

23. TWO 'TEXTLESS' ELABORATIONS OF CHANT FROM THE IVREA CODEx*

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The Ivrea Codex (Iv) is one of the most important sources of polyphonic sacred music of the fourteenth century. Long thought to be a French source, possibly from Avignon or Foix, more recent work by Karl Kügle has argued (convincingly to me) that a local origin for the source in Ivrea (Piedmont) is more likely, and that scribes from Savoy may have brought the French and French-influenced repertory to northwest Italy, giving a date to the manuscript in the late 1370s, 1380s, or 1390s.¹

With the long-awaited facsimile of the manuscript now available, new observations and discoveries on this important source can now be made.² Those images together with the entry of many of the neglected Iv items into the Electronic Medieval Music Score Archive Project (EMMSAP) shed important new insights into some of the compositions from the manuscript that hitherto had gone undiscerned.³

The two pieces with which this small contribution is mainly concerned are textless compositions added to the bottom of fol. 64^r, the page containing the end of the *Sanctus sanans fragilia*, and the final folio of the manuscript, placed at the end of Gathering VI. Each composition to be discussed is in two voices, with an undesignated upper part in C2-clef that I will call 'cantus', and a lower part with an F3-clef that I will call 'tenor'. The second piece begins around the middle of the second staff from the bottom; a facsimile of these passages appears as Figure 23.1. Their connection with the larger manuscript has long been a minor mystery in fourteenth-century music studies, but a closer examination of the notation, the tenors, and their connections with other pieces reveals much about scribal interests in the borderlands among Italy, France, and Switzerland in the late Trecento.

* Among humanists, I have always been a data sort of person: diagrams and lists sing to me as much as witty words and flowery prose. Tables contain their own arguments along with their evidence. As an undergraduate when I discovered a heavy tome called *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research*, my eyes opened wide. Here was a sort of musicology that spoke my language; one whose codes begged to be deciphered, and whose insights still inspire me today. I immediately wanted to have as deep an understanding of my own field of Trecento polyphony as that writer had on Machaut. Later, when I met the charming, humble, and witty author of the volume – one who could also speak about Webern as passionately as on Vitry – I was even more convinced that musicology can be advanced in myriad ways, both technical and musical. I offer to that remarkable person, Larry Earp, this small token of my appreciation about a manuscript that intersects our related fields.

I am grateful to Mons. Giovannino Giovanni Battista, director of the Archivio Diocesano of Ivrea for permission to reproduce images of the source in this paper, and to Margaret Bent, Karl Kügle, Jan Kolářček, and Ján Janovčík for comments and encouragement on earlier versions of the text.

1 • Kügle 1990, 527–61; Kügle 1997, 46–79; Kügle 2019, 24.

2 • Some of the observations in this paper were originally made from access to poor scans of an *nth*-generation microfilm prior to the publication of the facsimile and were shared with Kügle before it was released. Thus a prior, unpublished version of this essay is referred to in Kügle 2019 as 'Cuthbert 2015a.' This substantially revised version has been improved from insights from the higher quality images now available.

3 • The EMMSAP project is an attempt to encode all mensural or polyphonic music originally from at least 1300 (now extending back to 1200) to 1430; Michael Scott Asato Cuthbert, Principal Investigator, Anna Kathryn Grau, managing director, along with many other contributors (2013–present). Corwyn Wyatt was the encoding consultant for the Iv works that yielded new discoveries.

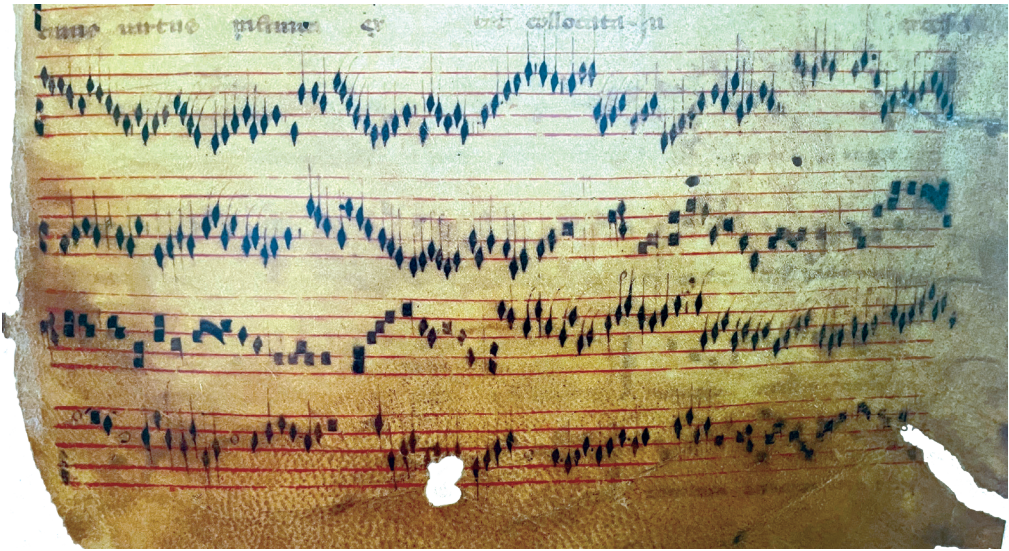


Figure 23.1: Detail from Iv, fol. 64', including textless works (Archivio Diocesano, Ivrea)

Prior transcriptions

The textless pieces have been transcribed twice, first by Walter Kurt Kreyszig and then independently by Gordon K. Greene.⁴ Greene did not seem to have been aware of Kreyszig's earlier work as it is not cited in his PMFC volumes. The independence of their editions allowed them to make starkly different choices in transcription. Kreyszig interpreted the opening of the cantus of each piece in imperfect tempus and transcribed their tenors as written in mensural notation, finding the lower voices to be approximately twice as long as the cantus. He supposed that a sign of repetition had faded from the manuscript and thus repeated the same cantus melody over different tenor notes.⁵ Example 23.1 shows the opening of his transcription of the first textless piece, including the first twelve tenor notes.

Example 23.1: Iv, fol. 64', opening of the first textless piece as transcribed by Kreyszig



4 • Kreyszig 1984, 282–87 (edition), 146–60 (commentary). PMFC XXII, 142–43 (edition), 184 (commentary).

5 • Kreyszig 1984, 153.

Greene, on the other hand, transcribed the cantus largely in perfect tempus and – in order to account for the differences in length between the two parts – placed the tenor in 2:1 diminution. Two notes at the end of the tenor could not be made to fit into Greene’s transcription and were removed. His version appears as Example 23.2 (and also includes the first twelve tenor notes).

Example 23.2: Iv, fol. 64^r, opening of the first textless piece as transcribed by Greene



For the second work, Kreyszig used minor prolation with perfect and imperfect tempus, or a simultaneous combination of $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$, with the same interpretation of the tenor as above, but here needing no repeats (Example 23.3).⁶

Example 23.3: Iv, fol. 64^r, opening of the second textless piece as transcribed by Kreyszig



Greene’s interpretation, in contrast, placed both voices in perfect tempus and minor prolation, with the tenor not in diminution (Example 23.4).⁷ By amending the initial breve to a long, his transcription made the majority of the notes of the cantus sound against a different tenor note from that of Kreyszig’s edition (that is, one note later). This emendation necessitated changing the third tenor note from G to *a*.

Both editions have the cantus largely in eighth notes for the first half of the edition, switching to an alternation between slower (half and quarter) and faster (triplet-eighth and sixteenth) notes in the second half. The continuation of Kreyszig’s edition from Example 23.3 is given as Example 23.5; Greene’s transcriptions are similar.

6 • Kreyszig 1984, 286. Indications of the continuation of the F# are omitted.

7 • PMFC XXII, 143. Indications of the continuation of the same F# are again omitted.

Example 23.4: Iv, fol. 64^r, opening of the second textless piece as transcribed by Greene

Example 23.5: Rhythmic variety of the cantus in Kreysig's edition of the second untexted piece



Despite many editorially supplied emendations in both editions, the transcribed tenor notes often create intervals of seconds, fourths, and sevenths with the cantus. Further, the rhythmic lurching of both parts seems both atypical and unmusical, hardly fitting the collecting patterns of a scribe who otherwise put his or her skill towards the copying of some of the most beautiful motets and masses of the period. As the reader has certainly guessed by now, I plan to offer new transcriptions in this chapter, ones that I hope are more musically satisfying.

The Liturgical Basis for the Works

The EMMSAP project, mentioned above, uses computational algorithms and a large database (currently comprising about 95% of all known polyphonic works from the period 1300–1430) to find previously unknown quotations, concordances, and stylistic similarities between compositions. To date, the project has found new direct connections between almost forty pairs of 'works.' (I use scare quotes since some of these independent transcriptions can now be shown to be different sections of the same work.) I will dispel any suspense by stating that no concordances or quotations were found for either of these works. However, the EMMSAP algorithm found three stylistically similar passages for the cantus of the second piece, all of which were from Italian secular works.⁸ The connection of style to Italian pieces spurred me to consider these pieces anew, considering styles of composing known only through native Italian works as possible solutions in transcription.

The notation of the tenor voice of both pieces seemed quite different from typical French *ars nova* motet tenors. It is far more similar to the notation of plainchant, with rhomboid notes indicating *currentes* rather than semibreves (see the end of the second full staff and the

8 • The similar works were Nicolò da Perugia's madrigal *Qual perseguita*, the anonymous madrigal *Avendo me falcon*, and Andrea da Firenze's ballata *Sia quel ch'esser pò*.

beginning of the third in Figure 23.1). A search through Jan Kolářček's *Global Chant Database* (now affiliated with the *Cantus Database*) found a nearly perfect match for the first tenor, 'Universi qui te exspectant,' the gradual from the Mass for the first Sunday in Advent (Psalm 24:2).⁹ See Figure 23.2. The entire gradual, minus the verse, is present in the tenor.

Figure 23.2: Gradual 'Universi qui te exspectant' from *Graduale Romanum* (1961), p. 2



The second tenor did not yield as convincing a match. However, all but the final two notes are the same as those on the word 'jejunasset' in the Matins responsory, 'Cum jejunasset dominus.' Those last two notes are the first and last notes of the immediately following melisma on 'do-' of 'dominus.' A transcription based on the version found in the *Cantus Database* is Example 23.6.¹⁰ Other matches to the same music are 'Beata vere mater ecclesia quem' from All Saints and 'Gregorius ortus Romae ex senatorum' from the feast of St Gregory, but neither of them place the quoted music in such a prominent position. Nonetheless, this identification should be considered provisional; a perfect match may yet be found.

Example 23.6: Transcription of the opening of 'Cum jejunasset dominus'



The text of the responsory comes from Matthew 4:2, 'Et cum ieiunasset quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus postea esuriit' (Vulgate), or 'After fasting forty days and forty nights, [Jesus] was hungry' (New International Version). Though the differences between Mass and Office, gradual and responsory, and Psalm and New Testament sources may seem to argue against a connection between these two *Iv* pieces, their parallel liturgical positions on the first Sunday in Advent and the first Sunday in Lent, respectively, unites them. These are pieces for the beginning of penitential seasons and their existence argues against the still pervasive notion that polyphony was not used during such solemn times of the year. They join the mainly monophonic mensural piece for John the Baptist, *Basis prebens*, as the only works in *Iv* that set Proper chants.¹¹

9 + See <www.globalchant.org>. A recording of the work with score can be found at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nrIebNSgww>>.

10 + See <cantus.uwaterloo.ca/chant/400091>. See also the version of the chant in BnF lat. 12044, fol. 73^v on *Gallica*.

11 + Interpretations of *Basis prebens*'s significance are found in Anderson 2013, 646–50.

The identification of each of these pieces as built on plainchant opens up the possibility that the notation of the tenors should not be interpreted mensurally. Instead of treating the note shapes like Franconian neumes, each note should be read as equal in length. This notational interpretation is known most famously in the tenor of Paolo 'Tenorista' da Firenze's *Benedicamus Domino* in the manuscript **Pit**.¹² Such pieces are common in Italian polyphony of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries (which I hope to soon argue might be considered a continuous period of *ars mutandi* or changing style, where stylistic change between closely copied pieces was admired). The pieces also form the basis for many instrumental settings such those of the Faenza Codex.¹³ Until now, however, Paolo's composition in **Pit** was the only known composition in which the plainchant was not renotated so that, if read as mensural notation, all the notes would become even in length. I have called such pieces 'compositions on equal-note tenors',¹⁴ though recently I have been informed that Reinhard Strohm had previously called such tenors 'monorhythmic cantus firm[i]'.¹⁵ Since I last wrote about these tenors, I have also come to believe that they are a representation of the practice of *cantare super librum*.¹⁶ These works are presumably the few written survivors of the unwritten traditions taught in counterpoint treatises to create what Anna Maria Busse Berger terms a 'memorial archive' of standardized diminution formulas.¹⁷

In all but one previously known example of 'monorhythm', each note of the chant is to be sung as a breve. In that exceptional example, the *Benedicamus Domino* from a Paduan manuscript, the chant is written in longs.¹⁸ By contrast, **Iv**'s *Universi qui te exspectant* (which I will now start calling the first textless work) requires the chant to be sung entirely in semibreves. *Cum jejunasset* (the second textless work) likewise begins with the chant in major prolation semibreves, but, for reasons to be explained below, switches to breves in perfect tempus half-way through. It is unclear to me which of the possible but conflicting insights to take away from the differences in notation of the chant lines among the various sources. If the **Iv** pieces are to be considered earlier than Paolo's and the anonymous Paduan's *Benedicamus* settings – which I think they should be – it may seem contradictory that shorter-named note values

12 • **Pit**, fol. 138^r. About this work, Willi Apel writes, "This [tenor] part contains, in addition to ordinary ligatures and single [longs], certain *conjunctura*-like characters which are very unusual in the polyphonic music of the fourteenth century, and which actually have no place in the Franconian system of ligatures. The explanation lies in the fact that the entire tenor is [...written] in the characters of plainsong notation [...]. In such tenors [...] each note always has the value of a *B*, regardless of its shape" (Apel 1953, 378, 380).

13 • Faenza, Biblioteca Comunale, 117.

14 • Cuthbert 2006, chap. 4.

15 • Strohm 1993, 526. As the term primarily appears in a chapter on music after 1480, I was not aware of this term when I fashioned my own. Earlier in the book (for example, p. 77), Strohm uses the term 'equal note-values' to describe such pieces.

16 • An entire article could be written about the ambiguity of this term; literally 'singing over a book', it might be thought of as a form of unwritten, probably polyphonic, embellishment.

17 • Busse Berger 2005, 151–58.

18 • Oxford, Bodleian library, Canon. Pat. Lat. 229. This work is also the only example of two-voice *cantare super librum* I can remember which is both integral to its surrounding manuscript, like **Iv**, and (unlike **Iv**) is also at a place of prominence at the top of the folio.

would have been the original norm that was later supplanted by longer note values, since throughout medieval music history the pace of notation moved from longer to shorter note values. On the other hand, since longer tenor notes allow for more notes to be placed against a single note of chant, perhaps this direction is less surprising. For as a tradition becomes more developed and codified and the practitioners (tenoristas?) become more professionalized, they are more able to conceive of and perform a greater number of notes against a tenor.

The Notation of *Iv*, Gathering VI, and New Transcriptions

A new basis for the notation of the tenors of *Universi qui te exspectant* and *Cum jejunasset* was not the only change needed to make accurate transcriptions of the pieces. Both works begin in imperfect tempus and major prolation. An unusual feature found in Gathering VI is the use of a minim with a stem (*cauda*) slanted to the right, indicating a four-in-the-place-of-three proportional relationship.¹⁹ This note form appears in both *Iv* pieces and its proper transcription is crucial to obtaining a correct alignment with the tenor. Transcribing these notes as normal minims, as in both previous transcriptions, moves the cantus line's notes further and further away from their corresponding tenor pitches. Taking the alignment of text to neume from the *Graduale Romanum*, a new transcription of *Universi qui te exspectant* is given in Example 23.7.

Some of the details of minim stems, *puncti*, and accidentals are extremely difficult to see even in the most recent facsimile. On the whole, however, the alignment seems secure. Nevertheless, in the bar before the final long there is one discrepancy not easily dismissed. In bar 29 of the transcription, the tenor is missing a semibreve (at the point marked [*]). I have repeated the G as it is the most likely scribal error, is found in some sources, and is the best contrapuntal solution. Other sources that transmit the chant with variations similar to the *Iv* version, such as Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 1176 (a Gradual from Polling), fol. 1r, insert an *E* in this place, which is an acceptable if less convincing solution.²⁰

An unusual moment in this piece occurs in bar 21, where the *F/c* fifth becomes an *E/c*♯ sixth before moving (after a 'Landini cadence' decoration) to a *D/d* octave. Such chromatic alterations of fifth to sixth before an octave are common in Italian compositional styles (sometimes called Marchettian sixths) and appear in Italian theory treatises (for instance, the 'Nota has figuras' examples), but they are less common (or even unknown?) in French sources. I do not want to make too much of this moment (indeed, there appears to be a *g* to *g*♯ motion in bar 18 which makes little sense except perhaps as an evaded cadence), but it may point to this piece being a more local, northern Italian composition than much of the rest of the manuscript.

The second piece – the setting of the 'jejunasset' neumes from *Cum jejunasset dominus* – begins similarly. It has a major prolation cantus that frequently uses 4:3 slanted minims,

19 • Kügle 1997, 36–37.

20 • Other sources, such as Verdun, Bibliothèque municipale, 100, have many more differences. I have not yet consulted a representative sample of southern French, Savoyard, and Piedmont Graduales from the period. No source I have seen yet has this chant's variation of omitting the second *a-G* repetition normally found on 'exspectant'.

Example 23.7: *Iv*, fol. 64^v, *Universi qui te expectant*

[U ni ver si qui te ex spec tant, non con fun den tur, Do mi ne.]

dragmae, and flagged minims. The notation here draws primarily on Italian principles of intrinsic notational signs.²¹ At the beginning of the last staff on the folio (Figure 23.1), however, the notation changes dramatically. Here the extrinsic mensural signs $\bigcirc$ and $\bigcirc$ appear in alternation to show changes in proportion and mensuration, though *dragmae* continue to be employed in $\bigcirc$ as a sort of added precaution. Setting the tenor in semibreves works well against the first line of the cantus, but, even considering the extensive damage to the end of the tenor, it is obvious that there are not enough tenor notes to fit the entire piece. Indeed, the music on the first three quarters or so of the second (bottom) staff lasts exactly twice as long as the music on the second half of the staff directly above.

21 • On the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic notational signs and their early use in *Iv*, see Stroessel 2009, 182–84.

What neither Kreyszig nor Greene noticed about the work is that this music on the second staff is nearly an exact restatement of the music of the first staff. It is a demonstration (by the scribe?) that the same work could be written in either the Italian or the French (that is, international) notational systems, so long as the tempus becomes the modus and the prolation becomes the tempus. Previous transcriptions I made from microfilms suggested that there might be slight differences between the Italian and French settings. Upon closer examination of the new facsimile, only the most minor changes remain: a minim rest in bar 3 replaced by a dot in bar 13, a sharp in bar 6 missing in bar 19, and an augmentation dot absent (but necessary) in bar 11. Example 23.8 transcribes this remarkable example of notational transformation.

Example 23.8: *Iv*, fol. 64^r, second untexted piece (*Cum jejunasset dominus?*)

The musical score consists of four systems, each with two staves. The top staff is in 8/8 time, and the bottom staff is in 6/8 time. The music is a polyphonic setting of 'Cum jejunasset dominus?'. The first system (bars 1-4) shows the top staff with eighth notes and the bottom staff with dotted half notes. The second system (bars 5-8) continues the melody and bass line. The third system (bars 9-12) shows a change in the top staff's rhythm. The fourth system (bars 13-16) concludes the piece. The bottom staff is labeled '[Jejunasset]' in the first and third systems.

With these new transcriptions, the two pieces added to the last folio of *Iv* argue that the manuscript's stylistic diversity and probably its connection to wider trends in Italy exceeded what was previously thought.

In addition to these two works, there is one possible additional new polyphonic composition in *Iv* that might be reconstructed with new notational readings. The Kyrie on fols 16^v–17^r, which consists of the cantus of Kyrie I and the whole of the tenor, might not be incomplete at all. With several emendations, it is possible to perform the same cantus on

top of the tenor's Kyrie I, Christe, and Kyrie II. I had intended to announce this as a nearly confirmed discovery here, but alas, the new facsimile giveth and also taketh away: several ligature stems that seemed ambiguous before can now be read clearly as the exact opposite of what I needed them to be for this reading to be confirmed. Nonetheless, having multiple incompatible cantus voices fitted to the same tenor is common throughout the written *cantare super librum* tradition and is probably a hint as to their unwritten origins. Multiple tenor parts that fit the same cantus are far rarer, but they are not unheard of. The work *La dur [...] mi fa [...] desir* in a Seville manuscript is one such example.²² Other examples can be found in the cantus reused between the *Gloria*, *Qui sonitu melodie* and the parallel Credo in London, British Library, Add. 29987.²³ Creation of a longer Mass movement by repurposing existing material, even where the notation gives no indication of a repetition, can also be seen in two polyphonic movements in the oft-studied Tournai manuscript, neither of which is part of the source's celebrated Mass.²⁴ The Kyrie's polyphonic structure was known to Friedrich Ludwig and Hanna Stäblein-Harder, but that the entire Sanctus (not just the 'in excelsis' sections) could be performed polyphonically was not previously known until I posted about it on a Facebook group in 2014, and indeed both works that are not part of the Mass can be performed as canons.²⁵ Thus the other monophonic works in *Iv* should continue to be examined for polyphonic or canonic possibilities.²⁶



Long-known and well-studied manuscripts continue to reveal new discoveries and new music, requiring the field to continue to reevaluate the systems of classification and constructed narratives of the period. This chapter shows that two pieces that had been filed under the

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- 22 • Seville, Institución Colombina, Biblioteca, 5-2-25. Discussed and transcribed in Cuthbert 2009a, 61–63. I believe that the interchangeable tenor hypothesis is still most plausible, though a missing contratenor also remains an alternative explanation.
 - 23 • The connections between these works, presented first at the Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference in 2013, will be part of my forthcoming book.
 - 24 • Tournai, Bibliothèque capitulaire, A 27 (*olim* 476), fols 32^v–33^r. New identifications of works in this source by Dominique Gatté and Richard Dudas are forthcoming.
 - 25 • Ludwig 1923, 221 n. 1; Stäblein-Harder 1962a, 20; Stäblein-Harder 1962b, 33. When I first posted my notes, I was not aware that Stäblein-Harder had figured out the structure of the Kyrie, as it was not noted as polyphonic (nor was the earlier edition cited) in PMFC XXIIIB, 503. As I was posting parts of my work about the canonic structure of the Kyrie, Ján Janovčík and Jason Stoessel nearly simultaneously posted that the Sanctus was also canonic. Janovčík has since recorded this piece with permission. Although I had intended to share my work for commentary and sharing purposes only (and noted it as such), and hoped to publish it soon after, Stoessel's enthusiasm was unbounded and he quickly submitted his contribution for publication, emerging as Stoessel and Collins 2019.
 - 26 • The textless cantus on fol. 54^r, transcribed by Kügle 1997, 248, seemed ripe for the analysis as a work of *cantare super librum*, especially since an equal-length tenor treatment of the Kyrie 'Orbis Factor', on which the Kyrie *rex angelorum* is based, had been discovered by Pedro Memelsdorff (2004, 147–154). However, the number of emendations to make the cantus fit the chant tenor were too numerous to warrant consideration as a solution.

(PMFC) label, 'French secular music,' are in fact sacred compositions with strong connections to Italian traditions. That there are no concordances for these or any other of the *cantare super librum* sacred pieces is no surprise. The works are among the few written examples of the types of composition that were generally unwritten or even improvised on the spot. The primarily written repertory of the fourteenth century was not large, and much of it survives.²⁷ The unwritten (or seldom written) tradition, represented by these pieces, may have been far vaster. Among the late additions, textless entries, and chicken scratches of the late Middle Ages lie musical gems whose sound and importance still await unearthing.

27 • Cuthbert 2009b.