

Magnus Williamson

Newcastle University, UK

\$\$\$\$ Singing the Litany in Tudor England, 1544–1555

This essay arises from some recent discoveries concerning a pair of polyphonic Litanies written in England in the 1540s and 1550s.¹ It was during these middle decades of the century that the musical and ceremonial implications of religious reform were first confronted head-on, and in this context the Litany was important for three reasons. Firstly, it was the first element of the old Latin rite to be translated for use within public worship: it was a pioneer, contested in the 1540s and debated more recently. Secondly, once introduced in 1544 the new vernacular Litany outlived successive waves of liturgical reform, partly because of the peculiarly legalistic temper of the English Reformation, and also because of the genre's liminal ritual status. Thirdly, because of its processional origins, the Litany was implicated in public campaigns of persuasion under Henry VIII and his daughter Mary. It is perhaps unsurprising that these early years of ritual reform gave rise to a cluster of polyphonic Litanies composed in the mid-sixteenth century.²

¹ On which, see the following essays from a recent issue of the periodical *Early Music*:

Johnstone (2016), Skinner (2016) and Williamson (2016).

² The present essay is indebted to two excellent but contrasting studies: Bowers (2002) and Marsh (2007), 219–61. In broad terms, Marsh argues that the vernacular Litany was of greater ritual importance than Bowers admits, and more suggestive of a reformist direction in Henry

§§§1. Before the Reformation

Within the pre-Reformation choral tradition, from the 1440s to the 1540s, Litanies were of tertiary importance. Within surviving and lost sources of Latin polyphony, first priority was given to four genres: the Mass Ordinary, Propers for Lady Mass, the Magnificat and the 'votive antiphon' or motet of prayer and praise to a named saint (normally the Virgin Mary). Second priority was given to festal and seasonal Propers, such as Hymns and Responsories, music for Holy Week (including the Passions), and processional antiphons such as *Christus resurgens*. Some of these second-tier genres might be realised either through the semi-improvised method of *faburden* or as fully elaborated compositions, but the third layer of polyphonic activity was largely or wholly improvisatory. One of the notated legacies of the distinctive insular tradition of *faburden* is a corpus of 'squares' or melodic formulae which had originated as literal counter-melodies of the chant but then became embedded in singers' working repertoires, in notated form. These mensural melodies were then used as the melodic foundations for improvised *faburden*, in place of the proper chants.³

The square for the Latin Litany refrain *Kyrieleyson qui precioso* provides an example of how the repertory of squares worked in practice (**Music Example 1**). <<PUT MUSIC EXAMPLE 1

HERE >> The uppermost stave shows the source melody found in the Salisbury

Processionale. The lowermost stave (Voice III) shows the square as notated in one of its

VIII's religious policies. Bowers's hypothesis is adopted wholesale in Bernard (2005), 589–90.

³ Harrison (1962); Trowell (1980).

various sources, in this case a copy of the Sarum Processional printed in 1525.⁴ The middle stave comprises the upper two voices in a typical three-voice realisation of the square: Voice II (shown here in lozenge-shaped notes) sings the chant, adjusted melodically to match the square which is sung in thirds and fifths below it, while Voice I (shown in small notes) sings in regular parallel fourths above the chant.⁵ Following the normal rules of *faburden*, the square follows strictly in parallel intervals below the chant except at cadences; at these points, stylised mensurated cadences enable the square to glide in idiomatic steps down to a perfect concord (here a fifth) below the chant. Gregorian chants have a disobligingly frequent tendency not to cadence by step, textbook-style; a stock of melodic formulae enabled singers to circumvent this problem, and the principle of ornamentation then spread outwards from the cadence points to their surrounding melodic context, with a general bias towards stepwise movement. For this reason some of the notated squares are more elaborate than others (as is the case with the square *Kyrieleyson qui precioso*).⁶

⁴ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. T inf. III.17: *Processionale...Sarum* (1525), sigs. 0.iii^v–0.iv^r; Trowell (1980), 71, #139. For source images see the Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music (<https://www.diamm.ac.uk>).

⁵ In Auct. T inf. III.17 the square is notated in thirds and fifths below service book pitch; in another source (Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. liturg. e. 45) the same square is written a fifth lower, placing the chant conceptually in Voice I (in sixths and octaves above the square), shadowed by Voice II in parallel fourths *below* the chant.

⁶ A slightly more elaborate form of the square *Kyrie qui precioso* is in two independent sources: London, Lambeth Palace Library, **H.5142.P.1545 (*Processionale...Sarum* (1545), f. cxxx^v) and Dublin, Trinity College Library, KK.k.55 (*Processionale...Sarum* (1525), sigs. m.8^v–n.1^r); Trowell, ‘Faburden – New sources’, 71, #140. Source images on DIAMM.

Fully notated polyphony for the pre-Reformation Litany is found only in the Pepys manuscript, a choirbook of modest dimensions (180 x 125 mm) compiled in the 1460s as a miscellany, and probably not intended for use in performance *ad lectrinam*.⁷ Otherwise, the Litany is represented exclusively in the form of squares such as *Kyrieleyson qui precioso*, added into pre-existing Processionals by their owners and users.⁸ Most importantly, these semi-improvised Litanies belong exclusively to one specific genre, the repeating *prosa*e of the Litanies *in revertendo*, which were sung as processions returned to their point of departure during Rogationtide.⁹ The three days preceding Ascension day, which often comprised the feast of St Mark (25 April), were one of the main focuses of parish identity, well-attended, and with refreshments provided.¹⁰ Rogationtide had a distinctive repertory of antiphons, Litanies, itineraries and visual symbols, chief of which was the dragon carried in procession, the shearing of whose tail on Wednesday served to banish evil spirits.¹¹ There are no pre-Reformation settings of the other kind of Litany, the Greater Litany that was

⁷ Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS 1236, ff. 12^v–13^r (*Kyrie eleison qui precioso*), ff. 17^v–18^r (*Kyrie: Christe audi nos*) and f. 18^r (*Kyrie: Christe audi nos*), and also the concluding verse in time of war, *Ab inimicis* (at ff. 46^v–47^r): Curtis and Wathey (1994), 6: ## O285, O276, O277 and O2. Modern edition: Charles (1967), ## 8, 12, 13 and 46. On Pepys 1236, see Roger Bowers's description in Fenlon (1982), 111–14.

⁸ See Trowell (1980), 71–2 and 76–8.

⁹ The prose *Kyrie eleyson qui precioso sanguine* was sung during the first of these Litanies.

¹⁰ Duffy (1992), 279; in 1533, Robert Peycoke of Kirkby St Peter (Lincs.), bequeathed funds for 'the Tuysday in rogacion weke to refreshe them that go in procession with bred and ale, xijd' (12 September 1532, probate granted 21/08/1533: David Hickman (2001), #76).

¹¹ Also the lion of St Mark; Bailey (1971), 52–8, 115.

recited on the outward leg of the Rogationtide processions.¹² (Table 1) This belonged to a family of Litanies that were sung during the year: on Wednesdays and Fridays during Lent;¹³ the seven- and five-fold Litanies on Easter morning;¹⁴ in *causa necessitatis*, as occasion demanded;¹⁵ and in specific rites such as the coronation.¹⁶ The earliest surviving polyphony for the Greater Litany dates from the mid-1540s and is, surprisingly, in English rather than Latin.

¹² *Processionale...Sarum* (1545), ff. cxxj^v–cxxxiii^f. The only known attempt to devise faburden-style squares for the Greater Litany is found in a copy of *Processionale...Sarum* (1545) now in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Rés. B. 1852, online at <https://gallica.bfr/fr>, at f. xcv, and in London, Lambeth Palace Library, **H.5142.P.1545 (f. [ccxxvi]^v). These two related sources are discussed below.

¹³ The Sarum Processional specifies *feria quarta* and *feria sexta*, but the Breviary provides also for daily recitation (Procter and Wordsworth (1879–86). II, cols. 250–60);

Processionale...Sarum (1545), ff. xlj^v–xliii^f.

¹⁴ *Processionale...Sarum* (1545), ff. xciii^f–xcv^v. The Processional specifies recitation *sine nota* on Rogation days.

¹⁵ *Processionale...Sarum* (1545), ff. cciii^v–ccv^v. Urgencies included need (undefined), tribulation, stormy weather, drought, pestilence, and war; the Litany *causa necessitatis* might also be sung *pro pace ecclesiae*.

¹⁶ Marsh (2007), 235–6. Legg (1893), col. 687, where the Litany was begun by two bishops, kneeling, and followed by the seven penitential psalms.

Table 1:

**The Greater Litany, its variants and descendants
to 1549**

	Quadragesima	Easter Sunday	Rogationtide	Causa necessitatis	Breviary ¹⁷	Latin Books of Hours ¹⁸	Cranmer 1544	Cranmer 1549
Seven Penitential Psalms			x	x	x	x		
Antiphon <i>Ne reminiscaris</i>			x	¹⁹	x	x	x ²⁰	x ²¹
Kyrie eleison	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Invocations to the Holy Trinity	x		x	x	x	x	x	x

¹⁷ *The Sarum Rite: Latin Breviary: Psalter, 424–37*

<https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/bitstream/11375/15874/19/A-12%20psalmi%20penitentiali.pdf>.

¹⁸ Sample: *An vniforme and Catholyke Prymer* (1555), sigs. c.i^r–c.ii^r.

¹⁹ Antiphon *Ne reminiscaris* replaced by alternative antiphons appropriate to the occasion.

²⁰ Antiphon ‘Remember not Lorde our offences’ (= *Ne reminiscaris*) now precedes Deprecations.

²¹ Antiphon ‘Remember not Lorde our offences’ (= *Ne reminiscaris*) precedes Deprecations.

Litany of Saints	Sancte/Sancta N.: <i>Ora pro nobis.</i>	x ²²	x ²³	x	x	x	x	²⁴	
Deprecations	Ab/A ____: <i>Libera nos, Domine.</i>			x	x	x	x	x	x
Obsecrations	Per ____: <i>Libera nos, Domine.</i>			x	x	x	x	x	x
Intercessions	Ut ____: <i>Te rogamus audi nos.</i>			x	x	x	x	x	x
Agnus Dei				x	x	x	x	x	x
Kyrie eleison				x	x	x	x	x	x
Pater noster				x		x	x	x	x
Versicle(s) and response(s)				x		x	x	x	x
Prayers				x		x	x	x	x

²² Immediately after the Litany of Saints, the priest retires to vest and the cantor begins the Introit for Mass (*PS1545*, f. xliij^r).

²³ Immediately after the Litany of Saints, the priest retires to vest and the cantor begins the Introit for Mass (*Processionale... Sarum* (1545), f. xliij^r).

²⁴ In 1544 the ‘Holye virgin Mary’ alone is invoked by name; the Litany of Saints is compressed into two collective invocations: ‘All holye Aungels and Archaungels, and all the holye orders of blessed spirites: *Praye for us*’ and ‘All holy Patriarches and Prophetes, Apostels, Martyrs, Confessors, & Virgins; and all the blessed companye of heaven: *Praye for us*’. In 1549 this vestige disappears.

\$\$\$2. The Greater Litany, private devotion and religious reform

If the Greater Litany was a discretionary rite, it was also highly adaptable and extensible – perhaps inevitably, given its form. The Litany of Saints, which followed the Invocations to the Holy Trinity, was particularly susceptible to customisation according to the needs of time and place: Nigel Morgan’s encyclopaedic edition of monastic Litanies includes saints so localised as to appear in only one conventual Litany.²⁵ The same study has found isolated instances of particular Deprecations,²⁶ Obsecrations,²⁷ and Intercessions.²⁸ Mendicant Litanies had distinctive categories of saintly intercessors.²⁹ But this adaptability also enabled the Litany, particularly the Litany of Saints, to make the transition from corporate liturgies into the private devotional space and the Book of Hours. Any parishioner participating in the Rogationtide processions, or in one of the occasional processions *causa necessitatis*, would have been able to follow the contents of the Litany more or less verbatim from their personal Book of Hours (if they owned one). Like the Marian antiphons, the Office of the Dead and the seven penitential psalms, therefore, the Litany was encountered both in public

²⁵ From the letter W alone, Walaricus (Shrewsbury Abbey), William of Norwich (Norwich Cathedral Priory), Wistan (Evesham Abbey), Wulfhilda (Barking Nunnery), and Wulmarus (Abbotsbury Abbey): Morgan (2012–2018), III, 195–206.

²⁶ ‘A persecucione inimici’ (Westminster Abbey: Morgan (2012–2018), III, p. 14).

²⁷ ‘Per angelorum ministrationem’ (Amesbury, order of Fontevrault): Morgan (2012–2018) I, p. 56.

²⁸ ‘Ut nos semetipsos in tuo sancto servicio confortare et conservare’ (Gloucester Abbey): Morgan (2012–2018), I, p. 126).

²⁹ Sandler (1979), 65–80; the Austin Friars invoked ‘All monks and hermits’, naming Benedict, Francis, Anthony and Dominic.

worship, usually in procession, and in private domestic devotion, usually on the knees and often recited by women.³⁰ From the mid-thirteenth century de Brailes Hours onwards, the seven penitential psalms and Litany were a universal staple of Books of Hours, along with the Commendations (Ps. 118/119) and the fifteen Gradual Psalms.³¹ No less than the *Salve regina*, the Litany stood at the cusp of private and public prayer;³² the well-thumbed Litany pages in Thomas More's Book of Hours suggest that this conventionally pious Henrician recited this devotion frequently.³³

It was probably no coincidence that official reform of the English liturgy was first effected, albeit tentatively, in the Litany. The landmark date is June 1544, when Archbishop Thomas Cranmer's translation was mandated for use in public processions and prayers in aid of Henry VIII's French wars.³⁴ But purchasers of some of the more recent, officially-sponsored, Books of Hours would have noticed the shared paternity of Cranmer's text. Ten years earlier, William Marshall's 'aggressively Protestant' Primer, issued with the support of Secretary

³⁰ Erler (2003), 119; Donovan (1991), 183–200.

³¹ British Library, Add. MS 49,999, ff. 66^r–89^r. Donovan (1991), 110–14. Among printed Books of Hours, see *Hore* (1510), f. lxxxv verso. The 'Golden Litany', first published in 1531, combined paraphrases of the Kyrie, Invocations to the Trinity with Obsecrations around the theme of Christ's Passion (*The golden letany* (1531)). Duffy (2006), 28.

³² This observation counters Roger Bowers's suggestion that the Litany 'had never been an item of any more than the most minor significance' which had 'never formed part of standard parish practice' (Bowers (2002), 152 and 169n).

³³ Duffy (2006), 113.

³⁴ Bowers (2002), 157–63; Skinner (2016), 242–5; Marsh (2007) 237–43; Cuming (1982), 35–40; Mears (2013), 34–35.

Thomas Cromwell had entirely omitted the Litany of Saints and its accompanying invocations, leaving only the seven penitential psalms which had traditionally preceded the antiphon *Ne reminiscaris*.³⁵ The omitted materials were restored in Marshall's next Primer (1535), but Henry VIII's distaste for Purgatory and the cult of saints, expressed in the Ten Articles of 1536, undermined the Litany of Saints.³⁶ The official Primer prepared in 1539 by John Hilsey, bishop of Rochester, excised all post-Biblical saints from the Litany.³⁷ Meanwhile, Cromwell's injunctions of 1538 had already provided cover for any clergy inclined to omit the saintly invocations altogether during public worship:³⁸

Item, where in tymes past men have used in dyvers places in their processions to syng *Ora pro nobis*, to so many saynctes, that they had no tyme to syng the good suffrages folowinge, as *Parce nobis Domine*, and *Libera nos Domine*, it muste be taughte and preached, that better it were to omytte *Ora pro nobis*, and to syng the other suffrages, beinge most necessary, and effectuell.

³⁵ *A Prymer in Englyshe* (1534); Duffy (2007), 147.

³⁶ *A goodly prymer* (1535), sigs. L.iiij^v–M.ij^v; between the seven penitential psalms and *Ne reminiscaris*, Marshall printed a preface defending himself against 'diverse persones or small judgement and knowledge in holy scripture' who had complained about his omission of the Litany the previous year; he issued a disclaimer concerning some of the saints in the reinstated Litany who had been 'canonised and lade sayntes by such as have ben byshoppes of Rome, yet whether they be sayntes or no I committe to the secrete iudgement of god' (ibid., sigs L.ij^v–L.iiij^r).

³⁷ *The manual of prayers* (1539).

³⁸ See, for instance, *Injunctions* (1538).

When Thomas Cranmer produced his new vernacular Litany in aid of Henry VIII's military campaigns, therefore, he deployed the textual resources of the late-medieval Breviary and Book of Hours, but tempered by evangelical qualms over saintly intercession. He omitted the seven penitential psalms in favour of a long prose *Exhortation to Prayer* which preceded the opening Kyrie; he incorporated the prayer-like antiphon *Ne reminiscaris* into the body of the Litany where it followed a vestigial Litany of Saints; and, in his shortened selection of Deprecations, Obsecrations and Intercessions, he adapted traditional forms to serve the circumstances of 1544:³⁹

From all sedycion and privey conspiracie, from the tyranny of the bisshop of Rome and all his detestable enormyties, from all false doctrine and heresy, from hardnes of hearte, and contempt of thy worde and commaundemente:
Good lorde deliver us.

That it maye please thee to be his [Henry VIII's] defendour and keper, gyvyng hym the vyctorye over all his enemyes:
We beseche thee to here us good Lorde.

The vernacular Exhortation and Litany of 1544 was re-issued the following year; but Cranmer's new text was also incorporated wholesale into the official Primer of 1545, where it was preceded by the seven penitential psalms and *Ne reminiscaris* – an acknowledgement

³⁹ Complete edition at: http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Litany1544/Litany_1544.htm.

of both the traditional form of the Book of Hours, and the close kinship between this first public vernacular liturgy and the private prayer books used by the laity.⁴⁰

In its 1544 form, with only minor textual emendations, Cranmer's Litany was subsumed into the first fully-vernacular liturgy, the first Book of Common Prayer (1549), where it was appointed to be sung before Holy Communion twice weekly, on the traditional Litany days of Wednesday and Friday:⁴¹

Upon Wednesdaies and Fridaies, the Englishe Letany shalbee saied or song in all places, after suche forme as is appoynced by the kynges Maiesties Iniuncions ... And though there be none to communicate with the priest, yet these daies (after the Letany ended) the priest shall put vpon hym a plain albe or surplesse, with a cope, and saie all thynges at the Altare...vntill after the Offertory.

In the second Book of Common Prayer the same Litany immediately following the orders for Morning and Evening Prayer, and in this state the Litany became embedded within the Elizabeth Book of Common Prayer (1559) and its successors.⁴² But Cranmer's Litany also continued to circulate in its original standalone form under Catholic Mary Tudor (r. 1553-8),

⁴⁰ *The Primer, in Englishe and Latyn* (1545), sigs. g.i^v–g.[vi]^v.

⁴¹ *The booke of common praier* (1549), Sig. P.iii. verso

⁴² *The boke of common praier* (1552), sig. B.iii. verso; 'Here foloweth the Letanie to be vsed vpon Sondayes, Wedensdayes, and Fridayes, and at other tymes, when it shalbe commanded by the Ordenarie'.

shorn of Cranmer's long Exhortation and his anti-Papal Deprecation.⁴³ Mary's restoration of Catholicism proceeded in careful steps, initially through a legalistic reversion to the state of religion as it had stood at the death of Henry VIII in 1547:⁴⁴ as if an aberration, the Protestant reforms effected during the minority of Edward VI (r. 1547-53) were repealed under Mary – all, that is, except the vernacular Litany introduced by her father of famous memory. Marian editions of the vernacular Litany include intercessions on behalf of both Mary and her husband Philip, and so we can assume that performances of the vernacular Litany continued after the royal marriage on 26 July 1554 – that is, beyond the earliest phases of the Catholic restoration. Likewise, between the death of Mary Tudor in November 1558 and the re-introduction of the Book of Common Prayer in May 1559, the not-yet-abolished vernacular Litany was performed in the new queen's chapel (shortly before Christmas) and at her coronation in January. The vernacular Litany therefore provided a thread of liturgical continuity from Henry, through Edward and Mary, to Elizabeth.⁴⁵

⁴³ STC 16453, without title page: British Library C.25.b.10.(3.). Perhaps by an oversight, some of Cranmer's more Protestant formulations such as 'our onlye mediatoure and advocate, Jesu Christ' lingered in the Marian editions.

⁴⁴ On the legalistic tenor of royal religious policies in the 1550s, see Bowers (2000), 317–44.

⁴⁵ STC 16453.5 (no title page). This standalone Litany was published around New Year 1559 (Clay (1847), 10–22. Elizabeth is named in the intercessions, and the 'tiranie of the bishop of Rome, & all his detestable enormities' have returned to the Deprecation (but were expunged in the official Prayer Book Litany on 1559).

§§§3. Early polyphonic settings of the vernacular Litany

Cranmer's Litany of 1544 was published in three formats: the first with words only;⁴⁶ the second with words and monophonic chant derived from the old Sarum tone;⁴⁷ and a polyphonic setting 'as sung in the King's Chapel'. No printed copies survive of this latter polyphonic version, the only polyphony ever to be officially mandated by the Church of England, but Andrew Johnstone has convincingly identified the lost 1544 edition with the surviving five-part Litany by Thomas Tallis, by this time a Gentleman of Henry VIII's Chapel Royal.⁴⁸ Tallis's setting was a pioneering example, probably the first, of what would become the normative archetype for polyphonic vernacular Litanies: in fauxbourdon, with the plainsong melody quoted literally in either the Tenor or the top voice (= Medius). Tallis's Litany is idiosyncratic, however, and will be discussed later on.

Immediately upon the publication of the new vernacular Litany, it was circulated, copied out, and set to polyphony by church musicians.⁴⁹ An anonymous setting can be found scribbled

⁴⁶ STC 10620–10621 (27 May 1544), 1622.5 (16 June 1544), 10623 (12 October 1544), 1623.3 (1544?), 10623.5 (1545?), 10624 (28 March 1545), 10625.3 (27 May 1546) and 10625.7 (8 December 1546).

⁴⁷ STC 10621.5 (n.d.), 10621.7 (16 June 1544) and 10622 (8 December 1546). There is no trace of any relationship between the chant provided for Cranmer's litany and contemporary Lutheran archetypes, for instance Johann Spangenberg's German Litany (*Cantiones ecclesiasticae Latinae* (1545), ff. clxxxix^v–cxcii^v: https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10147756_00748.html).

⁴⁸ Johnstone (2016).

⁴⁹ For instance, at Exeter Cathedral, 1543–4: 'Item for prykyng of bookes for procession, ij s...Item solutum pro libris chori nove letanie, iijs iiijd' (ex inf. Prof. Nicholas Orme); and at

onto the back flyleaves of a printed Latin Processional now at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC (Plate 1).⁵⁰ A single voice part is given of what was probably a four- or five-part setting, and only the opening invocation is given, along with two short segments of untexted notation. This vernacular material supplements an annotation already made on the same verso, of the plainsong Sanctus from the Latin *Missa pro defunctis*, copied by the book's owner as a convenient if inelegant aide-memoire.⁵¹ Like so many Processionals the personal property of an individual singer, the Folger Shakespeare copy is customised so as to make it both a chant book and a *de facto* partbook; here, the polyphonic notation of the Litany transmits one of the harmonizing voice-parts, rather than Cranmer's chant. The surviving polyphonic voice-part is shown in a reconstructed four-part setting as Music Example 2; by deduction, Cranmer's chant is assigned to in the Medius voice, pitched with a reciting note of F (and shown in lozenge-shaped note-heads);⁵² these two voices, one

Durham Cathedral, 1544–5: 1544/5: 'Item paid to the chaunter of Westmynster for prykyng the new Latyny in .iiij., .iiiiij. and .v. partes, xxd ... Item for xxiiiij^{tie} Latines, wherof .j. dozen noted with playneson of fyve partes, at iijs the dozen, vjs' (Fowler (1903), 726).

⁵⁰ Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, shelfmark STC 16237, a copy of *Processionale...Sarum* (1528).

⁵¹ Because of their basic function as walking books, Processionals typically only contain the chants sung at the bringing of the bier into the quire (antiphon *Subvenite*, respond *Libera me* and antiphon *In paradisum*). My thanks to Dr Georgianna Ziegler, Associate Librarian and Head of Reference at the Folger Shakespeare Library, for tracing this volume and providing images.

⁵² The chant can be accommodated an octave lower, but at the cost of weak part-writing at 'miserable sinners'.

surviving and the other inferred, provide a matrix for two conjectured voice-parts (shown in small note-heads). Three observations can be made about this setting. Firstly, the surviving polyphonic voice-part aligns syllabically with Cranmer's chant, suggesting simple fauxbourdon. Secondly, the bi-syllabic setting of the word 'heaven' deviates from the published form of Cranmer's Litany, suggesting an early date of composition, before Cranmer's chant had become familiarised. Thirdly, we can assume that the untexted three-note snippet Bb-G-A was intended for the response 'Pray for us' (equivalent to '*Ora pro nobis*'); Cranmer included three iterations of this relic of the old Litany of Saints in his Henrician Litany, but excised it entirely from the revised Litany he provided for the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549; we can therefore date the Folger Shakespeare setting to between May 1544 and June 1549.

The absence of the response 'Pray for us' enables us to date another early vernacular Litany to the next phase of liturgical reform, 1549-52. This is found in British Library, Additional MS 34191, f. 35v (**Music Example 3**). Like the previous setting, this is copied into a pre-existing source, in this case a Bassus partbook of Latin polyphony originally copied before 1530.⁵³

The partbook being re-purposed after Latin worship was abolished in June 1549, and the Litany comes first in a layer of vernacular music copied for the new prayer Book liturgy. The reconstruction given here is very speculative: it assumes four-part scoring for men's voices (but could have been in five parts for men and boys, like the pre-existing Latin polyphony in

⁵³ On the manuscript, see Summerly (1989), and Gibbs (2018), 131–148.

34191), and assigns Cranmer's chant to the Tenor rather than an upper voice.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, the surviving voice-part in 34191 suggests simple, homophony very similar to the Folger Shakespeare setting, although the reciting note here is C rather than F.

Copied contemporaneously with the 34191 additions, the Wanley partbooks are a pioneering compendium of mainly four-part polyphony for the new Prayer Book of 1549; some of their contents would be rendered obsolete on the publication of Cranmer's more circumscriptive second Book of Common Prayer in 1552.⁵⁵ Although these books contain some contrafacta of old Latin polyphony hastily adapted to vernacular texts, they comprise mostly new pieces in two idioms: chanson-style settings, often comprising short-winded *fuga*;⁵⁶ and homophonic pieces frequently redolent of established methods of improvisation.⁵⁷ Wanley has two settings of the 1549 Litany, both of them with the chant in the Tenor. The first setting, with F as its reciting note, restlessly attempts to avoid simple harmonization (**Music Example 4a**).⁵⁸ The second setting, on reciting note C, adheres more closely to the established homophonic archetype, and is more successful as a result; it

⁵⁴ This piece has also been reconstructed by Edmund Fellowes and Sydney Nicholson with the chant in the Medius and by Nicholas Temperley with the chant in the Tenor (Summerly (1989), 28 and 38).

⁵⁵ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Mus. Sch. e. 420–422 (= 'Wanley Partbooks'), copied in or after 1549 and edited in Wrightson (1995).

⁵⁶ On the English absorption of the chanson style, see Milsom (2007), 1–31.

⁵⁷ Aplin (1980), 245–65.

⁵⁸ Wanley Partbooks: e. 420, f. 58r, e. 421, f. 29v and e.422, f. 57v. The Tenor, lacking in the polyphonic source, is inferred from Thomas Cranmer's Litany of 1544. (Wrightson (1995), 142–44).

appeared in print in the 1560s and subsequently circulated in manuscripts (**Music Example 4b**).⁵⁹

\$\$\$4. Tallis, an English emulator and Antonio Cabezón

So far, perhaps the most important and widely-circulated Tudor polyphonic Litany has been discussed only in passing. This is Thomas Tallis's setting, edited in its putative 1544 form by Andrew Johnstone at <http://www.eecm.ac.uk/eecmsubsidia/twotudorlitanies/tallislitany/>. It is richly scored for five voices (Medius, Contratenor I & II, Tenor and Bassus); combined with Tallis's use of ornamented suspensions and melisma in the Contratenor parts, this distinguishes it stylistically from the other early vernacular Litanies. William Byrd has long been recognised as an emulator of Tallis and, true to type, the older composer's influence has been detected in Byrd's five-part vernacular Litany;⁶⁰ the Tallis Litany is otherwise remarkable for its lack of Elizabethan emulators.⁶¹ Perhaps paradoxically, the closest emulation of Tallis is found not in another vernacular setting, but in a Latin Litany almost certainly written for use in 1554-5, at the height of Mary Tudor's Catholic restoration.

⁵⁹ Wanly Partbooks: e. 420, f. 83v ('The Prossessys'), e. 421, f. 86v ('Prossessyon'), and e. 422, f. 82r ('The Prossyon' [sic]); again, Cranmer's chant was in the now-lost Tenor partbook. Concordances: *Mornyng and euenyng prayer* (1560/1565); Brasenose College, Oxford, UB/S III 18/1-4; and Queens' College, Cambridge, G. 4. 17, f. 58 (see Johnstone (2016), 221).

⁶⁰ Craig Monson (1979); Monson (1980).

⁶¹ This was possibly because Elizabethan composers showed no interest in the Litany (Harley (2015), 157).

This Litany and its most likely performance context have been discussed elsewhere.⁶² It is found, unattributed, in the bindings of two copies of the Latin Sarum *Processionale* printed in Antwerp in 1545: one in Paris, the other in London.⁶³ Both of these copies belonged to members of Westminster's new-foundation cathedral in the first half of the 1550s: Alexander Peryn, minor canon and owner of the Paris copy, and Robert Morley, lay vicar (i.e., singing man) and owner of the Lambeth copy. Peryn's book has the Bassus part, and Morley's the Medius, and so the two books convey the two outer voices of what was almost certainly a five-voice setting of the *Letania Major* (as is suggested in Peryn's copy where the Litany is followed in immediate succession by the Bassus part of Thomas Tallis's five-part motet *O sacrum convivium*). In both copies, the Peryn-Morley Litany is complemented with additional Intercessions praying for a safe, timely and painless outcome for Queen Mary's pregnancy.⁶⁴ It could have reshaped Europe's geopolitical future, but the pregnancy was a crushing illusion; nevertheless, the clear allusion to it in both of these Processionals enables us to pinpoint a performance date of November 1554, when the pregnancy was first announced, until hope was abandoned in August 1555.

⁶² 'Queen Mary I, Tallis's *O sacrum convivium* and a Latin Litany'. A reconstruction by Jason Smart has been recorded in *Queen Mary's Big Belly: Hope for an Heir in Catholic England*, Gallicantus/Gabriel Crouch (Signum SIGCD464, 2017).

⁶³ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Rés. B. 1852 and London, Lambeth Palace Library, **H5142.P.1545 respectively.

⁶⁴ Ut mariam reginam gravidam protegas: [*Te rogamus audi nos*]; Ut proles quam in utero gerit feliciter in lucem prodeat: *Te rogamus audi nos*; Ut in pariendo dolorem misericorditer evadat: *Te rogamus audi nos*; Ut prolem justo tempore pariat: *Te rogamus audi nos*.

The Peryn-Morley Litany bears a striking resemblance to Thomas Tallis's vernacular Litany of 1544. Although only two voices survive, one of them incomplete, they can be combined with the Sarum tone in the Tenor; the two Contratenor parts can be reconstructed with some confidence, because the polyphonic framework is, more or less, the same as Tallis's.⁶⁵ **Music examples 5a and 5B** show the Kyrie from each setting:

<<**Music Example 5a on left; Music Example 5b on right**>>

There are two obvious differences: the Latin Litany begins with an initial melisma in the Medius, and the two settings have divergent clef combinations (the Peryn-Morley Litany is set at service-book pitch, while the Tallis is, more pragmatically, transmitted in most of its sources down a perfect fourth).⁶⁶ But the polyphonic structure and concept are the same in both settings, and Tallis's distinctive cadence types are replicated in the anonymous Latin setting.

Who was emulating whom? Thomas Tallis was an occasional borrower: the *Credo* of his Mass for Four Voices is a contrafact of a composition by a Chapel Royal colleague, the Creed from John Sheppard's vernacular First Service;⁶⁷ Tallis had previously emulated the work of the elder John Taverner in the Mass *Salve intemerata*, having already alluded to Robert

⁶⁵ A full reconstruction by Jason Smart is at

<http://www.eecm.ac.uk/eecmsubsidia/twotudorlitanies/latinlitany/>.

⁶⁶ One seventeenth-century source presents the Tallis at the higher service-book pitch and attributes it to 'Mr Persons' (New York Public Library, MSS Mus. Res. *MNZ (Chirk)); the misattribution is ingeniously interpreted in Johnstone (2016), 222–3.

⁶⁷ The relationship between the Tallis and Sheppard pieces will be discussed by Stefan Scot in his edition of Sheppard's vernacular polyphony.

Fayrfax's *Ave Dei patris filia* in his own setting of the text.⁶⁸ But the Latin Litany is found only in sources that postdate the first performance of Tallis's vernacular Litany in 1544 (albeit by only one year), and both the Paris and Lambeth copies contain a *second* Latin setting of the Greater Litany, this time using the old tradition of squares.⁶⁹ This other setting probably sounded somewhat old-fashioned and cumbersome to ears accustomed to Tallis's recent fauxboudon-style setting of the vernacular Litany. Back in 1544, Tallis's setting had been entirely unprecedented, the first of numerous homophonic harmonizations of Cranmer's chant attempted by mid-century musicians. A comparison of Tallis's setting with the surviving voices of the Peryn-Morley Litany suggests a tighter and more convincing fit in the English than the Latin (see MUSIC Ex. XX), and hence a greater likelihood that the vernacular setting came first. It was surely Tallis who set the precedent and the anonymous composer (or arranger) of the Latin Litany who followed it.

I have argued elsewhere that the Peryn-Morley Litany was performed in Westminster, and particularly as part of a grand procession organized by Hugh Weston, dean of Westminster, which proceeded from Westminster, through Whitehall Palace to Temple Bar on Sunday 27 January 1554.⁷⁰ Public processions were an important expression of the Catholic restoration, especially during the first two years, 1553-5; there are likely to have been numerous occasions on which the Latin Litany, with special Intercessions on behalf of the expectant queen, would have been sung outdoors. In November 1553, within a few months of Mary's accession, 'a general proccessyion with the old Latene [= Litany]...with *ora pro nobis*' had

⁶⁸ Harley (2015) 39–41 and 25–7; Gibbs (2017), 81–3.

⁶⁹ See above, n. 12.

⁷⁰ Williamson (2016), 261–2.

taken place at St Paul's Cathedral, and the Privy Council subsequently attempted to enforce general attendance at processional Litanies on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays.⁷¹

Processions and Litanies were therefore ingrained in the culture of Marian Catholicism and, when the queen entered her bed of confinement after Easter 1555, her husband's household led some of these processions in her absence.⁷²

Public processions and petitions were mirrored by more private prayers within the walls of the royal palace during the queen's confinement. Here we consider the final piece of evidence, a Latin Litany by the Spanish composer Antonio Cabezón.⁷³ Cabezón was in the *capilla* of Philip of Spain when it sailed with him to England for the prince's marriage to Mary in July 1554; Cabezón returned to the continent in August 1555, after the royal couple's dynastic disappointment. Only this small fragment survives of his Litany which, although not based on the Litany tone, is fauxbourdon in style:⁷⁴

<<MUSIC EXAMPLE 6 HERE>>

The piece could easily be overlooked but for two factors. Firstly, Cabezón is regarded as one of the foremost and prolific keyboard composers of the Renaissance, whose likely impact on the English keyboard tradition has been postulated, but not thoroughly investigated.

Cabezón is not regarded as a composer for voices; indeed, this Litany fragment is his only

⁷¹ Duffy (2009), p. 131.

⁷² Edwards (2005).

⁷³ Robledo (1989), 143–52; my thanks to Prof. Owen Rees for first drawing my attention to this piece.

⁷⁴ Madrid, library of Don Bartolomé March Servera, MS 6829 (861), f. 107, reproduced in Robledo (1989), 146.

known piece of liturgical polyphony. Secondly, if this is an exceptional piece in Cabezón's oeuvre, the equally unusual circumstances of its composition were recorded in detail in 1601:⁷⁵ 'There is a Litany composed by Antonio Cabezon in fauxbourdon *pro regina gravida* that was sung in England daily procession through the corridors of the palace, after it was understood that the queen entered the month.'

It was in Hampton Court Palace, 35 km upstream from Westminster, that Mary entered her confinement in April 1555. Cabezón's Litany must therefore have been composed for use while the queen was out of circulation, and when her husband played a more active role as the public face of this dynastic union. In parallel with the native singers' public performances of Tallis's Litany in Westminster, members of Philip's *capilla* performed Cabezón's Litany in the privacy of Hampton Court, no doubt to the queen's comfort as they passed the door of her gloomy birthing chamber.

\$\$\$ Conclusions

Thomas Tallis's vernacular Litany is the first known setting of its kind in the English repertory. Before 1544, no English composer is known to have made a polyphonic setting of the Greater Litany. This is surprising, perhaps, given how pervasive this liturgical form had become, in part because of its wide availability in Books of Hours. Instead, musicians had

⁷⁵ Robledo, 'Sobre la letanía', p. 144, citing Archivo General del Palacio Real de Madrid, Seccion Real Capilla, caja 78 (dated 26 August 1601): 'Ay vna letania compuesta por Ant. Caveçon en favordon pro regina grauida quese canto en inglaterra haciendo proçesioncada día, despues que se entendio quelaroyña entraua enelmes, por loscorredores de Palaçio'.

focused on the specific Rogationtide Litanies whose repeating refrains were more easily adapted to established traditions of improvisation. Tallis's setting was therefore innovative in the fact of its very making, while its texture and idiom also reflected the temper of modest reform that characterised the late-Henrician church. Beyond England fauxbourdon-style, liturgical settings of the *Letania Major* are also conspicuously scarce before Cabezón. Although Latin Litanies were published later in the sixteenth century, there are no obvious continental precedents for either the Tallis or the Peryn-Morley Litany.⁷⁶ Instead, in a reversal of the normal flow of traffic at this time, it may have been Cabezón who took his cue from the English tradition.

LIST OF MUSIC EXAMPLES

1. Rogationtide Litany refrain, *Kyrie eleison qui precioso* (square in Voice III with implied chant in Voice II, and Voice I singing a fourth above the chant).
2. Anonymous Litany, Folger Shakespeare Library, STC 16237 (1544x49, reconstructed)
3. Anonymous Litany, British Library, Additional MS 34191, f. 35 (c. 1549, reconstructed)
4. 4a: Anonymous Litany, 'Wanley' partbooks, #54.
4b: Anonymous Litany, 'Wanley' partbooks, #73
5. 5a: Thomas Tallis, vernacular Litany of 1544: Kyrie
5b: Anonymous, 'Peryn-Morley' Litany: Kyrie

⁷⁶ For instance, Porta (1575): <https://stimmuecher.digitale-sammlungen.de/view?id=bsb00001894>).

6. Antonio Cabezón, Litany: Invocación

ILLUSTRATION CAPTIONS

1. Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, STC 16237. Image reproduced with kind permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library, and with thanks to Melanie Leung and Dr Georgianna Ziegler.

Biography

Magnus Williamson is Professor of Early Music at Newcastle University. His expertise is in music from the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, with particular reference to Tudor church music, its social context and the physical spaces in which it was practised; also the printed and manuscript sources of music, their notation, copying, contents and origins. His facsimile edition of the Eton Choirbook (2010) was awarded the American Musicological Society's Palisca Prize. As a performing musician, he is interested in traditions of improvisation and in the reconstruction of incomplete polyphony. His edition of Latin polyphony by John Sheppard (2012) included numerous reconstructions as does the AHRC-funded project *Tudor Partbooks* (2014-17), of which he is principal investigator. He is currently general editor of the British Academy series, *Early English Church Music*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscripts and Books Printed Before 1600

The booke of common praier and administracion of the Sacramentes, London, March 1549 [STC 16275].

The boke of common praier, and administracion of the sacraments, London, August 1552 [STC 16285].

Cantiones ecclesiasticae Latinae, Magdeburg, 1545 [USTC 613390].

The golden letany in englysshe, London, 19 June 1531 [STC 15707].

A goodly prymer in englyshe, London, 16 June 1535 [STC 15988].

Hore beatissime virginis marie, London, 1510 [STC 15908.5].

Haym, J., *Litaniae textus triplex*, Augsburg, 1582 [USTC 553585].

Iniunctions exhibited the ____ day of ____ anno M. D. XXXVIII, [London], 1538 [1538; STC 10087].

The manual of prayers or the prymer in Englysh and Latyn, London, 15 July 1539 [STC 16009].

Mornyng and euenyng prayer and communion, London, 1560/1565 [STC 6418 and 6419].

Porta, C., *Litaniae Deiparae Virginis Mariae...cum musica octo vocum Constantii Portae*, Venice, 1575 [USTC 850951].

A Prymer in Englyshe, London, 1534 [STC 15986].

The Primer, in Englishe and Latyn, set foorth by the Kynges maiestie, London, 6 September 1545 [STC 16040].

Processionale ad usum insignis ac preclare ecclesie Sarum, Rouen, 1525 [STC 16236.6].

Processionale ad vsum Sarum, Antwerp, 1528 [STC 16237].

Processionale ad vsus [sic] insignis ecclesie Sarum, Antwerp, 1545 [STC 16243].

Processionale ad usum insignis ac preclare ecclesie Sarum, Rouen, 1555 [STC 16248].

An vniforme and Catholyke Prymer in Latin and Englishe, London, 4 June 1555 [STC 16060].

The 'Wanley Partbooks': Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Mus. Sch. e. 422-422.

Bibliography

Aplin, J. (1980) "'The Fourth Kind of Faburden": The Identity of an English Four-Part Style,' *Music and Letters* 61, 245–65.

Bailey, T. (1971) *The Processions of Sarum and the Western Church* [Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies: Studies and Texts, 21], Toronto.

Bernard, G. W. (2005) *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church*, New Haven and London.

Bowers, R. (2002) 'The vernacular Litany of 1544 during the reign of Henry VIII', in G. W. Bernard and S. J. Gunn (eds.), *Authority and Consent in Tudor England*, Aldershot, 151–75

Bowers, R. (2000) 'The Chapel Royal, the first Edwardian Prayer Book, and Elizabeth's Settlement of Religion, 1559,' *The Historical Journal* 43, 317–44.

Charles, S. R. (ed.) (1967) *The Music of the Pepys MS 1236* [Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, 40], Neuhausen.

Clay, W. K. (1847) *Liturgical Services: Liturgies and Occasional Forms of Prayer set forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* [Parker Society, 30], Cambridge.

Cuming, G. J. (1982) *A History of Anglican Liturgy* [2nd edn], Basingstoke.

Curtis, G., and Wathey, A. (1994) 'Fifteenth-century English liturgical music: a list of the surviving repertory', *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* 27, 1–69

Donovan, C. (1991) *The de Brailes Hours: Shaping the Book of Hours in Thirteenth-Century Oxford*, London.

Duffy, E. (1992), *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580*, New Haven and London.

Duffy, E. (2006) *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers 1240–1570*, New Haven and London.

Duffy, E. (2009) *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor*, New Haven and London.

Edwards, J. (2005) 'Corpus Christi at Kingston upon Thames: Bartolomé Carranza and the Eucharist in Marian England,' in J. Edwards and R. Truman (eds.), *Reforming Catholicism in the England of Mary Tudor: the achievement of Friar Bartolomé Carranza*, Aldershot, 139–51.

Erler, M. C. (2003) *Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England*, Cambridge.

Fenlon, I. (ed.) (1982) *Cambridge Music Manuscripts, 900–1700*, Cambridge.

Fowler, J. T. (ed.) (1903), *Extracts from the Account Rolls of the Abbey of Durham*, [Surtees Society, 103; vol. 3], Durham.

Gibbs, D. M. (2017) 'The Transmission and Reception of the Marian Antiphon in Early Modern Britain' [unpublished doctoral dissertation, Newcastle University].

— (2018) 'England's most Christian king: Henry VIII's 1513 campaigns and a lost votive antiphon by William Cornysh,' *Early Music* 46, 131–148.

Harley, J. (2015) *Thomas Tallis*, Aldershot.

Harrison, F. Ll. (1962) 'Faburden in practice,' *Musica Disciplina* 16, 11–34.

Hickman, D. (ed.) (2001) *Lincoln Wills 1532–1534* [Lincoln Record Society, 89], Woodbridge.

Johnstone, A. (2016) 'Thomas Tallis and the five-part English Litany of 1544: evidence of "the notes used in the king's majesty's chapel",' *Early Music* 44, 219–32.

Legg, J. W. (ed.) (1893) *Missale ad Usum Ecclesie Westmonasteriensis*, [Henry Bradshaw Society, 5; vol. 2], London.

Marsh, D. (2007) 'Music, Church, and Henry VIII's Reformation,' [unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oxford].

- Mears, N., 'Special nationwide worship and the Book of Common Prayer in England, Wales and Ireland, 1533–1642,' in N. Mears and A. Ryrie (eds), *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, Aldershot, 31–72 .
- Milsom, J. (2007) 'Causton's Contrafacta,' *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 132, 1–31.
- Monson, C. (1979) 'The Preces, Psalms and Litanies of Byrd and Tallis: another "virtuous contention in love",' *Music Review* 70, 257–71
- Monson, C. (ed.) (1980) *The English Services* [Byrd Edition, 10a], London.
- Morgan, N. J. [2012-18] *English Monastic Litanies of the Saints after 1100* [Henry Bradshaw Society, 119–120 and 123; 3 vols], London.
- Procter, F., and C. Wordsworth (1879–86) *Breviarium ad Usum Insignis Ecclesiae Sarum* [3 vols], Cambridge.
- Renwick, W. (2006), *The Sarum Rite*, Hamilton [<https://hmcwordpress.mcmaster.ca/renwick>, accessed 13 December 2018].
- Robledo, L. (1989) 'Sobre la letanía de Antonio de Cabezón,' *Nassarre: Revista Aragonesa de Musicologia*, 5/ii, 143–52.
- Sandler, L. F. (1979) 'An early fourteenth-century English Psalter in the Escorial,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 42, 65–80.
- Scot, S. (ed.) (forthcoming) *John Sheppard IV: Vernacular Church Music* [Early English Church Music], London.
- Skinner, D. (2016) "'Deliver me from my deceitful enemies": a Tallis contrafactum in the time of war,' *Early Music* 44, 233–50.
- Summerly, J. (1989) 'British Library, Additional 34191: its Background, an Index and Commentary' [unpublished Master of Music dissertation, King's College London].

- Trowell, B. (1980) 'Faburden – New sources, new evidence: a preliminary survey,' in E. Olleson (ed.), *Modern Musical Scholarship*, Stocksfield, 28–78.
- Williamson, M. (2016) 'Queen Mary I, Tallis's *O sacrum convivium* and a Latin Litany,' *Early Music* 44, 251–70.
- Wrightson, J. (ed.) (1995) *The Wanley Manuscripts* [Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance; 3 vols.], Madison, WI, 99–101.