) from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 99r

The fourth segment begins like the first three but descends down an octave rather than back up to the starting pitch. The fifth segment, sung in French—cestui manda li Rois par nos (The King has summoned this man through us)—ascends to the initial high G. While this ascent could simply be a musical decision to conclude the phrase with the final, the ascent could also be interpreted as mirroring the confidence the nobles have in securing Daniel for the king. Also, that this fifth segment is sung in French, identifies the nobles with Daniel. It functions like a refrain, recurring at the end of each of the three verses.

On the other hand, Daniel’s melody begins with the Queen’s motive from Cum doctorum. Rather than remaining in the upper range like the noble’s first three segments, his melody winds down the octave, like the decorated nobles’ fourth segment, while singing pauper et exulans in French (compare example 3.11, the nobles’ fourth segment, with example 3.12, Daniel’s melody). The melodic descent could reflect the burden-some and lowly feelings Daniel may be carrying as he is summoned to the King.
Example 3.11. The nobles’ 4th segment from Conductus II (Hic verus)
from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 99v

\[\text{\textit{no-ta-re gis cu-ri-e.}}\]

Example 3.12. Daniel’s melody from Conductus II (Hic verus)
from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 99r

\[\text{\textit{Pau-per et e-xu\_lans en-vois al\_}}\]

In the second half of this melody, when Daniel sings that he will go to the king—\textit{envois al Roi par vos}—the phrase is a decorated version of the nobles’ fifth upward segment that was also sung in French (compare example 3.13, the nobles’ fifth segment, with example 3.14, the conclusion of Daniel’s melody). In this moment, unity of commitment is reflected between Daniel and the nobles through common language, melodic material, and text. But unlike the nobles’ melody that finds its way back to its starting pitch, Daniel’s melody finishes a fifth below that.

Example 3.13. The nobles’ 5th segment from Conductus II,
\textit{Ludus Danielis}, Egerton 2615, fol. 99v

\[\text{\textit{Cestui man-da li \_Rois par nos.}}\]
Daniel's indictment of Belshazzar and his father

Though Daniel’s indictment of Belshazzar and his father is neither a conductus nor a prosa, at this point I will briefly analyze it for it demonstrates how King Nebuchadnezzar’s behavior (and in turn, that of his son King Belshazzar) enacts precisely the antithesis of the themes of the Feast of Fools—the exalting of the lowly and the loftiness of burden-bearing—as well as the lessons from Matins. First, Daniel states that King Nebuchadnezzar was turgens nimis superbia, deiectus est a gloria (swelling over-much pride, was thus, cast down from glory); this casting down of the proud was heard in the Magnificat in each Vespers service and was that much more important in this celebration of the Circumcision Office/Feast of Fools. Bishop Odo of Sully’s decree from 1198 to Notre Dame states that the “Deposuit will be said in its appropriate place five times at most,” attesting to the importance of the the idea.\(^{56}\) The exact opposite of this casting down of the proud could be seen in the exalting of the subdeacon and his animal counterpart, the lowly donkey in the Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision. Second, Daniel states that Nebuchadnezzar was nam cum deo non ambulans (not walking with God) compared with the third lesson from Matins that states et ideo...fide ac devotione solita religiosi itineris vias (and therefore...with faith and devotion, walk the religious journey).

\(^{56}\) Trans. Craig Wright in Music and Ceremony at Notre Dame of Paris, 239.
Third, Daniel states that Nebuchadnezzar’s multas insanias...forma nudatus hominis, pastum
gustavit graminis (many acts of foolishness or madness...stripped him of “human form,” where he
ate grass like an animal). While I have argued that the human-animal analogy between the
subdeacon as the clerical ass and the donkey as the proto-subdeacon via Orientis partibus depicted a
positive relationship for the message of the feast, I contend that Nebuchadnezzar being driven to
eat grass represents a negative human-animal conversion. It explicitly conjures up the donkey, but
in a pejorative way, simply as a lowly beast (See Introduction). As noted in Chapter 1, dressing up
as animals and making oneself equal to animals were charges brought against those who
participated in the Kalends. In addition, Isidore of Seville calls Nebuchadnezzar a type of devil in
his Allegoriae.

Daniel’s charge against Belshazzar is this: Tu quoque, ejus filius, non ipso minus impius dum
patris actus sequeris vasis eisdem uteris. Quod quia Deo displicet, instat tempus quo vindicet, nam scripture
indicium minatur jam supplicium (But you too, his son, no less impious than he, following your
father’s deeds, are using those same vessels. Since this displeases God, the time of his vengeance
looms. For the warning in the writing threatens punishment now).

---

57 In Daniel 4:31–33, it is written, “there fell a voice from heaven, ‘O King
Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, and you shall be driven
from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; and you shall be made to
eat grass like an ox...Immediately the word was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven
from among men, and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his
hair grew as long as eagles’ feathers, and his nails were like birds’ claws.”

58 “Nabuchodonosor rex typus diaboli fuit, qui haereticorum plebem, erroris captivitate
devictam, de Jerusalem, id est, de Ecclesia in Babyloniam, id est, in ignorantiae confusionem
abduxit.” Isidore of Seville, Allegoriae, PL 83: 116.

59 See Peter Dronke, Nine Medieval Plays, 129.
After delivering this charge to Belshazzar, Daniel proceeds to reveal that the letters prophecy the division and end of Belshazzar’s kingdom. At these words, Belshazzar commands the general to take away the vessels. The rubric states that the satraps take away the vessels and the Queen takes her leave of the King: *Tunc, relictō palatio, referent vasa satrape. Et Regina discedet*.

*Conductus Regine.*

**CONDUCTUS III—*Solvitur in libro Salomonis***

Like the Queen’s first conductus, the Queen’s recessional is consistent in unifying the text with its accompanying action; this contributes a sense of wisdom to an otherwise despairing situation. The conductus’ reference to the book of Proverbs in its opening phrase—*Solvitur in libro Salomonis*—frames the Queen’s exit through the lens of the wisdom text, a text known for its praise of the wife whose wisdom in the domestic realm is unparalleled. Furthermore, it gives more legitimacy to the Queen as the bearer of wisdom. Though the song text and translation is as follows (in bold are phrases from Proverbs 31), it is also given in Appendix 3.5 along with the edition of the song:

- *Solvitur in libro Salomonis*  
  Digna laus et congrua matronis.  
  In Solomon’s book a fine and fitting praise of married women is unlocked.

- Precium est eius, *si quam fortis*  
  procul et de finibus remotis.  
  Her worth is just as that of a strong man/woman,  
  From distant and far-off lands.

- *Fidens est in ea cor mariti,*  
  Spoliis divitiis potiti.  
  Her husband’s heart sets trust in her—  
  The rich prize he has won.

- Mulier hec illi comparetur,  
  cuius Rex subsidium meretur.  
  Let this woman be likened to such a one:  
  The King rightly relies on her support,

- Eius nam facundia verborum  
  arguit prudentiam doctorum.  
  for the persuasiveness of what she said  
  Confuted the wisdom of his learned men.
Nos quibus occasi ludendi
hac die conceditur sollempni,
Demus huic præconia devoti,
veniant et concinent remoti!

Since we have been given the chance to play
on this ceremonial day,
let us herald her devotedly
And let those from afar come sing with us!

Highlighted in this excerpt from Proverbs 31 are the phrases that are referenced in the conductus:

Mulierem fortem quis inveniet? Procul et de ultimis finibus pretium ejus.
Confidit in ea cor viri sui, et spoliis non indigebit. Reddet ei bonum, et non malum, omnibus diebus vitae suae...Accinxit fortitudine lumbos suos, et roboravit brachium suum...Manum suam aperuit inopi, et palmas suas extendit ad pauperam...Nobilis in portis vir ejus, quando sederit cum senatoribus terrae...Os suum aperuit sapientiae, et lex clementiae in lingua ejus.

Who shall find a valiant woman? Far, and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her. The heart of her husband trusteth in her, and he shall have no need of spoils. She will render him good, and not evil all the days of her life. She had girded her loins with strength, and hath strengthened her arm...She hath opened her hand to the needy, and stretched out her hands to the poor...Her husband is honourable in the gates, when he sitteth among senators of the land....She hath opened her mouth to wisdom and the law of clemency is on her tongue. (Proverbs 31:10–17, 20, 23, 26.)

The Mulierem fortem the proverb speaks about is said to be the Virgin Mary because, according to Jaroslav Pelikan, she was seen as “an extension and expansion of Mary as the Second Eve, who had entered the lists of battle as the First Eve had done but who, being fortis, had defeated the devil, conquering the conqueror.” Thus, the conductus’ calling the Queen fortis could be heard as a nod to the connection between Mary and the proverbial wife.

In the drama, the Queen’s sharing of her wisdom about Daniel with the King is at the heart of her character. Thus, it is fitting that the only phrase from Proverbs quoted nearly exactly in the conductus is the one regarding the wife’s relationship to her husband: Fidens est in ea cor

---

60 See Jaroslav Pelikan, Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 27.
mariti (Her husband’s heart sets trust in her). In Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs, Claudia Camp argues that the woman portrayed in Proverbs 31 is a “portrait of a wise wife” whose husband’s “position among the elders flows from the energy and capabilities of the wife in the home.” The Queen’s influence likewise extends into the political realms as she becomes a “counselor-wife.”

The text of the conductus exalts the Queen for her excellence and particularly for her *facundia verborum arguit prudentiam doctorum* (persuasiveness of what she said that confuted the wisdom of the learned men). Thus, I argue that it is fitting that the Queen’s processional and recessional to and from the King are accompanied by a conductus, the proverbial sung “beast of burden,” because the Queen’s actions are on the side of wisdom and the exalting of the lowly. The analogy between the Queen and wisdom is linked to the image of the Virgin Mary in the Sedes sapientiae.

Near the end of the conductus, the text zooms out from the narrative of the ancient story to the feast at hand: *Nos quibus occasio ludendi hac die conceditur sollemni/Demus huic preconia devoti* (we to whom the occasion has been granted to perform our play upon this feast day, Let us sing her praises with devotion). These devoted praises could be sung in praise of the Virgin Mary, who was being exalted in this Octave of the Nativity.

---


62 Peter Dronke, Nine Medieval Plays, 131.
**CONDUCTUS IV—Regis vasa referentes**

The song sung while the satraps return the vessels to Daniel is, appropriately, a conductus. This is consistent with my argument that the prosae have been used for foolish actions (like the retrieving of the vessels for King Belshazzar’s feast) or characters, while the conductus are used for wise actions (like the returning of the vessels to Daniel) and characters. Though the text and translation appear below, they are also found in Appendix 3.6. The edition of the song is also given in Appendix 3.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regis vasa referentes</td>
<td>Bringing back the vessels of the King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quem Iudee tremunt gentes,</td>
<td>at whom Judea’s people tremble,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danieli applaudentes</td>
<td>applauding Daniel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaudeamus: laudes sibi debitas referamus!</td>
<td>Let us rejoice: let us proclaim the praises that are his due!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regis cladem prenotavit</td>
<td>He warned of the King’s disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum scripturam reseravit;</td>
<td>when he unlocked the writing;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>testes reos comprovabit</td>
<td>he proved Susannah’s accusers guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et Susannam liberavit—</td>
<td>and he set her free—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaudeamus: laudes sibi debitas referamus!</td>
<td>Let us rejoice: let us proclaim the praises that are his due!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babylon hunc exulavit</td>
<td>Babylon made him an exile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum Iudeos captivavit,</td>
<td>when she brought the Jews into captivity,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balthasar quem honoravit;</td>
<td>this man whom Belshazzar honoured;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaudeamus: laudes sibi debitas referamus!</td>
<td>Let us rejoice: let us proclaim the praises that are his due!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est propheta sanctus dei:</td>
<td>He is the holy prophet of God:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hunc honorant et Caldei</td>
<td>the Chaldeans honour him,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et gentiles et Iudei</td>
<td>And the Gentiles and the Jews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iubilantes ergo ei,</td>
<td>So, making jubilation for him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaudeamus: laudes sibi debitas referamus!</td>
<td>Let us rejoice: let us proclaim the praises that are his due!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Regis vasa referentes* is an orderly four-verse refrain song as one may expect from a wisdom conductus. Each verse sings of another aspect related to Daniel. In the first verse, the vessels are
brought to Daniel. The second verse sings of Daniel who protected and preserved the honor of Susanna, a woman falsely accused by two lustful elders of relations with a young man. The honouring of the exile Daniel by Belshazzar is recognized in verse three. The honouring of the prophet Daniel by Chaldeans, Gentiles, and Jews is recognized in verse four. The refrain Gaudeamus, laudes sibi debitas referamus (let us rejoice: let us proclaim the praises that are his due!) gathers those assembled for this collective, unified refrain of praise of Daniel.

CONDUCTUS V—Congaudentes celebremus natalis sollemnia

The final conductus in this drama, a song in celebration of the Nativity, occurs in the second half of the drama and is prepared by a brief exchange between legates of the new King Darius and Daniel. King Darius has ascended the throne, ousting Belshazzar; Daniel is still renowned for his wisdom. The legates bring Daniel to serve at Darius’s court. Upon being approached by the legates, Daniel sings G’en vois al Rois, in French, as a similar phrase was used in the conductus that accompanied Daniel to Belshazzar’s court. The melody is derived from the melody for en vois al Roi par vos from Daniel’s first conductus (compare example 3.15 with 3.16).

Example 3.15. G’en vois al Rois, sung by Daniel to the legates from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 103v

Example 3.16. en vois al Roi par vos sung by Daniel in Conductus II (Hic venus) from Ludus Danielis, Egerton 2615, fol. 99v
The rubric for this conductus is simple, *Conductus Danielis*. This conductus steps outside the narrative momentarily, focusing instead on the Christmas feast. (See Appendix 3.7 for the text, translation, and edition of *Congaudentes celebremus*. After the *con ductus* sung in praise of wise earthly characters like the Queen and Daniel, it is only fitting that the ultimate wisdom, *Dei sapientia*, the wisdom embodied in person of Jesus Christ, is duly praised. As the text states, this is the wisdom that redeemed us from death.

This conductus can be divided into two parts, the dividing line being a proclamation of Christ’s birth. The first part (three paired versicles in ABA structure) focuses on the *Dei sapientia* and Daniel’s connection to it while the second part (three paired versicles also with a parallel ABA structure) focuses on Daniel (see example 3.17). The conductus closes with a final mention of Christ’s birth to a virgin.

**Example 3.17. Conductus V (Congaudentes celebremus)**

*from Ludus Danielis*, Egerton 2615, fols. 103v–104r

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Versicles 1–3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congaudentes celebremus natalis sollempnia:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lam de morte nos redemit dei Sapientia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homo natus est in carne, qui creavit omnia,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasciturn quem predixit prophete facundia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would be born—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Danielis. Iam cessavit unctionis copia
cessat regni Iudeorum contumax potentia.

The first two paired versicles situate the song in the Christmas story, the word made flesh as prophesied by Daniel. In the third versicle, the anti-Judaic sentiment present in other points of this Circumcision Office surfaces. The text states that *Iam cessavit unctionis copia, cessat regni Iudeorum contumax potentia* (The means of anointing have now ceased, Ceased the contumacious power of the Jews).

At this point, the song again declares the birth of Christ who is the fulfillment of the Law. This declaration is framed in praise of Daniel: *In hoc natalitio, Daniel, cum gaudio te laudat hec contio.*

The melody steps out of the ABA pattern, instead following a stepwise pattern that is made up of three repeating fragments. The melody has echoes of the short responsory *Resurrexit Dominus* (Worcester Chapter Lib. F 160, p. 142).⁶³

Example 3.18. *In hoc natalitio*, Conductus V (*Congaudentes celebremus*)
from *Ludus Danielis*, Egerton 2615, fol. 104r

[Musical notation image]

In hoc na-ta-li-ti-o, Da-ni-el, cum gau-di-o te lau-dat hec con-ti-o.

If the liturgical authors were deliberate in this borrowing, they superimposed a suggestion of Easter onto a Christmas phrase in the Feast of the Circumcision, creating a rich exegetical moment where the three important Christ-centered feasts are linked.

---

⁶³ David Hiley, *Western Plainchant*, 87.
Versicles 4–6

Tu Susannam liberasti de mortali crimine
cum te deus inspiravit suo sancto flamine:
You rescued Susannah from a deadly charge
when God inspired you with his holy breath:

Testes falsos comprobasti reos accusamine,
you proved the false witnesses guilty in their
accusing

Bel draconem* peremisti coram plebis agmine,
you destroyed Bel and the dragon* before a
host of people,

Et te deus obervavit leonum voragine
and God watched over you in the pit of lions

Ergo sit laus dei Verbo, genito de virgine
praise be to God’s word, born of a maiden!

The second half of the conductus returns its focus to Daniel, mentioning his actions with
Susanna (Daniel 13:1–65), Bel (Daniel 14:1–21), the dragon (Daniel 14:22–26), and the lions’ den
(Daniel 14:30–31). In Dronke’s, Ogden’s, and Wulstan’s editions of the drama, they translate Bel
draconem as “Bel’s Dragon.” I suggest that the phrase means Bel and the dragon, referencing two
separate stories, as the idol Bel did not have a dragon nor did the dragon have an idol named Bel.
Bel and the Dragon are particularly pertinent to this Feast of the Circumcision as both of these
stories deal with idols, an idol named Bel and an idol that was a dragon. Idolatry was a practice
particular to the Kalends as heard in the lessons of Matins. In the story of Bel, the king claimed
that Bel was a living God because it ate and drank. But Daniel reveals that in reality, the priests of
Bel, their wives, and children were secretly stealing the food, resulting in the destruction of Bel
and his temple.

In the story of the dragon, the king tells Daniel to worship the great dragon in the palace. Daniel refuses and instead asks if he may slay the dragon, but not using any swords or clubs. The king agrees to Daniel’s challenge. Daniel decides to “slay” the dragon by feeding him with cakes made of hair, pitch, and fat. Upon consuming these cakes, the dragon bursts open and dies. The
focus on idolatry and gluttony is appropriate for the Feast of Fools considering the exhortations in
the lessons of Matins against being a temple of idols and Belshazzar’s excessive feast.

The conductus concludes in the spirit it began, with a mention of Christ’s birth. This time
the phrase that shares this is *dei Verbo genito de virgine*. This is the only moment in the entire drama
that the Virgin Mary is mentioned.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates how the conductus functioned in liturgical drama, but more
specifically in a Feast of Fools drama. Though the conductus did not prepare textual content as
they did in Matins, they still had a preparatory function, in this case the introduction of certain
characters to court or in accompanying of certain actions. I differentiated the conductus from the
prosa, both songs used to accompany processionals in the drama, by showing that they were
associated respectively with wisdom and folly. Even the dissonant presentation of the prosae as
compared to the relatively straightforward and consonant presentation of the conductus reinforced
their associations with wisdom and folly. That the conductus became signposts for wisdom in the
drama reveal their teaching identity in this context.

Also, in comparison to the Matins conductus, the drama’s conductus are far less
referential. While the Matins conductus used poetic, nuanced, and typological language to draw
out exegetical recollections from the cleric to prepare for the hearing of the lessons, the conductus
in the *Ludus Danielis* were rather straightforward in praise of the wise characters or actions they
accompany. The connective work that these conductus require of the observer is to recognize how
the conductus specifically and deliberating advance the case of wisdom in this Feast of Fools drama.

Looking forward to the conductus *Kalendas ianuarias* at Lauds in Chapter 4, we will see how the conductus functions in a much more focused ritual, that is the drinking of wine at the church doors. Though the ritual it accompanies is dramatic—a manifold symbolism is presented in the singing, hearing, tasting, and viewing of the wine at the church doors—it is not part of a single drama like the *Ludus Danielis*. Rather, *Kalendas* fits into the larger picture of the significance of wine to Christian theology, representative of Christ’s blood. In a sense, the stolen wine at the Babylonian court of the *Ludus Danielis* is redeemed through the *Kalendas*’ wine ritual.
APPENDIX 3.1

Astra tenenti (Prosa), Text and Translation
Egerton 2615, fols. 95r–95v

Astra tenenti, cuncitipotenti
Turba virilis et puerilis contio plaudi

For him who rules the stars, all powerful
the crowd of men and throng of boys clap
together

Nam Danielem multa fidelem
Et subisse atque tulisse firmiter audit

Because they hear that Daniel the loyal
has endured many trials and borne them
with steadfastness.

Convocat ad se Rex sapientes,
Gramata dextre qui sibi dicant enucleantes

The King summons the wise men to him,
that they should tell him the explanation of
the writing by a hand.

Que quia scribe, non potuere
solvere Rego, ilico muti conticuere.

Because the doctors were unable to
solve this for the King, they at once, dumbly,
lapsed into silence.

Sed Danieli scripta legenti mox patuere
que prius illis clausa fuere;

But to Daniel, as he read the writing, what
had been hidden
there in advance was soon revealed.

Quem quia vidit Balthasar illis prevaluisse,
Fertur in aula preposuisse.

And as Belshazzar saw him surpassing those
sages,
He is said to have given him preferment in
court.

Causa reperta, non satis aptis
destinat illum ore leonum dilacerandum

A pretext that’s found, a far from just one,
destines Daniel to be torn apart in the lion’s
jaws;

Sed, deus illos ante malignos
In Danielem tunc voluisti esse benignos.

Yet you, God wanted those who’d been
hostile
before to Daniel then to become benign.

Huic quoque panis, ne sit inanis,
mittitur a te, prepete vate prandia dante.

To him also bread (lest he be hungry)
was sent by you, the swift-flying prophet,
bringing him
Astra tenenti

Dum venerit Rex Balthasar, principes sui cantabunt ante eum hanc prosam

As - tra te - nen - ti, cun - cti - po - ten - ti, tur - ba vi -
Nam Da - ni - el - em mul - ti fi - de - lem et sub - i -
Con - vo - cat ad se Rex sap - i - en - tes gram - ma - ta
Que qui - a scri - be non po - tu - e - re sol - ve - re,
Sed Dan - i - el - i scrip - ta le - gen - ti mox pa - tu -

ri - lis et pu - e - ri - lis con - ti - o plau - dit.
is - se at - que tu - li - sse fir - mi - ter au - dit.
dex - tre qui si - bi di - cant en - u - cl - ant - tes;
re - gi i - li - co mu - ti con - ti - cu - e - re.
e - re que pri - us i - llis calu - sa fu - e - re;
Jubilemus Regi nostro magno ac potenti! Let us jubilate for our King, the great and mighty one!

Resonemus laude Digna voce competenti Let us proclaim the praise he merits, with harmonious voice.

Resonet jocunda turba sollemnibus odis! Let the joyous crowd proclaim it in ceremonial songs!

Cytharizent, plaudant manus, mille sonent modis! Let their lutes play, their hands clap it, making it sound in a thousand ways!

Pater eius destruens Iudeorum templam magna fecit, et hic regnat eius per exempla. His father, destroying the temples of the Jews, did great deeds, and the son reigns following his example.

Pater eius spoliavit regnum Iudeorum; Plundered was the kingdom of the Jews by his great father.

Hic exaltat sua festa decore vasorum. Splendid vessels now adorn the festal scene before us.

Hec sunt vasa regia quibus spoliatur These are the royal vessels of which Jerusalem has been despoiled.

Iherusalem et regalis Babylon ditatur. Regal Babylon enriched.

Presentemus Balthsar ista Regi nostro Let us present them to our King Belshazzar who has so greatly graced his men with purple and scarlet

Qui sic suos perornavit purpura et ostro

Iste potens, ist fortis! He is mighty, he is brave, he is glorious!

Iste probus, curialis, decens et formosus. He is gallant, courtly, seemly and handsome too.

Jubilemus Regi tanto vocibus canoris, Let us jubilate for so great a King with tuneful voice,

Resonemus omnes una laudibus sonoris! Let us make music all together with resounding praise!

Ridens plaudit, Babylon, Iherusalem plorat Babylon leaps laughing, Jerusalem weeps:

Hec orbatur, hec triumphans she is bereft; the other, triumphant,

Balthasar adorat pays Belshazzar homage

Omnès ergo exultemus tante potestati, Let us all exult then at such mighty power,

Offerentes Regis vasa sue maiestati offering the vessels to his royal majesty.
Jubilemus Regi nostro

Satrape, vasa deferentes, cantabunt hanc prosam ad laudem Regis

Jubi-le-mus Re-gi nos-tro mag-no ac po-ten-ti! Re-so-ne-mus lau-de di-gna
Re-so-net jo-cun-da tur-ba sol-lem-pni-bus o-dis! Cy-tha ri-zent plau-dant ma nus,

vo-ce com-pe-ten-ti! Pa-ter e-jus des-tru-ens, Ju-de-o-rum tem-pla.
im-le so-nent mo-dis!

Ma-gna fe-cit, et hic re-gnat e-jus_per ex-em-pla. Pa-ter e-jus spo-li-a-vit

re-gnum Ju-de-o-rum; Hic ex-al-tat su-a fe-sta de-co-re va-so-rum.

Hec sunt va-sa re-gi-a qui-bus spo-li-a-tur Jhe-ru-sa-lem et re-ga-lis
Pre-sen-te-mus Bal-tha-sar i-sta Re-gi no-stro, Qui sic su-os per-or-na-vit

Ba-by-lon di-ta-tur. Is-te po-tens, is-te for-tis
pur-pu-ra et os-tro.

is-te glo-ri-o-sus. Is-te pro-bus, cu-ri-a-lis, de-cens et for-mo-sus.

Ju-bi-le-mus Re-gi tan-to vo-ci-bus ca-no-ris;
Resonemus omnes una laudibus sonoris.

Ridens, plaudot Babylon, Jherusalem plorat;

Hec orbatur, huc triumphant Susannathasar adorat.

Omnes ergo exultemus, tante potestati,

offeren tes Regis vassa sue majestati.
APPENDIX 3.3

Cum doctorum et magorum, Text and Translation
Egerton 2615, fols. 97v–98r

Cum doctorum et magorum
omnis adist contio
secum volvit neque solvit
que sit manus visio.

Though a whole throng of sages and
magi is present here
They have pondered but not resolved
the vision of the hand.

Ecce prudens, styrpe cluens,
Dives cum potentia
In vestitu deaurato
Coniunx adest regia.

Behold, the wise one, of renowned race
rich and mighty,
wearying a robe of cloth gold
The royal spouse draws near.

Hec altentem promet vatem
Per cuius indicium
Rex describi suum ibi
Noverit exitium.

She will bring out a prophet from hiding,
through whose unfolding
the King will know that his own death
Is written there.

Letis ergo hec virago
comitetur plausibus,
cordis, oris que sonoris
personetur vocibus!

So let this mighty Queen be accompanied
by joyful clapping
in the heart's and voice's vibrant music
she shall be proclaimed!
Cum doctorum et majorum

Conductus Regiae venientis ad Regem

Cum doc to - rum et ma - go - rum om - nis ad - sit con - ti - o

se - cum vol - vit, ne - que sol - vit que sit ma - nus vi - si - o.
**APPENDIX 3.4**

*Hic verus dei famulus*, Text and Translation
Egerton 2615, fols. 99r–99v

**Princeps**

Hic verus dei famulus,
Quem laudat omnis populus,
Cuius fama prudentie
Est nota regis curie.

Cestui manda il Rois par nos.

**Nobles**

This is God’s true servant,
Whom each nation praises,
The fame of whose wisdom
Is known to the King’s court.

The King has summoned this man through us.

**Daniel**

Pauper et exulans
En vois al Roi par vos.

**Princeps**

In iuventutis gloria,
Plenus celesti gratia,
Satis excellit omnibus
Virtute, vita, moribus.

Cestui manda il Rois par nos.

**Nobles**

In the glory of his youth,
Full of heavenly grace,
He far surpasses everyone
In excellence, life, refinement

The King has summoned this man through us.

**Daniel**

Pauper et exulans
En vois al Roi par vos.

**Princeps**

Hic est/cuius auxillio
Solvetur illa visio,
In qua scribente dextera
Mota sunt Regis viscera.

Cestui manda il Rois par nos.

**Nobles**

He is the man with whose help
That vision will be explained,
At which, as the hand was writing,
The King’s heart was moved

The King has summoned this man through us.

**Daniel**

Pauper et exulans
En vois al Roi par vos.

**Daniel**

I, poor and exiled,
Am off to the King, through you.

**Daniel**

I, poor and exiled,
Am off to the King, through you.

**Daniel**

I, poor and exiled,
Am off to the King, through you.
Hic versus Dei famulus

Conductus Danielis venientis ad Regem

Hic versus Dei famulus, quem laudat omnis populus;
cujus fama prudenti est nota regis curie.
Ces tui mandali Rois par nos. Pau-per et exulans
en-vois al Roi par vos In juventutis gloriam,
ple-nus celesti grata, sa-tis excellit omnibus virtute,
vi-ta moribus. Ces tui mandali Rois par nos.
Pau-per et exulans en-vois al Roi par vos.
Hic est cu-jus auxilio solvere il-la vi-sio
in qua scri bene dextera mota sunt Regis visce-ra.
Ces tui mandali Rois par nos.
Pau-per et exulans en-vois al Roi par vos
Solvitur in libro Salomonis
Digna laus et congrua matronis.

In Solomon’s book a fine and fitting
praise of married women is unlocked.

Precium est eius, si quam fortis
procul et de finibus remotis.

Her worth is just as that of a strong man/woman,
From distant and far-off lands.

Fidens est in ea cor mariti,
Spoliis divitibus potiti.

Her husband’s heart sets trust in her—
The rich prize he has won.

Mulier hec illi comparetur,
cuius Rex subsidium meretur.

Let this woman be likened to such a one:
The King rightly relies on her support,

Eius nam facundia verborum
arguit prudentiam doctorum.

for the persuasiveness of what she said
Confuted the wisdom of his learned men.

Nos quibus occasio ludendi
hac die conceditur sollempni,

Since we have been given the chance to play
on this ceremonal day,

Demus huic preconia devoti,
veniant et concinent remoti!

let us herald her devotedly
And let those from afar come sing with us!
Solvitur in libro Salomonis

Conductus Reginae

Sol - vi - tur in li - bro Sa - lo - mo - nis
Pre - ci - um est e - jus, si quam for - tis,
Fi - dens est in e - a cor ma - ri - ti,
Mu - li - er hec il - li com - pa - re - tur:
E - jus nam fa - cun - di - a ver - bo - rum

dig - na laus et con - gru - a ma - tro - nis.
pro - cul et de fi - ni - bus re - mo - tis.
spo - li - is di - vi - ti - bus po - ti - ti.
cu - jus Rex sub - si - di - um me - re -
ar - gu - it pru - den - ti - am doc - to - rum.
Regis vasa referentes
quem Iudee tremunt gentes,
Danieli applaudentes
Gaudeamus: laudes sibi debitas referamus!

Bringing back the vessels of the King
at whom Judea’s people tremble,
applauding Daniel
Let us rejoice: let us proclaim the praises that
are his due!

Regis cladem prenotavit
cum scripturam reseravit;
testes reos comprovabit
et Susannam liberavit—
Gaudeamus: laudes sibi debitas referamus!

He warned of the King’s disaster
when he unlocked the writing;
he proved Susannah’s accusers guilty
and he set her free—
Let us rejoice: let us proclaim the praises that
are his due!

Babylon hunc exulavit
cum Iudeos captivavit,
Balthasar quem honoravit;
Gaudeamus: laudes sibi debitas referamus!

Babylon made him an exile
when she brought the Jews into captivity,
this man whom Belshazzar honoured;
Let us rejoice: let us proclaim the praises that
are his due!

Est propheta sanctus dei:
hunc honorant et Caldei
et gentiles et Iudei.
Iubilantes ergo ei,
Gaudeamus: laudes sibi debitas referamus!

He is the holy prophet of God:
the Chaldeans honour him,
And the Gentiles and the Jews.
So, making jubilation for him.
Let us rejoice: let us proclaim the praises that
are his due!
Regis vasa referentes

Conductus referentium vasa ante Danielem

Re-gis v-a-sa re-fer-ren-tes quem Ju-de-e tre-munt gen-tes,
Ba-by-lon hunc ex-u-la-vit, cum Ju-de-os cap-ti-va-vit

Da-ni-e-li ap-plau-den-tes. Gau-de-a-mus;
Bal-tha-sar quem ho-no-ra-vit. Gau-de-a-mus;

lau-des si-bi de-bi-tas re-fer-ra-mus!
lau-des si-bi de-bi-tas re-fer-ra-mus!

Re-gis cla-dem pre-no-ta-vit cum scrip-tu-ram re-se-ra-vit;
Est pro-phe-ta sanc-tus De-i; hunc ho-no-rant et Cal-de-i,
tes-tes re-os com-pro-ba-vit, et Su-san-nam li-be-ra-vit.
et gen-ti-les et Ju-de-i. Er-go ju-bi-lan-tes e-i.

Gau-de-a-mus; lau-des si-bi de-bi-tas re-fe-ra-mus!
Gau-de-a-mus; lau-des si-bi de-bi-tas re-fe-ra-mus!


APPENDIX 3.7

*Congaudentes celebremus natalis sollemnia*, Text and Translation
Egerton 2615, fols. 103v-104v

Congaudentes celebremus natalis sollemnia: Joyously, let us celebrate the Christmas feast:
Iam de morte nos redemit dei Sapientia. Now God’s Wisdom has redeemed us from Death.

Homo natus est in carne, qui creavit omnia, He is man, born in flesh, he who created all,
Nasciturum qum predixti prophete facundia Whom the eloquence of a prophet foretold who would be born—

Danielis; Iam cessavit unctionis copia Prophet Daniel; The means of anointing have now ceased,
cessat regni Iudeorum contumax potentia. Ceased the contumacious power of the Jews.

Tu Susannam liberasti de mortali crimine You rescued Susannah from a deadly charge
cum te deus inspiravit suo saneto flamine: When God inspired you with his holy breath:

Testes falsos comprobasti reos accusamine, You proved the false witnesses guilty in their accusing,
Bel draconem peremisti coram plebis agmine, You destroyed Bel and the dragon before a host of people,

Et te deus obervavit leonum voragine And God watched over you in the pit of lions,
Ergo sit laus dei Verbo, genito de virgine praise be to God’s word, born of a maiden!
Congaudentes celebremus natalis solemnphia

Conductus Danielis

Con-gau-den-tes ce-le-bre-mus na-ta-lis sol-lem-pnia
Jam de mor-te nos re-demit De-i sa-pi-en-ti-a.

Ho-mo na-tus est in car-ne, qui cre-a-vit om-ni-a,
na-sci-tu-rum quem pre-di-xit pro-phe-te fa-cun-di-a,

Da-ni-e-lis; jam ces-sa-vit un-cti-o-nis co-pi-a,
ces-sat reg-ni Ju-de-o-rum con-tu-max po-ten-ti-a.

In hoc na-tal-i-ti-o, Da-ni-el, cum gau-di-o te lau-dat hec con-ti-o.

Tu Su-san-nam li-ber-a-sti de mor-ta-li cri-mi-ne,
cum te De-us in-spi-ra-vit; su-o sanc-to fla-mi-ne.

Tes-tes fals-os com-pro-bas-ti re-os ac-cu-sa-mi-ne.
Bel dra-co-nem pe-re-mi-sti co-ram ple-bis a-gmi-ne.

Et te De-us ob-ser-va-vit le-o-num vo-ra-gi-ne.
Er-go sit laus De-i ver-bo ge-ni-to de vir-gi-ne.
By this point in the morning, the clerics’ imaginations are saturated with thoughts of stolen vessels, wisdom and folly, and the Babylonian world of the *Ludus Danielis*. At the conclusion of Lauds, the conductus *Kalendas ianuarias*, sung to a wine ritual at the church door, transforms the stolen wine cup from the Babylonian feast theologically, sonically, visually, and materially into the wine cup for the sanctification of Kalends. The very practice of excessive drinking criticized in the Kalends becomes the ritual through which the Kalends is sanctified. Also, with its celebration of the lofty Christ and its contemplation of the *poculum tui sanguinis*, *Kalendas ianuarias* reorients the clerics’ minds to the Eucharist. The location of the ritual at the church doors encourages those gathered to reflect on the meanings of the actual and metaphorical “door” through which one enters the new year. Ultimately, the clerics are transitioned from the physical darkness of the night to the lightness of day, from the “the servitude of our exile” (Matins) to the “joy of light and liberty…the time of grace.”

---

1 “Quia tamen ordo conuiens est ut a tenebris procedamus in lucem et non e conuerso, ideo a noctis officio inchoemus. Tempus autem nocturnum significant uitam nostram in peccatis. Nocturnum officium nostri exilii seruitium, laus matutina penitentie suffragium per quam tendimus ad lucis gaudium et libertatis. Vel tempus ante nocturnum significat tempus ante legem mortis in quo omnes silebant a laudibus Dei. Tempus nocturnum significat tempus legis date Moysi. Tempus laudis matutine significat tempus gratie a resurrectione usque ad finem mundi.

Since it is a fitting arrangement that we proceed from darkness into the light, not the other way around, we therefore begin the Office at night. Moreover, night time signifies our life in sin. The night Office is the servitude of our exile. Lauds is the suffrage of our penitence through which we strive towards the joy of light and liberty. Or the time before the nocturn signifies the time of death before the Law...The time for the night [Office] signifies the time in which the Law was
The service of Lauds is much shorter than Matins. It is comprised of five antiphon-psalm pairings as opposed to the extensive three nocturns of Matins. In this case, each psalm is introduced by a Marian antiphon. A perceptive cleric, with Daniel on his mind, would have noticed that in the position of the fourth psalm is a canticle from Daniel, possibly referring the cleric back to the *Ludus Danielis*. When the *Benedicamus/Deo gratias* are sung, the close of the service is signalled. But the final ritual remains: the wine ritual accompanied by the singing of the strophic conductus *Kalendas ianuarias*. The function of the conductus here could be seen as comparable to the conductus *Orientis partibus* at First Vespers (since it involves an extensive procession of people/animals) rather than to the conductus preceding the lessons or readings in Matins and the Mass. I propose that the singing of *Kalendas ianuarias* was the most complex of the conductus processions in this feast, a unique marriage of visual stimuli and song, that guides the clerics to create a rich performative exegesis.

This rubric appears at the end of Lauds in MS Egerton 2615 on fol. 40v.

Postea omnes eant ante ianuas ecclesie clausas et quatuor stent foris tenentes singuli urnas vino plenas cum cyfis uitreis, quorum unus Canonicus incipiatur *Kalendas ianuarias*. Tunc aperiantur ianue.

given to Moses. The time for Lauds signifies the time of grace, from the resurrection up to the end of the world.” Durand/Thibodeau, 5.3.1.

Also, “Dicuntur autem laudes quia illud officium laudem precipue sonat diuinam quem ei facimus, pro eo quod a tenebris erroris nos ad lucem seu uiam ueritatis reduxit et ad temptationes dyaboli repellendas, unde Ysaias XXVI: *Expergescimini et laudate qui habitatis in puluere quia ros lucis est*. De hoc matutinali officio dicit Propheta: *Ad te de luce uiglio Deus*.

They call it “Lauds [laudes]” because it especially resounds with the diving praise [laudem] which we offer Him, because He brought us from the darkness of error to the light or way of truth, and to repelling the temptations of the Devil; thus Isaiah: *Awake, and give praise, you that dwell in the dust: for your dew is the dew of light* (Isa 26:19). The Prophet says, about this morning Office: *O God, to you do I watch from daybreak* (Ps. 62:2).” Durand/Thibodeau, 5.4.2.
Afterwards let all go before the closed doors of the church, and four stand outside, each holding jars full of wine with glass cups [goblets]. One of the [four], a canon, begins Kalendas ianuaris. Then let the doors be opened.

What would this scene have been like? The clerics gather at the doors of the church while four clerics each hold a jar full of wine and a glass cup. The rubric instructs that when the singing of the conductus Kalendas ianuarias begins, the door of the church is opened. Presumably, as they process through the doors of the church, everyone drinks from one of the glass cups, which is continuously refilled by each cleric holding a jar of wine.

As the clerics wait for the singing of Kalendas ianuarias to commence, they could begin to create a theological narrative for each of the objects they see in the tableau—jars of wine, glass cups of wine, church door—and the four clerics. The symbolism present in this ritual is manifold. Because this ritual is as much visual as it is auditory, I will first consider the theological significance of the objects in the tableau before addressing the text of the conductus.

I propose that the smallest object in the scene—each cup of wine—was the immediate focus of the ritual. The chalice had just played a large role in the Ludus Danielis as the object whose sacredness was mishandled in the feast of Belshazzar and which ultimately led to the overturning of Belshazzar’s reign in Babylon. In this Lauds ritual, however, the glass cups of wine are regarded with reverence, for they represent the cup of Christ’s blood or poculum tui sanguinis according to Kalendas ianuarias. The wine could be afforded even greater solemnity because of the increasing importance of transubstantiation in the thirteenth-century. It was but one simple sentence—transubstantiatis pane in corpus et uino in sanguinem potestate diuina—in the Fourth Lateran Council
(1215) that set forth this doctrine. An instruction from Durand offering the protocol should transubstantiated wine ever spill to the ground or onto a cloth testifies to the preciousness of the wine:

If the Eucharistic host or a drop of the Blood should fall on wood, or stone or on the ground, the Blood must be licked up with the tongue, and then the spot must be scraped and wiped clean, and the dust that is left must be deposited in the sacristy or placed with the relics. If the Blood falls on the corporal cloth, it is sucked with the greatest diligence possible, and then washed three times in the chalice, and then the water that was used to clean it is consumed after the Mass; then, the corporal must be folded up and kept in the place with the relics.

The rubric specifies that the vessel holding the wine be glass cups, not chalices. This is probably because even in wedding ceremonies, according to Durand, chalices were not allowed to be used. But significant to the Feast of the Circumcision is that glass represents baptism, the alternative sacrament to circumcision.

---

2 The text of the Fourth Lateran Council has been edited by Antonio García y García, Constitutiones Concilii quarti Laterañoensi una cum commentariis glossatorum (Vatican City: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1981), 42. The idea of the transformation of the Eucharistic wine into Christ’s blood had already been discussed for centuries by patristics like Ambrose and Augustine and had been professed by Berengarius at the Synod of Rome (1059). Later theologians would turn to Ambrose (who believed in the transformation of the elements into the Body and Blood of Christ) and Augustine (who emphasized the “nonidentity of the bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ”) to debate transubstantiation. See James McCue, “The Doctrine of Transubstantiation from Berengar through Trent: The Point at Issue,” The Harvard Theological Review 61, no. 3 (July, 1968): 385–430.

3 “Quod si super lignum uel lapidem uel terram eucharistia uel aliquid de sanguine cecidiret, sanguis lingua lambendus est, et deine radendus et extergenus est ipse locus, et puluis in sacrario siue cum religuis reponendus. Si uero super corporale ceciderit, sugatur sicut diligentius fieri poterit, et lauetur ter in calice, et aqua lotionis post missam sumatur; deinde corporale recondencum est et loco reliquiarum seruandum.” Durand/Thibodeau, 4.42.15.

4 “Porro prohibitum est in concilio Aurelianensi ne diuina misteria prestentur ad nuptiarum ornatum, ne improborum tactu uel pompa secularis luxurie polluantur, quo nimirum ostenditur quod ex ueste cuiuscumque persone fieri non debet casula uel aliquis sacris mysteriis deputandus ornatus.” Durand/Thibodeau, 1.3.47.

5 “Et in conspectu sedis tamquam mare vitreum simile cristallo. Propter fidem ueri baptism refertur ad uitrum, in quo non aliud uidetur exterius quam quod gestat interius. Cristallo quoque,
Because the Eucharist was instituted at the Last Supper, a Passover meal, its symbolism could be traced back from that Passover meal to the original Passover meal in the Exodus. Significantly then, the four cups of wine held by the four clerics could represent the four cups of wine at Passover celebrations. According to the Midrash Rabbah, the four cups of wine commemorate the four parts of redemption that God promises to the Israelites in Exodus 6:6-8:

There are here four expressions of redemption: I WILL BRING YOU OUT—I WILL DELIVER YOU—I WILL REDEEM YOU and I WILL TAKE YOU. These correspond to the four decrees which Pharaoh issued regarding them. The Sages accordingly ordained four cups to be drunk on the eve of Passover to correspond with these four expressions, in order to fulfill the verse: I will lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.  

Thus, the symbolism of the four cups of Passover adds another layer of exegesis onto this New Year’s Day ritual.

In turn, the four clerics could also remind those gathered of the Four Evangelists—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. According to Isidore of Seville, the evangelists all gestured to the Old Testament in their presentation of their respective gospels: 1) Matthew focused on the human birth of Jesus through his genealogy through the patriarchs; 2) Mark opens his Gospel deriving Christ’s preaching of the Gospel with the quotation from Isaiah: “A voice of one crying in the

---


* “Primus Mattaeus conscripsit Evangelium litteris Hebraicis et sermonibus in Iudaea initans evangelizare ab humana Christi nativitate dicens: ‘Liber generationis Iesu Christi filii David, filii Abraham’: significans descendisse corporaliter ex semine patriarcharum Christum, sicut promissum erat in prophetis per Spiritum sanctum.” Isidore’s *Etymologies*/Barney, 6.2.35.
desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord;”

3) Luke’s opening of his gospel with a mention of the priest, Zechariah, places Christ in the context of the royal priesthood, beginning from Melchizedech in Genesis. 4) John’s focus on Christ as the Word of God connects to the “Old” because he writes that the Word was present before the world existed. Isidore of Seville seems to consider the four Evangelists as emerging from the tradition of the Old Law, the old prophecies, but sharing the New Law in the person of Christ. This tension between the Old and the New is always at play in the Feast of the Circumcision as it celebrates an Old Covenant ritual, the circumcision, on the New Covenant Christ.

The next largest items in the tableau are the jars of wine. Jars of wine could be evocative of Christ’s first miracle, the turning of water into wine at Cana, described in John 2. At this wedding, Jesus’ mother tells him that the servers have run out of wine, a statement that elicits this response from Christ, “Woman, what is that to me? My hour has not yet come.” Still, Jesus commands the waiters to fill six waterjugs with water and then draw some out for the chief steward. Upon tasting the water that has been turned into wine, the chief steward notes that the best wine has been kept for last. This parable will be discussed in greater detail as the conductus calls for the sanctification of the Kalends so the faithful may be received at Christ’s eschatological nuptials.

The largest object in this tableau is the door. According to Durand, the door of the church symbolizes Christ because of John 10:9: “I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be

---


9 “...Iohannes scripsit Evangelium ultimus in Asia, incipiens a Verbo, ut ostenderet eundem Salvatorem, qui pro nobis dignatus est nasci et pati, ipsum ante saecula Dei Verbum esse, ipsum a caelo venisse, et post mortem ad caelum iterum remeasse.” Ibid., 6.2.39.
saved: and he shall go in and go out and find pasture.”¹⁰ For any thirteenth-century cleric, this Lauds ritual at the door could have reminded them of the Dedication of the Church. In the Dedication of the Church, Durand notes that the bishop, representing Christ, knocks on the door three times with his pastoral staff; the number three is significant as it invokes the Trinity as well as Christ’s creation of the church, Christ’s redemption of the church, and Christ’s future glorification of the church.¹¹ The opening of the door represents “the emptying out of sin.”¹² Though there is no knocking on the door in the Lauds ritual, I propose that the opening of the door whilst drinking the *poculum sanguinis* or Christ’s blood could also remind those of the “emptying out of sin,” a symbolic gesture of the clerics distancing themselves from the Kalends, as instructed in the Matins lessons.

The juxtaposition of the opening of the church doors whilst drinking wine in the ritual could also remind those gathered of Augustine’s commentary on John 19. Augustine states that the Evangelist’s use of a “wide-awake word” like “open” for the piercing of Jesus’ side in his Passion demonstrates that

> the door of life was thrown open from which the mystical rites of the Church flowed, without which one does not enter into the life which is true life. That blood was shed for the remission of sins; that water provides the proper mix for the health-giving cup.¹³

---


¹¹ “Porro trina ad superliminare ostii percussio significat triplex ius quod Christus habet in Ecclesia sua, propter quod sibi debet aperiri: est snim sua creatione, redemptione et glorificationis promissione.” Durand/Thibodeau, 1.6.14. “In omni dedicatione episcopus ter ianuas percutere debet quia sine iuvocatione Trinitatis nullum fit in ecclesia sacramentum.” Durand/Thibodeau, 1.6.16.

¹² “Apertio ostii euacuatio est peccati.” Durand/Thibodeau, 1.6.16.

¹³ “ut illic quodammodo vitae ostium panderetus, unde Sacramenta Ecclesiae manaverunt, since quibus ad vitam quae vera vita est, non intratur. Ille sanguis in remissionem fusus est
That the doors of the church are opened as the wine is consumed by the clerics seems to enact Augustine’s exegesis of the piercing of Jesus’ side. Thus, the church door represents both the requirements of the Old Law of Passover, the fulfillment of the New Law in Christ, and the eschatological door that is opened at the Second Coming.

In Margot Fassler’s study of the liturgical function of the portal at Chatres Cathedral during the bishop’s entrance, she notes the Second Coming portrayed in the central tympanum is of particular importance to the concept of doors as

the vision takes place just after a mystical discussion of doors, of knocking, and entering. Apocalypse 3:20–33 reads: ‘Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in to share his meal side by side with him.’

The fact that upon opening this door, Christ will share a meal with each person associates this passage with the second and ninth verses about feasting in Kalendas ianuarias.

When the singing of Kalendas ianuarias finally commences, it verbalizes this visual exegesis. It should be noted that the text and music for the song is not presented in Egerton 2615. The text, translation, and edition is given in Appendix 4.1 is taken from Henri Villetard’s transcription of F-SEm 46, the thirteenth-century Circumcision Office of Sens Cathedral. At Sens, the song functioned as the conductus ad poculum in Second Vespers.


Verses 1–3, *Kalendas ianuarias*, F:SEM 46, fol. 27v

Kalendas ianuarias May you render the Kalends of January
Solemnes Christe facias solemn, Christ,
Et nos ad tuas nuptias And may you receive us
to your nuptials, [you who are] called king.
Vocatus rex suscipias

Suscipe tuum populum Receive your people
Ad nuptiarum epulum at the wedding feast
Qui multiplex es ferculum you [who] are a multiple meal,
Cuius sanguis est poculum whose blood is the cup.
Poculum tui sanguinis Give us the cup of your blood
Sumptique carnem hominis and the flesh of the consumed man
Ad laudem tui nominis in praise of your name,
Da nobis, proles virginis. offspring of the virgin.

At the outset of this conductus is the request that Christ sanctify the pagan feast of the Kalends and prepare his church for his nuptials. The lessons from Matins have already attested to the need for the faithful to walk away from Kalends as the Kalends was often singled out for drunkenness, among other abuses. Pseudo-Maximus’s sermon asks, “For what wise person, who understands the sacrament of the Lord’s birthday, would not condemn the drunkenness of the Saturnalia and turn away from the excesses of the Kalends?”¹⁶ In another sermon, Pseudo-Maximus shows his disgust for those who “while celebrating the Lord’s birthday with us, have given themselves over to pagan feasts and, after the heavenly banquet, have prepared a meal of superstition for themselves.”¹⁷ Augustine writes, “They run to the theatre; you, to the church. They become intoxicated; do you fast.”¹⁸ Caesarius of Arles notes this:

¹⁶ “Quis enim sapiens, qui dominici natalis intelliget sacramentum, non ebrietatem condemnat saturnalium non declinet lasciuiam kalendarum, et partem cupiens habere cum Christo particeps nolit esse cum saeculo?” Maximus of Turin, Sermo 98.1, CCSL 23: 390; trans. Boniface Ramsey in ACW 50: 222.
¹⁷ “De his loquor qui nobiscum natalem domini celebrantes gentilium se feriis dediderunt, et post illud caeleste conuiuium superstitionis sibi prandium praepararunt, ut qui ante laetificati
Therefore when our holy ancient fathers observed that the majority of the human race were obeying gluttony or dissipation on these days and were possessed with a mania for drunkenness and wicked dances, they passed a decree for the whole world. Throughout all churches a public fast was imposed...It is not right, brethren, for you who have been wont to exclaim daily to the good God, “My eyes are ever towards the Lord,” and again: “To you I lift up my eyes,”—it is not right for your eyes, which are continually sanctified by watchful looking to God in church, to be defiled by seeing the wickedness of foolish men...Therefore cry out with the prophet and say: “Turn away my eyes from seeing what is vain.” Moreover fear what the Apostle says: “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and also the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and likewise the table of demons.”

Caesarius’ quotation of Saint Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians 10:21, “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and also the cup of demons,” is reminiscent of the warning from the fifth lesson of Matins: “Take care to avoid dead and vain things, otherwise you will cease being the temple of God, and could become the habitat of darkness or a monument of demons.” Both highlight the stark divide between the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. The wine ritual,
thus, could turn the drinking of wine on its head, transforming it from a profane act to a sacred one.

Since wine was symbolic of Christ’s blood, it is useful to consider Augustine’s warning to the faithful that their participation in the Kalends demonstrates their ungratefulness for the blood of Christ.

Moreover, you intermingle with the pagans in your life, your deeds, your heart, by believing, hoping, and loving as they do. Then you are ungrateful to your Redeemer; you do not appreciate your purchase price, the blood of the Immaculate Lamb. Therefore, in order to follow your Redeemer, who bought you back with His own blood, do not mix with the pagans by aping their customs and deeds.²⁰

Of course, some historians, like E. K Chambers in The Mediaeval Stage, considered the wine ritual at Lauds to be a “drinking bout,” in the words of Max Harris.²¹ But as John Caldwell has written, “refreshments after the service were written even into the ordines romani of the 8th and 9th centuries” and did not mean that things got out of control.²² One wonders had those in attendance been aware they would be accused of drunkenness centuries later, would they have pleaded Saint Paul’s defense of the apostles on Pentecost: “For these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.” Lauds was held at daybreak, well before the third hour.²³

---


²¹ See Max Harris, Sacred Folly, 108.


²³ While the consumption of alcohol beyond an acceptable degree by clerics was parodied in many a song in the Middle Ages, the excessive consumption of alcohol was not called for in actual liturgical celebrations. Parodies of liturgical drinking are found, however according to Martha
How would the wine ritual intersect with the conductus’ references to the preparation of Christ’s nuptials? To start, Thomas Aquinas’ statement that the “bodily presence” of Christ is “united” to the faithful during the consumption of the Eucharistic sacrament situates the wine in the marriage relationship.

Yet meanwhile in our pilgrimage He does not deprive us of His bodily presence; but unites us with Himself in this sacrament of His body and blood. Hence (John 6:56), he says: “He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.” Hence this sacrament is the sign of supreme charity, and the uplifter of our hope, from such familiar union Christ with us.24

The wine becomes the conduit for the union. As Saint Paul writes in his second letter to the Corinthians 11:2, the relationship between the church and Christ is one of marriage: “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

Two parables that address the question of preparedness for weddings would have been on the minds of those gathered. Both are cautionary tales of how the lack of preparedness can leave one thrown out or left out of the wedding banquet. The first parable is of the wedding banquet found in Matthew 22:14 and in Luke 14 and the second parable is that of the wise and foolish Bayless, in at least four fragments of drinkers’ Masses from the thirteenth and fourteenth century. The following example of a parodied Pater noster is found in D-Mbs Clm. 10751:


Our Father. Our drink who art in goblet, glorified be thy name. Thy power come on the stairs as in the glass. Give us and our fellow drinkers this day our bread back and white. And lead us not into the bad tavern, but deliver us from it forever. Straw.


virgins from Matthew 25:1–13. Linked to preparedness is the moral of these parables in promoting behavior suitable for the faithful, something that participation in the Kalends did not encourage.

In the parable of the wedding banquet in Matthew 22, a wedding guest is thrown out of the wedding banquet after coming without proper wedding attire. While the reaction of the king, the bridegroom’s father, seems unduly harsh—“Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness”—both Augustine and Gregory interpret it to be a question concerning the gravity of wearing the proper attire of attitude and heart. Augustine writes:

The garment that is required is in the heart, not on the body, for it had been put on externally, it could not have been concealed even from the servants. But what is the wedding garment that must be put on? We learn it from these words, “May your priests be clothed with righteousness.”

Gregory also sees this question of proper dress as a matter of the heart: “But since you already come into the house of the marriage feast, our holy church, as a result of God’s generosity, be careful my friends, lest when the King enters he finds fault with some aspect of your heart’s clothing.

Beyond the strictly tropological sense of the parable, the parable’s lesson intersects with the meaning of the Eucharist. Augustine equates this issue of preparedness for the parabolic wedding

---


feast with preparedness for receiving the Eucharistic elements, a sacrament that ultimately points to the eschatological wedding feast.

All the faithful know the story of the marriage of the king’s son and his feast. They know that the Lord’s table is open to all who are willing correctly to receive it. But it is important that each one examines how he approaches, even when he is not forbidden to approach...You are taking careful note of the words “For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Corinthians 11:29).27

In the case of the parable of the foolish virgins whose oil ran out, Augustine interprets their lack of preparedness (and subsequent need to go out and buy more oil) as a sign for looking for flattery, rather than good works.

Who are those who “sold you oil?” They are the ones who sell praises. Who sells praises, but flatterers? How better would it have been for you not to have acquiesced to flatterers, and to have carried oil within, and for the sake of a good conscience to have done all good works.28

When the foolish virgins return with their oil, the bridegroom has already arrived and the door is now locked. Augustine interprets this as the foolish virgins being locked out of the unity that Christ (the bridegroom) and the wise virgins (the Church) have together.29

---


For the cleric at Beauvais Cathedral, the marriage feast and the unity with Christ are both now and in the future. In Apocalypse 19:7–8, the eschatological wedding feast is described in which the Lamb is Christ and the wife is the Church.

Let us be glad and rejoice and give glory to him. For the marriage of the Lamb is come: and his wife hath prepared herself. And it is granted to her that she should clothe herself with fine linen, glittering and white. For the fine linens are the justification of saints. Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Bede threads eschatological time with the tropological and anagogical level of exegesis in his commentary on this wedding feast. He calls the feasting at this banquet to be “spiritual.”

The marriage supper of the Lamb occurs when the church will be united with her Lord in the wedding chamber of the heavenly kingdom. “And his bride has made herself ready.” By always persisting in the works of righteousness, [the church] has shown herself worthy of the spiritual banquet and the eternal kingdom. One can also interpret this according to the parable of the Gospel, which speaks of the virgins who, when the bridegroom was coming, rose up to prepare their lamps, that is, among themselves to consider their deeds for which they hope to receive eternal blessedness...It was granted to [the church] to be clothed with her own deeds.\textsuperscript{30}

Bede draws from two items in Christ’s parables on the marriage feast to emphasize the preparedness required of the church for this future feast. The first is of the virgins who “rose up to prepare their lamps...for which they hope to receive eternal blessedness” and the other is that the “church be clothed with her own deeds.”

But it is not just the wedding parables that speak to the need for the Church’s preparedness for the present and future union with Christ. The juxtaposition of the pocuslum tui

\textsuperscript{30} “Nuptiae sunt agni, cum ecclesia domino in thalamo regni caelestis sociabitur. “Et uxor eivs praeparavit se.” Operibus iustitiae semper insistendo spiritali se conuiuo et perenni regno dignam exhibuit. Potest et iuxta euangelii parabolam accipi, quae virgines narrat ueniente sponso surgentes suas ornare lampades, id est sua secum opera numerare, pro quibus aeternam percipere beatitudinem expectant...Datum est illi factis suis indui.” Bede, Expositio Apocalypseos 33.73–81 and 83, CCSL 121A: 491; trans. William Weinrich in Latin Commentaries on Revelation, 175.
sanguinis (cup of blood) in the context of a marriage feast in Kalendas with the refilling of each cup by the clerics holding the jars of wine in the Lauds ritual can remind those gathered of Christ’s first miracle, the turning of water into wine at the wedding at Cana. Augustine’s commentary on the passage from John 2 threads together the wine and the door from Lauds as well as the general theme of wisdom from the feast at large. The faithful both embody the wine and imbibe the wine, which is ultimately wisdom.

I think that he did not come to the wedding without a reason. The miracle apart, something mysterious and symbolic lies hidden in the very act. Let us knock that he may open and may inebriate us with invisible wine; for we, too, were water and he made us into wine, he made us wise. For we are tasting the wisdom of his faith who before were unwise.\(^\text{31}\)

The chalice is the focal point in Maximus of Turin’s allegorical reading of the miracle. He calls the chalice “the new chalice of eternal salvation” which will supplant any earthly wine:

The most blessed Mary said to him, “They have no wine.” Jesus answered as though he were displeased. “Woman,” he said, “is this my concern or yours?” It can hardly be doubted that these words were words of displeasure. However, this I think was only because his mother mentioned to him so casually the lack of earthly wine, when he had come to offer peoples of the whole world the new chalice of eternal salvation. By his reply, “My hour has not yet come,” he was foretelling the most glorious hour of his passion and the wine of our redemption, which would obtain life for all.\(^\text{32}\)


The image of the cup in Psalms also draws out similar exegesis to Christ’s blood. In Psalm 22:5, the psalmist writes “my chalice inebriateth me, how goodly it is” (et calix meus inebrians, quam praeclarius est!), a statement that provokes this comment from Ambrose: “surely it is a powerful cup that washes away every stain of sin.” Cyprian writes that the cup of blood has the opposite effect of wine; it makes one sober and wise:

The inebriation of the cup and of the blood of the lord is not like the inebriation coming from worldly wine, since the Holy Spirit says in the psalm, “Your cup that inebriates,” and adds, “how excellent it is,” because the cup of the Lord inebriates in such a way that it makes people sober, that it brings minds to spiritual wisdom, that from the taste for this world each one returns to the knowledge of God.

Cassiodorus’ comments on Psalm 74:9—“For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup of strong wine full of mixture. And he hath poured it out from this to that: but the dregs thereof are not emptied: all the sinners of the earth shall drink”—point to the coming together of the Old and New covenants in the “chalice of salvation:”

The Lord’s chalice is “full of well-mixed wine,” so that though continually drunk it is never emptied. “Mixture” points to the New and Old Testaments; the mixture of the two results in the most health-giving drink for the souls...It was a blessed and

---


untroubled refreshment to obtain the chalice of salvation from him who always knows how to provide what will be beneficial.\footnote{\textit{"Plenus est mixto utique Domini calix: unde quamvis jugiter bibatur, nunquam tamen expenditur. Quod autem dixit, mixto, Novum Vetusque significat Testamentum, quae utraque permixta animarum efficiunt saluberrimam potionem...Felix et secura refectio ab illo calicem salutis accipere, qui semper novit profutura praestare."}}

For the clerics who chant the cycle of Psalms each week, knowledge of these readings of chalices and cups could have turned their minds to the \textit{poculum tui sanguinis}.

At the mention of \textit{proles virginis} at the end of the third verse, the song transitions from its focus on the cup of wine to the Incarnation. January 1 was, after all, not only Kalends or the Feast of the Circumcision, but also the Octave of the Nativity, a fact emphasized by many of the Marian-focused Matins conductus.

\textbf{Verses 4–7, Kalendas ianuarias, F-SEM 46, fol. 27v}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Virginis quidem proprius & For indeed, [you are] both the Virgin's \\
Et creator et filius, & own creator and son \\
Extra quem non est alius, & beyond whom there is no other, \\
Et quid hoc mirabilius & and what could be more wondrous than this? \\
Miranda res per secula & [It is] a wondrous thing, eternally \\
Quod sine viri copula & that, without coupling with a man, \\
Te concepit iuvencula & a young girl conceived you \\
In virginali clausula & In virginal enclosure. \\
Clausa mater concipiens & The mother, closed, conceiving \\
Clausa fuit et pariens & Was both closed and giving birth, \\
Et tu, Deus ingrediens & And you, God, entering \\
Ingressus et egrediens. & Entered and exiting. \\
Egressus aute ardua & Having come forth, however, \\
Mortis fregisti cornua & you broke the rough horns of death, \\
Quin ipsa mors est mortua & In fact, death itself is dead \\
Occisa vite ianua. & killed by the door of life. \\
\end{tabular}

\footnote{\textit{\textit{Expositio in Psalmum}} 74.8, PL 70: 539; trans. P.G. Walsh in ACW 52: 229.}
The transition from wedding imagery to the Incarnation could be heard seamlessly because the bridegroom from the wedding parables is identified as the Incarnation by patristic and medieval commentators. As mentioned in Chapter 2 in connection to *Dies ista colitur*, the phrase from Psalm 18:5—“he as a bridegroom coming out of his bridechamber, hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way”—was considered symbolic of the Incarnation. A fuller, more developed look at the mystical wedding of the Church to Christ also celebrates the groom as the Incarnation. In his first homily on the Gospels, Bede explains how the allegorical marriage between Christ and the Church was played out in the Incarnation:

*Therefore the bridegroom is Christ, the bride is the church, and the friends of the bridegroom or of the marriage are each and every one of his faithful. The time of his marriage is that time when, through the mystery of the Incarnation, he joined the holy Church to himself. Thus it was not by chance, but for the sake of a certain mystical meaning that he came to a marriage ceremony on earth in the customary fleshly way, since he descended from heaven to earth in order to wed the church to himself in spiritual love. His nuptial chamber was the womb of his virgin mother. There God was conjoined with human nature. From there he came forth like a bridegroom to join the church to himself.*

36

Gregory connected the parabolic wedding feasts to the eschatological wedding feast and to the Incarnation, stating that the feast is the eschatological heavenly banquet:

*From Matthew we can infer that in this passage the marriage feast represents the church of the present time, and the dinner in Luke [Luke 14] represents the final and eternal banquet.... A clearer and safer thing to say is that the Father made a marriage feast for his Son by joining the church to him through the mystery of his

36 “Sponsus ergo Christus sponsa eius est ecclesia filii sponsi uel nuptiarum singuli quique fidelium eius sunt; tempus nuptiarum tempus est illud quando per incarnationis mysterium sanctam sibi ecclesiam sociavit. Non igitur caus sed certi gratia mysterii uenit ad nuptias in terra carnali more celebratas qui ad copulandam sibi spiritali amore ecclesiam de caelo descendit ad terram cuius quidem thalamus incorruptae genetricis uterus fuit in quo Deus humanae naturae coniunctus est et ex quo ad sociandam sibi ecclesiam tamquam sponsus processit.” Bede, *Post Epiphaniam*, Homilia I: 14, CCSL 122: 96; trans. L. T. Martin and D. Hurst in Bede’s *Homilies on the Gospels*, vol. 1 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990), 135.
Incarnation. The womb of the Virgin who bore him was the bridal chamber of this bridegroom, and so the psalmist says, “He has set his tent in the sun, and his bridegroom coming forth from his bridal chamber.”

It is the transition from verse six to verse seven of Kalendas where we see how the poet moves from Incarnational thinking to the January 1 feast day and the wine ritual at the door. As God exits the womb in verse seven, he crushes both death and the horn. This crushing of death by Christ’s birth anticipates its emphasis in Natus est, the conductus that precedes the Gospel in the Mass, while the destruction of the horn, according to commentators, is a reference to the Antichrist from Daniel 7:8:

I considered the horns, and behold another little horn sprung out of the midst of them: and three of the first horns were plucked up at the presence thereof: and behold eyes like the eyes of man were in this horn, and a mouth speaking great things.

John Chrysostom explains the Antichrist/horn:

Who are the ten kings? What is the little horn? I say that the antichrist will appear among a certain number of kings. “And in that horn were eyes like the eyes of a human and a mouth boasting great things.” What greater boast can be said with that mouth than this thing that is said, “He will place himself above everything that is called God or God”? Do not marvel if he has the eyes of a human, even if he

---


38 Verse seven paraphrases a stanza from Ambrose’s Veni redemptor gentium:

Egressus eius a Patre he proceeds from the Father
Regressus eius ad Patrem he returns to the Father
Excursus usque ad inferos runs forth as far as hell
Recursus ad sedem Dei. runs back to the seat of God.

speaks such a thing. He is a person. Why does the horn appear to be little and not big in the beginning? It will grow after this time and will rule certain kingdoms. Why? No kingdom will conquer this king, but God will abolish and destroy him.**39**

Earlier in Lauds, the Canticle from Daniel 3:57–88; “signifi[ies] the condition of the Antichrist,” according to Durand’s commentary.**40** Since King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was considered a prototype of the Antichrist, for the clerics present at Lauds, this reference, albeit brief, to the Antichrist via the horn could also create an association with the *Ludus Danielis*, which included an account of Nebuchadnezzar’s prideful, Antichrist-like behavior. Isidore of Seville states in the *Allegoriae* that Nebuchadnezzar was a type of the devil.**41** Furthermore, the conductus that concludes the entire feast at Second Vespers, *Alto consilio*, is also featured in the drama *Ludus de Antichristo*.

It is the fact that death has been destroyed by the door (*ianua*) or at the door that aligns the verse with January 1. As the clerics walk through the church door during the wine ritual, they enact this crushing of death and the horn. For the thirteenth-century Christian, as stated earlier, the opening of the door represents the “emptying of sin” in the Dedication of the church. January 1 was also the door to the New Year. All of the *ianuae* can be layered upon each other—the

---


40 “Quartus est canticum trium puerorum Benedicte, quod est Danielis c. iii, significans statum Antichristi.” Durand/Thibodeau, 5.4.7.

metaphorical door in the conductus, the actual church doors through which the ritual occurs, January as a door, and Christ as a door. The song challenges those assembled to walk through the doors, transitioning from the old to the new, the last year to the new year, and symbolically sanctifying the journey by drinking wine.

Verses 8–10, Kalendas ianuarias, FSEm 46, fol. 27v–28r

Ianua vite congrua
Immo vite perpetua,
Nos, Christe, per hec annua
Duc ad festa continua
Continua festa Sion,
Quo reperto topazion
Tulitis homo Sion
Patris presentans Elyon.

The door of life is equivalent indeed to
the perpetual [door] of life,
Christ, through these annual [celebrations]
Lead us to the continual feast.
The continuous feast of Zion
Where the topaz was discovered by man
Which you, as a man, brought to Zion
Reigning as Elyon (God) of the father.

Eli patri sit Gloria
Tibi, Christe, victoria,
Pneumatica sint equalia
Per seculorum secula.

Glory be to the Father
To thee, Christ, victory
May the spiritual things be equal
For eternity.

The theme of the marriage feast, the umbrella under which the first few verses of the song functioned, is transformed into the “continua festa Sion” as the conductus comes to a close. The antepenultimate verse ends with a request that Christ duc ad festa continua (lead us to the continual feast) while the penultimate verse opens with the phrase, continua festa Sion (the continuous feast of Zion). As the proverbial door (Christ) is walked through via the Incarnation while the literal door of the Beauvais cathedral is walked through via the wine ritual, the conductus’ request that Christ “lead us to the continual feast of Zion” almost mirrors the opening request of the conductus that Christ support, summon, and accept his people for the marriage feast.
Bede’s commentary on Apocalypse 3:20—Behold, I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear my voice and open to me the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him:

and he with me—reads the opening of the door to a communal meal as an invitation to abide with Christ:

On the other hand, if we long to search out what these happenings are at a more profound level of understanding, it was not only in his earthly house that he produced a bodily feast for the Lord, but with great gratitude in the house of his breast he prepared a feast for him through faith and love, as [Christ] himself attest saying, “Behold, I stand at the doorway and knock. If anyone listens to my voice and opens the gate, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me.” The Lord stands at the doorway and knocks when he pours into our heart the memory of his will...When his voice is heard, we open the gate to receive [him].... He comes in order to eat with us and we with him...He lives there so that they may advance more and more to heavenly desires, and so that he himself may feed their zeal for heaven, as it were, with a most pleasant banquet.42

But what is this feast of Zion? Cyril of Alexandria interprets the “feast of Zion” to be the feast found in Isaiah 25:6—And the Lord of hosts shall make unto all people in the mountain (Mount Zion), a feast of fat things, a feast of wine, of fat things full of marrow, of wine purified from the lees—the Eucharistic feast we consume with joy.

Having said that the Lord will reign in Zion and Jerusalem, Isaiah leads us to the mystical meaning of the passage...This joy, of course, means the joy of hope, of the hope rooted in Christ, because we will reign with him, and with him we will enjoy every spiritual joy and pleasure that surpasses mind and understanding. By “wine”

——

42 “Porro si altiore intellectu quae gesta sunt indagare cupimus non tantum in domo sua terrestri conuiuium domino corporale exhibuit sed multo gratius illi conuiuium in domo pectoris sui per fidem ac dilectionem paraut ipso adtestante qui ait: Ecce ego sto ad ostium et pulso; si quis audieret uocem meam et aperuerit ianuam, intrabo ad illum et caenabo cum illo et ipse mecum...Audita autem uoce eius ianuam ut recipiatur aperimus quando illius siue secretis seu apertis ammonitionibus libenter assensum praebemus et his quae facienda cognouimus perficiendi operam damus. Intrat uero ut et ille nobiscum et nos cum illo caenemus quia in cordibus electorum per amoris sui gratiam inhabitat ut et ea semper luce suae praesentiae reficiat quatenus ad superna desideria magis magisque proficiant et studiis eorum caelestibus quasi gratissimis dapibus ipse pascatur.” Bede, Homelia 1.21, CCSL 122: 151; trans. Lawrence Martin and David Hurst in Homilies on the Gospels, Book One, Advent to Lent, 209.
he points to the mystical sacrament, that of the bloodless sacrifice, which we celebrate in the holy churches.\textsuperscript{43}

Perhaps this continual feast at Zion could also refer to the Apocalyptic marriage supper of the Lamb, layering the feasts onto each other. Bede writes this about the Apocalyptic marriage supper of the Lamb:

It says that they were invited to a supper, not a mere lunch, for at the end of days the supper will certainly be a great feast. Therefore, when the time of the present life is ended, those who come to the refreshment of the heavenly contemplation are truly invited to the supper of the Lamb.\textsuperscript{44}

That Bede calls this marriage supper “the refreshment of heavenly contemplation” gives context for the choice of topaz in the next line of the conductus. Topaz was one of the twelve stones, representing the twelve apostles, used on the wall of the new heavenly city in Apocalypse 21.\textsuperscript{45} It was the ninth foundation. The walls of Jerusalem are mentioned in the context of the marriage relationship in the hymn for the Dedication of the Church, Urbs Beata Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{46} Bede links topaz to the contemplative life:


\textsuperscript{44} “Non ad prandium, sed ad cenam uocatos narrat, quia nimirum in fine diei eonuiuiium cena est. Qui ergo finito praesentis uitate tempore ad refectionem supernae contemplationis ueniunt, profecto ad cenam agni uo cantur.” Bede, \textit{Expositio Apocalypseos} 19:9, CCSL 121A: 491; trans. William C. Weinrich in \textit{Latin Commentaries on Revelation}, 188.

\textsuperscript{45} Topaz was also one of the twelve stones on the breastplate of the High Priest, representing the second born son Simeon in Exodus 28.

\textsuperscript{46} The hymn’s text is as follows: Urbs beata Hierusalem/Dicta pacis visio/Que construitur in celis/Vivis ex lapidibus/Et Angelis coornata/Ut sponsa comite. Nova veniens e celo nuptiali thalamo/Preparator ut sponsata/Copulatur Domino/Piatee et muri ejus/ Ex auro purissimo. Porte
Since topaz is rare, it is very valuable... The most beautiful quality of its nature is most fittingly compared to the **contemplative life**. For saintly kings, whose hearts are in the hand of God, display this nature by the riches of good works and by the gems of all the virtues. Especially guiding in it the contemplation and keen vision of the pure minds, they shall be more frequently struck by the splendor of the heavenly grace, the more fervently they behold the sweetness of the heavenly life with their soul... Since the perfection of the active life is designated by the eighth place, this stone, which represents the delight of the **contemplative life**, is fittingly put in ninth place.47

As Bede continues in his commentary on the wall constructed of all these stones, he brings the focus back to the blood of Christ. He writes that “by the sacrifice of his own blood he might both wash clean and dedicate the walls of this city.”48

**Conclusion**

The singing of *Kalendas ianuarias* as the accompaniment to this multi-sensory and richly symbolic wine ritual demonstrates how a conductus can direct those singing or listening to the song to perform multivalent exegesis. Unlike the conductus of Matins that only intersected musically and textually with the lessons of each nocturn, the visual and sensory elements that accompany *Kalendas ianuarias* allow the cleric to access exegesis on images in a

---


variety of ways. As discussed, the various objects in the tableau could each trigger the cleric to recall a multitude of narratives which could then be threaded together with the exegesis of images found in the text of the song. This creates a complex commentary on the wine ritual at hand. As the clerics sip the wine, the song’s textual focus on the pocusum tu Sanguinis is physically experienced. Similarly, as the clerics walk through the church doors, their understanding of the door as Christ is reinforced by the song’s text about the Ianua Vite, through which Christ duc ad festa continua (Lead[s] us to the continual feast). Furthermore, the references to the wedding feast and the feast of Zion remind those gathered both of their marriage relationship with God, a relationship that has no space for other gods, an exhortation already given in the nocturns of Matins, and the elements of joyful feasting. Later during the Mass, the clerics could recall the composite exegesis of this wine ritual for how it relates to the Eucharist.
Kalendas ianuarias  
May you render the Kalends of January

Solemnes Christe facias  
solemn, Christ,

Et nos ad tuas nuptias  
And may you receive us

to your nuptials, [you who are] called king.

Vocatus rex suscipias  

Suscipe tuum populum  
Receive your people

Ad nuptiarum epulum  
at the wedding feast

Qui multiplex es ferculum  
you [who] are a multiple meal,

Cuius sanguis est poculum  
whose blood is the cup.

Poculum tui sanguinis  
Give us the cup of your blood

Sumptique carnem hominis  
and the flesh of the consumed man

Ad laudem tui nominis  
in praise of your name,

Da nobis, proles virginis.  
offspring of the virgin.

Virginis quidem proprius  
For indeed, [you are] both the Virgin’s

Et creator et filius,  
own creator and son

Extra quem non est alius,  
beyond whom there is no other,

Et quid hoc mirabilius  
and what could be more wondrous than this?

Miranda res per secula  
[It is] a wondrous thing, eternally

Quod sine viri copula  
that, without coupling with a man,

Te concepit iuvencula  
a young girl conceived you

In virginali clausula  
In virginal enclosure.

Clausa mater concipiens  
The mother, closed, conceiving

Clausa fuit et pariens  
Was both closed and giving birth,

Et tu, Deus ingrediens  
And you, God, entering

Ingressus et egrediens.  
Entered and exiting.

Egressus autem ardua  
Having come forth, however,

Mortis fregisti cornua  
you broke the rough horns of death,

Quin ipsa mors est mortua  
In fact, death itself is dead

Occisa vite ianua.  
killed by the door of life.
Ianua vite congrua
Immo vite perpetua,
Nos, Christe, per hec annua
Duc ad festa continua

The door of life is equivalent indeed to
the perpetual [door] of life,
Christ, through these annual [celebrations]
Lead us to the continual feast.

Continua festa Sion,
Quo reperto topazion
Tulitis homo Sion
Patris presentans Elyon.

The continuous feast of Zion
Where the topaz was discovered by man
Which you, as a man, brought to Zion
Reigning as Elyon (God) of the father.

Eli patri sit Gloria
Tibi, Christe, victoria,
Pneumatica sint equalia
Per seculorum secula.

Glory be to the Father
To thee, Christ, victory
May the spiritual things be equal
For eternity.
Kalendas ianuarias

1. Kalendas ianuarias sol-lempnes Chris-te, facias et nos
2. Suscep tu-um populum ad nuptia-rum e-pulum Qui mul-
   ad tusas nup-tias vocatus rex susci-pias
   ti-plex es ferv-u-lum cu-ius sang-ui-nis est po-culum
3. Po-culum tu i sang-ui-nis sumpti-que car-nem-ho-minis ad laud
4. Vir-ginis qui-dem pro-pri-us et cre-a-tor et fil-i-us, xx-tra
5. Mi-ран-da res per seu-qua-la, quod sine-vir-ri co-pula-te con-
6. Clau-sa ma-ter con-ci-piens clau-sa fu-it et pa-rinens et tu,
7. E-gres-sus au-tem ar-du-a mor-tis fre-gis-ti cor-qua-a, quin ip-
8. I-a-nua vi-te con-qua-a, im-mo vi-te per-pe-tu-a, nos, Chris-
9. Con-tinua fes-ta Si-on, quo re-per-to to-pa-zi-on tu-lis-
10. E-li pa-tri sit Glo-ri-a. Ti-bi, Chris-te, vic-to-ri-a, pneu-ma-
   dem tu-i no-minis da no-bis, pro-les vir-ginis.
   quem non est a-li-us, et quid hoc mi-ra bi-li-us.
   ce-pit iu-ven-qua-la in vir-gi-na li clau-su-la.
   De-us in-gre-di-ens, in-gres-sus et e-gre-di-ens.
   sa mor-s est mor-tu-sa oc-ci-sa vi-te ia-nu-a.
   te, per hec an-nu-a Duc ad fes-ta con-ti-nu-a.
   ti ho-mo in Si-on pa-tri pre-sen-tans E-ly-on.
   ti sint e-qua-li-a per se-cu-lo-rum se-cu-la.
CHAPTER 5
Mass: Orientis partibus and the farsed Epistle

It is during the Liturgy of the Word in the Mass that the conductus guide those gathered in the most compelling exegetical “performances” of conductus/lesson pairings of the Feast of the Circumcision. Chapter 5 will discuss the framing of the farsed Epistle by Orientis partibus while Chapter 6 will address the framing of the Gospel lesson by Salvatoris hodie and Natus est.

Before the chanting of the farsed Epistle from Isaiah 9 in the Mass, the subdeacons sing a polyphonic reprisal of Orientis partibus from First Vespers. In this moment, themes of burden-bearing and the exalting of the lowly collapse upon each other through the intersection of the donkey in Orientis partibus, the subdeacons who sing the conductus, the clerics who sing the farsed Epistle, the child who bears the government on his shoulders in the farsed Epistle from Isaiah 9, and the general character of the Epistle in medieval liturgy. As discussed in Chapter 1, the singing of Orientis partibus at the subdeacons’ feast superimposes the figure of the donkey on the subdeacon, laying the groundwork for the importance of the relationship for the feast. But in this liturgical vignette in the Mass, the parallel between the donkey and subdeacon triangulates to include the burden-bearing Christ child from Isaiah 9. While some of the Matins conductus

---

1 The passage from Isaiah 9 is as follows:
The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen...For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:2, 6–7).

2 Durand notes that the reading for the Epistle is not only taken from the Apostles, but also from the Old Testament. “Vsus etiam sedendi a ueteri testamento assumitur, sicut in Esdra legitur.” Durand/Thibodeau 4.16.8.

3 At Sens Cathedral, Lux optata, not Orientis partibus accompanied the subdeacon’s procession to the Farsed Epistle, framing the reading from Isaiah 9 from the perspective of light.
include images and language on the paradox of the divine, yet human Christ child, the framing of
Isaiah 9 with Orientis partibus conveys this paradox more subversively by introducing and
juxtaposing the Isaian lowly burden-bearing child to the lowly burden-bearing donkey-subdeacon
duality.

The farsing of the Epistle itself, a practice specifically provided for by Bishop Odo in the
reformed Feast of Fools at Notre Dame (1198), illustrates the mixing of the lowly and the lofty.
While Bishop Odo forbade many aspects of the feast (rhythmic poetry, mummeries, processions of
the lord of the feast) in his reforms of the Feast of Fools, he specifically provides for the farsed
Epistle. The amplification of the Epistle through the farses or interpolated phrases that weave
New Testament context into the fixed lines of the Isaiah text can be seen as a gesture of the
exalting of the lowly, for the Epistle was considered to be more lowly than the Gospel, according to
William Durand. Since the conductus’ text has already been closely analyzed in Chapter 1 and its
unique framing function in the Mass has already been established, this chapter will focus on the
farsed Epistle in order to show how the farsed Epistle shares and promotes similar themes to
Orientis partibus, reinforcing the theology of the Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision. Furthermore,
the farsing of the Epistle offers a look at a more direct method of exegesis than the more suggestive

4 “…hoc addito quod epistola cum farsia dicetur a duobus in capis sericis, et postmodum a
subdiacono nichilominus perlegetur.
...with this addition, that the troped epistle is to be said by two clerics dressed in silk copes, and
afterwards nothing is read aloud by the subdeacon.”

“Besides, in the Epistle is understood the preaching of the Old Testament, which is more
lowly, while the Gospel is the New Testament, which is more lofty. “Preterea per epistolam
predicatio ueteris testamenti que humilior est, per euangelium noui testamenti, que excellenter
est, intelligitur.” Durand/Thibodeau 4.24.18. In addition, the Epistle is read in a lower place and
the Gospel in a higher place. “Epistola uero in loco inferiori, quia lex et prophete.”
Durand/Thibodeau 4.24.18.
thought process encouraged of the clerics by the other conductus in the feast. But first, let us take a brief look at the appearance of polyphony in the feast, beginning with Orientis partibus (see example 5.1. This edition is also given in Appendix 5.1.)

Example 5.1. Orientis partibus, Egerton 2615, fols. 43r–44v
Though polyphony figures significantly in this manuscript, the polyphonic setting of *Orientis partibus* (found on folgs. 43r-44v) is the only piece of polyphony that appears in the main body of the feast and is one of only two polyphonic conductus sung during the feast. The other polyphonic pieces are relegated to a supplement (beginning on fol. 69r) following the main body of the feast in the manuscript. The polyphonic expansion of the monophonic tune of *Orientis partibus* from First Vespers reshapes the character of the song. What seemed bright, cheerful, and even innocuous gains import and depth with the addition of two upper voices. Even in 1856 in *Annales archéologiques*, Victor Didron commented that the three-part setting makes *Orientis partibus* “plus solennel.”

Still at Beauvais, one can imagine that the performance of this donkey song during the Mass may have been marked with levity as the French refrain, *Hez, hez, sire asnes, hez*, could have elicited raised eyebrows from those in attendance. Missing from this version, though, is the full refrain found after verse 6 in the monophonic version. The full refrain at First Vespers was as follows: *Hez va, hez va, hez va, hez biax [sire asnes] car allez, belle bouche car chantez*. Yet in the Mass, the refrain is simply *Hez va, hez sire asnes hez*. Perhaps the omission of the phrase *biax sire asnes car allez, belle bouche car chantez* reflects the inappropriateness of a vernacular reference to a singing ass in the celebration of Mass.

The rubric *cum organo* accompanying a given monophonic line in the body of the feast indicated if a piece was to be sung polyphonically. Thus, the fact that the polyphonic setting of

---

6 A rubric indicates the performance of *Salvatoris hodie* on folio 49r, but the music for a version of *Salvatoris hodie* is found in the supplement.


8 David Hughes argues that the folios containing polyphonic pieces directly following the Office of Circumcision, folios 69–77, make up one appendix in MS Egerton 2615 while those
Orientis partibus was the only polyphony to be notated in the body of the Office demonstrates its significance to the feast. The following table 5.1 shows the other pieces in the Circumcision Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Folio</th>
<th>Music following Rubric</th>
<th>Piece</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Folio in Appendix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cum organo</td>
<td>2r</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Venie doctor previe</td>
<td>First Vespers</td>
<td>69r–71v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In pulpito cum organo</td>
<td>3r</td>
<td>Monophonic line</td>
<td>Christus manens</td>
<td>First Vespers</td>
<td>71v–72v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In pulpito cum organo</td>
<td>4r</td>
<td></td>
<td>Confirma nos</td>
<td>First Vespers</td>
<td>73r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsorium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versus cum organo</td>
<td>7v</td>
<td>Monophonic song</td>
<td>Gabrielam archangelus; uterum tuum erubescat Judeus</td>
<td>Ad Processionem ante Crucifuxum</td>
<td>74r–74v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hic dicitur</td>
<td>9v</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Serena virginum—Manere</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>92r–93r</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

polyphonic works appearing on folios 79–94v make up another appendix. He argues that the first appendix dates from the same time period as the Office while the second is closer to the beginning of the thirteenth century. See David G. Hughes, “Liturgical Polyphony at Beauvais in the Thirteenth Century,” Speculum 34, no. 2 (1959): 184–200. Mark Everist, however, notes that present scholarship (see Edward Roesner) indicates that the first and second appendix date from the same time period as the Office. See Mark Everist, French 13th-century Polyphony in the British Library; A Facsimile Edition of the Manuscripts Additional 30091 and Egerton 2615 (folios 79–94v) (London: The Plainsong and Mediaeval Music Society, 1988), 46. I agree with Everist’s assessment that both appendices were produced at the same time as the Office because of the inclusion of such pieces associated with the Notre Dame Cathedral as Viderunt omnes, Christus manens, Descendit de celis, Gaude Maria, and Salvatoris hodie. These pieces are all found in F-Plut 29.1, the Notre Dame manuscript dating from the 1240–1255, not the beginning of the thirteenth century. Furthermore, Gregorio Bevilacqua has shown that Salvatoris hodie appears in F-T 1471, a thirteenth-century codex from Troyes, whose provenance is Paris, not Clairvaux, and whose binding could date to before 1230, but not to the beginning of the thirteenth century. See Gregorio Bevilacqua, “The Earliest Source of Notre-Dame Polyphony? A New Conductus Fragment from the Early Thirteenth Century,” Music and Letters 97, no. 1 (2016): 1–41.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Folio</th>
<th>Music following Rubric</th>
<th>Piece</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Folio in Appendix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In choro cum organo</td>
<td>10r</td>
<td>Monophonic line</td>
<td>Simon Joannis</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cum organo</td>
<td>12v–13r</td>
<td>Monophonic line + additional v?</td>
<td>Kyrie Eleison</td>
<td>Compline</td>
<td>missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitatorium cum organo</td>
<td>27r</td>
<td>Monophonic line</td>
<td>Pastorum summo iubilemus</td>
<td>Matins</td>
<td>missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonum Responsorium cum organo</td>
<td>34v</td>
<td>Monophonic line</td>
<td>Descendit de celis</td>
<td>Matins</td>
<td>82r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsorium cum organo</td>
<td>46v</td>
<td>Monophonic line</td>
<td>Viderunt Emmanuel</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>79r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In pulpito cum organo</td>
<td>47r</td>
<td>Monophonic line</td>
<td>Alleluia: dies sanctificatus</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hic afferatur virga</td>
<td>48v</td>
<td>Monophonic line</td>
<td>Hec est virga</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron in medio, et demonstrata virga dicatur cum organo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hic dicatur Salvatoris hodie</td>
<td>49r</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Salvatoris hodie</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>86v–88v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Epistle itself, Isaiah 9:2, 6–7, is not presented sparsely or simply, but is expanded by the Latin farse. Farses could be in Latin or the vernacular. E. Catherine Dunn traces the practice back to the public reading of Saints’ lives in the Gallican liturgy of France and Spain in the sixth to

---

eighth centuries.\(^{10}\) The farcing of the Epistle was a feature of the liturgical feasts of the Christmas Octave, and the Feast of Fools was no exception. As noted earlier, in Bishop Odo’s decree of reforms for the celebration of the Feast of Fools at Notre Dame in 1198, he specifically provides for the farced Epistle:

\[
\text{...hoc addito quod epistola cum farsia dicetur a duobus in capis sericis, et postmodum a subdiacono nichilominus perlegetur.}^{11}\]

\[
\text{...with this addition, that the troped epistle is to be said by two clerics dressed in silk copes, and afterwards nothing is read aloud by a subdeacon.}^{12}\]

The provision of two clerics for the singing of the troped epistle is noted in the farced Epistle in Egerton 2615. The rubrics indicates that the first cleric (\textit{primus}) sings the text from Isaiah and the second (\textit{secundus}) sings the alternating farced lines, creating an antiphonal and dramatic performance of the farced Epistle.

The farse for this text, \textit{Laudem Deo dicam per secula}, found on fols. 44v–46v, was the oldest extant farse chanted on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, or the Circumcision.\(^ {13}\) (Though it will be introduced section by section in the body of this text, the text and translation of the farced Epistle is found in its entirety in Appendix 5.2.) It also appears alongside other farced/troped epistles on

---

\(^{10}\) See Catherine Dunn, “The Farced Epistle as Dramatic Form in the Twelfth Century Renaissance,” \textit{Comparative Drama} 29, no. 3 (1995): 367–368. Dunn has noted the possible connection between the Saturnalia celebration and the practice of the farced Epistle. Also, Dunn notes that Paul Zumthor posits that even in Matins in the tenth century, the readings “were troped in the vernacular with strophic compositions that doubled or mirrored the clerical Latin chants.” Ibid., 368–369.


\(^{12}\) Quoted from Craig Wright, \textit{Music and Ceremony}, 239.

fol. 67r in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, latin 1139 (F-Pn 1139), the Aquitanian manuscript containing the Beauvais’ conductus *Eva virum*, *Ex Ade*, and *Alto consilio*, as well as about twenty-four other manuscripts from France, England, and Italy from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. This farced Epistle was also used in the Circumcision Office of *F*SEM 46, though the conductus that accompanied the subdeacons’ procession in that manuscript was *Lux optata claruit*, not *Orientis partibus*.

In Henri Villetard’s study of *F*SEM 46, the Circumcision Office from Sens attributed to Pierre Corbeil, he includes a table that shows the sequences from which each phrase of the farse is taken. These phrases create what E. Catherine Dunn calls a “mosaic.” Judith Marshall also includes Villetard’s table in her study of the Farsed Epistle in *F-Pn* 1139 commenting that “it is clear that the feast was not the determining factor in the choice of the prose, but rather the textual fitness of the phrase in question that led to its placement within the Epistle.” Table 5.2 reproduced here is from Henri Villetard.

---


16 Ibid., 218.
Table 5.2. Original sources for farses in *Laudem Deo dicam per secula*\(^{17}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trope</th>
<th>Sequence source</th>
<th>Feast</th>
<th>Analecta Hymnica, vol.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 In qua Christi lucida vaticinatur nativitas</td>
<td>Fulgens Præclara</td>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>VII, p. 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Pater, filius, sanctus spiritus</td>
<td>Benedicta semper sancta</td>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>VII, p. 108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Quem creasti, quem fraude subdola, hostis expulit paradiso</td>
<td>Rex omnipotens</td>
<td>Ascension</td>
<td>VII, p. 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Fulserunt et immania nocte media pastoribus</td>
<td>Nato canant</td>
<td>Christmas</td>
<td>VII, p. 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Lux sempiterna et redemptio vere nostra</td>
<td>Salus eterna</td>
<td>First Sunday in Advent</td>
<td>VII, p. 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 O mira genitura, O proles gloriosa, O stupenda nativitas</td>
<td>Sonent regi</td>
<td>Christmas</td>
<td>L, p. 282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Magnus hic erit Iesus</td>
<td>Salve porta</td>
<td>Assumption B.M.V.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Patris summi</td>
<td>Aurea virga prime</td>
<td>Assumption B.M.V.</td>
<td>VII, p. 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Ab arce summa</td>
<td>Alle-celeste</td>
<td>Assumption B.M.V.</td>
<td>VII, p. 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Ut celos regat atque arva</td>
<td>Ad te cuncta</td>
<td>S. Albinus</td>
<td>X, p. 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Messias, Sother, Emanuel, Sabaoth, Adonay</td>
<td>Alma chorus Domini</td>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>LIII, p. 152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Radix David</td>
<td>Ecce vicit</td>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>VII, p. 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Dei Patris qui creavit omnia</td>
<td>Jubilemus omnes una</td>
<td>Fourth Sunday in Advent</td>
<td>VII, p. 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Flore demonum castra perimens tetterrima</td>
<td>Fulgens praeclara</td>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>VII, p. 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Rex omnipotens</td>
<td>Rex omnipotens</td>
<td>Ascension</td>
<td>VII, p. 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Per secla sempiterna</td>
<td>Regnantem sempiterna</td>
<td>Second Sunday in Advent</td>
<td>VII, p. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 In Ierusalem, Iudea sive Samaria</td>
<td>Rex omnipotens</td>
<td>Ascension</td>
<td>VII, p. 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Hic et in evum</td>
<td>(doxology?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{17}\) See Judith Marshall, “A Late-Eleventh Century Manuscript,” 219–221. For a discussion of any alterations made to the original phrases when they were inserted into the farsed Epistle, see *ibid.*, 222–230.
The farsed Epistle at the Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision presents three themes, two of which have already been established as central to the occasion. The first is the positioning of the Isaiah text in the context of Christmas through the shared imagery of light. The second is the elevation of the parvulus. The third is that burden-bearing is a majestic and royal task, not an onerous one for the parvulus. The interpolated textual phrases in the farsed Epistle serve as a commentary on the fixed Isaiah text, a form of interlinear glossing. In addition, the musical-textual relationship of the farsed sections provides another layer of commentary to the gloss (see text and translations below for lines 1–12, of the farsed Epistle).

1 Laudem deo dicam per secula: I shall speak praise for ever to God
2 Qui me plasmavit in manu dextera Who formed me in his right hand
3 Et reformavit cruce purpurea And restored me with the violet/dark red cross
4 Sanguine nati, qui cunctos redemit With the blood of his son, who has redeemed all
5 Ab ortu solis orbis per clymata From the rising of the orb of the sun through the climes
6 Usque ad mundi partes occiduas Even to the western parts of the world
7 In laude cuiis clamores excitat Whose shouts of praise he stirs up.
8 Unus: Lectio Ysaie prophetae, One: A reading from the prophet Isaiah
9 Alter: In qua Christi lucida vaticinatur Another: In which the birth of Christ is clearly nativitas foretold
10 **Primus**: Hec dicit dominus  
*The First*: Thus says the Lord

11 **Secundus**: Pater, filius, sanctus spiritus, deus unus  
*The Second*: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, one God

12 **Item primus**: *populus qui ambulabat in tenebris*  
*Again the first*: *The people that walked in darkness*

[* the Isaiah text begins here]*

I. **Introduction of Text from Isaiah**

Lines 1–7 serve as the introductory verse of the farse, declaring the individual’s recognition of his birth and redemption as being all due to the *cruce purpurea* and the *sanguinis nati*. These references to dark red and blood, while expected, could have greater resonance for those who participated in the wine/blood ritual earlier at Lauds. The text from Isaiah proper begins on line 12 (it is introduced by lines 8–11) and alternates with the interpolated text. (The even-numbered lines indicate the Isaiah text while the odd-numbered lines indicate the interpolated/farsed text.) The even-numbered lines starting with line 8 use a psalm tone that resembles the qualities of a transposed psalm tone 6 on C, reciting on E, while the odd-numbered lines use a transposed mode 7 on C. (While the edition is given in its entirety in Appendix 5.2, I will introduce important sections in the body of the text.) The mode of the odd-numbered farsed lines is more apparent when B-flats begin to appear in line 27 and thereafter.

There is a strong contrast between the Isaiah text, sung to a reciting tone, and the interpolated texts, sung to varied and florid melodies. The interpolated phrases leap up or down
intervals of thirds, fourths, and fifths, and cover a range of an octave plus a fourth. The contrast creates a sense of dialogue accentuated by the performance of the piece by two clerics.  

The Isaiah text’s prophetic authority is immediately established in the farse that follows Lectio Ysaie prophetae (line 8): in qua Christi lucida vaticinatur nativitas (line 9). This is not simply a reading from Isaiah, but a reading “in which the birth of Christ is foretold,” pointing to the allegorical sense of exegesis, the Law understood through the Christmas context. This interpolation is an emendation of a line from the Easter sequence Fulgens praeclara (see the following text and translation from Fulgens preclara): 

Fulgens praeclara
Rutilat per orbem hodie dies,
In qua Christi lucida narrantur
ovanter proelia
De hoste superbo quod Jesus triumphavit
Pulchre castra illius perimens taeterrima.

Shining forth resplendence
Make a reddish glow/sparkle through the world today
In which the bright battles of Christ are exultantly narrated.
Over the proud enemy, Jesus triumphed
Nobly destroying terrible armies of the most offensive.

In the Easter sequence, it is not Christ’s birth, but Christ’s battle that is clearly told.

---

19 In the Ludus Danielis, the narrative of the story pauses in the conductus Congaudentes celebremus as prophecy, redemption, man in flesh: “Rejoicing, let us celebrate the solemnity of Christmas/For we are redeemed from death by the Wisdom of God./He is born as man in the flesh, who created all/Whose birth foretold by the words of the prophet.”
II. Darkness

Lines 12–13 read:

12  **Item primus**: *populus qui ambulabat in tenebris*  
Again the 1st: *The people that walked in darkness*

13  **Secundus**:²¹ *Quem creasti, quem fraude subdola hostis expulit paradiso*  
[2nd]: *Whom you created, whom the enemy by deceitful fraud drove from paradise*

[* the Isaiah text begins here]*

The farse does not just look forward to Christ, but also looks backwards in order to establish the reason for this prophecy. Isaiah 9:2 (line 12) opens with *populus qui ambulabat in tenebris* (the people that walked in darkness). The subsequent farse in line 13 qualifies this statement, explaining that these are the people whom God created and who were driven from paradise, *expulit paradiso*.²² This allusion to Adam, Eve, and the Garden of Eden aligns the Isaian people walking in darkness to the darkness brought about by the Fall.

Before I continue any further with my musical-textual analysis of the farsed Epistle, I must acknowledge the debate amongst musicologists about the question of word-painting, whether meaning can be attributed to a monophonic melody like chant. Perhaps most famous is John Stevens’ view in *Words and Music* (1986), in which he states:

*The music of the chant is essentially non-referential; it does not express the meaning of words directly. On the rare occasions when it responds to detailed

---

²¹ The designation of Primus and Secundus stops at line 13. I will continue to use P and S, (1 and 2 in the English translation) to distinguish the Isaiah and farsed texts, respectively.

²² This farse “quem creasti, quem fraude subdola hostis expulit paradiso” (whom you created, whom the deceitful fraud of the enemy drove from paradise) is taken from a sequence for Ascension. In the context of this Ascension sequence, the phrase is also a take on the need for redemption.
meaning, it responds to the sound of that meaning as realized in the sound of the words, whether the words are onomatopoeic or expressive of human emotion.\textsuperscript{23}

Later in \textit{Words and Music}, Stevens quotes from chapter 18 of Johannes Afflighemensis’s \textit{De musica} (twelfth century), in which Johannes explains how to compose \textit{cantus}.

Just as a poet who is desirous of praise must study aptly to relate deeds to words and not say things which are incongruous with the fortunes of the characters described, so the praise-loving composer must take pains to put together a melody with such decorum that the melody is seen to express what the words declare…So the musician has to take care to manage his melody so that in dealing with adversity it runs at a low pitch [literally is pressed down] and with prosperous circumstances it runs high [literally is exalted].\textsuperscript{24}

Though Stevens calls Johannes’ discussion “whimsical rigmarole,” as it was “so out of keeping with the general tenor of medieval music discussion,” his decision to include it in the book could signify that he is not entirely opposed to the consideration of word-painting in medieval music.

Stevens acknowledges that Johannes’ message could be in agreement with Guido of Arezzo’s rhetoric, pointing out this passage from the \textit{Micrologus}:

\begin{quote}
Item: the effect of the song should imitate the course of events [as set forth in the text], so that in sad affairs the neumes should be low [? harsh? grave], so in peaceful affairs pleasant, in prosperous affairs exulting [? leaping about], and so on.\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

In 1990, in his analysis of the interpretation of chant by Dom Joseph Gajard, choirmaster at Solesmes from 1914–1971, Terence Bailey categorically states that that subjective Romantic

\textsuperscript{23} See John Stevens, \textit{Words and Music}, 307.

\textsuperscript{24} “Sicut autem laudem desideranti poetae studendum est ut facta dictis exaequet neve eius, quem describit, fortunis absa dicit, sic laudis avido modulatori annitendum est uit its proprie cantum componat, ut quod verba sonant cantus exprimere videatur…Providendum igitur est musico, ut its cantum moderetur, ut in adversis deprimatur et in prosperis exaltetur.” Quoted and trans. John Stevens, \textit{Words and Music}, 405–406.

notions of “expressivity” cannot be used to describe chant.\textsuperscript{26} He finds fault with Gajard’s attempts to find imitative or suggestive elements in chant, noting that Gajard seemed to apply \textit{Augenmusik} to a genre that was primarily oral, not written.\textsuperscript{27} Like Stevens, he also acknowledges that such tangible and onomatopoeic examples as a melodic phrase evoking the cooing of a turtle dove (\textit{turtur}) in the Communion antiphon \textit{Paser invenit} (used as an example in Gustave Reese’s \textit{Music in the Middle Ages}) can be convincing.\textsuperscript{28}

Rachel Golden Carlson points to the writings of St Basil (fourth century) to note the importance of the relationship between music and text:

St Basil seems to understand melody as an attractive ornament that helps the less informed relate to the impact of the words of psalmic chants: “these harmonious melodies of the Psalms have been designed for us, that those who are of boyish age or wholly youthful in their character, while in appearance they sing, may in reality be educating their souls.”\textsuperscript{29}

More recently, in 2012, William Peter Mahrt has argued that the art of oratory provides a model for the existence of word-painting in chant:

Now if the rhetorical figure is the use of words to “paint” a vivid picture, then in music its analogue is the use of tones to depict a vivid, concrete image, an image arising almost of necessity from the text.\textsuperscript{30}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{30} See William Peter Mahrt, \textit{The Musical Shape of the Liturgy} (Richmond, VA: Church Music Association of America, 2012), 189.
\end{flushright}
Though he concedes that it is challenging to identify word-painting in chant melodies definitively, he proposes that if one studies the melodic formulae of a chant, one can identify what is unique about it.  

The musical line that accompanies this reference to the Fall opens with a falling third and follows a circuitous path, reaching back up to the falling $f-d'$ third on hostis (enemy) before finally settling on a rather unsettling pitch of $b$, perhaps a reflection of the need for a resolution both musically and theologically (see example 5.2). While all the $b$'s would have been flatted in mode 7 transposed to C, the B's on subdola (deceitful) and paradiso are left as naturals in the manuscript. Though it is possible that $b$-flats would have been sung to avoid the tritone, we must also consider the musico-poetic effects if $b$ naturals were sung. ($b$-flats are clearly indicated later in the piece.) The harsh aspect of $b$ natural aligns with subdola and being driven from paradiso.

Example 5.2. Quem creasti (line 13) from Laudem deo, Egerton 2615, fol. 45r

III. Light

Lines 14–17 of the farsed Epistle read:

14  P[rimus]: Vidit lucem magnam 1[st]: Have seen a great light
15  S[ecundus]: Fulserunt et immania nocte 2[nd]: And the immense lights shone to media pastoribus lumina the shepherds in the middle of the night

31 Ibid., 190.
P: Habitantibus in regione umbrae mortis

S: Lux sempiterna et redemptio vere nostra

P: Orta est eis

16 P: To them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death
17 S: Light eternal and truly our redemption
18 P: He is risen to them

Example 5.3. Vidit lucem magnum (lines 14-17) from Laudem deo, Egerton 2615, fols. 45r-45v

The idea of the people in darkness shifts immediately as the Isaiah text continues with vidit lucem magnum (have seen a great light). The interpolation chosen to amplify this light comes from a sequence from the Missa de luce of Christmas: fulserunt et imman...lumina (and there shone an immense light) in line 15.32 Melodically, this phrase begins with a leap of a fifth and then reaches up to a e”, the highest pitch thus far in the piece (see example 5.2). It remains in this uppermost register for the recitation on the fifth degree, perhaps implying a heightened sense of awareness to the lucem magnum. This register shift is quite a contrast to the following Isaiah text that returns to

32 This farse is taken from Nato canant 3a (Missa Noël de luce) found in Dreves 7: no. 31 and in F. Clément, chants S° Chap. No. 6 (1876). See also Calvin Bower, ed., The Liber Hymnorum of Notker Balbulus (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 2016).
the reciting tone on the text line 16, *Habitantibus in regione umbrae mortis* (To them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death).

Exegetically, the farse (line 15) brings the light from Isaiah into the context of the Christmas season by connecting it to the light that illuminated the angel who tells the shepherds about the birth of Christ. Below is a comparison of the three texts that are explicitly and implicitly referred to in the farse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 9:2</td>
<td><em>Populus qui ambulabat in tenebris, vidit lucem magnum; habitantibus in regione umbrae mortis, lux orta est eis.</em></td>
<td>The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 2:8-11</td>
<td><em>Et pastores erant in regione eadem vigilantes, et custodientes vigilas noctis super gregem suum. Et ecce angelus Domini stetit juxta illos, et claritas Dei circumfulsit illos, et timuereunt timore magno. Et dixit illis angelus: Nolite timere: ecce enim evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum, quod erit omni populo: quia natus est vobis hodie Salvator, qui est Christus Dominus, in civitate David.</em></td>
<td>And there were in the same country shepherds watching and keeping the night watches over their flock. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them and the brightness of God shone round about them: and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the peoples. For, this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farse</td>
<td><em>Fulserunt et immania nocte media pastoribus lumina</em></td>
<td>And in the middle of the night unearthly lights shone upon the shepherds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *claritas Dei* (brightness of God) from the Lucan narrative becomes the *immania lumina* of the farse as the Isaiah text is literally illuminated with the great light of the birth of Christ. The contrast between the light and dark is reiterated in the next Isaiah/farse pairing, lines 16 and 17:
Habitantibus in regione umbrae mortis (line 16), Lux sempiterna et redemptio vere nostra (line 17) (To them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, Light eternal and truly our redemption). In *Homilies on the Gospels* 31.2. Bede connects the Isaian light with the Lucan light in this way:

> He appeared with a heavenly light to those who were conducting the watch by night...light from light, true God from true God. Because, therefore, the light of life rose for those of us dwelling in the region of the shadow of death, the herald of this rising says, “A savior has been born to you this today.” So that being always advised by this word we may remember the night of ancient blindness is past and the day of eternal salvation has arrived.\(^{33}\)

In Augustine’s *Exposition on the Apocalypse*, he notes the light that is Christ:

> ...the church is not governed by the moon or the elements of the world. She is rather led by Christ, the eternal sun, through the darkness of the world. “For the brightness of God illumines it, and its lamp is the Lamb,” as Christ himself said, “I am the Light of the world.”\(^{34}\)

**IV. Birth**

Lines 19–20 of the farsed Epistle read:

19  S: O stupenda nativitas  
20  P: Parvulus enim natus est nobis  
2: O wondrous birth  
1: For a child is born to us

---

\(^{33}\) “Hac nocte, quia, videlicer, cum luce coelesti apparuit...lumen de lumine, Deus verus de Deo vero natus est. Quia ergo habitantibus nobis regione umbrae mortis lux orta est vitae, apte nuntius ortus ejusdem dicit ‘Quia natus est nobis hodie Salvator,’ ut hoc quoque verbo admoniti, semper recordemur quia nox praecessit antiquae caecitatis, dies atuem appropinquavit aeternae salutis.” Bede, Homilia 31, PL 94: 338; trans. Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst in Bede, *Homilies on the Gospels, Book One*, 61.

This next interpolated text O stupenda nativitas (O wondrous birth) (line 19) directly preceding the crux of the Isaiah text (line 20), Parvulus enim natus est nobis (For a child is born unto us), prepares those assembled for the statement of the incarnation. The text and music is anything but understated, as the musical setting emphasizes the exclamation, beginning recitationally on a g, the highest starting pitch thus far for any line of the farse. Until now, the interpolated lines were quite melodically active from the beginning of each of the phrases, whereas here they are relatively static.

Example 5.4. O stupenda nativitas (lines 19–20) from Laudem deo, Egerton 2615, fol. 45v

V. Lofty/Lowly and Burden-Bearing

Lines 20–27 of the farsed Epistle read:

20 P: Parvulus enim natus est nobis 1: For a child is born to us
21 S: Magnus hic erit Ihesus filius Dei 2: He will be great, Jesus the son of God
22 P: Et filius 1: and the son
23 S: Patris summi 2: of the highest Father
24 P: Natus est nobis 1: Is born unto us
25 S: Ab arce summa 2: From the highest [citadel]
26 P: et factus est principatus super umerum eius 1: and the government is upon his shoulder
27 S: Ut celos regat atque arva necnon refrenet maria 2: So that he rule the heavens and the dry land, and control the seas
The themes of burden-bearing and the exalting of the lowly ultimately culminate in the Isaiah passage in lines 20–27 given above. The Isaiah text without the farses is as follows: “For a child is born to us (line 20)/and a son (line 22)/is born to us (line 24)/and the government is upon his shoulder (line 26).” Children are paradigmatically lowly figures in society. Yet, it is through the birth of this child that the redemption of the world is wrought in Christian theology—the lowly figure becomes lofty. That this child must bear the government on his shoulders demonstrates his burden-bearing, linking him to the donkey of Orientis partibus. Ambrose’s (fourth century) commentary on the passage hints at the perspective of Christ as a beast of burden, his cross being his plow:

Accordingly, to call the nations to the grace of his resurrection...he bowed his shoulder to labor, bowed himself to the cross, to carry our sins. For that reason the prophet says, “whose government is on his shoulder.” This means, above the passion of his body is the power of his divinity, or it refers to the cross that towers above his body. Therefore he bowed his shoulder, applying himself to the plow.35

Justin Martyr (c. 100–165) also connects this Isaiah phrase to “the power of the cross, which, at his crucifixion, he placed on his shoulders” (First Apology 35).36 Tertullian considers a more glorious perspective to this burden-bearing:

Now what king is there who bears the ensign of his dominion upon his shoulder, and not upon his head as a diadem, or in his hand as a scepter, or else a mark in


some royal apparel? But the one new King of the new ages, Jesus Christ, carried on his shoulder both the power and the excellence of his new glory, even his cross; so that, according to our former prophecy, he might thenceforth reign from the tree as Lord.\textsuperscript{37}

Caesarius of Arles (468–542) notes the aspect of humility with which Christ bore this burden of the government/cross:

When Isaac himself carried the wood for the sacrifice of himself, in this, too, he prefigured Christ our Lord, who carried his own cross to the place of his own passion. Of this mystery much had already been foretold by the prophets: “And the government shall be upon his shoulders.” Christ, then, had the government upon his shoulders when he carried his cross with wonderful humility.\textsuperscript{38}

The farsed Epistle moves from the Isaian text, \textit{parvulus enim natus est nobis}, to the interpolations that remind us of the loftiness of this child. The first farse is a slightly altered phrase from the angel Gabriel’s annunciation to Mary—\textit{Magnus hic erit Ihesus, filius dei} (line 21)—that is derived from Luke 1:32, \textit{hic erit magnus, et Filius Altissimi vocabitur}. In his second sermon on the Lord’s Circumcision, Bernard expresses frustration that Isaiah 9 does not actually include “Jesus” in the many names listed for the child. Since the naming of Jesus went hand in hand with the circumcision ritual, it was only appropriate that Bernard discuss Isaiah 9 and its names for this child. Writing of the Isaiah 9 names for Jesus, Bernard acknowledges that “these are great names


\textsuperscript{38} "Quod vero Isaac ipse sibi ad immolandum ligna detulit, et in hoc Christum dominum figuravit, qui ad locum passionis crucem suam ipse portavit. De quo mysterio multo ante dictum fuerat per prophetam: Et erit, inquit, principatus eius super humeros eius. Tunc enim Christus principatum super humeros habuit, quando crucem suam admirabili humilitate portavit.” Caesarius of Arles, Sermo 84.3, CCSL 103: 331; trans. Mary Magdeleine Mueller in Caesarius of Arles, \textit{Sermons: Volume 2} (81–186), FC 47.17
Indeed—but where is the name that is above every name, the name of Jesus, at which every knee should bend?Bernard comments that the name Jesus was “from eternity...inborn in him, not imparted to him by any creatures, human or angelic,” yet “the great prophet [Isaiah]...was silent about this one.” The fared Epistle, then, provides what Bernard felt Isaiah 9 does not—an immediate connection between the name of this Isaian child and Jesus.

The following interpolations continue to emphasize and affirm the fact that this is not just any child, but an exalted one, one born Patris summi (of the highest Father) in line 23 and Ab arce summa (from the highest citadel) in line 25 (see example 5.5). The initial musical setting of Ab arce summa (beginning on the same pitch as O stupendas in line 19) falls a fifth at the end of the phrase.

Example 5.5. Ab arce summa (line 25) from Laudem deo, Egerton 2615, fol. 45v

John Stevens has acknowledged that the interpretation of an ascent or descent in the melody of chant as representative of words like heaven or hell is a challenging one to accept unequivocally. His argument against it is this:

---


40 “...ab aeterno...Vocatum est plane, non impositum; nempe hoc ei nomen est ab aeterno. A natura proppria habet ut sit Salvator; innatum est ei nomen hoc, non iditum ab humana vel angelica creature.” Ibid., PL 183: 136; trans. ibid., 135.
The fact of the matter is that the characteristic movement of plainchant...is in the shape of an arch. Except in the case of plain recitation, the chant is rising or falling. Words like ascendit and descendit seem, on the whole, to take their chance with the rest.\(^{41}\)

Yet, I propose that if one examines the relative height of the pitches within this farsed Epistle, one observes, for example, that the emphasis of the g’ on fulserunt and lumina (line 15), O stupendas nativitas (line 19), Ab arce summa (line 25), and celos (line 27) seems to highlight the exalted nature of the phrases.

Line 26 recitationally states that et factus est principatus super umerum eius (and the government is upon his shoulder). Isidore of Seville writes this about the heanness of a king’s responsibilities: “A king is called βασιλεῖς in Greek because like a pedestal’s base (basis) he supports the people.... Hence pedestals also have crowns (i.e. their cornices), for the higher a person is placed in command, just so much heavier is the burden of his responsibilities.\(^{42}\) The following farse (line 27), ut celos regat atque arva necnon refrentem maria (so that he rule the heavens and the dry land, and control the seas), reflects the depth and breadth of this child King’s responsibility.

The contour of the melody sung to the farsed line (line 27) includes four points of interest regarding the musical representation of the text (see example 5.5).\(^{43}\) First, the melody opens with celos (heaven) sung on the g’, possibly depicting its loftiness. The upward third that is repeated three times here seems to reflect a lightness not usually associated with much responsibility. As

---


\(^{42}\) “Reges autem ob hanc causam apud Graecos βασιλεῖς vocantur, quod tamquam bases populum sustinent. Vnde et bases coronas habent. Quanto enim quisque magis praeponitur, tanto amplius pondere laborum gravatur.” Isidore’s *Etymologies*/Barney 9.3.18.

\(^{43}\) This line 27 is from a sequence *Ad te cuncta*, for the feast of Saint Albinus (sixth century) The opening line is “towards you, all light extends” which is followed by what is line 27 in the farsed epistle: “so that he rule the heavens and the earth, and control the seas.”
stated in Chapter 1, bearing burdens, an arduous activity typically reserved for donkeys, becomes lofty and light when associated with Christ. The next point of interest in the melody and text is Arva (dry ground) which is positioned on a descending third of e’–c’, perhaps reflecting the gradual descent from the heavens to earth. Lastly, maria (sea), literally below the dry ground, begins on a b-flat, one step below arva. This b-flat, clearly noted in the manuscript reminds the listener that the farses are indeed in transposed mode 7 on C.

**Example 5.6. Ut celos regat (line 27) from Laudem deo, Egerton 2615, fol. 45v**

VI. Names that elevate the child

The next farse on the text from Isaiah (line 28), et vocabitur nomen eius (and his name shall be called), is precisely what Bernard discusses in his first sermon on the Lord’s Circumcision, the names of the child. Lines 28–52 of the farsed Epistle read.

28 P: et vocabitur nomen eius  
29 S: Messyas, Sother, Emmanuel, Sabbaoth Adonay  
30 P: Admirabilis  
31 S: Radix David  
32 P: Consiliarius  

1: And his name shall be called  
2: Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, The Lord of Hosts  
1: Wonderful  
2: Root of David  
1: Counselor

---

44 In the Gospel of Matthew (11:28–29) Christ famously says that his “yoke is sweet and [his] burden light.”
Of God the Father, who created all things.

God the Mighty

Nobly destroying hideous armies of demons

Father of ages to come

Omnipotent king

Prince of Peace

Through the ages everlasting

His kingdom shall be multiplied

Jerusalem, Judea, or Samaria

and there shall be no end of peace

Now and forever

He shall sit upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom

And the kingdom of this one himself will have no end,

That he will establish it, in a pledge of faith,

And he will strengthen it with judgment and with justice

Since the judge will come to judge his image,

from henceforth

To him is due glory, praise and jubilation

Both: and always and everlasting.

---

45 The rubric Duo appears in the manuscript.
The farse on line 29 lists four names in Hebrew for this child: Messyas, Sother, Emmanuel, Sabbaoth Adonay. That these first names stated in the farse are in Hebrew strongly connects Christ to the Old Testament.

The farse for the next Isaiah phrase “Wonderful” (line 30) is Radix David (line 31). Radix David is what Jesus calls himself in Apocalypse 22:16: “I, Jesus have sent my angel, to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the root and stock of David, the bright and morning star.” At this moment, the Isaian light, the farses on the Lucan light, and now tangentially Jesus’s Apocalyptic light illuminate the prophecy of the child who is born to the world.

The progression from the child to Deus fortis (line 34) in the Isaian text elicits a strong interpolated statement of what the child will accomplish (line 35): pulchre demonum castra perimens taeterrima (nobly destroying hideous armies of demons). This phrase, like the immense lights that appeared to the shepherds of line 15, is taken from the Easter sequence, Fulgens praeclara.

Conclusion

At the outset of this chapter, I claimed that the framing of the magisterial, prophetic text from Isaiah 9 with such a song as Orientis partibus invites those gathered to imagine the juxtaposition’s broader exegetical significance. Themes of burden-bearing and the exalting of the lowly converge in the subdiaconal procession to Orientis partibus and Isaiah’s proclamation of a topsy-turvy kingdom led by a child king. During the procession, the subdeacon becomes the donkey in the clerics’ minds as ideas discussed in Chapter 1 float in their consciousness. However, the majority of this chapter focused on the exegetical construction of the farsed Epistle, a kind of exegesis that leaves less room for imagination than occurs in the conductus. The farsing of the
Epistle is an exegesis that explicitly comments on the main text line by line, one that is not dependent on the clerics’ recollection of patristic or medieval exegesis. I chose to focus on the farsed Epistle in this chapter both for how it is a departure from the imaginative exegesis encouraged by the conductus and for how it reinforces the themes of Orientis partibus. Thus, it is with thoughts of paradox and burden-bearing that the clerics transition to the hearing of the Gospel in Chapter 6.
Oriens Partibus, Edition
Egerton 2615, fols. fols. 43r-44v

Conductus subdiaconi ad Epistolam

<Hez, hez>
O - ri - en - tis par - ti - bus ad - ven - ta - vit
Hic in col - li - bus Sy - chen iam nu - tri - tus
Sal - tu vin - cit hyn - nu - los, dam - nas et ca -
Cum tra - hit ve - hi - cu - la mul - ta cum sar -
Cum a - ris - tis or - de - um com - e - dit et
A - men di - cas, a - si - ne, iam sa - tur ex

a - si - nus, pul - cher et for - tis - si- mus sar - ci - nis ap -
sub Ru - ben trans - i - it per for - da- nem sa - li - it in
pre - o - los, su - per dro - me da - ri - os ve - lox Ma - di -
ci - nu - la, il - li - us man - dibu - la du - ra te - rit
car - du - um, tri - ti - cum a pa - lea se - gre - gat in
gra - mi - ne, a - men, a - men, i - te - ra a - sper - na - re

tis - si - mus, R:Hez <va> hez sire as - ne, hez.
Beth - le - em, a - ne - os.
pa - bu - la.

297
APPENDIX 5.2

Farsed Epistle, Isaiah 9:2, 6–7, Text and Translation
Egerton 2615, fols. 44v–46v.

The introductory verse of the farse is found in lines 1–7
The Isaiah text begins in line 12, the Isaiah text [P] alternating with the farse [S].

1 Laudem deo dicam per secula: I shall speak praise for ever to God
2 Qui me plasmavit in manu dextera Who formed me in his right hand
3 Et reformavit cruce purpurea And restored me with the violet/dark red cross
4 Sanguine nati, qui cunctos redemit With the blood of his son, who has redeemed all
5 Ab ortu solis orbis per clymata From the rising of the orb of the sun through the climes
6 Usque ad mundi partes occiduas Even to the western parts of the world
7 In laude cuis clamores excitat Whose shouts of praise he stirs up.
8 Unus: Lectio Ysaie prophetae, One: A reading from the prophet Isaiah
9 Alter: In qua Christi lucida vaticinatur Another: In which the birth of Christ is clearly foretold
   nativitas
10 Primus: Hec dicit dominus The First: Thus says the Lord
11 Secundus: Pater, filius, sanctus spiritus, deus unus The Second: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, one God
12 Item primus: *populus qui ambulabat Again the first: *The people that walked
   in tenebris in darkness
13 [Secundus]: Quem creasti, quem fraude [2nd]: Whom you created, whom the enemy
   subdola hostis expulit paradiso by deceitful fraud drove from paradise
14 P: Vidit lucem magnam 1: Have seen a great light
15 S: Fulserunt et immania nocte media 2: And the immense lights shone to the
   pastoribus lumina shepherds in the middle of the night
16 P: Habitantibus in regione umbrae mortis 1: To them that dwelt in the region of the
17 S: Lux sempiterna et redemptio vere nostra shadow of death 2: Light eternal and truly our redemption
P: Orta est eis

18: He is risen to them

S: O stupenda nativitas

19: O wondrous birth

P: Parvulus enim natus est nobis

20: For a child is born to us

S: Magnus hic erit Ihesus filius Dei

21: He will be great, Jesus the son of God

P: Et filius

22: and the son

S: Patris summi

23: of the highest Father

P: Natus est nobis

24: Is born unto us

S: Ab arce summa

25: From the highest [citadel]

P: et factus est principatus super umerum eius

26: and the government is upon his shoulder

S: Ut celos regat atque arva necnon refrenet maria

27: So that he rule the heavens and the dry land, and control the seas

P: et vocabitur nomen eius

28: And his name shall be called

S: Messyas, Sother, Emmanuel, Sabbaoth Adonay

29: Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, The Lord of Hosts

P: Admirabilis

30: Wonderful

S: Radix David

31: Root of David

P: Consiliarius

32: Counselor

S: Dei patris, qui creavit Omnia,

33: Of God the Father, who created all things.

P: Deus fortis

34: God the Mighty

S: Pulchre demonum castra perimens teterima

35: Nobly destroying hideous armies of demons

P: Pater futuri saeculi

36: Father of ages to come

S: Rex omnipotens

37: Omnipotent king

P: Princeps pacis

38: Prince of Peace

S: Per secla sempiterna

39: Through the ages everlasting

P: Multiplicabitur eius imperium

40: His kingdom shall be multiplied

S: Ierusalem Judea sive Samaria

41: Jerusalem, Judea, or Samaria

P: Et pacis non erit finis

42: and there shall be no end of peace

S: Hic et in evum [aevum]

43: Now and forever
1: He shall sit upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom
2: And the kingdom of this one himself will have no end,
1: That he will establish it,
2: In a pledge of faith,
1: And he will strengthen it with judgment and with justice
2: Since the judge will come to judge his image,
1: from henceforth
2: To him is due glory, praise and jubilation
Both: and always and everlasting.
Farsed Epistle: *Laudem deo dicam*

1. Laudem deo dicam per secula,
2. Qui me plasmavit in manu dextra
3. Et reformavit cruce purpurea
4. Sanguine nati, qui cunctos redemit
5. Ab or tuolis orbis per clymata
6. Usque ad mundi partes occiduas,
7. In laude cius clamores excitat.
8. Lectio Ysaiei prophete.
9. In qua Christi lucida vaticinatur nativitas.
10. Hee dict dominus,
11. Pater, filius, sanctus spiritus, deus unus:
12. Populus gentium, qui ambulabat in tenebris,
13. Quem creasti, quem fraudes sub do la hostis expulit paradiso,
Vidit lucem magnum, 

Fulserunt et immanna nocte media pastoriibus lumina 

Habitanibus in regione umbre mortis 

Lux semperna et redemptio verae nostrae 

Orta est eis 

O stupenda nativitas, 

Parvulus enim natus est nobis 

Magnus hic erit Iesus, filius dei. 

Et filius 

Patrum summi 

Natus est nobis 

Ab arce summam, 

Et factus est principatus super lumen eius, 

Ut celos regat atque arva necnon refrenet maria.
Et vocabitur nomen eius

Messias, Sother, Emmanuel, Sabaoth, Adonay,

Admirabilis

Radix David

Consiliarius

Dei patris, qui creavit omnia,

Deus fortis,

Pulchre demonum castra perimens terrima,

Pater futuri seculi,

Rex omnipotens,

Principes partis

Per secla sempiterna.

Multipliabitur eius imperium

Jerusalem, Judea sive Samaritana,
Et participis non erit finis

Hic et in evum.

Super solium David et super regnum eius sedebit,

Et regni meta ipsius non erit aliqua,

Ut confirmet ilud

In diei pignone

Et cor boaret in iudici et iusticia

Iudex cum venerit iudicaret seculum

A modo

Il lide be tur glor i a, laus et iu bila ti o

Et usque in sem pi termum.
CHAPTER 6
The Gospel: *Salvatoris hodie* and *Natus est*

While I argued in Chapter 5 that the preparation of the farsed Epistle by *Orientis partibus* and the farsed Epistle itself encouraged those gathered to reflect on themes of burden-bearing and the exalting of the lowly, this chapter shows how the polyphonic conductus *Salvatoris hodie*, attributed to Perotin, and the monophonic conductus *Natus est* redirect the clerics’ attention to the hearing of Christ’s circumcision in the Gospel of Luke. The first part of this chapter will demonstrate how *Salvatoris hodie* contextualizes, amplifies, and adds greater solemnity to the succinct reading on Christ’s circumcision from the Gospel of Luke through a consideration of images and ideas in the song as they relate to patristic and medieval exegesis, cathedral iconography, and a historiated initial. The second part of the chapter will focus on how the division of *Natus est*—half of the song immediately precedes the Gospel and the other half follows the Gospel—prepares those gathered for the hearing of the Gospel as well as for responding to the Gospel lesson.

As a side note, I propose that the use of the conductus in the pre-Gospel position demonstrates the theme of the exalting of the lowly. Typically, it was the sequence, a liturgical genre discussed in commentaries, that preceded the hearing of the Gospel, a preparation that included an elaborate procession.¹ That the Gospel, the element that William Durand states “has

---

¹ The elaborate procession of the cross, two candle-bearers, thurifer, subdeacon, and finally the deacon, who kisses the hand of the bishop or priest before ascending the pulpit to read the Gospel, ceremonially testifies to the Gospel’s loftiness. “Data itaque benedictione, procedit duaconus ad pulpitum per dextram partem chori quem precedit subdiaconus cum textu evangelii, et illum precedit thribulum cum incenso, et ante thribarium ceroferarii cum faculis accensis—ante
preeminence in the whole Mass liturgy,” was prepared by the conductus, a non-liturgical genre, can testify to the elevation of the conductus.

I. The Manuscript, Author, Source of *Salvatoris Hodie*

*Salvatoris Hodie* was attributed to Perotin by Anonymous IV in De Mensuris et discantu (thirteenth century).

But Master Perotin himself made excellent quadrupla, like “Viderunt” and “Sederunt,” with an abundance of colors of the harmonic art; and also several very noble *tripla* like “Alleluia Posui Adiutorium,” “Nativitas,” etc. He also composed three-part conductus like *Salvatoris Hodie* and two-part conductus like “Dum sigillum summi patris,” and even monophonic conductus [simplices conductus] with several others like “Beata viscera,” etc.

The rubric *Salvatoris Hodie* on fol. 49r indicates the performance of this conductus after the sequitur prosa *Alle celeste* and before the conductus *Natus est*, though music does not accompany it.

While the text and music to a two-verse version of *Salvatoris Hodie* does appear on folios 86r–87v in the manuscript, David Hughes and Mark Everist have both argued that this fascicle containing the

illos, in quibusdam locis, crucis uexillum—sicque pulpitum ascendit et euangelium incipit.” Durand/Thibodeau 4.24.1. Amalarius also noted that the preaching of the Old Testament is “humbler; through the responsory, the preaching of the New Testament, which is more elevated.” 3.11.5.

2 “Et est sciemdum quod sicut caput preeminet ceteris corporis membris, et illi cetera membra servcient, sic et evangelium principale est omnium que ad officium misse dicuntur, et toti preeminet officio misse.” Durand/Thibodeau 4.24.3.


306
song had nothing in common with the origins of the Circumcision Office. Hughes argues that the “hodge-podge” state indicates that its contents could hardly have been meant to be used in the Office. Everist uses physical evidence to demonstrate the fascicle’s distinction from the Office: 1) a difference in color between the sections, the supplement being “considerably brighter and fresher...a result of different pigmentation rather than wear or exposure to light”; 2) different types of borders between the two sections; 3) a difference in “artistic vocabulary” in terms of emblems utilized by each artist/scribe.

The three-verse version of the song is found in the following sources: W1 (c. 1230), F-Plut 29.1 (c.1240–1255), and F-T 1471, a thirteenth-century codex from Troyes. W2 (c. 1275) and E-Mn 20486 (c. second half of the thirteenth century) contain the two-verse versions. Since it is reasonable to assume that a strophe could have been left out of the manuscript, I will consider all three strophes of Salvatoris hodie as found in F-Plut 29.1, fols. 201r–202v and 307r–307v even

---

4 In MS Egerton 2615, the initial “S” on folio 86r was one of the seven of twelve initiales chomies (plain gold letters on blue and magenta grounds decorated with white filigree) that was “cut away and patched” probably “prior to the sale of the MS in 1883.” See Everist, French Polyphony, 47–48.
7 W1 was probably the earliest of these manuscripts, but its origin in St. Andrews (Scotland) probably precluded contact with Beauvais. Mark Everist has presented an interesting hypothesis that Guillaume Mauvoisin or someone in his familia (active in St. Andrews before 1230?) could have been the conduit for bringing Notre-Dame polyphony to St. Andrews. See Mark Everist, “From Paris to St. Andrews: The Origins of W1,” Journal of the American Musicological Society 43, no. 1 (Spring, 1990): 1-42.
8 Gregorio Bevilacqua has shown that the eight conductus on two bifolia in F-T 1471, a thirteenth-century codex from Troyes that transmits a glossed book of Isaiah, are all associated with Notre-Dame. Furthermore, he argues that the provenance of the manuscript is Paris, not Clairvaux, and dates the binding to before 1230, making it possibly the earliest known manuscript to transmit Salvatoris hodie. See Gregorio Bevilacqua, “The Earliest Source of Notre-Dame Polyphony?,” 1-41.
though only two are transmitted in Egerton 2615. (While the entire text and translation is found in Appendix 6.1, I will introduce the text gradually in the body of the chapter.)

Figure 6.1. Historiated Initial from Salvatoris hodie, F-Plut 29.1, fol. 201r
II. Historiated initial from *Salvatoris hodie* in *F-Plut* 29.1

In *F-Plut* 29.1, a historiated initial depicts the infant Christ’s circumcision on the upper part of the “S” and the adult Christ’s baptism on the lower part of the “S,” illustrating the dichotomy between the Old and New Covenant rituals in this circumcision-centric song (see figure 6.1). The relationship between baptism and circumcision has already been discussed in relation to conductus *Nostri festi* and *Quanto decet* in Chapter 2.

*Salvatoris hodie*, verse 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Salvatoris hodie</em></th>
<th>Today the Saviour's</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Sanguinis pregustatur</em></td>
<td>Blood is foretasted,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>In quo Sion filie</em></td>
<td>In which Zion Daughter's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Stola candidatur.</em></td>
<td>Robe is made shining white.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four lines of the first verse of *Salvatoris hodie* present the message of transformation from the “foretasted” blood red to gleaming white, a transformation effected *hodie* on the Feast of the Circumcision, implying it occurs via the circumcision blood. The historiated initial in *F-Plut* 29.1 could be understood as a depiction of this verse; the circumcision blood on the top of the “S” trickles down to prepare the white robe of Christ’s baptism. Of course, white robes are an image found throughout Scripture—white wedding garments, white robes of sanctification, white robes of deliverance, and the white robes of the saved that allow access to the city of God. In the *Brit Milah*

---

9 In *W*₂ on folio 31r, the historiated initial has three clerics singing. Mary Caldwell notes that this image is often used for Psalm 97 and the concept of New Song. See Mary Caldwell, “Singing, Dancing, and Rejoicing,” 123–124, 644. The association of this conductus with circumcision and new song *canticum novum* reflects the New Year’s/Circumcision typology that linked those events to new song.
“Covenant of Circumcision” ceremony, the blood of the covenant, the covenant made between Abraham and God in Exodus 24, was understood to be the blood of the circumcision.\(^{10}\)

Those gathered could be reminded of the apocalyptic wedding of the Lamb and the bride where the white garments also represent the justification of the saints (Apocalypse 19:7–18).

Let us be glad and rejoice and give glory to him. For the marriage of the Lamb is come: and his wife hath prepared herself. And it is granted to her that she should clothe herself with fine linen, glittering and white. For the fine linen is the justification of saints.

The image of robes being made white and spotless through the blood is also tied to sanctification in Rufinus’ commentary on Jacob’s blessing of Judah from Genesis 49:11—“tying his foal to the vineyard, and his ass, O my son, to the vine. He shall wash his robe in wine, and his garment in the blood of grapes.”

Christ’s robe washed in wine is interpreted with good reason as the church, which he himself has purified in his blood and is spotless and faultless.... And therefore in the wine of that blood, that is, in the bath of the regeneration, Christ washes the church.... Those who, after they had been washed with the bath and had become his robe, reached the sacrament of the blood of grapes, that is, a more intimate and more secret mystery; they in a sense participate in his garment. In fact, the soul is washed in the blood of grapes, when it has begun to grasp the meaning of that sacrament.\(^{11}\)


\(^{11}\) “Nam stola Christi qua e lauatur in uino merito eius intellegitur ecclesia, quam ipse sibi mundauit sanguine suo, non habentem maculam aut rugam...In huius ergo sanguinis uino, id est, lauacro regenerationis, a Christo lauatur ecclesia...In sanguine autem uuae quomodo amictum suum lauet uidendum est. Amictus propinquior quaedam uel secretior corpori uestis uidetur stola eius fuerant effecti, posteaquam ad sacramentum sanguinis uuae peruenirent, uelut interioris mysterii secretiorisque, participes amictus eius esse dicuntur. Lauatur enim etiam in uuae sanguine anima, cum sacramenti huius coeperit capere rationem.” Rufinus, De Benedictionibus Patriarcharum 1.5, PL 21: 305; ed. Mark Sheridan in ACCS OT 1b: 333.
For the cleric who participated in the wine ritual at Lauds, hearing about the *sanguinis pregustatur* in the first verse could remind him of the *sanguinis tui poculum* from *Kalendas ianuarias*. But in the case of the passage from Genesis, the “blood of grapes” is not drunk, but washed in. That Rufinus calls it the “bath of regeneration” alludes to baptism. In a sense, participation in the singing of *Salvatoris hodie* could mean that those gathered have symbolically had their robes washed in the circumcision blood as they enter the New Year, just as drinking of the wine at Lauds has sanctified those gathered for the eschatological wedding feast. On a side note, the presence of the donkey in the Genesis passage very tangentially brings *Orientis partibus* into the context of *Salvatoris hodie*.

The final reason for the washing of the robes as heard in Apocalypse 22:14—“Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb: that they may have a right to the tree of life and may enter in by the gates of the city”—is as a means to access the tree of life and the gates of the city. The right to the tree of life was lost by Adam’s transgression in Paradise, a detail expanded upon in the Matins conductus *Ex Ade* and also mentioned in the farsed Epistle. While access to the tree of life is ultimately restored through Christ’s incarnation and circumcision, in Apocalypse 22, access to the tree of life is restored after one has washed one’s robes in the blood of the Lamb.

Having the image of the church door fresh in their minds from the singing of *Kalendas ianuarias* at Lauds, those gathered could also have made the connection between the entrance granted to the city via the washing of the robes through Christ’s blood. Bede connects this apocalyptic gate to Christ’s words, “I am the door.”

In the image of the white robes he promises a worthy and suitable reward, namely, that of a pure and stainless life. Evidently he promises this so that one might receive the vision of the Lord, who is eternal life.... “And that they might enter the city by the gate.” Those who keep the commandments of the Lord, who said, “I am the door; if any one enters by
me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture”—these are the pastures that are also here promised, that is the tree of life.”

In the four lines of the first verse, the conductus presents the message of the transformation—the conversion from blood red to the gleaming white—as effected through the ritual of circumcision.

One detail not yet addressed is that the robes being washed belong to Zion’s Daughter. This reference to Zion’s daughter could remind those gathered of the ass from Orientis partibus because in Zacharias 9:9, the daughter of Zion is to rejoice for the king who will come riding on an ass, a prefiguring of Christ’s Entry to Jerusalem. (This was already discussed in regards to Lux optata in Matins.)

Palm Sunday and white robes converge in this passage from Apocalypse 7:9 that states: “After this, I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne in the sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” This also elicits a very oblique remembrance of the donkey as the donkey’s role at Palm Sunday was significant.

III. “Blindness of the Law”

_Salvatoris Hodie_, verse 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecce nomen Domini</td>
<td>Behold! The name of the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De longinquo venit,</td>
<td>comes from afar,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodie quod homini</td>
<td>Which today brings help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perdito subvenit</td>
<td>for the ruined man.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

12 “Dignum praeumum stolis candidis, id est, vitae immaculatate promittit, videlicet ut Domini aspectu, qui est vita aeterna, potiatur...Et per portas intrent in civitatem. Qui Domini servant mandatat dicentis: Ego sum ostium, per me si quis introierit, salvabitur, et intredietur, et pascua inveniet; illa utique pascua quae et hic promittuntur, id est, ligni vitae, hi procul dubio per portas intrant in Ecclesiam.” Bede, Expositio Apocalypseos 22.14, PL 93: 205–206 or CCL 121A: 571–73; trans. William C. Weinrich in Latin Commentaries on Revelation, 194.

13 See Chapter 2, 49.

14 The first two lines directly quote Isaiah 30:27.
The second verse opens Ecce nomen Domini...hodie quod homini perdito subvenit or “Behold the name of the Lord...which today brings help.” Concomitant with the circumcision of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke was his naming: “And after eight days were accomplished, that the child should be circumcised, his name was called JESUS, which was called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb” (Luke 2:22). The significance of the name “Jesus” is established in Matthew 1:21 where the angel appeared to Joseph before the birth of Christ and told him this: “And she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins.”

In the Etymologies, Isidore of Seville writes this: “Jesus is translated as ‘σωτήρ’ in Greek, and ‘healer’ (salutaris) or ‘savior’ (salvator) in Latin, because he has come for all nations as the ‘bearer of salvation’ (salutifer).” The importance of the name Jesus was already established in the farsed Epistle, where the farses included numerous names besides “Jesus” for the Christ child. The reiteration that it is hodie that the name of the Lord helps further emphasizes that it is specifically Jesus’ circumcision and his naming that are celebrated for the saving and helping of humanity.

The second half of this verse sings of the salvation “in whose circumcision the blindness of the Law finds its end.” The only other mention of circumcision in the conductus

---

15 In Acts 4:12, this is written: “Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.”

thus far in the feast was *Nosti festi* at Matins—*Dei circuncisio nos emundet vitio*. In *Nosti festi*, circumcision was celebrated for its efficacy in the Old Law, as the ritual that purifies sin, appropriate for its placement in Matins, the service that Durand equated with the Old Law. While the Old Law was precisely why Jesus was subject to circumcision, a fact that is reiterated at Matins in Bede’s sermon, in this verse, circumcision becomes the path to the fulfillment or end of the Law. As it is written in Romans 4: “Christ is the end of the Law.” In the *Etymologies*, Isidore of Seville writes that “when Christ came, the priesthood of the Jews grew silent, and their law and prophecy ceased.”¹⁷

The veiled aspect of the Law is discussed by St. Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians. He writes that the veil Moses wore to keep the Israelites from seeing God’s glory was the same veil that remained in the reading of the Old Testament. This veil “upon their heart” was only removed when they converted to Christ (2 Corinthians 3:13–16). Augustine clarifies that “It is not the Old Testament that is done away with in Christ, but the concealing veil, so that it may be understood through Christ.”¹⁸

But verse two does not simply state that the Law was veiled, but uses a much stronger term, that it was blinded. In *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography*, Sara Lipton argues that the dichotomy between the blind Jew and the seeing Christian was set up by St. Paul who “contrasted the Jews’ sensory-driven approach to God with the pure faith of

¹⁷ “*Vbi enim Christus advenit, sacerdotium Iudaeorum obmutuit, lex et prophetia cessavit.*” Isidore/Barney, 6.2.39.

Christians”; in St Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, Christians are said to be “always confident...for we walk by faith, not by sight.”\textsuperscript{19} Furthermore, Lipton points to Augustine’s Sermon 263 and the City of God as being the most responsible for the theology from which the Old Law is associated with blindness;\textsuperscript{20} Sermon 263 praises the Christian for seeing Christ with the “eyes of the heart” as opposed to the Jews who only saw with “the eyes of the flesh.”\textsuperscript{21}

But, perhaps most pertinent is that the specific term “blindness” was used multiple times by Augustine in the Tractates against the Jews. He repeatedly points to Jews’ blindness as their failure to recognize Christ. In one instance, he writes that if the Jews had understood what the prophets were foretelling, “they would not be so blind...as to not recognize in Jesus Christ both light and salvation.”\textsuperscript{22} In another, he pointedly asks, “do you either with great blindness fail to consider them [those events foretold with such great authority], or with remarkable impudence refuse to acknowledge them?”\textsuperscript{23} Finally, in the penultimate chapter of the treatise, Augustine categorically states that “not in you [the Jews], I say, is this light, for with plenty of blindness you rejected the stone which was made the corner-stone.”\textsuperscript{24}


\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., Dark Mirror, 4.

\textsuperscript{21} PL 38: 1209–12. Ibid., Dark Mirror, 4.

\textsuperscript{22} “Nam utique si intelligerent de quo praedixerit propheta, quem legunt, dedi te in lucem gentium, ita ut sis salus mea usque in fines terrae; non sic caeci essent...ut in Domino Christo nec lucem agnoscerent, nec salutem.” Augustine, Tractatus adversus Judaeos, Ch. 1: 2, PL 42: 51–52; trans. Marie Liguori in Augustine, Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects, vol. 27 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1955), 392.

\textsuperscript{23} “...aut majores cecitate non intuemini, aut mirabili impudentia non fatemini. Augustine, Tractatus adversus Judaeos, Ch 7.9, PL 42: 57; trans. ibid., 403.

\textsuperscript{24} “Non est, inquam, in vobis haec lux: ideo nimia caecitate lapidem reprobatis, qui factus est in caput anguli.” [Emphases added.] Augustine, Tractatus adversus Judaeos, Ch 9.14, PL 42: 62; trans. ibid., 413.
The blind aspect of the Law is depicted in medieval iconography in the blinded figure of Synagoga that could have been known by those at Beauvais Cathedral. Synagoga is contrasted with the figure of Ecclesia, representing the Church or the New Covenant. These figures were first represented as women at the foot of the cross in iconography dating from the ninth century. On the south façade at Reims Cathedral (1225–1235), blinded Synagoga holds the tablets of the Old Law inverted, a gesture that could be read as the overturning or inversion of the Old Law. In the main portal of Notre Dame (late twelfth to early thirteenth century), in this landscape view, we see Ecclesia, crowned on the left, holding a chalice and Synagoga blinded with a serpent wrapping itself around her eyes while tablets of Law are slipping out of her hand and her crown has fallen. Synagoga’s eye is blinded by a devil shooting an arrow into it in the passion window of Chartres Cathedral (1215–1240). In the “Anagogical north II” window of the abbey church of St. Denis (twelfth century), Christ removes the blindfold over Synagoga’s face while crowning Ecclesia, a depiction of the verse—What Moses had covered with a veil, the doctrine of Christ revealed. This idea is dramatized in the twelfth-century Ludus de Antichristo, where it is only after Elijah and Enoch remove Synagoga’s veil that she declares her faith in Christ (Tunc tollunt ei velum).

---


27 See Wolfgang Seiferth, Synagogue and Church in the Middle Ages, 99.

28 Ibid., 100.


Somewhat tangential to the discussion of Synagoga and blindness is the fact that circumcision is often associated with Synagoga. This should not come as a surprise since the ritual of circumcision was prescribed in the Old Testament as a remedy for Adam’s sin. As Augustine writes, “If I had been a Jew in the times of the ancient people...I would surely have accepted circumcision. That ‘seal of the justice of the faith’ had so much power at that time, before it was rendered void by the coming of the Lord.” In the Altercatio Ecclesiae et Synagogae, attributed to Augustine and probably written between 438 and 476, circumcision is debated between Synagoga and Ecclesia; Synagoga defends the ritual based on the law of Moses while Ecclesia questions its purpose when not combined with internal change. Circumcision of the heart was required according to the Scriptures. On the book cover of Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 9383 (c. 900), a crucifixion scene includes Synagoga with the knife of circumcision in her left hand. A crucifixion scene from an eleventh-century evangelistary in Regensburg has Synagoga carrying the knife of circumcision in one hand and a mantle and roll of Torah with the words Lex Tenet Occasum (The law carries the seeds of its own destruction) in the other hand.

A much later example that does not feature Synagoga, but is useful for how it portrays circumcision and the Old Covenant is found on a folio of a late fourteenth/early fifteenth-century

---

31 Romans 4:11.
33 See Nina Rowe, The Jew, the Cathedral, and the Medieval City, 49.
34 “The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed.” (Deuteronomy 30:6). “For it is not he is a Jew, who is so outwardly; nor is that circumcision which is outwardly in the flesh. But he is a Jew that is one inwardly and the circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter.” (Romans 2:28–29)
35 See Wolfgang Seiferth, Synagogue and Church in the Middle Ages, 7.
36 Ibid., 9.
illuminated manuscript of Pèlerinage de Jésus-Crist by Guillaume de Deguileville. Here the infant Christ is rather roughly circumcised by a “dark scowling woman” who “snips the foreskin off with clippers.” Sara Lipton’s translation of the poem that accompanies the image explains the presence of the shadowy woman:

> When the Virgin Mary cries out at this cruel treatment of her son, the woman responds, “I am the Old Law, and I have the commandment from the King [of Heaven] to circumcise boys on the eighth day. It is a sign of God’s alliance with man, a sacred sacrifice.”

Lipton comments that “this woman’s ugliness relates to her perfidious law.” As early as the Moralia in Job Gregory the Great calls Synagoga the Redemptoris mater (mother of our redeemer), suggesting that the Old Law birthed Christ. Gregory notes that Synagoga “kept Him [the Christ child] to herself veiled under the covering of the letter, seeing that she neglected to open the eyes of the understanding of spiritual import thereof.”

Perhaps even more tangential but curious for the significance of the ass in Egerton 2615, is that when Ecclesia and Synagoga are depicted riding on animals, Ecclesia is on a horse and Synagoga is on an ass. A miniature crucifixion scene in the Hortus deliciarum (twelfth century) finds Synagoga blindfolded sitting backwards on a donkey. This idea of the Old Covenant is

38 See Sara Lipton, Dark Mirror, 226.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 227.
41 See Gregory’s Moralia in Job, Book 2.36, 59, CCSL 143: 96.
represented both by yokes and by tablets that Synagoga holds. It is the “blindness of the law” that the conductus proclaims “finds its end” through the circumcision. Outside of France, we find an image of Synagoga on an ass in the Salzburg Antiphonary. Seiferth comments that the yoke she is wearing is “a symbol of her being bound to the old law.”

Significant for how the meeting of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is pictorially depicted is the tournament between Synagoga and Ecclesia in the Tucher window in Freiburg Cathedral (early fourteenth century). Synagoga, veiled, rides on an ass, carrying a broken flag and a goat’s head (see figure 6.2). The goat’s head symbolized a lack of chastity by 1300. Ecclesia, who carries a chalice and an undamaged flag, rides on a horse who wears a mask made up of the heads of an eagle, lion, angel, and ox (see figure 6.3). Each foot of the horse is also taken from one of these creatures. The significance of this is that these creatures represent the four evangelists: Matthew as the angel; Mark as the lion; Luke as the ox; John as the eagle.

Figures 6.2 and 6.3. Synagoga (left) and Ecclesia in the Tucher window at Freiburg Cathedral

---

44 See Wolfgang Seiferth, *Synagogue and Church in the Middle Ages*, 103.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
In Caesarius’ Sermon 84 on Abraham and Isaac, he notes that the donkey was considered to be a figure of the Jews: “The two servants whom he ordered to stay with the ass typified the Jewish people who could not ascend or reach the place of sacrifice because they would not believe in Christ. The ass signified the synagogue.”47 Thus it is reasonable that blinded Synagoga rides an ass while Ecclesia rides a horse.

It is liturgically appropriate that, at this moment before the reading of the Gospel, Salvatoris hodie refers to the blindness of the Law finding its end in circumcision. Thirteenth-century liturgical commentator William Durand writes that the Gospel reading should be heard with one’s head uncovered to “note that all things contained in the Law and the Prophets that were veiled or were figurative are made manifest in the Gospel; and in the Passion of Christ, the veil of the Temple was torn (cf. Mark 15:38).”48

While I have addressed the question of blindness, one must also determine the meaning of the phrase in the conductus verse that this blindness of the Law “finds its end” in circumcision? Romans 10:4 states, “for the end of the law is Christ.” This end is not, as the Glossa states, “the destruction but the completion; therefore he completes justice through faith without works of the law.”49 On his fulfillment of the law, Christ states this:


Do not think that I have come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For amen I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled.\(^{50}\)

Chromatius (fourth century) writes that Christ “fulfilled the law at the time by completing the sacrifices of the law and all the examples prefigured in himself...by receiving a body.”\(^{51}\) Part of Christ’s acceptance of a body was being subject to the ritual of circumcision. As has been stated in Chapter 2, circumcision was a remedy—a remedy “by which they were able to be free,” according to the Glossa Ordinaria.\(^{52}\) Part of the fulfillment of circumcision was healing. In Jesus’ dispute with the Pharisees over the observance of the Sabbath, Jesus comments that “if a man receive circumcision on a Sabbath day...are you angry with at me, because I have healed the whole man on the Sabbath day?” (John 7:23). This demonstrates that Christ himself believed in the healing aspect of circumcision.

IV. Renewal: Adam and Christ

_Salvatoris hodie_, verse 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novus Adam natus est</td>
<td>A new Adam is born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ut novetur mundus,</td>
<td>that the world might be renewed,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A quo tamen factus est</td>
<td>by whom, however, was made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primus et secundus;</td>
<td>the first and second;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quippe cum principium</td>
<td>Indeed, since the same person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idem sit et terminus,</td>
<td>is both beginning and end,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servus atque dominus,</td>
<td>Slave and master,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nescit hoc preputium</td>
<td>the state of not being circumcised knows this not,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nescit hoc immundus.</td>
<td>An unclean man knows this not.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{50}\) Matthew 5:17–18


\(^{52}\) “Trans. Michael Scott Woodward in _The Glossa Ordinaria on Romans_, 80. Romans 5:13, “Sin indeed was in the world up to the law, but sin was not imputed since the law did not exist.”
The third verse of *Salvatoris Hodie* comments on the duality between Adam and Christ, a relationship that would have been well known to any thirteenth-century Christian through Scripture and commentary. Though Christ is not named in the verse, the phrase *Novus Adam natus* refers to Christ, the “figure of him who was to come,” according to Saint Paul’s letter to the Romans 5:14. The commentary on this verse from the *Glossa Ordinaria* explains that the original “death” of Adam is redeemed by the life Christ brings.53

Adam is a figure of Christ because, just as Adam is the father of all according to the flesh, so Christ is the father of all according to faith; and just as Eve was formed from Adam’s side, so the sacraments by which the Church is saved flowed out from the side of Christ. Therefore just as Adam was able to communicate sin to his children, and death, so Christ is able to communicate his own justice and life to his children. Truly Christ is able to confer more good to his children than Adam conferred death to his, and thus he is able to save more than Adam lost.54

In *Religious Art in France, the Thirteenth Century*, Emile Mâle points to Bede’s gloss on Mark 15:33 in the *Glossa Ordinaria* that also testifies to the connection between the death Adam caused by sinning and the life Christ brings through his death and resurrection.

At the sixth hour, when the sun is about to withdraw from the center of the world, he was crucified, and at day break, at the rising sun, he was resurrected, etc., until

---

53 The full Romans passages is as follows:
“Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned. For until the law sin was in the world; but sin was not imputed, when the law was not. But death reigned from Adam unto Moses, even over them also who have not sinned, after the similitude of the transgression of Adam, who is a figure of him who was to come. But not as the offence, so also the gift. For if by the offence of one, many died: much more the grace of God and the gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” (Romans 5:12–17).

54 “Adam est forma Christi: quia sicut ille est pater omnium secundum carmem, sic Christus secundum fidem; et sicut ex latere illus formata est Eva, sic ex hujus latere profluxerunt sacramenta, per quae salvatur Ecclesia. Ideoque sicut ille communicare potuit diliis suis peccatum et mortem, sic iste suis justitiam suam et vitam, et etiam iste plus boni suis conferit, quam mali: et ideo magis potest salvare quam ille perdere.” *Glossa Ordinaria*, PL 114: 486; trans. Michael Scott Woodward in *Glossa Ordinaria on Romans*, 81.
the hour at which the first Adam introduced death to the world by sinning, at that same hour, the second Adam destroyed death by dying.\textsuperscript{55}

But it was not only through death that Adam and Christ are connected; the thirteenth-century Christian also believed that the Annunciation occurred at the same place where God took dirt to form Adam.\textsuperscript{56} Calendars from the thirteenth century designated March 25 as the commemoration of Adam’s creation as well as the birth of Christ.\textsuperscript{57}

But it is Adam and Christ’s relationship specific to circumcision that concerns Salvatoris \textit{hodie}. Augustine, Bede, and Bernard of Clairvaux each discuss how circumcision is the antidote to the Fall. Augustine notes that circumcision is a “sign of rebirth” that negates “the original sin by which God’s covenant was first broken.”\textsuperscript{58} Bede also notes Adam’s culpability and the necessity of this remedy.

A male, the flesh of whose foreskin is uncircumcised, that soul shall vanish from his people because he has made my pact null and void. That is, because Adam by his transgression went against the pact of life given to human beings in paradise, and in him all sinned, [a person] will vanish from the society of saints if he is not aided by a saving remedy.\textsuperscript{59}


\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{59} “‘Masculus cujus praeputii caro circumcisa non fuerit, peribit anima illa de popula suo, quia pactum meum irritum fecit,’ id est, quia pactum vitae in paradiso hominibus mandatum Adam praevaticante transgressus est, in quo omnes peccaverunt: peribit de coetu sanctorum, si non ei fuerit remedio salutari subventum.” Bede, Homilia 10, \textit{Die festo circuncisio Domini}, PL, 94: 54; trans. Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst in Bede the Venerable’s \textit{Homilies on the Gospels}, 105.
Bernard, on the other hand, in his second sermon on the Circumcision, sets the original commandment given to Adam in opposition to the law of circumcision, the remedy for the transgression of the original law:

He gave a commandment, saying, You shall eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat.... Human beings transgressed the restraint.... This made God turn his face from them. At length—and barely—in the days of Abraham his friend God began to be appeased. Again he established moderation; he promulgated a Law—not altogether like the first. That one had been cautionary, this one was remedial; there a prohibition was made so that excess would not steal in, here a cutting away was declared so that the healing power of a sacrament might remove what had crept in. Finally, the former was given concerning a tree, that its fruits were not to be eaten, while this one concerned a person’s own body, that the flesh of the foreskin was to be cut away.60

The conductus comments that the “new Adam” brings renewal. Augustine writes about the relationship between circumcision and renewal in the City of God, stating:

for what does circumcision symbolize but the renewal of nature by the sloughing off of old age.... “Newness” is the note struck in every detail; and the new covenant is presented, in a veiled manner, in the old. For what is the “Old Testament” but a concealed revelation of the new?61

---

60 “Ex omni ligno paradisi comedes, de ligno autem scientiae boni et mali ne comedas. Levissimum plane amndatum, et larga omnino mensura! Sed trangressus est homo praescriptum sibi modum, et constitutum sibi terminum praetergressus. Unde et avertens ab eo faciem suam Deus, vix tandem in diebus Abrahae amici sui placabilis fieri incipiens, rursus modum instituit, promulgavit legem sed non priori similem usquequaque. Ea siquidem ad cautelam fuerat, haec ad medelam; ibi prohibitio, facta, ne superfultias subintraret; hic jam indicta abscessio est, ut Sacramenti remedio, quae subintraverat, tolleretur; postremo ill aquidem in arbore data est lex, ne fructu ejus vesceretur; haec in proprio corpore, ut caro praeputii scinderetur.” Bernard of Clairvaux, Circumcisione Domini, Sermo 2 “De variis Christ nominibus,” PL 183: 135; trans. Irene Edmonds, Wendy Mary Beckett, and Conrad Greenia in Bernard of Clairvaux’s Sermons for Advent and the Christmas Season, 134.

61 “Quid enim aliud circumcisio significat quam vetustate exuta naturam renovatam?...omnia resonant novitatem, et in Testamento vetere obumbratur novum. Quid est enim quo dicitur Testamentum vetus, nisi occultatio novi?” Augustine, De Civitate Dei Book 16.26, PL 41: 505; trans. Henry Bettenson in Augustine, City of God, 687. This footnote # is wrong and not indented!
In Bede’s homily on the circumcision (that is used as the lessons of the Third Nocturn of Matins in the Beauvais Feast), he also ties circumcision to renewal:

And so, dearly beloved brothers, since we desire to attain the rewards of this most beautiful renewal, [which is] as it were the highest [form] or circumcision, we must take care that in the meantime we submit to the remedies of the simple circumcision and renewal which happens in the daily practice of virtues...Let us be renewed in the spirit of our mind and put on the new man, who, after God’s image, is created in justice and the holiness of truth.”

This “daily practice of virtues,” could point to the circumcision of the heart, a recurring concept in both the Old and New Testaments, as opposed to bodily circumcision. God, speaking to Moses in Deuteronomy exhorts him to “circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and stiffen your neck no more.”

The idea of renewal that the new Adam brings through circumcision is also articulated in a sermon for the Feast of Circumcision by Richard of St. Victor (mid-twelfth century), pointed out by Mary Caldwell in “Singing, Dancing, and Rejoicing.”

We are renewed in the new man through the new circumcision, in this new year, in this world, so that in it [the New Year] we may win the right to be renewed in heaven.

This concept is also heard in New Year’s songs that Caldwell presents in “Singing, Dancing, and Rejoicing.” One song Anni novi prima die, celebrates the restorative nature of circumcision on New Year’s Day.

---

64 Deuteronomy 10:16.
66 “Renovemur in novo homine per novam circumcisionem, in hoc novo anno in hoc mundo, ut in ipso renovari mereamur in coelo.” Trans. Mary Caldwell in ibid., 651.
67 Ibid., 656.
Anni novi prima die, On the first day of the New Year,
Filius virginis Marie The Son of the Virgin Mary
Morem gessit natilie, Bore the custom of his birth.

R Dum, dum, dum circumcidi sustinuit When, when, when, the circumcision he endured
In quo non fuit dignum quid abscidi. In which what was not necessary was cut away.
Anni novi die prima On the first day of the New Year

Superna moderans et ima, Governing the celestial and terrestrial,
Passus est sub petre lima, He suffered under the sharpened stone.

R Dum dum, dum circumcidi sustintui When, when, when, the circumcision he endured
In quo non fuit dignum quid abscidi. In which what was not necessary was cut away.
Anni novi die nova, On the new day of the New Year
Homo, cor, animamque nova, Restore the person, the heart, and the spirit;
Ad ipsius laudem ova Rejoice in Him with praise.

R Quid, qui, qui circumcidi sustinuit Whom, who, who the circumcision he endured
In quo non fuit dignum quid abscidi. In which what was not necessary was cut away.
Anni novi festum cole, On the Feast of the Staff of the New Year,
Qui manet sub utroque sole He who abides throughout the season
Te peccati solvit mole, Releases you from the heavy burden of sin.

R Quid, qui, qui circumcidi sustinuit Who, who, who the circumcision he endured
In quo non fuit dignum quid abscidi. In which what was not necessary was cut away.

Caldwell notes that verse four that opens Anni novi festum cole (On the Feast of the Staff of the New Year) includes a play on the word cole which could mean staff or penis. Usually, the Feast of the Staff is referred to as the Festum baculi.

The version of Novus annus hodie found in Munich 20153, fol. 5v also includes the reference to circumcision.

In hac circumciditur
Hostie regalis

68 Ibid., 657.
69 Ibid., 658.
70 Ibid., 962–963. The song also appears in the Circumcision Office from Sens.
Et legi subicitur
Deus eternalis.

[On this day is circumcised and subjected to the law Eternal God of the royal
sacrifice.]

The second half of this verse of the conductus Salvatoris hodie states that the same person is
both the principium and the terminus, alluding to the Alpha and the Omega. In his Commentary on
John, Origen places Adam and the saints all under the auspices of Christ for this very reason.

for Christ the only begotten is also “all in all”; for example, he is the beginning in
the man which he assumed, but the end in the last of the saints—being, of course,
also in those in between—, or, he is the beginning in Adam, but in the end in his
sojourn among us, according to the saying, “The last Adam became a life-giving
spirit.” But this saying will apply also to the interpretation of “first and last.”

Tertullian uses the concept of the Alpha and the Omega to express the restoration as a circular
movement “away from circumcision back to the integrity of the flesh.”

For just as Alpha continues on until it reaches Omega and Omega completes the
cycle back again to Alpha, so he meant to show us that in him is found the course
of all things from the beginning to the end and from the end back to the
beginning. Every divine dispensation should end in him through whom it first
began, that is, in the Word made flesh.... So truly in Christ are all things recalled to
their beginning. So the faith has turned away from circumcision back to the
integrity of the flesh, as it was in the beginning.

---

71 “...omnia enim et in omnibus est Christus unigenitus, qui ut principium in eo est
homine quem assumpsit: ut finis autem in ultimo, sanctorum scilicet, etiam in his qui sunt in
medio. Est etiam, ut principium quidem, in Adam; ut finis autem, in adventu suo, juxta illud:
Ultimus Adam in spiritum vivificantem. Verumtamen hoc dictum congruet etiam explicationi harum
vocum, primus et ultimus.” Origen, Commentary on John, Book 1: 34, PL 14: 83; trans. Ronald E.
Heine in Origen, Commentary on the Gospel According to John, Books 1–10, FC 80: 78.

72 “Quemadmodum A ad Z usque uolitur et rursus Z ad A replicatur, ita ostenderet in se esse
et initii decursum ad finem et finis recursum ad initium, ut omnis dispositio in eo desinens per
quem coeptra est, per sermonem scilicet dei qui caro factus est, proinde desinat quemadmodum et
cœpit. Et adeo in christo omnia reuocantur ad initium, ut et fides recursa sit a circumcisione ad
integritatem carnis ilius, sicut ab initio fuit.” Tertullian, De Monogamia Ch. 5, line 13 (Accessed
from www://cit.brepolis.net/lita/pages/Toc.aspx); trans. William P. Le Saint in “On Monogamy”
The conductus also calls this “new Adam” both the slave and master. Christ’s authority as master was not in question, but his identity as a slave seems less secure. This idea comes from Saint Paul’s letter to the Philippians 2:5–7:

For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man.

The conductus verse concludes, stating that the uncircumcised do not understand that this new Adam is both beginning and end, slave and master. Yet, the fact that this conductus features a verse centered on restoration and redemption through the circumcision ensures that the song, when performed, ends with a celebration of the reason for the Feast.

This performance of Salvatoris hodie gives greater context to the ritual of circumcision, directing those gathered to reflect on the tension between theology and imagery on the restorative and renewing aspects of circumcision as well as the theology and imagery that supports anti-Jewish sentiment related to the circumcision—“in whose [Christ’s] circumcision, the blindness of the law finds its end.” But Salvatoris hodie does not lead directly into the Gospel lesson; rather it is followed by Natus est, a conductus centered on the Nativity, not the circumcision.

V. Musical Analysis of Salvatoris hodie

As I have just argued, the text of Salvatoris hodie amplifies and expands the very short Gospel lesson to follow. Similarly, I will argue that the musical setting of this conductus sonically

in Treatises on Marriage and Remarriage: To His Wife, an Exhortation to Chastity, Monogamy, ACW 13, 78–79.
reflects this elaboration with its polyphonic setting and its sheer length. It brings a solemnity to the preparation for hearing the lesson. (See Appendix 6.1 for the edition of the song.)

While there are other points of polyphony in the feast (see Table 5.1), I propose that the setting of *Salvatoris hodie* is the most innovative. *Salvatoris hodie* is a through-composed polyphonic conductus attributed to Perotin by Anonymous IV. When compared to the other strophic settings of conductus in the Circumcision Office, this setting of *Salvatoris hodie* is by far the most modern in its musical construction.

*Salvatoris hodie* is a conductus cum caudis that is characterized by a generally syllabic setting marked with melismatic, sine littera caudae,\(^{73}\) and cadential punctus organi.\(^{74}\) While cauda means tail, we will see that the caudae are not only found at the ends of stanzas, but within stanzas.\(^{75}\) In his study on the two-part conductus, Jacopo Mazzeo differentiates between these caudae by calling those occurring within stanzas “internal” as opposed to the terminal (or initial) “framing” caudae.\(^{76}\)

---


\(^{74}\) In chapter 2 of *De mensurabili musica* (1260), John of Garland writes that extensive melismas without texts are called *caudae* in *conducti* and with texts, are motets. See Johannes de Garlandia, *Concerning Measured Music (De Mensurabili Musica)*, trans. Stanley Birnbaum (Colorado Springs: Colorado College Music Press, 1978), 5.

\(^{75}\) Sarah Fuller made this observation forty years ago in her study of Aquitanian polyphony. See Sarah Fuller, “Aquitanian Polyphony of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1969), 1: 228.

\(^{76}\) See Jacopo Mazzeo, “The Two-Part Conductus: Morphology, Dating, and Authorship” (PhD diss., University of Southampton, 2015). In the polyphonic “supplement” of Egerton 2615, two out of the five conductus contain these internal melismas or *caudae* that set up the boundary between sections of each stanza. Mazzeo’s study of the two-voice conductus in F shows that 70% of these melismatic pieces contain internal *caudae*. His study of datable two-voice conductus in the period from c.1160–1250 shows that 90% of two-voice melismatic conductus have a terminal *cauda* at the end of the stanza, “while the remaining 10% still presents terminal *caudae* but not
Caudae are the defining feature of *Salvatoris hodie*, (making up 87.5% of the performance of the conductus). Below is a table of their appearances in the song (see table 6.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines of text</th>
<th>Initial caudae (length of perfections)</th>
<th>Internal/medial caudae (L.o.p.)</th>
<th>Terminal/framing caudae (L.o.p.)</th>
<th>Modified Punctus Organi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Salvatoris hodie</td>
<td>X (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanguinis pregustatur</td>
<td>X (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In quo Sion filie</td>
<td>X (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stola canditatur</td>
<td>X (25)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Ecce nomen Domini</td>
<td>X (13)</td>
<td>X (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De longinquo venit</td>
<td>X (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodie quod homini</td>
<td>X (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perdito subvenit</td>
<td>X (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecce salva veritas</td>
<td>X (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veraque salvatio</td>
<td>X (4.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuius in preputio</td>
<td>X (4+3.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litteralis cecitas</td>
<td>X (30)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Novus Adam natus est</td>
<td>X (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ut novetur mundus</td>
<td>X (12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A quo tamen factus est</td>
<td>X (13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primus et secundus</td>
<td>X (12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quippe tam principium</td>
<td>X (13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idem sit et terminus</td>
<td>X (13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servus atque dominus</td>
<td>X (13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*necessarily one each stanza.* Mazzeo also shows that of these datable two-voice conductus, 70% have initial *caudae.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines of text</th>
<th>Initial caudae (length of perfections)</th>
<th>Internal/medial caudae (L.o.p.)</th>
<th>Terminal/framing caudae (L.o.p.)</th>
<th>Modified Punctus Organi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nescit hoc preputium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nescit hoc immundus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table shows, internal caudae are found after eight of the twenty-two lines of the song, while initial caudae are found before four of the lines. Terminal/framing caudae are found at each terminal moment of the stanzas. Mazzeo notes that medieval theorists do not specify the “length and position of caudae within a piece.”\(^77\) Hence, the term cauda came to include all melismatic parts of polyphonic conductus that exhibited characteristics of the original cauda.

The first verse in *Salvatoris hodie* is only four lines, yet caudae mark the ends of each of those four lines. While each internal cauda in verses two and three is generally of a similar length, the first verse’s terminal cauda is more than three times as long. The internal and framing (initial or terminal) caudae are used very regularly in the first verse, unlike the internal and framing caudae in the next two verses, which are much more flexible in length, position, and frequency. In the second stanza, internal caudae begin three internal lines and end three internal lines, while caudae only begin one line and end two internal lines in the third verse. In these verses, one wonders, as Sarah Fuller has argued, if the otherwise seemingly non-systematic use of the caudae (with regards to textual structure) actually “obliterates [the text’s] structural outlines.”\(^78\)

In her study of Aquitanian polyphony (1969), Fuller asserts that the cauda imposes structural drawbacks on songs when compared with the Aquitanian melisma. She writes,

\(^77\) See Jacopo Mazzeo, “The Two-Part Conductus: Morphology, Dating, and Authorship,” 93.

\(^78\) See Sarah Fuller, “Aquitanian Polyphony of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” 227.
The terminal melismas of the Aquitanian versus have an unmistakable affinity with the extensive vocalizations of the Notre-Dame conductus cum cauda. Both Aquitanian melisma and Parisian cauda are purely musical expansions that occur within the context of a strophic, rhymed poem and stay the flow of the text. But apart from this resemblance in kind, the two operate on quite different planes. Whereas the caudae often totally engulf the text, obliterating its structural outlines, the Aquitanian melismas are carefully controlled and normally function to support or to interpret the structure of the text.... The Aquitanian melismas never reach the exaggerated proportions of the conductus caudae, or overpower the text to which they are attached...the conductus cauda forfeits the direct impact and structural purpose claimed by the Aquitanian melisma.\(^79\)

On the other hand, David Hughes recognizes the structural function of caudae:

That they “interrupt” the conductus in which they occur is not only evident to the ear, but demonstrable by somewhat more objective evidence. In almost all cases, the conductus melody makes perfectly good musical sense, even if the caudae are admitted—the end of one syllabic phrase ties in neatly with the beginning of the next, despite the intervening melisma...the caudae are extended ornaments—carefully fitted to but not necessarily of the essence of the conductus in which they appear. They are, however, structurally functional in that they serve to demarcate large segments of the overall form.\(^80\)

Mark Everist points to the poetic function of the caudae:

The musico-poetic discourses play into each other in the conductus cum caudis with a number of different results: the enhancement of divisions in the text or of specific passages or images in the poetry itself, the exploitation of specific numerical units or proportions, or a combination of all these. The result is a deployment of caudae that can extend to close on a hundred longae trium temporum and the regular presence of up to five or six caudae in a single stanza. The purely cadential function that such melismas had in earlier repertories is here massively enlarged.\(^81\)

I cannot account for any specific musical-textual relationship in the uses of the caudae in Salvatoris

\[^{79}\text{Ibid.}, 227–228.\]
\[^{81}\text{See Mark Everist, “Tails of the Unexpected: The Punctus Organi and the Conductus cum caudis,” in }\text{Musik des Mittelalters und der Renaissance, ed. Rainer Kleinertz, Christoph Flamm, and Wulf Frobenius, 161–95 (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2010), 165.}\]
terminal use of the caudae. Also, I find no explanation for the sporadic initial and internal/medial uses of the caudae. The only thing I can venture to say is that the regular and lengthy use of the caudae in the first verse—after each line of the verse—may offer moments of pause and reflection.

The cauda brings a lofty element to this polyphonic conductus. On the performance of conductus with or without caudae, Anonymous IV writes this:

And there is another volume of double conducti that have caudae like the ancient “Ave Maria” in duplum and “Pater Noster commiserans” or “Hac in die reg<e> nato,” in which are contained the names of several conducti, and similar things. And there is a fifth volume of quadruple, triple, and duple [conducti] without caudae, which used to be much used by minor singers and similar things.82

The statement about “minor singers” seems to imply that conductus without caudae were sung by the “less skilled or simply junior singers,” implying that caudae must have been challenging to sing.83 Thus, if elite singers, as opposed to “minor singers,” had been used to sing the conductus containing caudae, the presence of these skilled singers could have elevated the performance of the song and its reception.

Adding to the solemnity of the conductus are the currentes figures, spanning a seventh, that decorate cadences. At first glance, these appear to be punctus organa, but punctus organa are characterized by a descending currentes figure in an upper voice that meets a unison with the


sustained tenor voice via a major second.\textsuperscript{84} These figures, on the other hand, resolve to a fifth (see example 6.1). For the purposes of \textit{Salvatoris hodie}, though, I propose that these figures function as a punctus organa, and thus, I will call them “modified” punctus organa.

\textbf{Example 6.1.} Modified punctus organi on \textit{mundus} from \textit{Salvatoris hodie}, F-Plut 29.1, fol. 202r

Mark Everist interprets Sarah Fuller’s observation on the ineffectiveness of the cauda as a cadential formula as a reason for the development of the punctus organi, describing the punctus organi “as a cadential discourse more tightly aligned with the structure of the poetry than the now freewheeling cauda.”\textsuperscript{85} As I have noted, while the use of the caudae in \textit{Salvatoris hodie} does indeed

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{84} In the \textit{Vatican Organum Treatise} (second quarter of the thirteenth-century) Mark Everist shows that the eighteenth rule (out of thirty-one) concerns the execution of the punctus organi: Si cantus ascenderit dues uoces et organum incipiat in dupla, descendat organum 7 uoces et erit cum cantu, ut post.
\item If the chant ascends by a second and the organum begins at the octave, let the organum descend by a seventh, and it will arrive at the unison as follows.
\end{itemize}


\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{85} See Mark Everist, “Tails of the Unexpected,” 173.
\end{itemize}
seem non-systematic or “freewheeling,” as Everist notes, the punctus organi very consistently and identically decorates the final cadential moments of the three stanzas. The only time a punctus organi happens outside of these boundaries is when the text mirrors the final syllables of a verse. A cauda with a punctus organi decorates mundus, in line two of stanza three. This is mirrored in the final line of the stanza, Nescit hoc immundus.

Anonymous IV also notes that the punctus organi should be placed at the ends of caudae and when they are not notated, they are to be improvised.

The third volume is of triple conducti that have caudae like “Salvatoris hodie” and “Relegentur ab area” and similar ones, in which are contained the final sections [puncta] of the organum at the end of verses and in some not, and a good maker of organum is expected to know these perfectly.86

Tertium volumen est de conductis triplicibus caudas habentibus sicut Salvatoris hodie et Relegentur ab area et similia, in quibus continentur puncta finalia organi in fine versuum et in quibusdam non, quos bonus organista perfecte scire tenetur.87

As far as the rhetorical purpose of the punctus organi, an anonymous treatise from St. Martial notes that “certain phrases of organum,” punctus organi, bring “greater pleasure” to the work:

But if by chance at the end of a clausula, on either the last or penultimate syllable of the word of the poetry (dictio), in order to have a finer and more delightful discantus and in order to hear with greater pleasure, you wish to mix certain phrases of organum you may do so, however much nature does not wish this to be brought in, for it is known that discantus is one thing and organum another.88

---

Anonymous IV describes the purpose of the punctus organi in this way: “And together with such things, some people add a punctus puri organi after what we have discussed above [organum triplum] for a more noble ending.”⁸⁹ In Salvatoris hodie, the four modified punctus organa (three at the end of each verse, and one at the end of an internal cauda in the middle of stanza three) elevate the cadences.

As an interesting side note, Everist points out that the two Parisian organa in his study that also contain melismas similar to punctus organi are processional pieces (an antiphon and a responsory) that function similarly to processional conductus. While he is careful not to make any conclusions about what this shared characteristic may mean, the fact that he mentions it seems significant, or curious, at least for the implication that punctus organi were specific to processional pieces, whether they were conductus or organum.⁹⁰

The short melismas on cu-ius of cuius in preputio (in whose circumcision) in verse 1 could be considered caudae, but the fact that there are two in succession seem to preclude that identity (see example 6.2). Still they are significant in that they prepare the hearing of preputio.

---

It should be noted that the essence of the song, *cuius in preputio*, is emphasized by the light ornamentation of the text. The typical musical form of cauda + syllabic setting + cauda used in previous lines is departed from here. While the melismas are not extensive on *preputio*, they are enough to elongate the statement without losing the text and its meaning. The effect could be that those assembled would hear *preputio* in neither a hurried nor an inordinately slow fashion, especially coming after the lengthy melismas on *cuius*. (I imagine that after hearing an extensive cauda, one could forget what the text actually was.) The final line in this strophe, *terminum invenit* employs a long cauda.

The third verse reduces from a three-voice texture to a two-voice texture, as is also seen in *Relegentur ab area*, also found in Egerton 2615. While the first two lines end with caudae and the
third line starts with a cauda, the other five lines do not include caudae. Rather the simple,
straightforward homophonic texture set to rhythmic mode 1 creates the effect of rapid textual
delivery. *Mundus* is set to a lengthy internal cauda while *immundus* is also set to a terminal caudae
(compare examples 6.3 and 6.4).

**Examples 6.3. mundus from Salvatoris hodie, F-Plut 29.1, fol. 202r**
Example 6.4. *immundus* from *Salvatoris hodie*, F-Plut 29.1, fol. 307v
VI. *Natus est* 49r–49v

The transition from the luxurious polyphonic performance of *Salvatoris hodie* to the six-verse monophonic *Natus est* could have had the effect of quieting and focusing the minds of those gathered for the Mass.\(^9\) The clear syllabic setting of this conductus would have made its extensive text intelligible for the listeners. As stated earlier, *Natus est* is divided into two parts, one part (verses 1–3) that is sung before the Gospel reading and the other (verses 4–6) that is sung after the Gospel reading. (Though the text of *Natus est* will be introduced verse by verse in the body of this text, the text is found in its entirety as Appendix 6.2.) The close reading of the first part of *Natus est* will show that even though it transitions away from the circumcision-focused *Salvatoris hodie* towards the Incarnation, its emphasis on the embodied aspect of the Incarnation provides the link to the bodily aspect of Christ’s circumcision in the Gospel lesson. The analysis of the second part of *Natus est* sung after the Gospel lesson will show how it is a response to the hearing of the Gospel.

*Natus est*, verse 1

\begin{verbatim}
Natus est, natus est, natus est
hodie Dominus,
Qui mundi, diluit facinus,
Quem pater factor omnium
In hoc misit exilium,
Ut facturam redimeret.

Today the Lord is born, is born, is born
Who cleansed the crimes
of the world,
Whom the father, the maker of all
sent into this exile in this [world]
In order to redeem creation
And return him to paradise.
\end{verbatim}

---

\(^9\) Three additional verses are found in MS *F LG*-2 (17), fol. 27r–28v, a fourteenth century Gradual from Limoges, but because of its significantly later date than Egerton 2615, I have chosen not to consider them in this analysis.
The opening of *Natus est* wastes no time in redirecting the clerics’ thoughts to the birth of Christ; the threefold repetition of *natus est* in the opening statement *Natus est, natus est, natus est,* *hodie Dominus* plainly and insistently emphasizes the Nativity. But, the use of *hodie* merges the immediacy of the textual event, the Nativity, to the liturgical feast at hand, the Feast of the Circumcision.\(^2\) Rhetorically, the author’s decision to place *qui mundi* at the start of the next phrase—*qui mundi, diluit facinus*—immediately places the focus of this momentous birth on what the birth offers to the world through the removal of its sin. Christ’s birth (celebrated in this song) and the ritual of the circumcision (celebrated in this feast) were the remedies for this global sin. The verse concludes by reiterating the exile of Adam from paradise as featured in the farsed Epistle and the historiated initial of *Salvatoris hodie* from *F-Plut* 29.1.

*Natus est, verse 2*

Nec, Nec, Nec minuit quod erat,  
He did not, not, not diminish what he was  
Assumens quod non erat,  
assuming (taking on) that which he was not,  
Sed carnis assumpto pallio  
but with the cover of the flesh taken on,  
In virginis palatio,  
in the virgin’s palace,  
Ö ut sponsus e thalamo  
Ö, like a bridegroom from his bridal chamber  
Ö processit ex utero  
Ö, he proceeds out of the uterus.

The second verse centers on Christ’s taking on human flesh and highlights the reality of Christ’s bodily circumcision to those present at Mass. According to Jennifer Harris, serious interest in the corporal Jesus—the flesh—did not become central to medieval Christianity until the twelfth century, as evidenced by iconography of the suffering Jesus in the eleventh and twelfth-centuries

\(^2\) The conductus is also sung in thirteenth-century celebration of the Feast of the Circumcision at Sens (Sens 46A) but in the fourteenth-century Gradual from Limoges, *F-LG* 2 (17), the rubric accompanying the song is *Sequentiae de nativitate.*
and the interest in the Eucharist.\footnote{See Jennifer Harris, “The Body as the Temple in the High Middle Ages,” 237.} It is fruitful to briefly consider earlier authors’ perspectives on the Word becoming flesh to reveal the conflict that Christians felt about the divine becoming human. In John 1:14, the incarnation is stated in theological terms—“and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,”—not narrative ones as in the Gospel of Luke. Augustine’s statement in The Trinity—“so the Word of God indeed becomes flesh, but far be it from us that it should be changed into flesh”—reflects the discomfort that Augustine had about the reality of the embodied Christ.\footnote{“...ita Verbum Dei caro quidem factum est, sed absit ut mutaretur in carnem.” Augustine, De Trinitate 15.11.20, PL 42: 1072; trans. Stephen McKenna in Augustine, The Trinity, FC 45: 477.}

John Chrysostom assures the reader thus:

So, when you hear that “the Word became flesh,” do not be disturbed or cast down, for that essence did not change to flesh—it is impiety to imagine this—but continuing what it is, it took the form of a servant on it.\footnote{“Itaque cum audieris, Verbus caro facum est, ne turberis, ne concidas. Neque enim substantia decedit in carnem (impium enim esset id vel cogitare), sed manens quod erat, sic formam servi accepit.” John Chrysostom, In Joannem Homilia 11.1, PG, 59: 79; trans. Philip Schaff in John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of St. John and the Epistle to the Hebrews, NPNF 1 14: 38–39.}

Old Testament typologies that would have been known by medieval clerics are used to express Christ’s birth in the next phrases of the verse. The verse states that Sed carnis assumpto pallio/in virginis palatio/O ut sponsus e thalamo (But with the cover of the flesh taken on/ in the virgin’s palace/O like a bridegroom from his bridal chamber). I have already discussed the phrase O ut sponsus thalamo from Psalm 18:6 as an expression of Christ leaving the womb in connection to Kalendas ianuarias in Lauds and tangentially to Dies ista colitur, the first conductus of Matins. As quoted in Chapter 2, Augustine writes this on the significance of the images of the bridegroom and the giant in connection to Christ: “comely as a bridegroom, strong as a giant; amiable and
terrible, severe and serene, beautiful to the good, stern to the evil—remaining in the bosom of His Father, He took possession of the womb of his Mother.”

Augustine also notes that “in this bridal chamber, that is, in the womb of the Virgin, he united human to divine nature.” In his description of the bishop’s entrance to the church, Honorius Augustodunensis (twelfth century) equates the bishop’s procession to Christ processing “from the womb of the virgin, clothed with beauty as the bridegroom.”

An early witness to the idea of Christ as the bridegroom comes from Novatian’s (c. 200–258) De Trinitate. It is useful to consider this commentary for its emphasis on the flesh (stated six times in this passage), reminiscent of the conductus phrase’s emphasis on the assumption of the flesh by the “bridegroom” or Christ.

If this Word descended from heaven as a bridegroom to take on our flesh, so that in taking flesh he might ascend again as Son of man to that place where, as Son of God, the Word had descended, then assuredly, because of a mutual bond, the flesh bears the Word of God, and the Son of God assumes the weakness of the flesh. He ascends with his spouse, the flesh, to the same place from which he had descended without the flesh and receives now that glory that he is shown to have had before the creation of the world.

---


97 “In quo thalamo, id est, Virginis utero, natura divina sibi copulavit humanam.” PL, 138: 1019.


Natus est, verse 3

O flos de Jesse virgula,  
A fructus replet secula,  
Hunc predixit prophetia  
Nasciturum ex Maria,  
Quando flos iste nascitur,  
Diabolus confunditur,  
Et moritur mors, et moritur mors,  
et moritur mors.

O, flower from Jesse’s shoot/rod,  
Fills the universe with fruit,  
The prophecy predicted that this  
would be born from Mary,  
When that flower is born,  
The devil is confounded,  
And death dies, and death dies, and death dies.

Verse 3 uses the standard Marian image flos de Jesse virgula (flower from the shoot of Jesse), already discussed in Chapter 2 in connection to Gratulemur in hac and Nostre quod, to describe Christ. But unlike in its mentions in the Matins conductus, the writer of this conductus briefly expands on the image from its conception as the flos de Jesse virgula to its fulfillment: fructus replet secula (fills the universe with fruit). The author continues this metaphorical language, stating that the flower (not the son) is to be born from Mary, thus confounding the devil.

The perceptive cleric would notice that the conclusion of this verse with its threefold repetition of et moritur mors, inverts the opening threefold repetition of natus est. Birth and death can be interpreted as bookends to one’s life, so it is appropriate that the first half of the conductus begins and ends in this way. Those gathered may draw the connection to Kalendas ianuarias from Lauds as it also celebrated the destruction of death by the Incarnation.

Kalendas ianuarias, verses 6–7

Clausa mater concipiens
Clausa fuit et pariens
Et tu, Deus ingrediens
Ingressus et egrediens.

The mother, conceiving enclosed
Was enclosed and giving birth
And you, God, entering,
Entered [while] leaving.

Egressus autem ardua
Mortis fregisti cornua
Quin ipsa mortua
Occisa vite ianua.

But the departure was difficult
You crushed the horns of death,
In fact, death itself is dead
Having been killed by the door of life.

On the surface, Et mortitur mort, et mortitur mort, et mortitur mort—the conclusion to the first half of the conductus—does not seem to create a seamless segue to the Gospel reading on circumcision. But the death can both signify existential death and death of the flesh through circumcision. Also, by preparing the dry Gospel lesson with such poetic imagery as the flower who destroys death, the conductus invites those gathered to elevate the child who will be circumcised and named.

At this point in the liturgy, the brief text from the Gospel of Luke is chanted:

Gospel reading, Luke 2:21

And after eight days were accomplished, that the child should be circumcised, his name was called JESUS, which was called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

The reading is followed by the continuation of Natus est, verse 4:

Igitur, igitur mundana fabrica
Pax, pax, pax est in terris reddita
Per prothoplastum perdita

Therefore, therefore, in the cosmic workshop
The peace peace, peace that was lost through
the first created man has been restored to the earth

Orta prole summi patris.

by the offspring born of the highest Father

Verse 4 opens with the conjunction igitur, framing its ensuing text as a response to the Gospel reading. It is as a result of the reading/hearing of Luke 2:21 that verse four claims the
restoration of peace—Pax, pax, pax est in terris reddita. While this result is not suprising, the verse’s initial statement about new song is: Igitur mundana fabrica iam nova, concrepent cantica (Therefore, in the cosmic workshop, new songs sound now). The hearing of the circumcision and naming of Jesus in the Gospel lesson not only brings a new world order, but also activates the sounding of new song. Considering that the genre of the conductus itself has been regarded as “New Song,” a term coined by Wulf Arlt, the conductus’ singing of nova cantica is self-referential. As Arlt suggests:

On the one hand “Neues Lied” refers to the new repertory of liturgical songs in strophic form as it appears for the first time in manuscripts from the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, rubricated as “Versus”, “Benedicamus”, and “Conductus”. On the other hand the new term “Neues Lied” designates a new structural quality that is usually seen as an aspect of poetry, its distinctive features being an increasing regularity of syllable count, rhyme and accent, combined with a variety of experiments in artful strophic forms. This, of course, is not peculiar to one specific genre, and in this sense “Neues Lied” refers to the general trend in the poetry of the eleventh century.

The new song with its “regular syllable count, rhyme and accent...artful strophic forms” could still curiously be considered to characterize the rimos that Bishop Odo of Sully forbade in the Parisian Feast of the Circumcision. Yet, nova cantica is celebrated almost as a cosmic byproduct to the circumcision. This verse also brings to the forefront the duality between Adam and Christ that was explored in Salvatoris hodie. While Adam and Christ are not explicitly named in this verse, the protoplastum (or the first created man) clearly refers to Adam while the orta prole summi patris refers to Christ. Other “New Songs” include the idea of the protoplasma. In Novus annus dies magnus, a

---


101 See Wulf Arlt, “Nova Cantica; ‘Sequence and ‘Neues Lied,’’ 4.
versus from the Abbey of Saint Martial at Limoges, we find the duality between Adam and Christ presented as the *protoplasma*’s restoration being effected through the cross:\(^{102}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Quia sit genitor paradis Adam} & \quad \text{Since father Adam should be in paradise} \\
\text{Protoplasma suum reddit ad patriam} & \quad \text{He returned his firstborn to the homeland} \\
\text{Crucis sub precio reparando viam} & \quad \text{By repairing the way at the cost of the cross.}
\end{align*}
\]

The refrain from *Novus annus dies magnus* found in *Mn-289*, also contains reference to the *protoplasma*.\(^{103}\)

Following this theological statement about Adam and Christ, the fifth verse of the conductus turns towards more metaphorical language to describe Christ:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Sacrosancta carnem matris,} & \quad \text{From the sacrosanct flesh from the mother,} \\
\text{Cypressus ex platano} & \quad \text{The cypress tree from the plane-tree} \\
\text{Veniens a libano} & \quad \text{Coming from Lebanon} \\
\text{Est inclinata deitas,} & \quad \text{The divine nature is lowered} \\
\text{Ut assumeret humanitas;} & \quad \text{So that humanity might assume it;} \\
\text{O quanta letitia a} & \quad \text{O how great the joy} \\
\text{O quanta est gloria} & \quad \text{O how great is the glory}
\end{align*}
\]

As in verse two, verse five’s attention on the corporal, yet divine aspect of Christ could remind those gathered of the fleshly aspect of circumcision. But in this case, the imagery used to describe the *sacrosancta carne*—the cypress, the plane tree, and Lebanon from Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 24—all point to Wisdom. Mary’s flesh is the *sacrosancta carne matris* from which Christ emerges, the plane tree from which the cypress tree emerges. The comparison of Mary and Christ to these trees is telling for January 1 is the occasion for the Feast of Fools. Below is the passage from Ecclesiasticus that includes these images:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{I Wisdom shall praise her own self, and shall be honoured in God, and shall glory} \\
\text{in the midst of her people...And in the multitude of the elect she shall have praise,} \\
\text{and among the blessed she shall be blessed, saying: I came out of the mouth of the}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{102}\) Translation from Mary Caldwell, “Singing, Dancing, and Rejoicing in the Round,” 565.

\(^{103}\) See transcription in David Hiley, “The Liturgical Music of Norman Sicily,” 822.
most High, the firstborn before all creatures:...I dwelt in the highest places, and my
throne is in a pillar of a cloud...And by my power I have trodden under my feet the
hearts of all the high and low...And so was I established in Sion, and in the holy
city likewise I rested, and my power was in Jerusalem...I was exalted like a cedar in
Libanus, and as a cypress tree on mount Sion. I was exalted like a palm tree in
Cades, and a rose plant in Jericho. As a fair olive tree in the plains, and as a plane
tree by the water in the streets was I exalted (Ecclesiasticus 24:1, 4–8, 11, 15, 17).

Perhaps it is the sheer height of these trees in this passage that makes them appropriate to
illustrate the exalted nature of Wisdom. But in comparing the sacrosancta carne matris to these
heights, the song also illustrates more vividly how far est inclinata deitas, ut assumeret humanitas (the
divine nature is lowered so that humanity might assume it). Christ’s submission to circumcision as
he was “under the law” (the ninth lesson of Matins) exemplifies this paradox. As stated in the
discussion of Lux opta/lesson 7 in Matins, Bernard of Clairvaux in his sermon on the
circumcision of Christ puts the paradox of Christ best when he writes, “but recognize the mediator
between God and humankind who from the very beginning of his birth joins what is human to
what is divine, the lowest to the highest.”

For a general understanding of the cypress tree, we turn to Isidore of Seville who writes this
in his Etymologies:

The wood of the cypress is closest in character to cedar—it also is suitable for the
timbers of temples; its impenetrable solidity never gives way under a burden, but it
retains its initial strength.

That the wood from the cypress tree could be used for the building of temples, calls to mind the
biblical passages on being the temple of God, a concept emphasized in the second nocturn of

104 “Sed agnosce mediatoriorem Dei et hominum, qui ab ipso nativitatis suae exordio divinis
humana sociat.” Bernard of Clairvux, Sermo 1 De lectione evangelica PL 183: 133; trans. Irene
Edmonds, Wendy Mary Beckett, and Conrad Greenia in Bernard, Sermons for the Advent and
Christmas, 140.
105 “Huius lignum cedro pene proximam habet virtutem; templorum quoque trabibus
aptum, inpenetrabili soliditate numquam oneri cedit.” See Isidore/Barney, Etymologies XVII.vii.34.
Matins. Also, the cypress’ characterization by a “solidity” that “never gives way under a burden” resonates with the Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision. The importance of burden bearing had been just reinforced by the singing of *Orientis partibus* before the Epistle.

While the cypress was known for its strength, Isidore’s description of the plane tree presents a softer dimension.

The plane tree (*platanus*) is so called for the breadth of its leaves, or because the tree itself spreads wide (*patulus*) and is large...Further, its leaves are very tender and soft, and like those of vines.106

The plane trees’ soft leaves could represent the tenderness of Mary as a mother while the breadth of the leaves could represent Mary’s generosity in bearing Christ. Ambrose’s explanation of the plane tree’s significance also connects it to Mary as the plane tree’s fertility and production of offspring could describe Mary.

By the plane tree is meant an abundance of spiritual fruit, because a vine attaches itself to this tree so that the tree may be fertile through the symbiosis and pour itself out into rich offspring.107

The theme of joy elides the fifth stanza into the sixth stanza, reflected in the musical setting of these four lines (see example 6.5).

---

106 “Platanus a latitudine foliarum dicta, velquod ipsa arbor patula sit et ampla...Est autem tenerissimus foliis ac mollibus et vitium similis.” Ibid., XVII.vii.37.

Example 6.5. *O quanta leticia* from *Natus est*, Egerton 2615, fol. 50v

| Verse 5 | O quanta leticia  
|         | O quanta est gloria |
| Verse 6 | Tante rei gaudia   
|         | Sunt ineffabilia    |

The next image in the sixth stanza of importance would be *Stella maris* or “the star of the sea.” The origin of this name for the Virgin Mary dates back to a misreading of Jerome’s spelling of *stilla maris* (drop of the sea) in Eusebius of Caesarea’s (c. 260–c. 340) *Onomasticon*. Isidore of Seville perpetuates this error in the *Etymologies* when he writes that another name for Mary is “she who illuminates” or ‘star of the sea (mare),’ for she gave birth to the light of the world.” The famous hymn *Ave Maris Stella* (in circulation since the tenth century though its text was probably from the ninth century) probably solidified this appellation.

| Tante rei gaudia  | The joys of so great a fact |
| Sunt ineffabilia a | are indescribable            |
| O nativitas miranda | O wondrous Nativity         |
| O et dies veneranda  | And O day to be worshipped   |
| O, O, O *stella maris* inclita | O, o, o celebrated *star of the sea* |

---

109 “MARIA, illuminatrix, sive stella maris; genuit enim Lumen mundi.” Isidore/Barney, Book VII.x.1.
Musical Analysis of *Natus est*

*Natus est* does not follow a strictly strophic musical setting like the conductus in Matins, or a through-composed setting as we saw in *Salvatoris Hodie*. (The complete edition of *Natus est* is given in Appendix 6.2, but salient examples will be provided in the body of the text.) Rather the conductus unfolds loosely in paired versicles, following the style of the sequence. These versicles are dissimilar in length and form, a departure from the typical Parisian sequence. Thomas Payne’s study of thirty-one datable Notre Dame conductus shows that at least seven are in sequence form, four with identical paired strophes and three with dissimilar paired strophes.\(^{110}\) Even with the dissimilar paired strophes, the repetition was exact within each pair. For example, in *Omnis in lacrimas*, one of Payne’s dissimilarly paired sequence form conductus, the musical pairings are exact so that the scribe in *F-Plut 29.1* simply writes the text of the second and fourth verses for the singer to underlay (see figure 6.4). This convention of notating these sequence-form conductus is used in the other cases in *F-Plut 29.1*.

Figure 6.4. *Omnis in Lacrimas* in F-Plut 29.1, fol. 415v (the second and fourth verses are circled)
On the other hand, the scribe notates all the music and text in Natus est as some of the musical lines within “pairs” are slightly different. Still, even though some of the paired lines are not exact replications, the general repetitive quality gives the piece a sense of order that is reminiscent of the sequence. David Hiley comments that “the repetitive melody highlights, by its very naïveté, the irresistible drive of the poem.”

Payne notes that these sequence-form conductus are not present in the earliest layer of datable Notre Dame conductus and do not appear until 1181. This seems to imply that Natus est, whose earlier concordances include eleventh-twelfth century Cambridge, Trinity College, B.1.16 (GBCtc B.1.16) and twelfth-century EMn 289, is an anomaly with its use of a sequence style.

Example 6.6. Opening of Natus est, Egerton 2615, fol. 49r

---

111 See David Hiley, Western Plainchant, 245.
The song generally dwells in the lower part of the mode, F, where the reciting tone is emphasized. There are moments where the melody expands through thirds; this tertiain style was typical of “New Song” (see example 6.6 above).\footnote{See David Hiley, Western Plainchant, 238.}

While it cannot be determined if the upward melodic motion on *sed carnis* in verse 2 (see example 6.7) was for textual reasons, I wonder if clerics listening to the song during the Mass would have heard the upward melodic motion as incongruous with the text’s earthly assumption of the flesh. Or could they have understood that the seeming contradiction between the music and text was the melody’s exegetical contribution, a reflection of the inversion of the order of the human and divine? I imagine if the singer lingered on this three-note motive in the performance, those gathered could have been conducted to hear a particular interpretation. The same melody recurs for the next phrase, *virginis palatio*. Since the virgin’s palace is metaphorically the virgin’s womb, melody could be characterized as a melody that is associated with the Incarnation.

**Examples 6.7.** *Sed carnis* from verse 2/lines 2–3 of *Natus est*, Egerton 2615, fol. 49v

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{sed carnis sump-to pal-li-o,} \\
\text{In vir-gi-nis pa-la-ti-o,}
\end{array}
\]

*Sed carnis* assumpto pallio But with the cover of the flesh taken on
In virginis palatio. In the virgin’s palace.

Later in the conductus, this upward melody is also paired with the text that begins *quando flos iste nascitur* (when that flower is born) (see example 6.8), a metaphor of the Incarnation. But
what is one to make of the melody’s recurrence for the text *diabolus confunditur*? I propose that, in fact, the confounding of the devil is a direct result of the Incarnation.

**Example 6.8. Quando flos iste from verse 3/lines 5–6 of Natus est, Egerton 2615, fol. 49v**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Quando flos } & \text{iste nascitur} \\
\text{Diabolus confunditur}
\end{align*}
\]

When that flower is born, the devil is confounded

In the second half of the song, after the Gospel lesson, the same melody sets the text *Est inclinata deitas ut respiret humanitas* (the divine nature is lowered so that humanity might enjoy a respite). As in the first appearance of this melody, in this later iteration, the soaring melody seems to elevate the concept that Christ lowered himself so that humanity may enjoy a respite. I propose that the this three-note motive in its multiple iterations could unify the idea of the reversal at the heart of the Incarnation and the Feast of Fools.

**Example 6.9. Est inclinata deitas from verse 5 of Natus est, Egerton 2615, fol. 50v**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Est inclinata deitas} \\
\text{Ut respiret humanitas}
\end{align*}
\]
Example 6.10. O, processit from verse 2/line 6 into O, flos de lesse from verse 3 of Natus est,
Egerton 2615, fol. 49v

O ut sponsus e thalamo O, like a bridegroom coming from his bridal chamber
O processit ex utero O, he proceeds from the womb.
O flos de lesse virgula O, the flower from Jesse’s shoot/rod
fructus replet secula Fills the world with fruit.

While these final lines of verse 2 describe the infant Christ somewhat metaphorically, the
human element is still very real. On the other hand, the first two lines of verse 3 describe the
infant Christ using the image of the fruit from Jesse’s rod. Even though the ending syllable
changes from o to a as the verse changes, the textual material unites the four lines. Similarly,
following the Gospel, verse 5 elides into verse 6 using this musical material. In this case the
unifying element is the theme of joy:

O quanta letitia O how great the joy
O quanta est gloria And how great is the glory
Tante rei gaudia The joys of so great a fact
Sunt ineffabilia Are indescribable

The final phrase of this first half of the song, et moritur mors, et moritur mors, et moritur mors,
musically follows an ABA form (see example 6.11). The second half of the song ends with nearly
identical musical material setting the phrase ut adiuvet nos, ut adiuvet nos, ut adiuvet nos (in order to
aid us).
Example 6.11. Et moritur mors from verse 3 of Natus est, Egerton 2615, fol. 49v

The second appearance of the soaring melody in this second half of the conductus is on the text O, O, O stella maris. Rather than beginning the melody on a, as in the regular upward melody, the line opens with a d–f movement on “O, O.” Considering the text is O stella maris, perhaps this would create an association with the hymn Ave Maris Stella that opens with a leap from d–a. While the intervals of O stella maris are not exactly like those in Ave maris stella, the general contour created by the opening homage to Ave Maris Stella seems to offer enough of a loose outline of the melody in Ave maris stella (compare examples 6.10 and 6.11).

Example 6.12. The hymn Ave maris stella

Example 6.13. The opening phrase of O stella maris from verse 6 of Natus est, Egerton 2615, fol. 50v

Stella maris, a conductus found in F-Plut 29.1 has a much less convincing comparison to the original Ave maris stella, expanding only to a fifth rather than the octave found in the original hymn (see figure 6.5).
Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that *Salvatoris hodie* and *Natus est* jointly prepare those gathered to hear the Gospel in the Mass. But the conductus do not only frame the Gospel lesson. Rather, *Salvatoris hodie* also frames *Natus est*. By opening the clerics’ minds to the wider context and greater purpose of the circumcision, *Salvatoris hodie* directs them to recall exegesis on the renewing and transformative aspect of the ritual of circumcision. *Natus est* seems only to direct the clerics’ thoughts to recall theology and exegesis on the corporal nature of the Incarnation, a distinctly separate focus from *Salvatoris hodie* (the Incarnation vs. the circumcision). However, I argue that having been framed by the circumcision-centric *Salvatoris hodie*, *Natus est* itself is heard through the lens of circumcision. The cleric is reminded that the Incarnation is not simply an abstract idea, but a fleshly one, just as the circumcision is not simply an abstract idea, but a fleshly one.

Finally, the fact that it was not a sequence, but rather two conductus that prepare for the hearing of the Gospel lesson on this important feast, exalts the genre of the conductus, a typically non-liturgical song. Even the pairing of the conductus reflects the paradox of great and small; the grand, polyphonic setting of *Salvatoris hodie* elevates the idea of circumcision while the monophonic syllabic setting of *Natus est* draws the listener closer to hear the text of the song.
APPENDIX 6.1

*Salvatoris hodie*, Text and Translation\(^{114}\)

*F.Plut* 29.1, fols. 201r–202v and 307r–307v,

Salvatoris hodie            Today the Saviour’s
Sanguinis pregustatur        Blood is foretasted,
In quo Sion filie            In which Zion Daughter’s
Stola candidatur.            Robe is made shining white.

Ecce nomen Domini            Behold! The name of the Lord
De longinquo venit,           Which comes from afar,
Hodie quod homini             Which today brings help
Perdito subvenit;             For the ruined man.
Ecce salva veritas            Behold! Saving truth
Veraque salvatio              and true Salvation
Cuius in preputio             In whose circumcision
Litteralis cecitas            The blindness of the Law
Terminus inventit.            Finds its end.

---

\(^{114}\) Translation adapted from Gordon Anderson, *Four- and Three-Part Conductus in the Central Sources*, vol. 1, XXIX.
Salvatoris hodie

rubric from MS Egerton 2615, fol. 49r, Salvatoris

Sal - va - to - ris ho - di - e

san - guis pre - gu -

-sta -
Ec-

ce, no-men do-mi-ni

364
de longuiquo venit hodie

e, quod homini

per di

365
184

191
dus, a

198

205
quo ta-men fac-tus est pri-mus

212
et se-cun-dus, quip-pe cum prin-ci-pi-um

370
Natus est, natus est, natus est hodie Dominus,
Qui mundi, diluit facinus,
Quem pater factor omnium
In hoc misit exilium,
Ut facturam redimeret
Et paradiso redderet.

Nec, Nec, Nec minuit quod erat,
Assumens quod non erat,
Sed carnis assumpto pallio
In virginis palatio,
O ut sponsus e thalamo
O processit ex utero

O, flos de Iesse virgula,
A fructus replet secula,
Hunc predixit prophetia
Nasciturum ex Maria,
Quando flos iste nascitur,
Diabolus confunditur,
Et moritur mors, et moritur mors,
et moritur mors.

Today the Lord is born, is born, is born
who cleansed the crimes of the world,
Whom the father, the maker of all
sent into this exile
In order to redeem creation
And return him to paradise.

He did not, not, not diminish what he was
assuming (taking on) that which he was not
But with the cover of the flesh taken on
in the virgin’s palace,
O, like a bridegroom from his bride chamber
O he proceeds out from the uterus.

O, the flower from Jesse’s shoot/rod,
Fills the universe with fruit
The prophecy predicted that this
would be born from Mary,
When the flower is born,
The devil is confused,
And death dies, death dies,
deadth dies.

[GOSPEL]
Igitur, igitur mundana fabrica
    iam nova concrepent cantica;
    Pax, pax, pax est in terris reddita
    Per prothoplastum perdita
    Orta prole summi patris.

Therefore, therefore, in the cosmic workshop
    new songs sound now;
The peace, peace, peace that was lost
    Through the first created man has been restored
to the earth by the offspring born of the highest Father.

Sacrosancta carnem matris,
    Cypressus ex platano
    Veniens a libano
    Est inclinata deitas,
    Ut respiret humanitas;
    O quanta letitia
    O quanta est Gloria

From the sacrosanct flesh of the mother
    The cypress tree from the plane-tree
    Coming from Lebanon
    The divine nature is lowered
    So that humanity might enjoy a respite;
    O how great the joy
    O how great is the glory

Tante rei gaudia
    Sunt ineffabilia
    O nativitas miranda
    O et dies veneranda
    O, O, O stella maris inclita
    Eternum solem rogita
    Ut adiuvet nos, ut adiuvet nos, ut audiuvet nos.

The joys of so great a fact
    are indescribable
    O wondrous Nativity
    And o day to be worshipped
    O, o, o, celebrated star of the sea
    Ask the eternal sun
    To aid us, aid us, aid us.
Natus est

Conductus ante Evangelium

Natus est, Natus est ho-di-e do-mi-nus, Qui mun-di di-lu-it fa-ci-mus, Quem pa-ter, fac-tor om-ni-um, in hoc mi-sit e-xi-li-
um, ut fac-tu-ram re-d-i-me-ret et pa-ra-di-so re-d-de-ret

Nec, nec, nec mi-nu-it quod e-rat, As-su-mens quod non e-rat, Sed car-
nis sump-to pal-li-o, In vir-gi-ni discus

e the-lam-o, O, pro-ces-sit ex u-ter-o. O, flos de Ies-se vir-

gu-la, A, fruc-tu re-plet se-cu-la. Hunc pr<e>di-xit proph-e-ti-a

Nas-ci-tu-rum ex Mar-i-a. Quan-do flos i-ste nas-ci-tur

Di-a-bo-lus con-fun-di-tur Et mo-ri-tur mors, Et mo-ri-tur mors,
Evangelium

Et mo-ri-tur mors. Do-mi-nus vo bis-cum Et cum sp-ri-tu tu-o

Se-quenti-a sa-nti evan-ge-li-i se-cun-dum Luc-am

Glo-ri-a ti-bi do-mi-ne. In il-lo tem-po-re: Post-quam con-

sum-ma-ti sunt di-es oc-to ut cir-cum-ci-de-re-tur pu-er vo-ca-tum

est no-men e-ius Ihe-sus. Quod vo-ca-tum est ab an-ge-lo pri-us quam in

Redeundo ad altare de antedicto Conducto

u-te-ro con-ci-pe-re-tur. I-gi-tur I-gi-tur

mun-da-na fa-bri-ca Iam no-va con-cre-pe<n>t can-ti-ca Pax est in

ter-ris red-di-ta per pro-tho plau-stum per-di-ta, Or-ta pro-le sum

mi pa-tris sa-cro-sanc ta car-ne ma-tris Cy-pres-sus ex pla-ta-no

Ve-ni-ens a Ly-ba-no Est in-cli-na-ta de-i-tas Ut re-

376
spiritu humanitas O quanta leticia O quanta est glor-

ri-Tante religiada Sunt ineffabilita O

nativitas miranda O est dies veneranda O, O, O stella maris

inclita Eternum sollem rogita, Ut adiu-

vet nos, ut adiuvet nos, ut adiuvent nos.
At Second Vespers, as the feast is coming to a close, the clerics gathered are ushered to the night (and the refectory), not by a playful conductus like Orientis partibus sung just twenty-four hours before, but rather by the singing of Regis natalicia and the solemn Alto consilio. No rituals or readings accompany or follow these songs, yet just as Orientis partibus prepares and frames the feast through the perspective of a lowly donkey, these other conductus frame the conclusion of the feast.

Regis natalicia opens hailing the birthday celebrations of the king, not the puer as in Dies ista colitur, the first conductus of Matins. (See Appendix 7.1 for the complete text, translation, and edition of Regis natalicia.) Compare the openings of the two conductus.

**Verse 1** of Dies ista colitur, Egerton 2615, fol. 18r

Dies ista colitur, tange symphoniam, Nam puer, qui nascitur, iuxta prophetiam Ut gigas egreditur, ad currendam viam. *Felix est egressio, per quam fit remissio.*

He is worshipped this day, strike the instrument For the boy, who is born, according to the prophecy. As the giant marches, to hurry the way. *Happy is the birth through which comes forgiveness.*

**Verse 1** of Regis natalicia, Egerton 2615, fols. 66v–67r

Regis natalicia, qui gubernat omnia, summa cum leticia celebret ecclesia, quia dei gratia miserros reduxit ad superos.*

The birthday celebrations of the **king**, who governs all, with the highest joy because the favor of God restores the miserable to those above.

[Emphases added in both verses.]
While both songs recognize the uniqueness of the one who is being celebrated (January 1 was, after all, the Octave of the Nativity), the focus on his regal status in *Regis natalicia* is a shift from the *puer* who is worshiped in *Dies ista colitur*. I propose that this celebration of the Christ child as king was mitigated by the farsed Epistle in the Mass (Chapter 5). At the midway point of the Epistle from Isaiah 9, the well-known phrase—“for a child is born to us” (line 20)—is farsed by phrases celebrating the regal and powerful aspect of this child—“He will be great, Jesus the son of God” (line 21), “Lord of Hosts” (line 29), “omnipotent king (line 37), for example. It is also this paradoxical nature of Christ—high and low—that is celebrated in the Feast of Fools.

**Verses 2 and 3 of Regis natalicia, Egerton 2615, fols. 66v–67r**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime culpam femine delens sine crimen natus est de virgine perdito pro homine rex et lux de lumine clariet et nobis apparuit.</td>
<td>Erasing the first female blame Without guilt, The birth is from the virgin having been destroyed on behalf of man King and light from light was illuminated And appeared to us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime matris vitio dampnatur exilio sequens generatio, sed de celi solio mundi restauratio mititur, sic nobis consulitur.</td>
<td>By the sin of the mother He is condemned with exile Following the generation but concerning the throne of heaven The restoration of the world Is thrown, Thus, it is considered by us.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verses 2 and 3 of *Regis natalicia* reviews the medieval understanding that the virgin birth erased the *prime culpam femine* (first female blame). In *Eva virum* sung at Matins, Mary’s redemptive effect on Eve’s sin was explored in depth.¹

¹ See Ch. 2, footnote 101.
Verse 4 of *Regis natalicia*, Egerton 2615, fol. 67r

Hic est salus omnium, This is the health of all,
redemptor humilium, The lowly redeemer,
vera spes credentium, The genuine hope of the faithful, pauperis refugium, the poor refuge,
vidae solatium, Bereft comfort
in celis in the heavens
sanctis cibus angelis Holy food from angels.

Finally, verse 4 reminds the listener that though Christ is king, he is the *redemptor humilium* (the lowly redeemer), another nod to the theology of the Feast of Fools where the lowly are exalted.

While *Regis natalicia* provided a summary of theological ideas sung at Matins and the Mass by focusing on the Nativity and Mary’s role in redeeming Eve, I propose that *Alto consilio*, the final conductus of the feast, brings the focus back to the circumcision of Christ. It provides the profound, exegetical bookend to the Feast of the Circumcision by directing those gathered to contemplate the tension between the flesh and the law, a tension inherent in the circumcision of Christ. This tension was presented at various points in the feast. In the final lesson of Matins, Bede reiterates St. Paul’s words to the Galatians that Christ subjected himself to the ritual of bodily circumcision because he was “under the law.” Before the Gospel in the Mass, *Salvatoris hodie* sings of the “blindness of the law” finding its end or fulfillment in Christ’s circumcision. At the conclusion of Second Vespers, *Alto consilio* does not resolve the tension between the flesh and the law, but rather declares the *failure* of the law; this declaration seems to implicate circumcision, a vestige of the Old Law, in the failure.

In addition to this exegetical aspect of the song is the curious fact that *Alto consilio* played a primary role as the Song of Ecclesia in the twelfth-century drama *Ludus de Antichristo*. Though I cannot say definitively that the clerics at Beauvais Cathedral would have known this drama, I
propose that a consideration of its dramatic context is useful; ultimately, I contend that Alto consilio, a song that describes the struggle between good and evil in the Ludus de Antichristo, mirrors the cosmic struggle between the Feast of the Circumcision and that of the Kalends. And in the vein of the exalting of the lowly in the Feast of the Circumcision, the lofty battle against the Antichrist is not fought with traditionally exalted means, but with a vulnerable infant. The inclusion of a song from the Ludus de Antichristo also brings the dramatic elements in the feast full circle, for the Antichrist, according to Durand, was prefigured by Nebuchadnezzar, whom we met in the Ludus Danielis.²

The twelfth-century drama Ludus de Antichristo opens at the Temple of the Lord with the characters of Gentilitas (the Heathen), Synagoga, and Ecclesia each presenting songs that define their respective faiths. Gentilitas sings first, a song in praise of polytheism. Below are the first two of the eight verses of her song:

Deorum immortalitas
Est omnibus colenda,
Eorum et pluralitas
Ubique metuenda.

Stulti sunt et uere fatui,
Qui deum unum dicunt,
Et antiquitatis ritui
Proterue contradicunt.

The immortality of the gods
must be adored by all
And their multitudes
must be feared everywhere.

They are stupid and truly silly
who say that there is one god
and recklessly contradict
the rites of antiquity.³

Synagoga sings next, a much shorter song than Gentilitas’ that is mostly an apologetic against Christ. The play indicates a procession stating, “Tunc sequitur Sinagoga cum Iudeis cantans” (Then Synagoga follows with the Jews singing).³

---

² “Quintus erit eorum qui futuri sunt sub tempore Antichristi, in cuius figuram precessit Nabuchodonosor,” Durand/Thibodeau, 5.4.13
³ Adapted from trans. John Wright in The Play of the Antichrist (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies), 67.
Nostra salus in te, Domine
Nulla uite spes in homine
Error est in Christi nomine
Spem salutis estimari.

Lord, our salvation is in Thee;
In man there is no hope for life
To hope that we can ever gain
Salvation in the name of Christ is vain.

Mirum si morti subcubuit,
Qui utam alis tribuit.
Qui se saluare non potuit
Ab hoc quis potest saluari?

Strange, that He should fall to death
Who offered life to other men.
Is one who could not even save
Himself, to rescue others from the grave?

Non hunc, sed qui est Emmanuel,
Deum adorabis Israel.
Ihesum sicut deos Ismahel
Te iubeo detestari.

As Ishmael despised the gods,
So you are to detest this Christ.
Not He, but Lord Immanuel
Shall be the God adored by Israel.  

After this, Synagoga ascends to her throne with the Jews.

Ecclesia is the last to sing. Her procession is much fuller than Gentilitas’ or Synagoga’s. She enters with Mercy holding oil on her right, and Justice holding scales and a sword on her left. Following her are the Pope and the Clergy on the right and the Emperor of the Romans and his army on the left. Ecclesia wears a breastplate and a crown. At this moment in the libretto, one would expect to be given the text of Ecclesia’s song, as was the case for Gentilitas and Synagoga. Instead, the author only gives performance instructions that the conductus Alto consilio be sung with a refrain after each verse. This call for a conductus is significant, as it marks an early example of the designation for a conductus in a drama or liturgy. Neither Gentilitas’ or Synagoga’s songs were called conductus. While the refrain of the conductus is included, the verses are not, perhaps implying that the song was already well known. A performer not familiar with the song would have had to consult F-Pn lat. 1139 (38v–39v), a manuscript from Saint Martial (late eleventh-}

---

5 This English translation is by John Wright, *The Play of the Antichrist*, 69.
The rubrics for this dramatic moment are as follows:⁶

Cantabit autem Ecclesia conductum Alto consilio, his qui eam secuntur ad singulos versus respondentibus:

Ecclesia sings the conductus Alto consilio, with those who follow her responding with this refrain after each verse:

Hec est fides ex qua vita
In qua mortis lex sopita
Quisquis est qui credit aliter
Hunc damnamus eternaliter

This is the faith where life is found
In which the law of death is bound
Whoever there is who believes otherwise
We damn eternally to [Hell].

Ecclesia’s song Alto consilio is much extended in comparison to Gentilitas’ and Synagoga’s songs. The fact that it is nearly twice as long as Gentilitas’s song and more than three times as long as Synagoga’s song demonstrates the primary position it was given in the performance of the drama. The text is a mixture of Marian imagery, battle imagery, Incarnational imagery, and anti-Judaic phrases about the failure of the Old Law, a concept already emphasized in the Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision.

The strains of anti-Judaism in this and other conductus in the feast perhaps demonstrate the conflict within medieval theology about Judaism as well as the actual treatment of Jews in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For instance, the Feast of the Circumcision simultaneously celebrates circumcision, an Old Law ritual, while criticizing the Old Law. As John Wright writes in his analysis of the Ludus de Antichristo, the “sympathetic role played by Synagoga and the Jews” in the play and the way the “Jewish doctrine...though of course attacked by the Christian author, is

⁶ See Karl Young, Drama of the Medieval Church, vol. 2, 373. For the full Latin text see ibid., 371–415. For English translation, see John Wright, The Play of Antichrist, 69–70.
presented with solemnity and respect,” should not discount the fact that the twelfth century was an “age largely...of quick and thoughtless violence,” of massacres of Jews.⁷ The generic, but dogmatic refrain frames Alto consilio within the confines of faith or condemnation.

The anti-Judaic elements are somewhat mitigated by the appearance of Elijah and Enoch in the Ludus de Antichristo, two figures whose appearance at the Second Coming signals a reconciliation between Jews and Christians. This is an excerpt of their song that introduces the new law, one different from the law of nature:

The Father’s Word, while still divine,  
Became a man in a virgin’s womb.  
Remaining God, He became a mortal,  
Timeless God, made to live in time.  
This was not done by normal law  
Of nature; this was God’s command.  
Christ took on our mortal weakness  
To bring His strength to feeble men.⁸

Scholars point to Augustine’s City of God 20.29 as an explanation for the new interpretation of the Law, a law that has a spiritual sense:

Malachi thus admonishes his people to remember the Law of Moses for he foresaw that for a long time yet they would not interpret spiritually, as they ought to have done...the belief that in the final period before the judgement this great and wonderful prophet Elijah will expound the Law to the Jews, and that through this activity the Jews are destined to believe in our Christ.... Well then, when he comes, he will explain in a spiritual sense the Law which the Jews did not take in a material sense, and by so doing he will ‘turn the heart of the father toward the son,’ that is, the hearts of the fathers toward the children.... The meaning, then, is that the sons, that is, the Jews, will interpret the Law as their fathers—that is, the prophets, including Moses himself—interpreted it.”⁹

⁷ See John Wright, Play of the Antichrist, 57–59.  
⁸ Ibid., 94.  
⁹ “Cum autem admonuisset, ut meminisse legis Moysi: quoniam praevidebat eos multo adhuc tempore non eam spiritualiter, sicut oportuerat, accepturos continuo subject...Per hunc Eliam magnum mirabilemque propheta exposita sibi lege, ultimo tempore ante judicium, Judaeos
In this dramatic narrative, perhaps Elijah’s and Enoch’s unmasking of the Antichrist’s deception is a sign of the revelation of the Law as this action causes blinded Synagoga to desire conversion. As discussed in Chapter 6, Synagoga often appeared blindfolded in medieval iconography and when the blindfold is removed, as in the “Anagogical north II” window at St. Denis, it signifies that she now “sees” and accepts Christ.10 At this moment in the drama, if Synagoga’s blindfold is, indeed, removed (John Wright notes that the rubric at this moment—Tunc tollunt ei velum—could refer to the Antichrist or to Synagoga), it could also demonstrate her conversion.11 It is in the final scene of the drama that the law is usurped by the Antichrist; he sings of the “royal law” being ratified and the predictions of his prophets who “venerate [his] name and law.” But at this moment, as if to show displeasure in the Antichrist’s verbal commandeering of the “law,” a crash of thunder scares the Antichrist and his men away, leaving Ecclesia praising God.12 Clearly, the Antichrist’s law is opposed to the New Law, embodied in Christ.

That Ecclesia holds court with Alto consilio makes it the anthem of the church. It is because of its status as the anthem in the battle against the Antichrist that Alto consilio is so appropriate to conclude the Feast of the Circumcision. In the context of the Circumcision Office, Alto consilio reaffirms the defeat of the darker forces of the Kalends through the triumph of the Incarnation’s descent to earth. It must be clarified that the refrain included in the Ludus de Antichristo—including

in Christum verum...Cum venerit ergo, exponendo legem spiritualiter, quam nunc Judaei carnaliter sapiunt, convertet cor patris ad filium, id est, cor patrum ad filios...Et est sensus, ut etiam filii sic intelligant legem, id est Judaei, quemadmodum patres eam intellexerunt, id est Prophetae, in quibus erat et ipse Moyses.” Augustine, De Civitate Dei Book 20.29, PL 41: 704; trans. Henry Bettenson in Augustine, City of God, 957.

10 See Ch 6, 12.
11 See Wright, 95.
12 Ibid., 98.
the phrase “whoever from our faith rebel, we damn eternally to Hell”—does not appear in the Circumcision Office manuscript, perhaps softening its delivery at Second Vespers.

What in the text and music of Alto consilio could contribute to the exegesis of this moment, the conclusion of this feast? While the text, translation, and edition is given in Appendix 7.2, verses of the song will be introduced gradually in the body of this chapter.

**Verses 1–4 of Alto Consilio, Egerton 2615, fols. 67r–67v**

1. **Alto consilio**
   - Divina ratio
   - Restaurans hominem
   - Immittit celius
   - Vim sancti spiritus
   - Qua replet, qua replet,
     - qua replet,
     - qua replet virginem.
   - The lofty counsel,
   - Restoring man,
   - The divine prudence
   - sends from heaven the
   - Power of the holy spirit
   - Which completes, which completes,
     - which completes
     - Which completes the virgin.

2. **Pectus virgineum**
   - Celo capacius
   - Totum et integrum
   - Claudi interius
   - Illum, qui Deus est, Deus est, Deus est et Dei filius.
   - I hide the virgin
   - Whole and untouched
   - The capacius heart
   - to be closed by
   - That, who God is, God is, God is
   - And the son of God.

3. **Visitatur sede de supera**
   - Babylonis filia misera,
   - Persona fili missa non altera
   - Nostra carnis sumpsit mortalia.
   - The miserable daughter has been visited
     - from the seat
     - of the higher places of Babylon,
     - The character of another son having not been sent,
     - takes up our mortal flesh.

4. **Moratus est fletus ad vesperum**
   - Matutinum ante luciferum
   - Castitatis egressus uterum
   - Venit Iesus, nostra letitia.
   - Gentle is the lamenting at vespers
   - Early before the morning star
   - The womb of virginity having disembarked,
   - Jesus comes, our joy.

---

It must be noted that the highly melismatic setting of these four first verses brings not only a sense of grandeur to the text, but also offers time and space for those gathered to reflect. The first four verses generally reflect on the Virgin Mary from whose womb Venit Iesus, nostra letitia (comes Jesus, our joy) ultimately pointing to Christ the son. There is a momentary consideration of Mary’s antithesis, the virgin daughter of Babylon, which only solidifies Mary’s pre-eminence among women.

The song is in mode 1 with a number of cadences on G. Verse 1 includes an inner repetition between the opening phrase on Alto consilio (example 7.1) and the second phrase on Immitet celitus (example 7.2).

Example 7.1. Verse 1.1 from Alto consilio, Egerton 2615, fols. 67r–67v

---

14 In Silvia Wälli’s analysis of Alto consilio, she gives theological meaning to certain pitch ranges of phrases and final notes of phrases. Wälli develops a theory that characterizes the boundaries of the fourth g–c’ in the first phrase Alto consilio, the second phrase divina ratio, the fourth phrase Immitet celus, the fifth phrase vim sancti spiritus as all being in the göttlichen Sphäre simply because they are not about hominem. See Silvia Wälli, “Musikalische Analyse und ‘natürliche Erkenntnis’: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis von Alto consilio,” in Musik jenseits der Grenze der Sprache. Series: Rombach Wissenschaften: Reihe Voces 6, ed. Christian Berger, 95–111 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag, 2004), 101 and 103.
Example 7.2. Verse 1.2 from *Alto consilio*, Egerton 2615, fol. 67v

The symmetry between verses breaks down when the concluding text of example 7.2—*qua replet*—repeats four times before cadencing on *virginem*. The fourth iteration of *qua replet* expands upwards outlining thirds until it reaches e’, the highest pitch thus far in the song, before descending dramatically to d on *virginem*. The melody’s expansion could mirror the ecstatic, holy spirit-driven Annunciation the verse alludes to:

- Vim sancti spiritus  
  The power of the holy spirit
- Qua replet, qua replet, qua replet  
  Which fills, which fills, which fills
- Qua replet virginem  
  Which fills the virgin.

Verse 2, though also highly melismatic, includes moments of syllabic setting that punctuate the text on *totum et integrum claudit interius illum* qui Deus est (whole and untouched to enclose within it the one who is God) (see example 7.3). Like verse 1, the verse concludes with a textual repetition, this time a thrice repetition of *qui Deus est*. As in the conclusion of verse 1 on the final *qua replet*, the phrase *et Dei filius*, a clarification that this God is the *son* of God, follows the same ascending melismatic pattern.
Example 7.3. Verse 2 from *Alto consilio*, Egerton 2615, fol. 67v

The text in verse three differs from the rest of the opening four verses, as it is not focused on the Virgin Mary, but rather on the *Babilonis filia misera*, a reference that recalls Isaiah 47:1.\(^\text{15}\)

Come down, sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne for the daughter of the Chaldeans, for thou shalt no more be called delicate and tender.

I propose that the reference to the daughter of Babylon in the conductus offers a contrast to the Virgin Mary. While the virgin daughter of Babylon has no throne, the Virgin Mary is the *sedes sapientiae*, the throne of wisdom, as discussed in Chapter 3 on the *Ludus Danielis*. Also, the conductus describes the Virgin Mary as *totum, integrum, capacius*, a stark contrast to the virgin daughter of Babylon who is described as *misera*.

But the verse closes with an acknowledgement that the son takes up *nostra carnis sumpsi mortalia*. The 52 note closing melisma on *mortalia* may seem curious as extended melismas were...

often associated with the jubilus that followed the Alleluia in the Mass, an expression of wordless joy (see example 7.3). However, the son’s assuming of the mortal flesh is indeed a joyous action. The melisma is characterized by a sequence of downward thirds that take a turn with upwards thirds through the octave c–c’, finally descending through a scalar pattern to the cadence on d.

Example 7.4. Verse 3 from Alto consilio, Egerton 2615, fol. 67v

The fourth verse returns to Mary via the lamenting at Vespers. Durand states this about the connection between Mary and Vespers:

From here, Bede says the custom arose, that the canticle of the Blessed Virgin would be sung at the Office of Vespers; and more preferably at the Office of Vespers than at the other Offices. First, because in the evening time of the world [vespera mundi], with his singular assent, [Christ] came to the aid of a condemned world. Second, because from this assent came the Incarnation, done in the evening time of the world, which has a continuous remembrance. Third, because she is the star of the sea [stella maris], which, in the evening time of this world, begins to shine on us, just as the evening star [vespera stella], from which the Office is called
“Vespers,” begins to shine at the beginning of night.... Fifth, because the Virgin carried the Lord in the evening time of the world.\textsuperscript{16}

The closing phrase of verse four, Christus nostra leticia, is mapped onto a truncated version of the previous verse’s closing phrase carnis sumit mortalía (see example 7.4). The melisma on letícia is on 31 notes whereas the melisma on mortalía is on 52 notes. Leticia cadences on c, not d, the closing pitch of the previous verses. This cadence is significant because it is the only time in the conductus that a phrase cadences below the d final.

Example 7.5. Verse 4 from Alto consilio, Egerton 2615, fol. 67v

Nube carnis maiestatis Hiding the power of the majesty
Occultans potentiam In the cloud of flesh
Pugnaturus non amisit About to fight, he did not part
Armaturam regiam, With his royal armor,
Sed pretendit inimico But extended to the enemy
Mortalem substantiam. His mortal substance.

\textsuperscript{16} “Beda dicit quod inde inoleuit consuetudo ut in officio uesperino cantetur canticum beate Virginis, et potius in uesperino quam in aliis officiiis. Primo, quia in ipsa uespera mundi, suo singulari assensu, mundo succurrir perdit. Secundo, quia per hoc fit incarnationis, in uespera mundi facte, iugo recordatio. Tertio, quia ipsa est Stella maris que, in huius mundi uespera, nobis lucere cepit; sicut uespera Stella, a qua dicitur uesperinum officium, in initio noctis lucere incipit.... Quinto, quia Virgo portavit Dominum in uespera mundi.” Durand/Thibodeau, 5.9.8.
The tension between flesh and the law, central to Jesus’ circumcision, is suggested with the evocative opening phrase, *nube carnis* (cloud of the flesh), as the fifth verse steps away from Marian contemplation. With this shift towards a contemplation of the flesh and law comes a change in the musical setting of the text from a melismatic setting to a primarily syllabic setting, which brings a sense of urgency to the delivery of the text.\(^\text{17}\) Imagery of clouds of “things” could conjure up the recollection of the cloud that Moses entered when he went up the mountain to receive the Law in Exodus 24. In a sense, the cloud protected Moses from the presence of God, but at the same time was the presence of God. Ambrose very bluntly states that the cloud is “where God is.”\(^\text{18}\) This could also refer to the “pillar of a cloud,” the Lord, which showed the Israelites their way in the wilderness in Exodus 13.

The clerics could also recall another “cloud of...” passage, this time from the New Testament. In St. Paul’s letter to the Hebrews, he declares the “so great a cloud of witnesses over our head,” which essentially encourages the faithful to “let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us.”\(^\text{19}\) This recollection could take the cleric back to Matins where the lessons exhorted those gathered to “walk the religious journey and in the steps of truths.”

But what is so intriguing about the conductus phrase is that it is a cloud of flesh that hides *maiestatis potentiam* (the power of the majesty). This notion seems inverted as flesh is usually...

---

\(^{17}\) Bruno Stäblein has argued that at this point, the conductus could be divided into two self-standing pieces based on evidence in MS St. Martial lat. 3719 and three other northern French sources. Verse five appears on folio 71v of CIV, the verse being the first verse of a different Aquitanian versus, *Nube carne maiestatis*. See Bruno Stäblein, “Zur Musik des Ludus de Antichristo,” 326.


\(^{19}\) Hebrews 12:1.
theologically presented as weak. At the Garden at Gethsemane after agreeing to submit to God’s will, Christ famously tells his disciples, “Watch ye: and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” As Jerome writes in his commentary on this passage, “as much as we trust the ardor of our spirit, so too should we fear the weakness of the flesh. And yet, according to the apostle, the works of the flesh are mortified by the Spirit.” Chrysostom agrees with this pessimistic view of the flesh when he writes, “for no matter how much you might wish to despise death, you will not be able to do so until God extends his hand. For the carnal mind draws you down.” Of course, we must remember from John 1:14 that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we saw the glory, the glory as it were the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”

The verse notes that Christ did not enter the battleground unprepared, but rather wore royal armor, *armaturam regiam*. (This recalls the armor of God from Ephesians 5.) Returning to the *Ludus de Antichristo* for a moment, similarly, when Ecclesia enters the temple singing *Alto consilio*, she openly wears a breastplate. The rubrics do not indicate that either Gentilitas or Synagoga wears armor. Antichrist wears a breastplate, but it is deceptively hidden under his other garments when he makes his entrance after the defeat of the King of Babylonia.

While *Alto consilio* states that Christ “extended to the enemy his mortal substance,” the Antichrist has his henchmen Hypocrisy and Heresy set the groundwork for his ascent in the world.

---

20 Matthew 26:41.
After his henchmen accomplish this and Hypocrisy tells him that it is his time to rule, the Antichrist wavers, asking, “How shall this be? I am an unknown man.”23 The Antichrist’s statement that he is an “unknown man” calls to mind St. Paul’s address to the Athenians in Acts 17:23–26 about the altar to the “Unknown God.” There Paul states:

for passing by and seeing your idols, I found an altar also, on which was written: To the Unknown God. What therefore you worship without knowing it, that I preach to you; God who made the world and all things therein, he being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.

That the Antichrist also calls himself “unknown” aligns him with idols, against the worship of which the Circumcision Office includes many warnings.

In her study of Aquitanian versus, Rachel Carlson notes that the fifth verse of Alto consilio “invokes[s] Christ’s materiality as an emblem of battle against demons and enemies.”24 I propose that Christ’s materiality goes beyond being a mere emblem; rather, Christ’s mortality is so powerful that it extends to the most vulnerable forms of human life and suffering, the Incarnation and the Crucifixion. Only in Christian theology where hierarchies are overturned could the idea of a baby or a crucified man be held up as a weapon.

**Verses 6–9 of Alto consilio, Egerton 2615, fols. 68r–68v**

6 Capit Deus temporale
     Nascendi principium
     Et pudoris non amittit
     Virgo privilegium,
     Nec post partum emarcescit
     Castitatis lilium.  

   God, about to be born,
   seizes the temporary beginning
   and the virgin does not lose the
   privilege of decency
   neither after birth, does the virginity
   disappear the lily.

---

23 See John Wright, The Play of the Antichrist, 81.
24 It must be noted that in F-Pn lat. 1139, Alto consilio appears on fols. 38v–39v with the rubric versus. See Rachel Golden Carlson, “Striking Ornaments,” 529.
Verses six through nine return to the meditation on Mary and the Nativity. The Marian image, *castitatis lilium*, or the lily of chastity, in verse six comes from the Song of Songs 2:2, “As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.” Ambrose’s comments comparing the cutting of the lily to Christ’s crucifixion can also be understood as Mary’s virginity remaining unsullied despite her impregnation. He writes that the lily “when cut, keeps its odor, and when bruised increases it, nor if torn off does not lose it. So too, the Lord Jesus, on the fork-shaped yoke/gibbet of the cross neither failed when bruised nor fainted when torn.”


7 Rubus ardet sed ardenti
Non nocet vis elementi
Flamma nichil destruct

8 Sic virgine pariente
Partu nichil destruente
Virginitas floruit.

9 Solvitur Abrahe
sera promissio
iam ferre seculi
decurso spatio
Nobis locutus est
Deus in filio.

The bush burns but burning
does not harm the strength of the elements
the flame destroys nothing

Thus, with the virgin giving birth
Destroying nothing with the birth,
Virginity has flourished.

The late promise of Abraham
is fulfilled;
now, the space of eternity
having nearly elapsed,
God has spoken to us
in his son.

Verses six through nine return to the meditation on Mary and the Nativity. The Marian image, *castitatis lilium*, or the lily of chastity, in verse six comes from the Song of Songs 2:2, “As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.” Ambrose’s comments comparing the cutting of the lily to Christ’s crucifixion can also be understood as Mary’s virginity remaining unsullied despite her impregnation. He writes that the lily “when cut, keeps its odor, and when bruised increases it, nor if torn off does not lose it. So too, the Lord Jesus, on the fork-shaped yoke/gibbet of the cross neither failed when bruised nor fainted when torn.”

Verse 10 of *Alto consilio*, Egerton 2615, fol. 68v

Cumei carminis
Completur litera
Rex, inquid, veniet
De sede su pera
Qui presens hominum
Iudicet opera.

The letter of the Cumean song/prophecy
is fulfilled;
The king, she said, shall come
from the highest place
[he] who, reigning/presiding
shall judge the works of men.

Bruno Stäblein identifies the adjective *cumei* as a reference to the Cumaean sibyl who predicts Christ’s coming, his redemption, and judgment in Virgil’s *Aeneid* VI.26

Verses 11–13 of *Alto consilio*, Egerton 2615, fol. 68v

11 Cum non salvat hominem
Legis observatio,
Deus orbem visitat
Ortu necessario,

When the observation of the law,
Does not save man,
God visits the earth
With the necessary birth.

12 Nec per legem gens salvatur
Nec mortuis suscitatur
Per permissum baculum.

Neither for the law,
the people have been saved
Neither, with the dead,
By the permission of the rod/staff.

13 Donec venit Helyseus
Et in carne presens deus
Visitavit seculum.

While Elisha comes
And God, present in the flesh
entered the world.

These final three verses bring the tension between the law and the flesh to the forefront.

The idea of the futility of the Old Law and the resolution in the New Law is heard in the song’s juxtaposition of the declaration that the “observance of the law does not save man” with the “necessary birth.” Already in the Mass (and somewhat in Matins), the first verse of *Salvatoris hodie* reminded those gathered that the circumcision of Christ makes the Law obsolete:

---

Ecce salva veritas  
Lo! Saving truth
Veraque salvatio  
and true Salvation
Cuius in preputio  
In whose circumcision
Litteralis cecitas  
The blindness of the Law
Terminus invenit.  
Finds a limit.

Ultimately, the ritual of circumcision, a remedy for sin under the Old Law, becomes obsolete itself as the Incarnation brings a new world order. Here in Alto consilio, verse eleven succinctly and clearly declares this deficiency of the Law and God’s remedy in the “ortu necessario.”

Verse twelve’s reference to the story of the Shunnamite woman’s son and Elisha offers the clerics the final opportunity to recall exegesis that illuminates the conductus text, to again become “the diligent observer who can extract honey from rock and oil from the stoniest ground,” in the words of William Durand. In this case, the conductus verse seems directly based on Augustine’s interpretation of the story from 2 Kings 4:8–37, a derivation that no scholar has yet discussed. In this story, a Shunammite woman goes to inquire of Elisha regarding her ill son. Though she begs him to come and heal her son, Elisha, instead, tells his servant Giezi to take his staff and heal the woman’s son. After laying the staff on the woman’s son, the boy is not healed. Giezi returns to Elisha with the news and Elisha goes to tend to the boy himself. He places his body atop the boy’s and the boy awakens. Augustine interprets the ineffectiveness of the staff as the Old Law and Elisha as a type of Christ, just as the conductus verse does:

The law sent through the servant did not bring life. But Elisha, who had sent his staff with his servant, was to follow later himself and bring the child to life. After hearing that the child had not revived, Elisha came in person; he was as a type of our Lord, who had sent his servant ahead of him with a staff that represents the Law...The dead child arose when the living man had fitted himself to him; the Lord
accomplished what the staff had failed to do; grace to achieve what the Law could not.  

In these final verses of the Feast of the Circumcision, the choice of *Alto consilio* articulates the futility of the Old Law and the gift of the Incarnation through Augustine’s exegesis of the Old Testament story of Elisha. There is no military defeat in this conclusion as may have occurred in the *Ludus de Antichristo*, but rather a gentle reminder that *Et in carne presens deus visitavit seculum* (And God, present in the flesh entered the world). While I have argued that the choice of *Alto consilio* did contribute to a sense of victory over darker forces (or the struggle for the faithful to resist the temptations of Kalends), the victory was wrought unexpectedly, by God’s descent to earth through a helpless infant. The use of the words *visitat* and *visitavit* by God implies a guest status, not a conqueror status. His visit was ultimately not as an ethereal, kingly, divine being but *in carne*. And as carnal as Circumcision is, so is the Incarnation that is celebrated here.

**Conclusion**

I suggest that the bookending of the Feast of the Circumcision with *Alto consilio* balances the somewhat less serious conductus *Orientis partibus* about the burden-bearing, Christ-like donkey with a substantial song known for its significance in the *Ludus de Antichristo*, a song that attests to

---

the battle at hand in the spiritual realms. The extensive song takes the clerics on the journey from
allo consilio (the lofty counsel) to the lowliness of human birth in carne, an inversion of the
paradigm conveyed in Orientis partibus, where the lowly were exalted. While much of the song
dwells on Marian imagery, it is only fitting that as this New Year begins, the final three verses
contrast the failure of the Old Law with the birth of Christ.
1 Regis natalicia,  
qui gubernat omnia,  
summa cum leticia celebret ecclesia,  
quia dei gratia  
miseros  
redxit ad superos.  
The birthday celebrations of the king,  
who governs all,  
with the highest joy,  
because the favor of God  
restores the miserable  
to those above.

2 Prime culpam femine  
delens sine crimine  
natus est de virgine  
perdito pro homine  
rex et lux de lumine  
claruit  
et nobis apparuit.  
Erasing the first female blame  
Without guilt,  
The birth is from the virgin  
having been destroyed on behalf of man  
King and light from light  
was illuminated  
And appeared to us.

3 Prime matris vitio  
dampnatur exilio  
sequens generatio,  
sed de celi solio  
mundi restauratio  
mititur,  
sic nobis consulitur.  
By the sin of the mother  
He is condemned with exile  
Following the generation  
but concerning the throne of heaven  
The restoration of the world  
Is thrown,  
Thus, it is considered by us.

4 Hic est salus ominium,  
redemptor humilium,  
vera spes credentium, pauperis refugium,  
vidue solatium,  
in celis  
sanctis cibus angelis  
This is the health of all,  
The lowly redeemer,  
The genuine hope of the faithful, the poor refuge,  
Bereft comfort  
in the heavens  
Holy food from angels.
Regis Natalic[i]a

Conductus

Re-gis na-ta-li-ci-a, qui gu-ber-nat om-ni-a, sum-ma cum le-
Pri-me cul-pam fe-mi-ne de-lens si-ne cri-mi-ne na-tus est de
Pri-me ma-tris vi-ti-o damp-na-tur e-xi-li-o se-que-ns ge-ne-
Hic est sa-lus om-ni-um, red-emp-tor hu-mi-li-um, ve-ra spes cre-

ti-ci-a ce-le-bret ec-cle-si-a, qui a de-i gra-ti-a
vir-gi-ne per-di-to pro ho-mi-ne, rex et luc de lu-mi-ne
ra-ti-o, sed de ce-li so-li-o mun-di re-stau-ra-ti-o
den-ti-um, pau-pe-ris re-fu-gi-um, vi-du-e so-la-ti-um,

mi-se-ros re-du-xit ad se-per-ros
cla-ru-it et no-bis ap-pa-ru-it.
mi-ti-tur, sic no-bis con-su-li-tur.
in ce-lis sanc-tis ci-bus an-ge-lis.
### APPENDIX 7.2

*Alto consilio*, Text and Translation  
*Egerton 2615, fols. 67r–68r*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alto consilio</td>
<td>The lofty counsel,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Divina ratio</td>
<td>Restoring man,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurans hominem</td>
<td>The divine prudence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immitit celitus</td>
<td>sends from heaven the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vim sancti spiritus</td>
<td>Power of the holy spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qua replet, qua replet, quae replet, qua replet virginem.</td>
<td>Which completes, which completes, which completes Which completes the virgin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pectus virgineum</td>
<td>I hide the virgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Celo capacius</td>
<td>Whole and untouched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Totum et integrum</td>
<td>The capacius heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Claudi interius</td>
<td>to be closed by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Illum, qui Deus est, Deus est, Deus est et Dei filius.</td>
<td>That, who God is, God is, God is And the son of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Visitatur sede de supera</td>
<td>The miserable daughter has been visited from the seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Babylonis filia misera,</td>
<td>of the higher places of Babylon,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persona fili missa non altera</td>
<td>The character of another son having not been sent,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nostra carnis sumpsit mortalia.</td>
<td>takes up our mortal flesh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Moratus est fletus ad vesperum</td>
<td>Gentle is the lamenting at vespers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matutinum ante luciferum</td>
<td>Early before the morning star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Castitatis egressus uterum</td>
<td>The womb of virginity having disembarked,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Venit Iesus, nostra letitia.</td>
<td>Jesus comes, our joy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

5 Nube carnis maiestatis
Occultans potentiam,
Pugnaturus non amisit
Armaturam regiam,
Sed pretendit inimico
Mortalem substantiam.

Hiding the power of the majesty
in the cloud of the flesh,
about to fight, he did not part with
the royal armor
But extended to the enemy
His mortal substance.

6 Capit Deus temporale
Nascendi principium
Et pudoris non amittit
Virgo privilegium,
Nec post partum emarcescit
Castitatis lilium.

God, about to be born,
seizes the temporary beginning
and the virgin does not lose the
privilege of decency
neither after birth, does the virginity
disappear the lily.

7 Rubus ardet sed ardenti
Non nocet vis elementi
Flamma nichil destruit

The bush burns but burning
does not harm the strength of the elements
the flame destroys nothing

8 Sic virgine pariente
Partu nichil destruente
Virginitas floruit.

Thus, with the virgin giving birth
Destroying nothing with the birth,
Virginity has flourished.

9 Solvitur Abrahe
sera promissio
iam ferre seculi
decurso spatio
Nobis locutus est
Deus in filio.

The late promise of Abraham
is fulfilled;
now, the space of eternity
having nearly elapsed,
God has spoken to us
in his son.

10 Cum ei carminis
Completur litera
Rex, inquid, veniet
De sede supera,
Qui presens hominum iudicet opera.

When, alas, the Letter of song
Has been completed
The king, it is said, comes
From the highest seat
Who decides the present work of man
11 Cum non salvat hominem
   Legis observatio,
   Deus orbem visitat
   Ortu necessario,
   When the observation of the law,
   Does not save man,
   God visits the earth
   With the necessary birth.

12 Nec per legem gens salvatur
   Nec mortuis suscitatur
   Per permissum baculum.
   Neither for the law,
   the people have been saved
   Neither, with the dead,
   the people have been roused
   By the permission of the rod/staff.

13 Donec venit Helyseus
   Et in carne presens deus
   Visitavit seculum.
   While Elisha comes
   And God, present in the flesh
   entered the world.
Alto Consilio

Conductus

Al-to con-si-li-o di-vi-na ra-ti-o re-stau

rans ho-mi-nem Im-mi-tet ce-li-tus vim sanc-ti spi-

-ri-tus, qua re-plet, qua re-plet, qua re-plet, qua re-plet vir-

-gi-nem. Pec tus vir-gi-ne-um ce-lo ca-pa-ti-us

to-tum et in-te-grum clau-dit in-te-ri-us il-lum, qui de-us

est, de-us est, de-us est et de-i fi-li-us.
Visitatur de sede supera Babylonis filia mi-
sera persona fili misa, non altera nostrae carnis
sumit mor-
-talis.
Moratus est fle tus ad vesperum,
matutinum ante luciferum castitatis egressus u-
terum venit Christus nostra le-
ti ci a.
Nu - be car - nis ma - ie - sta - tis oc - cul - tans po - ten - ti - am
pug - na - tu - rus non a - mi - sit ar - ma - tu - ram re - gi - am

sed pre - ten - dit in - i - mi - co mor - ta - lem sub - stan - ti - am,

Ca - put de - us tem - po - ra - le nas - cen - di prin - ci - pi - um.
sed pu - do - ris non a - mit - tit vir - go pri - vi - le - gi - um


Ru - bus ar - det, sed ar - den - ti flam - ma ni - chil de - stru - it,
non no - cet vis el - le - men - ti,
par - tu no - chil de - stre - en - te

Sol - vi - tur A - bra - he se - ra pro - mis - si - o,
iam fe - re se - cu - li de - cur - so spa - ti - o

no - bis lo - cu - tus est de - us in fi - li - o.
Cum me i carminis comple tur litera;
Rex, in quid, veniet et de se de supra,
qui present hominum iudicet opera.

Cum non salvat hominem legis observatio,
Deus orbem visitat or tu necessario,
nec per legem gens salvatur premisum baculum,
nec mortuis suscitatur

Donec venit He lyseus et in carne present Deus
visitavit se culum.
CONCLUSION

“While it does not seem that those things that are done in ecclesiastical rites and offices are done figuratively...those figures, which have diminished in importance, when today the Truth has appeared, still, in fact, conceal a multiplicity of truths that we cannot see.”

— Prologue from William Durand’s *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*¹

In this dissertation, I have endeavored to demonstrate how the conductus in the Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision frame the lessons, readings, and rituals they precede or accompany. This project contributes to the field of musicology as it is concerned with how the semantic aspect of the conductus leads to an understanding of Beauvais Cathedral’s multi-faceted message for the Feast of the Circumcision. As I proposed in the Introduction, for the conductus to be most effective in exegetically framing its accompanying elements, the clerics must recall exegesis of the textual imagery in their own minds, becoming the living, imaginative link between conductus and lesson or ritual. This project shows that while these conductus in the liturgy “conceal a multiplicity of truths,” they offer the medieval cleric and the modern scholar the opportunity to reveal those truths.

Just as January 1 was the convergence of three feasts—the Feast of the Circumcision, the Feast of Fools, and the Kalends—the message of the Beauvais Cathedral, as conveyed through its conductus, is a convergence of multiple theological strands. The singing of *Orientis partibus* at First Vespers to the procession of a donkey projects the theology of the exalting of the lowly beast (and its clerical counterpart the subdeacon), the loftiness of burden-bearing, and the separating of the

¹ “Porro non uidetur quod ea que in ecclesiasticis fiunt rebus atque officiis, figuraliter fiant, tum quia figure recesserunt, et est tempus hodie ueritatis, tum quia non debemus iudaizare. Sed licet reuera figure quarum hodie ueritas apparuit recesserint, tamen adhuc multiplex ueritas latet, quam non uidemus, propter quod utitur Ecclesia figuris.” Durand/Thibodeau, *Prologue* 6.
chaff from the wheat. A number of hours later at **Matins**, the densest of the services in the Office, the distinction between the faithful and those who participated in the Kalends (the wheat and chaff) is reiterated in the exhortation that the cleric choose between being a temple of God or a monument of demons (*daemonis monumentum*). In the second nocturn, **Nostri festi** transitions those gathered to the theological essence of the feast—circumcision—with its closing statement of its sanctifying purpose, *Dei circumcisio nos emundet vitio* (May the circumcision of God purify us of sin).

With this shift towards circumcision, the conductus of the third nocturn turn their attention to the theology of the circumcision by reflecting on the Fall, the event that necessitated circumcision, while the subsequent lessons simply state the fact of Christ’s circumcision. The final conductus of Matins **Ex Ade** reveals the paradox that the life “under the yoke” (the law) is precisely why God’s son subjected himself to circumcision; Bede’s quotation of Galatians in the final lesson resolves the question of Christ’s submission to a ritual of the Old Law by stating that Christ was made “under the law...that he might redeem them who were under the law.” This juxtaposition of conductus and lesson both condemns the law (i.e. the yoke) and celebrates the law, leaving the question of the law’s efficacy ambiguous.

Through the performance of the **Ludus Danielis** at **Matins**, the separating of the wheat from the chaff as well as the exalting of the lowly is communicated as the upright and faithful Daniel triumphs over the godless Babylonians. Perhaps more significant to the message of the Feast of Fools is that the conductus play a significant role in advancing wisdom. As St. Paul writes in his second letter to the Corinthians, “that which is foolish of God is wiser than men.” By the time of **Lauds**, the liturgy has sent a very clear message to the clerics about staying faithful in the New Year. Almost as if to solidify the reception of this message, Lauds ends with the singing of **Kalendas**.
ianuarias to a wine ritual that draws those gathered from darkness to daybreak through the church doors. As the clerics pass from darkness to light, while drinking wine symbolic of the blood of Christ, they participate in the eschatological wedding feast/feast of Zion and the sanctification of the Kalends.

It is only fitting that the “multiplicity of truths” meet in the Liturgy of the Word at Mass. First, the loftiness of burden-bearing and the exalting of the lowly is reiterated in the singing of Orientis partibus before the farsed Epistle from Isaiah 9; the lowly donkey is superimposed on the subdeacon and on the child bearing the government from Isaiah 9. Second, Salvatoris hodie delivers the crux of the truth about circumcision in this statement: “the blindness of the Law finds its end” in Christ’s circumcision. This statement holds the paradox by both acknowledging the blindness of the Old Law and recognizing that it is in obedience to the Old Law that the blindness of the law finds its end or fulfillment. As Christ says in the Sermon on the Mount, “Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”

The conclusion of the feast at Second Vespers with Alto consilio reiterates the tension between the flesh and the law implicit in circumcision. But the nuanced manner in which Salvatoris hodie states that the “blindness of the law finds its end” in circumcision is replaced by the categorically negative statements that Alto consilio makes of the law. Alto consilio states that both the “observation of the law” and the law itself do not save man; it is only the birth, God in the flesh, that ultimately does save man. As John 1 states, “the law was given by Moses: grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

---

2 Matthew 5:17.
3 John 1:17.
While these observations of the exegetical work in which the conductus encourage the clerics to participate lays the groundwork for the multi-layered message of the Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision, I propose that future work on other genres in the feast such as the sequence, prosa, and responsory, for instance, could nuance the message. Particularly interesting would be a study of the responsories, as they often provide the bookend to a conductus-lesson pairing. It would also be fruitful to compare the construction of the Beauvais Office of Circumcision with that of Sens, Laon, or Le Puy to determine how their messages differed.

Also useful for a more comprehensive understanding of the message of the Beauvais Circumcision Office would be the theological and historical contextualization of the feast within Jewish-Christian relations in thirteenth-century northern France. Northern France was a unique environment for the Christian celebration of a Jewish ritual as the school of Jewish exegesis enjoyed particular prosperity there beginning in the eleventh century. The Jewish scholar Rashi (1040–1105) or Solomon ben Isaac and his school in Champagne produced a commentary on the Bible (except for Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah) as well as the Babylonian Talmud. Rashi’s focus on the literal (peshat) interpretation of Scripture had its parallel in the northern French Christian exegetical schools.

---


5 Devorah Schoenfeld acknowledges that Rashi’s use of the peshat approach has been debated in current scholarship, raising the question whether his approach was more based on the peshat or on the midrash, the more comprehensive approach to texts that includes the allegorical and mystical level.
By the mid-twelfth century, however, the crusades put Jews in a more precarious position. Still, at the outset of the Second Crusade, Bernard of Clairvaux called upon the clergy and people of Eastern France and Bavaria to desist from persecuting Jews for theological reasons.

The Jews are not to be persecuted, killed, or even put to flight. Ask anyone who knows the Sacred Scriptures what he finds foretold of the Jews in the psalm. “Not for their destruction I pray,” it says. The Jews are for us the living words of Scripture, for they remind us always of what our Lord suffered.... Finally we are told by the Apostle that when the time is ripe all Israel shall be saved.... If the Jews are utterly wiped out, what will become of our hope for their promised salvation, their eventual conversion?6

In 1146, Bernard wrote another letter, this time to Henry, the archbishop of Mainz, in response to reports that a monk incited violence against Jews. Again, he gives theological reasons, including the implication of blindness, for his advocacy of peace towards Jews:

Is it not a far better triumph for the Church to convince and convert the Jews than to put them all to the sword? Has that prayer which the Church offers for the Jews...that the veil may be taken from their hearts so that they may be led from the darkness of error into the light of truth, been instituted in vain?7

Considering his close relationship with Bishop Henry of Beauvais (twelfth century), one wonders if Bernard’s words would have had a significant impact on the Beauvais chapter’s attitude towards Jews and towards their reception of the Feast of the Circumcision.

Thus, a study of the historical context in which the Beauvais Feast of the Circumcision was celebrated in the thirteenth century would allow the modern scholar to more fully understand the implications of the truths that the conductus delivered (via the exgetical imagination of the clerics) and the mindset of the clerical audience for whom the conductus were intended.

---


———. *Four and Three-Part Conductus in the Central Sources*. Edited by Gordon Anderson. *Notre-


Godt, Irving and Benito Rivera. “The Vatican Organum Treatise: A Colour Reproduction,


Grocheo, Johannes de. Quellenhandschriften zum Misktraktat des Johannes de Grocheio. Edited by Ernst Rohloff. Leipzig, n.d..


Rice, Winthrop H. *The European Ancestry of Villon’s Satirical Testaments*. PhD diss., Columbia University, 1941.


Robertson, Anne Walter. “From Office to Mass: The Antiphons of Vespers and Lauds and the Antiphons Before the Gospel in Northern France.” In *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography: Written in Honor of


Weitzmann, Kurt. *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art: A Catalog of the*


