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## A VISION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM: THE TEXT OF STRIGGIO'S *ECCE BEATAM LUCEM*

*Striggio's forty-part motet Ecce beatam lucem survives in a unique manuscript source, dated 1587, in the Ratsschulbibliothek in Zwickau. Its text, first published in 1595, formed part of a Pindaric ode written by the neo-Latin poet and Calvinist Paul Schede Melissus (1539–1602). A closer consideration of Melissus' biography indicates that he probably wrote it after 1575, long after the wedding festivities with which the motet has habitually been associated (Florence, 1565; Munich, 1568). Its subject matter – a Calvinist vision of the New Jerusalem – also makes it an unlikely wedding text and inappropriate for Catholic festivities. Rather, it was probably used as the text of a contrafactum, for an as yet unidentified occasion, with which Striggio himself had little or no connection.*

During the 1560s Alessandro Striggio, Florence's highest-paid court musician, more or less cornered the market for forty-part music. First, he wrote a Canzona in forty parts for the visit of papal legates passing

†[This essay by David Butchart, the last of his extensive and fundamental contributions to the biography and music of Alessandro Striggio the Elder, was completed shortly before his death, after a long struggle, from cancer of the bile duct on 9 May 2023. The text presented here, with just a few minor editorial interventions, is otherwise printed in the final form which David oversaw.]

I am most grateful to Hugh Keyte and Silvia Resenghetti, Alan Newcombe and Michael Talbot, who read earlier versions of the text and made many useful comments. Jörg Robert of Tübingen University encouraged me to pursue the Calvinistic aspects of Melissus' poem. Dr. Gregor Hermann, Deputy Librarian of the Ratsschulbibliothek in Zwickau, was most helpful both during and after my stay there in 2020, as was Elisabeth Dlugosch of the University Library, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, Erlangen-Nürnberg (Alte Universitätsbibliothek, Handschriften, Graphische Sammlung). I also wish to thank Clemens Rohfleisch of the Historical Collections at the University Library, Heidelberg, who supplied me with a scan of the 1575 list of odes planned by Melissus. In addition, Dr William Barton of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Neo-Latin Studies, Innsbruck, provided me with a very useful commentary on the phrase 'ver novum' in Melissus' poem.

through Florence in July 1561.<sup>1</sup> A month later, he sent a refurbished version, also in forty parts, which he called a 'Musica', with a new text, as a late wedding present for his feudal lord, Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga of Mantua.<sup>2</sup> By the end of 1566 Striggio had composed a complete mass setting for forty voices, 'sopra "Ecco sì beato giorno"', with a final Agnus in 60 parts. The Mass has been associated with the dynastic wedding of Grand Duke Francesco de' Medici and Archduchess Johanna of Austria, held in Florence in December 1565. It is first mentioned in letters which Striggio wrote back to Florence in the course of a journey he undertook through Europe in 1567.<sup>3</sup> On that occasion it was intended as a gift for the Emperor Maximilian II (Johanna's brother) in Vienna, but it was first performed when Striggio travelled on to the Wittelsbach court of the Dukes of Bavaria in Munich and subsequently to the French court. After that, Striggio took it to England, where he was received favourably by Elizabeth I in Richmond in late May or early June 1567. Having met the leading musicians of the kingdom, as was his stated intention, Striggio, with his mass, seems to have inspired Thomas Tallis to emulate him with his own forty-part motet, *Spem in alium*.

The following year, in February 1568, a motet for forty voices by Striggio was performed at the lavish wedding of Duke Wilhelm of Bavaria and Renata of Lorraine in Munich – given twice (or perhaps three times) by the ducal Kapelle under the direction of its master, Orlando di Lasso.<sup>4</sup> Reports that Lasso himself had tried his hand at forty-part composition are unfounded, as they are based on a misunderstanding of the document in question, a letter of Duke Albrecht of Bavaria to his brother-in-law, Maximilian II, dated

<sup>1</sup> See *Diario fiorentino di Agostino Lapini dal 252 al 1596*, ed. G. O. Corazzini (Florence, 1900), p. 132; the Mantuan musica was first discussed in I. Fenlon and H. Keyte, 'Memorialls of Great Skill: A Tale of Five Cities', *Early Music*, 8 (1980), pp. 329–34, at p. 333.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Striggio's letter accompanying the Musica is included in I. Fenlon, *Music and Patronage in Sixteenth-century Mantua*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1980), I, pp. 179–80; see also D. Butchart, 'The Letters of Alessandro Striggio: An Edition with Translation and Commentary', *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, 23 (1990), pp. 1–78, at pp. 13–15.

<sup>3</sup> See D. S. Butchart, 'A Musical Journey of 1567: Alessandro Striggio in Vienna, Munich, Paris and London', *Music & Letters*, 63 (1982), pp. 1–16.

<sup>4</sup> See M. Troiano, *Dialoghi . . . Ne' quali si narrano le cose piu notabili fatte nelle Nozze dello Illustriss. & Excell. Principe GUGLIELMO VI. . . . ; et dell' Illustriss. & Excell. Madama RENATA di Loreno* (Venice, 1569), fols. 146<sup>v</sup> (Italian)–147<sup>r</sup> (Spanish), 'performed twice' in both versions; an earlier version of the same passage, M. Troiano, *Discorsi delli triumphi, giostre, apparati, & delle cose piu notabile fatte nelle sontuose Nozze, dell' Illustrissimo & Eccellentissimo Signor Duca Guglielmo . . . nell' Anno 1568, a 22. di Febraro* (Munich, 1568), p. 183, says 'three times'. Cf. Warren Kirkendale, *The Court Musicians in Florence during the Principiate of the Medici* (Florence, 1993), p. 72 and n. 68.

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26 July 1564. As Bernhard Rainer has recently pointed out,<sup>5</sup> while Albrecht had sent music by Lasso to the Emperor (for which the latter thanks him), it is the Emperor who is sending the ‘gesang mit den 41 schtimen’ (forty voices plus a basso seguente) to Albrecht, as previously promised in a letter of 26 June.<sup>6</sup> There, Maximilian reveals he had received his copy from Cristoforo Madruzzo, Prince Bishop of Trent, a leading cardinal and prominent music patron.<sup>7</sup> Rainer suggests (but without corroborating evidence) that Madruzzo may have acquired it from Ippolito d’Este, one of the papal legates in Florence in 1561 for whom Striggio’s original forty-part Canzona was, as it were, written. Rainer speculates that the work Maximilian sent to Duke Albrecht may have been by Striggio, either the original or a version of the work performed in 1561. The connection with Ippolito d’Este is made more intriguing by the presence of a 46-part work (sic), ascribed to Striggio, in the music collection of Antonio Goretti of Ferrara later in the century (see below).

After 1568, no more performances of forty-part music are recorded, although large-scale compositions for many voices are known about, both in 1568 itself (when a mass in 24 parts by Annibale Padovano was performed at the Munich festivities) and in succeeding years.<sup>8</sup> It is thought that Striggio’s colleague in Florence, Stefano Rossetto, composed a 50-voice motet, *Consolamini*

<sup>5</sup> B. Rainer, ‘La quale fu cantata molto bene. The Performances of Alessandro Striggio’s Monumental 40-part Compositions in Munich, 1567/68’, *Mirabilia*, 33 (2021), pp. 198–221 (online at [https://www.revistamirabilia.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/07\\_rainer.pdf](https://www.revistamirabilia.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/07_rainer.pdf)), at p. 219, n. 45, correcting R. Lindell, ‘Stefano Rossetti at the Imperial Court’, in *Musicologia Humana: Studies in Honor of Warren and Ursula Kirkendale*, ed. S. Gmeinwieser, D. Hiley and J. Riederbauer (Florence, 1994), pp. 157–81, at p. 163, and D. Moroney, ‘Alessandro Striggio’s Mass in Forty and Sixty Parts’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 60 (2007), pp. 1–78, at p. 23, n. 71, who both say Maximilian was sending *back* the forty-part work to Albrecht, rather than simply sending on a copy of the work he had received from Rome (‘Was mir auch dise tag zuckhumen, ubersende ich E. L. hiemit sambt dem gesang mit den 41 schtimen’). See also B. Rainer, *Instrumentalisten und instrumentale Praxis am Hof Albrechts V. von Bayern, 1550–1579* (Vienna, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> The correspondence is in V. Bibl, ed., *Die Korrespondenz Maximilians II, I: Familienkorrespondenz, 1564 Juli 25–1566 August 11* (Vienna, 1916), pp. 1–2. In the letter of 26 June, Maximilian asks Albrecht to send him a copy of some recent compositions by Lasso.

<sup>7</sup> On Madruzzo, see R. Vettori, ‘Note storiche sul patronato musicale di Cristoforo Madruzzo Cardinale di Trento (1512–1578)’, *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, 20 (1985), pp. 3–43; R. Becker, ‘Madruzzo, Cristoforo’, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960–; hereafter *DBI*), LXVII (2006).

<sup>8</sup> For a list of ‘works in many parts’, see Moroney, ‘Alessandro Striggio’s Mass’, p. 5, n. 11, and p. 6, table 1. See also the works listed in the inventory of Antonio Goretti’s collection (n. 12 below).

*popule meus*, in the same period; it survives incomplete in manuscript in Munich.<sup>9</sup>

We can follow the Striggio side of the story to its conclusion in the seventeenth century. A forty-part cantio by Striggio, named as ‘*Ecce beatam lucem* or *Laudes Jehovae summi*’, was mentioned by Georg Quitschreiber (1569–1638) in his *De parodia* (Jena, 1611): it had apparently been reduced to seven parts by the Lutheran scholar Johannes Lippius of Strasbourg (1585–1612).<sup>10</sup> The manuscript of a motet by Striggio existed in the library of Antonio Goretto of Ferrara (c. 1570–1649), a well-known music patron and collector. The music theorist and theologian Marin Mersenne saw the manuscript when he visited Ferrara in 1645, describing the motet as being for 46 voices; he did not specify its title or format (score or partbooks).<sup>11</sup> After Goretto’s death in 1649, his son and heir Lorenzo sold his father’s collection to the young Archduke Sigismund Franz of Austria (1630–1665). Presumably it was among the items transferred to the archduke’s court in Innsbruck. In an inventory drawn up after Sigismund Franz’s death in 1665, it may be identifiable with the work listed as a ‘Musica fata a 7 chori’, although this was ascribed to Goretto rather than Striggio, and is hardly an adequate description of Striggio’s work.<sup>12</sup> The collection was apparently transferred to the Imperial library in Vienna. Since then, no more has been heard of what was surely an exceptional item, one probably related to the sole forty-part motet ascribed to Striggio that survives today.

<sup>9</sup> Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. 1536, no. 104. The possibility that it was composed later, either for the Imperial court in Vienna or for Munich, should not be discounted: Rossetto was active in both centres.

<sup>10</sup> See Moroney, ‘Alessandro Striggio’s Mass’, p. 37 and n. 100.

<sup>11</sup> On Goretto, see A. Newcomb, ‘Goretto, Antonio’, in *New Grove*, X, pp. 162–3, and bibliography there; also S. De Salvo, ‘Goretto, Antonio’, in *DBL*LVIII (2002). Mersenne’s account is in *Novarum observationum physico-mathematicarum ... tomus III* (Paris, 1647), p. 166. The passage reads: ‘Denique vidi apud eum [Antonio Goretto] Motetum Alexandri Stygij 46. Vocum; Benedicti à Catano Capucini Litanias 66. vocum, cum 10. choris. Petri Mariae, *Benedictus*, 100. vocum, cum 20. Choris &c. quibus addo 22. magnos fasciculos Musicae S. Ceciliae, quam pro vocibus & instrumentis ipse composuit, & totidem annis Ferrariae concini cum omnium admiratione curavit’. The figures ‘46’ and ‘66’ may be misprints and should perhaps read ‘40’ and ‘60’, respectively.

<sup>12</sup> The inventory, dated 10 September 1665, was in the ‘k.k. Stadthalterei-Archiv, Innsbruck, in einem Akt, die sog. ‘Leopoldina’ Lit. J. No. 40’; now in the Tiroler Landesarchiv, Innsbruck; see F. Waldner, ‘Zwei Inventarien aus dem XVI. und XVII. Jahrhundert über hinterlassene Musikinstrumente und Musikalien am Innsbrucker Hofe, *Studien zu Musikwissenschaft*, 4 (1916), pp. 128–47, at p. 134. The same inventory also lists, among several large-scale compositions, ‘Salmi scripti a 4., 5 Chori di Alessandro Striggio’ (*ibid.*, p. 139), as well as a ‘Messa a 4 Chori, 16 voc. Di *Ippolito Baccusi*’ (p. 134) and a ‘Messe a 20. voc. Gaspari Villani’. A bust portrait of the composer (‘Alessandro Priggio’) is also listed (p. 131, no. 32) among a large group of composer portraits.

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That work – entitled *Ecce beatam lucem*, as Quitschreiber had written – has been known about since the late 19th century. First listed and described in the printed catalogue of the Ratsschulbibliothek in Zwickau in present-day Saxony, it is a unique manuscript source, still preserved in the library and dated by a chronogram to 1587;<sup>13</sup> a modern edition of the work first appeared in 1980.<sup>14</sup> It has been associated with the visit to Florence in 1561 of the papal legate Ippolito II d'Este, as mentioned above; more generally with the Munich wedding of 1568; and, more recently, with the Medici–Habsburg wedding in Florence in 1565.<sup>15</sup> Most recently, Jan Bařa has tried to link it to a meeting of the Order of the Golden Fleece in Prague in 1585.<sup>16</sup> The surviving manuscript is discussed in more detail below. The mass setting, mentioned in Striggio's correspondence and in a report by a Mantuan envoy in Paris in 1567, was thought to be lost, until Davitt Moroney rediscovered its forty partbooks and bassus ad organum, wrongly attributed and wrongly catalogued, in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris – surely one of the most remarkable musical 'finds' of the present century.<sup>17</sup> In a major article published following the discovery, Moroney was also able to show that the motet and mass shared many features, as well as musical material.<sup>18</sup>

Since then, the circumstances surrounding the composition and performance of both the mass and *Ecce beatam lucem* have been widely discussed in concert programme notes, online blogs and microsites, and in CD booklets. The mass was first performed in modern times at

<sup>13</sup> See R. Vollhardt, *Bibliographie der Musik-Werke in der Ratsschulbibliothek zu Zwickau* (Leipzig, 1893–6), p. 256 (no. 732): 'Striggio (Alessandro) . . . 41 Stbll. [Stimmblätter] in folio, Handschrift, enthalten eine Motette in 4 Chören à 8, 10, 16, u. 6 voc. Text: Ecce beatam lucem.' The chronogram is given at the end. A modern catalogue of the library's holdings is in preparation. The work was discussed in Max Schneider, *Die Anfänge des Basso Continuo* (Leipzig, 1918), p. 6, and mentioned in G. Reese, *Music in the Renaissance*, rev. ed., (London, 1954), p. 487; both authors continued to refer to the work as being for four choirs.

<sup>14</sup> The modern edition, with Preface, is by H. Keyte (London, 1980). Another edition, which has the advantage of retaining original note values, is by P. Legge (Melbourne, 2009; online at [https://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Ecce\\_beatam\\_lucem\\_\(Alessandro\\_Striggio\)](https://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Ecce_beatam_lucem_(Alessandro_Striggio))), both full score and separate scores for each choir).

<sup>15</sup> For the 1565 proposal, see R. Hollingworth and H. Keyte, liner notes to *Alessandro Striggio: Mass in 40 Parts Ecco si beato giorno*, Decca CD 478 2734 (2011), p. 13, and the corresponding microsite (<https://microsites.ifagiolini.com/striggio/>); and, especially, D. Moroney, 'The Polychoral Splendors of Renaissance Florence', concert program notes (Cal Performances, Berkeley, California), 3–4 February 2012, pp. 14–31, esp. pp. 20–5 (on *Ecce beatam lucem*); online at [https://calperformances.org/learn/program\\_notes/2011/pn\\_polychoral.pdf](https://calperformances.org/learn/program_notes/2011/pn_polychoral.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> J. Bařa, 'Remarks on the Festivities of the Order of the Golden Fleece in Prague (1585)', *Musicologica Brunensia*, 51 (2016), pp. 25–35.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Moroney, 'Striggio's Mass'.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

the London Promenade Concerts in the Royal Albert Hall in 2008, with Davitt Moroney conducting the Tallis Scholars, the BBC Singers and an array of instrumentalists. In the notes to the first commercial recording of the mass, by I Fagiolini under Robert Hollingworth (2011), which also included a recording of *Ecce beatam lucem*, the text of the latter was identified by Silvia Reseghetti as the work of Paul Schede Melissus (1539–1602), a prominent German neo-Latin poet, humanist and composer. It comprises the final two sections (antistrophe and epode) of an ode in the formal style of the ancient Greek poet Pindar.<sup>19</sup> A closer look at Melissus' biography, and examination of the text of *Ecce beatam lucem*, calls into question the earlier proposals about the composition of the motet (or, rather, the ode), its chronology and the occasions for which it may have been written. The text's connection to Striggio – as distinct from the music itself, which can certainly be ascribed to him – may no longer be justified. It may be associated, rather, with a later decade than the 1560s, in accordance with Melissus' development as a poet and the history of his publications. This being the case, the speculation regarding the text and its relation to the text of the music the mass was based on (*Ecco sì beato giorno*) becomes largely redundant.

#### THE POET

In Paul Schede Melissus we encounter an altogether remarkable figure.<sup>20</sup> He seems to encapsulate the notion of the eternal student, the wandering scholar and penniless poet – he only assumed a full-time paid position in his mid forties. The reality behind his peripatetic condition, however, and indeed much of his poetic activity, is one of striving for recognition and seeking out a position at one or other of the courts of potential patrons. These included places in his homeland around Würzburg in Franconia, Imperial Vienna, Heidelberg, Nuremberg and Augsburg. Later, he made his pitch in

<sup>19</sup> See Hollingworth and Keyte, liner notes to *Striggio: Mass in 40 Parts*, p. 13, and the corresponding microsite.

<sup>20</sup> Schede adopted his second surname early on, taking it from that of his mother (Otilie Melissa), and used it consistently from the 1570s in his signature and publications; his original surname may have been 'Schad'. Melissus' poetry is an important source for information about his life. The earliest biographical sources are J.-J. Boissard, *Icones quinquaginta virorum illustrium doctrina & eruditione praestantium ad vivum effictae cum eorum vitis descriptis*, 4 vols. in 2 (Leiden, 1597–9), II (I), pp. 86 (sic; correctly 84)–94 (believed to have been written by Melissus himself; Boissard was a close friend of the poet); M. Adam, 'Paulus Melissus Schedius', in his *Vitae Germanorum philosophorum: Qui seculo superiori, et quod excurrit, philosophicis ac humanioribus literis clari floruerunt* (Heidelberg, 1615), pp. 446–53, based on Boissard and the funeral oration of Melissus' son-in-law, Simon Stein (Stenius), and other sources ('Ex oratione parentali Simonis Stenii, Iconibus Boissardi, et aliis'), which also covers the years to his death and offers some sympathetic remarks on his character.



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Figure 1 Melissus at the age of 25 (1564). Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Porträtstichsammlung, Inventar-Nr. 45/39 (image in public domain).

Paris, Geneva and London. Engraved images show him, first, as an elegant courtier at the age of 25 in 1564 (Figure 1); later (1597), he appears as more of a forbidding patrician figure (Figure 2).



Figure 2 Melissus in his late 50s. Engraving by Theodor de Bry in Boissard, *Icones* (1597). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-1917-745 (image in public domain).

As one of the leading poets in Germany in the second half of the sixteenth century, Melissus wrote almost exclusively in Latin and gained a reputation across Europe. Various views of Melissus have been put forward, variously viewing him as Germany's first Petrarchist, or as a German Horace, or as the German Ronsard,



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and praised widely in his lifetime, he wrote in the lingua franca of the educated elite with an extraordinary facility and virtuosity. He produced several collections of poetry, some voluminous and many smaller anthologies and single-poem publications (typically epithalamia). It has been estimated that he wrote over 2,000 poems and that half of his oeuvre remained unpublished at his death.<sup>21</sup> Melissus' poetry can be conveniently divided into secular and religious. The former includes poems to friends, patrons and masters and his love poetry (addressed to an idealised Rosina); the latter includes didactic and edificatory poems. His secular verse shows 'great formal skill, but otherwise ... [is] characterised by flattery' in John Flood's view.<sup>22</sup> Melissus addressed a mesmerising throng of philologists, philosophers, theologians, historians, jurists, antiquarians, physicians, astronomers and astrologers, politicians, diplomats, courtiers, poets and musicians, noblemen and leading clergy, as well as many of the crowned heads and cultural patrons of Europe.<sup>23</sup>

He also maintained a huge circle of correspondents, many of whom feature in his poetry.<sup>24</sup> He consciously sought out scholars and learned men all over Europe, in order to discover and benefit from their knowledge and expertise, conforming to a pattern typical of many humanists of his day. However, his name and work are now largely forgotten. Universally characterised as a representative of early Baroque Mannerism in the secondary literature in Germany – a view cogently challenged in the last few years<sup>25</sup> – Melissus tends to be remembered today (despite a lively community of neo-Latin scholars

<sup>21</sup> Cf. J. L. Flood, *Poets Laureate in the Holy Roman Empire: A Bio-Bibliographical Handbook*, 5 vols. (Berlin and New York, 2006), IV, p. 1822, citing R. G. Czaplá, 'Zwischen politischem Partizipationsstreben und literarischer Standortsuche: Die Italienreise des pfälzischen Späthumanisten Paul Schede Melissus', in *Lateinische Lyrik der frühen Neuzeit: Poetische Kleinformen und ihre Funktionen zwischen Renaissance und Aufklärung*, ed. B. Czaplá, R. G. Czaplá and R. Seidel, Frühe Neuzeit, 77 (Tübingen, 2003), pp. 217–55, at p. 241.

<sup>22</sup> Flood, *Poets Laureate*, IV, p. 1822.

<sup>23</sup> Female acquaintances also formed part of his circle, including Anna von Palant (Anna Pallant, c. 1550–1599), a humanist and neo-Latin poet to whom Melissus addressed several poems. He reports having heard her sing a piece to words by Ronsard in Cologne: *Schediasmata poetica* (see n. 42 below), pp. 88–91. See also n. 33 below.

<sup>24</sup> Melissus' correspondence is scattered throughout libraries in Europe. The main source is the Staatsbibliothek in Munich, where much of it has been digitised (<https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/>): 10 volumes, including poetry and autograph letters, are to be found there: Clm 735, 736, 760, 1659, 1831, 10367, 10368, 10383, 10741, 10789.

<sup>25</sup> See T. Burkard, 'Frühbarocker Manierismus? Zu Poetologie und poetischer Praxis in den *Schediasmata* des Paulus Schedius Melissus', in *Würzburger Humanismus*, ed. T. Baier and J. Schultheiss, NeoLatina, 23 (Tübingen, 2015), pp. 209–43, at p. 215, who points to Melissus' predilection for shorter lyric forms, his natural style of poetry, observance of decorum, imitation of all the ancient poets and restitution of their vocabulary and a rejection of Mannerist poetic forms.

in Germany) for his pioneering translation into German of the Huguenot Psalter and for his few German poems. As even the editors of the principal modern anthology of neo-Latin poetry in Germany have to admit, the Latin culture and literature of his time belongs to a submerged world in a distant epoch.<sup>26</sup>

Born into a modest family in Mellrichstadt in Lower Franconia (present-day northern Bavaria), Melissus was educated at the Ratsschule in Zwickau – whose library, coincidentally, now houses the unique manuscript of *Ecce beatam lucem* – and studied philology at the universities of Erfurt and Jena. He was also a trained musician, becoming Kantor in Königsberg in Franken (now Königsberg in Bayern) in 1559, at the age of 19. Suspicions of his early Calvinist tendencies may have led him to move to more tolerant Vienna in 1561, where he continued his studies and, encouraged by his friend Caspar Cropacius, took up poetry, writing verses praising the Habsburg rulers. For his efforts he was duly crowned poeta laureatus by the Emperor Ferdinand I on 2 May 1564 – an honour indicating not much more than the encouragement of a loyal young Imperialist. It brought no material benefits; at the same time he was also raised to the ranks of the nobility.<sup>27</sup> He returned to his studies, at Wittenberg, Leipzig and Würzburg between 1564 and 1565, but also taught 42 cadets, scions of the nobility, at a military seminary in Vienna, and even accompanied them on the Emperor Maximilian II's disastrous campaign against the Turks in Hungary in 1566. Previously, in the same year, at the Diet of Augsburg, he probably met Orlando di Lasso, the Duke of Bavaria's Kapellmeister, who became a friend and to whom he addressed several poems. He published a collection of motets, the *Cantionum musicarum, quatuor et quinque vocum liber unus* (Wittenberg, 1566), mostly to his own texts in Latin and Greek.<sup>28</sup> By this time, he had

<sup>26</sup> *Humanistische Lyrik des 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. Köhlmann, R. Seidel and H. Wiegand, Bibliothek der Frühen Neuzeit, Abt. 1, 5, Bibliothek Deutscher Klassiker, 146 (Berlin, 1997), p. 914. The Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Neo-Latin Studies in Innsbruck has set itself the task of championing the subject. The best introduction to Melissus' work remains E. Schäfer, *Deutscher Horaz: Conrad Celtis, Georg Fabricius, Paul Melissus, Jacob Balde; Die Nachwirkungen des Horaz in der neulateinischen Dichtung Deutschlands* (Wiesbaden, 1976).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Flood, *Poets Laureate*, IV, p. 1821, correcting J. H. Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, 64 vols. (Halle and Leipzig, 1731–54), XX (1739), cols. 521–2, at col. 521, who wrote that Melissus was made a laureate in 1561. On the value of the honour and its debasement in the course of the century, see K. Karrer, *Johannes Posthius: Verzeichnis der Briefe und Werke mit Regesten und Posthius-Biographie* (Wiesbaden, 1992), pp. 82–3, who cites in this respect J. Lipsius, *Satyra Menippaea* (Leiden?, 1581), pp. 9ff.

<sup>28</sup> The copy in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4<sup>o</sup> Mus. pr. 15, is online at <https://stimmbuecher.digitale-sammlungen.de/view?id=bsb00093036>. In the collection, there is a *Threnodia de obitu reverendi viri D. Philippi Melanthonis*, 'Spargite humum lacrymis' (no. XII), written on the death of the great Lutheran theologian Philipp Melancthon

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written no fewer than five books of Ovidian elegies and two books of epigrams in Latin, and several poems, many in the form of epithalamia, addressed to members of the Viennese nobility. Disappointed with his lack of recognition, he destroyed the elegies and epigrams in an auto da fé in 1567. Several of the wedding poems survive in manuscript in the Austrian National Library in Vienna.<sup>29</sup>

Seeing no further prospects at the Imperial court, Melissus left Vienna in 1567. His broadening experience and increased contacts, made at the Diet of Augsburg in 1566, may well have given him the impulse to extend his poetic ambitions further afield.<sup>30</sup> Armed with letters of recommendation to associates of France's leading poets (the Pléiade group), Melissus was to enter one of the most decisive periods of his life.<sup>31</sup> After travelling to Flanders in the company of the jurist Jean Lobbet, he reached Paris. According to the account in Boissard's *Icones*, in the short time he resided in Paris, Melissus met up with the influential humanist Petrus Ramus (1515–1572), a convert to Protestantism in 1561, Denis Lambin (1520–1572), a classical scholar famous for his editions of Horace, Lucretius and Cicero, and Jean Daurat (Dorat; 1508–1588), a nobleman, poet, scholar and member of the Pléiade – indeed, father of the group – whose members were his pupils at the Collège de Coqueret.<sup>32</sup> Daurat was probably the most important figure that Melissus met in Paris. But the crucial influence was that of Ronsard, who by this time had retired from the life of the court. Pierre de Nolhac suggests that he and Melissus met 'sans doute' at the house of Jean de Morel, the host of Paris's leading literary salon.<sup>33</sup>

(1497–1560). The book ends with the epigrammatic 'Si vox est, canta' (no. XX; 'If voice be, sing'), which features extended passages of melisma; the text is from Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, I, 595–6 (I am grateful to Silvia Reseghetti for this reference). On Melissus as a composer, see the articles in *New Grove* and *MGG*.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Die Psalmenübersetzung des Paul Schede Melissus, 1572*, ed. M. H. Jelinek, Neudrucke Deutscher Literaturwerke des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts, 144–8 (Halle an der Saale, 1896) p. iii, n. 1.

<sup>30</sup> See M. Kelber, *Die Musik bei den Augsburger Reichstagen im 16. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2018), pp. 335–83.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. P. de Nolhac, *Un poète rhénan ami de la Pléiade: Paul Melissus* (Paris, 1923), pp. 9–17; idem, *Ronsard et l'humanisme* (Paris, 1921), pp. 218–24.

<sup>32</sup> Boissard, *Icones*, II (I), p. 88: 'Anno 1567. profectus per Belgium in Galliam comite itineris Ioanne Lobetio Iurisconsulto experientissimo, cum substitisset aliquandiu Lutetiae [Paris], salutassetque Petrum Ramum, Dionysium Lambinum, Ioannem Auratum, Erricum Memmium, audissetque Professores regios, contulit se Aurelianum [Orléans] ad Ligurim, ubi incidit in tumultus illos bellicose, qui movebantur die 29. Septemb. per totum regnum ob diversitatem religionis [the 'Michelade'].'

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Nolhac, *Ronsard et l'humanisme*, p. 219. Melissus addressed poems to Morel and his famously erudite daughter Camille. See too J. Robert, 'Deutsch-französische Dornen: Paul Schede Melissus und die Rezeption der Pléiade in Deutschland', in *Abgrenzung und*

The members of the Pléiade – above all Ronsard – had revitalised French poetry in the previous decades. Ronsard had established his name in the early 1550s with collections of odes modelled on Pindar (whose original texts he had studied with Daurat),<sup>34</sup> and, more successfully from the point of view of their reception, with a series of *Amours* (1554) based on Petrarch.<sup>35</sup> In Paris, Melissus relates, he also attended lectures on literature at the Collège Royal. He admired Ronsard more than any other living poet, as is clear from the poems he addressed to him and from five poems, based on Ronsard originals, that appeared in his collections of 1574 and 1575.<sup>36</sup> Melissus saw himself as the poet who would spread the word on Ronsard in Germany, and, indeed, establish himself there as the new Ronsard:<sup>37</sup>

Tecum perennis jam genii, Petre,  
 Pleno, futurum est, plenus ut ipsemet           50  
 Fortassis aeternem per aevum  
 Teutonicam fidicem Camoenam.

(Bound with you, Pierre, whom an eternal genius possesses, I too, perhaps, filled with that spirit, will confer authority as a poet on the German muse through the ages.)

Melissus' stay in Paris was relatively short. During this period he was also engaging with leading Huguenots, becoming actively involved with their struggle in the conflicts that were plaguing France at that time. In the course of events he fell into the hands of both French and Spanish troops, and sought refuge in Besançon in eastern France for three months, where he made friends with the French composer Claude Goudimel (1514–1572), a close associate of the Pléiade, who wrote four-part settings of the psalms of the Genevan (or Huguenot) Psalter, and who exercised a considerable influence on Melissus

*Synthese: Lateinische Dichtung und volkssprachliche Traditionen in Renaissance und Barock*, ed. M. Föcking and G. M. Müller (Heidelberg, 2007), pp. 207–29.

<sup>34</sup> He was the creator and principal exponent of the 'ode pindarique'. One model for Melissus was Ronsard's *Quatre premiers livres des odes*, probably written between 1546 and 1552, and published between 1550 and 1552. It began with fifteen Pindaric odes.

<sup>35</sup> On Pindar (in English), see C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford, 1964); S. Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar: Historical Narrative and World of Epinikian Poetry* (Oxford, 2004). On Pindar and music, see W. Anderson and T. J. Mathiesen, 'Pindar', *New Grove*, XIX, pp. 750–1; W. D. Anderson, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca, NY, 1994), pp. 94–109; T. J. Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre: Greek Music and Music Theory in Antiquity and the Middle Age* (Lincoln, NE, 1999), pp. 135–41.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. P. Ford, *The Judgment of Palaemon: The Contest between Neo-Latin and Vernacular Poetry in Renaissance France* (Leiden and Boston, 2013), pp. 186–7.

<sup>37</sup> *Schediasmata poetica* (see n. 42 below), pp. 31–3, at p. 33; my translation. Quoted in Schäfer, *Deutscher Horaz*, p. 67. Cf. Ford, *The Judgment of Palaemon*, p. 201.



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himself. Ultimately, Melissus made Geneva his place of residence. He lived there from 1568 to 1571, able to proclaim his faith openly and befriending leading Calvinists. Théodore de Bèze (1519–1605), Calvin's successor as rector in the city, became a lifelong acquaintance, and corresponded with Melissus into the 1580s. Above all, Melissus benefitted from contact with the printer and philologist Henri II Estienne (Stephanus, 1531–1598), with whom he studied Greek lyric poetry and whose editions of Greek epigrams Melissus translated into Latin. Estienne's editions of Anacreon (1554) and, above all, of Pindar (1560) were, it is said, the inspiration for Melissus' later renewal of the Pindaric ode in Latin.<sup>38</sup>

In Geneva, Melissus also made the acquaintance of Christoph, the third son of the Count Elector of the Rhine, Friedrich III, and a fellow Calvinist. He was commissioned by the count (whom he met again at the Diet of Speyer in 1570) to translate the Psalms of David from the Geneva Psalter of Marot and de Bèze (1562) into German and arrange them in four-part settings using the pre-existent Huguenot melodies.<sup>39</sup> He moved to the Elector's capital, Heidelberg, to work on his commission.<sup>40</sup> As a result, Melissus produced the first musical settings of Psalms (nos. 1–50) in German, *Di Psalmen Davids: In teutsche Gesangreymen nach französischer Melodeien unt Sylben Art* (Heidelberg, 1572). Although he put a great deal of effort into the work, believing he was carrying out an immortal service to German literature that would see him recognised as the German Ronsard, the project enjoyed only a mixed reception. The translations mark Melissus' development into a poet of the elevated style ('gravis sublimisque stilus', as he described it in a later epigram), analogous to that of learned poetry in Latin for an elite, and provide 'the only instance in [Melissus'] career of an illiterate or semi-literate popular culture regularly reciting his poetry' – i.e. the church congregations of Heidelberg.<sup>41</sup> Their wide, ornate vocabulary, use of enjambement, convoluted construction, as well as the introduction of a new orthography for the German text, caused

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Schäfer, *Deutscher Horaz*, p. 66.

<sup>39</sup> See Jellinek, *Die Psalmenübersetzung*; R. G. Czaplá, 'Transformationen des Psalters in Spannungsfeld von gemeinschaftlicher Adhortation und individueller Meditation: Paul Schede, *Psalmen Davids* und *Psalmi aliquot*', in *Der Genfer Psalter und seine Rezeption in Deutschland, der Schweiz und den Niederlanden*, ed. E. Grunewald et al. (Tübingen, 2004), pp. 195–215; M. Laube, 'Music and Confession in Heidelberg, 1556–1618' (PhD diss., Royal Holloway College, University of London, 2014), esp. pp. 92–7.

<sup>40</sup> There, in 1572, with his close friend Johannes Posthius, a fellow poet and physician whom he had met in Paris in 1567, he also formed the Collegium Posthimelissaeum – in effect a drinking club and poets' circle. Together with other poets in Nuremberg, they published a variety of pamphlets in the following two years.

<sup>41</sup> Laube, *Music and Confession*, p. 95.

confusion and made them difficult to understand. Also, only Psalms 1–50 were included, meaning that familiar and favourite texts, such as Psalm 119, were missing. Melissus' work was then overtaken by the publication, first in Leipzig in 1573, then in Heidelberg in 1574, of the complete Psalms in a more straightforward version in simplified language by the jurist Ambrosius Lobwasser, whose text quickly found favour all over Germany and was adopted by the elector – despite his sponsorship of Melissus – for the churches of his state.

The bitter disappointment Melissus felt – reflected in letters criticising Lobwasser's translations – seems to have confirmed him in his commitment to Latin verse. In 1574 and 1575, respectively, he published his first collections, the *Schediasmata poetica* (roughly, 'Schede's poetical gasps', the Greek title implying improvised poetry) and the much more extensive *Schediasmatum reliquiae*.<sup>42</sup> The former contained odes, elegiacs and hendecasyllables, modelled on Horace and Catullus. The *Reliquiae* introduced epigrams and translations from the Greek Anthology, as well as a variety of anagrams and acrostics and poetry in French. Notable in the collections is the range of addressees and places introduced. Melissus was communicating with the European republic of letters, to friends and acquaintances in Franconia and Saxony, Vienna and Augsburg, Flanders and France, Geneva, Heidelberg – bringing together, however briefly, 'an assembly of middle European culture bearers, scholars, poets and musicians'.<sup>43</sup> Among the musicians addressed were Lasso (above all),<sup>44</sup> Jakob Vaet (the Imperial choirmaster who had died in 1567), Jakob Meiland and Claude Goudimel (commemorated after his death in 1572).<sup>45</sup> Further poems to musicians – including Leonhard Lechner, Andrea Gabrieli and Gioseffo Zarlino – came to be included in the much expanded Parisian edition of the *Schediasmata poetica* of 1586.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Melissi Schediasmata poetica* [197 pp.]; *item Fidleri Flumina* (Frankfurt am Main, 1574); *Melissi Schediasmatum reliquiae* [451 pp.] (Frankfurt am Main, 1575).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Schäfer, 'Paulus Melissus Schedius (1539–1602): Leben in Versen', in *Humanismus im Deutschen Südwesten: Biographische Profile*, ed. P. G. Schmidt (Sigmaringen, 1993), pp. 239–63, at p. 242.

<sup>44</sup> The poems to Lassus are included in both the *Schediasmata poetica* (pp. 76–7, 111–13) and the *Schediasmatum reliquiae* (pp. 63–4, 64). The most famous of them, 'Non ita laetanti Ariona ab undis', inspired by rumours of Lasso's death, is included in *Humanistische Lyrik*, p. 808 ff. In it, Melissus recalls their first meeting in the 1560s and how Lasso inspired his own musical composition.

<sup>45</sup> In the *Schediasmatum reliquiae*: poem to Vaet ('In funere Iacobi Vaeti musici Cesarei'), pp. 65–6; to Jacob Meiland, pp. 69, 140; three poems to Goudimel, pp. 78–80. Melissus also reprinted, pp. 82–4, two of Goudimel's letters to him, written in 1570 and 1572 respectively.

<sup>46</sup> *Melissi Schediasmata poetica: Secundo edita multo auctiora*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1586). See n. 62 below.

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With the death of his protector Friedrich III in 1576, after which Heidelberg reverted to Lutheranism, Melissus, like many others at the court, saw no immediate future there; indeed, with the accession of Ludwig VI as elector, Calvinist courtiers were being replaced by Lutherans. He resolved to travel to Italy, ostensibly to study law in Padua – one of the few universities in Europe not to insist on religious conformity – in order to attain, at last, a proper professional qualification. Instead, his *furor poeticus* displaced any such effort. The deaths of his fiancée and of his mother may also have spurred him on. It was at this point that the genre of the ode, both Horatian and Pindaric, became the focus of his attention; he was to write more than thirty of the latter.<sup>47</sup>

He spent the next four years (to 1580) travelling around the peninsula, supported by financial contributions arranged for him by his close friend, the poet and physician Johannes Posthius.<sup>48</sup> A highlight of his visit was the study of Horace manuscripts for a month in the Vatican Library. He spent a long period in Siena (October 1578–July 1579), where, as well as making music with the citizens, he presented himself to Alessandro Piccolomini, the renowned humanist and philosopher, poet and astronomer and translator of Aristotle's *Poetics* (1575), and sent odes to scholarly friends in Rome, Florence and Leiden.<sup>49</sup> He also addressed poems (and letters) to Pietro Angèlio da Barga, another renowned humanist and classical scholar, who encouraged his efforts. In 1579 he gained honorary Roman citizenship, the titles of Comes Palatinus and Knight of the Golden Spur, and the right to confer poet laureateships, in a ceremony supervised by the Imperial commissioner in Padua, Ferrando Amadis. All through this period he maintained a lively correspondence (in Latin) with colleagues in Germany and scholars in Italy, such as the revered classical philologist Pietro Vettori in Florence (the mentor of the music theorist Girolamo Mei). Indeed, he spent a month in Florence, in August 1579, at a time when Striggio was probably in residence there; but no known contact between them is documented, nor did Melissus have any direct contact with the Medici court, as far as we know.

<sup>47</sup> He drew up a list – probably in Nuremberg during the 1580s – alternating Pindaric and Horatian odes, including titles and strophe form, that came to fruition between 1575 and 1582: cf. Schäfer, *Deutscher Horaz*, p. 73. Original in Heidelberg University Library, MS 1610, 22. The list includes the ode addressed to Zarlino.

<sup>48</sup> See Karrer, *Johannes Posthius*, pp. 74–5.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Schäfer, 'Paulus Melissus Schedius', p. 250.

Melissus' international fame, initially won in Italy, is in part due to his becoming the leading exponent in his time of the Pindaric ode in Latin, which was essentially his innovation. He brought together the results of his efforts in the great edition of his poems in 1586. Before his departure for Italy, he had only written only one such ode, according to Eckhart Schäfer, who viewed Melissus' personal crisis at the time as contributing to his poetic transformation.<sup>50</sup> In Italy he won praise for his novel contributions in the styles of Horace and Pindar from the scholars whose acquaintance he sought out.<sup>51</sup> For Melissus, Italy was, in a sense, the place where, like Goethe a century and a half later, he gained a real sense of self-assurance; he would return to Germany as a newborn Horace and Pindar.<sup>52</sup>

How exactly he survived in Nuremberg in the early 1580s, from a financial point of view, remains unclear, although he had a number of earlier contacts there.<sup>53</sup> During Melissus' years there, the city's musical culture was flourishing, with a succession of musical societies organised by the patricians. Melissus was undoubtedly part of this scene, as a poem addressed to the members of one of the societies testifies.<sup>54</sup> The presence of Leonhard Lechner (1553–1606) – 'the leading German composer of choral music in the later sixteenth century' – undoubtedly enhanced the city's reputation and prestige,

<sup>50</sup> The ode, 'Iuveni modestissimo quae canam', addressed to Johannes Rosbach of Meissen, was printed in *Schediasmata poetica* (21586), I, pp. 33–5.

<sup>51</sup> They included the Frenchman Antoine Muret (classical philologist and friend of Ronsard, resident in Rome), Flavio Orsini (antiquarian and librarian at Palazzo Farnese in Rome), Pietro Vettori (Florence), Pietro Angèlio da Barga, the historian Carlo Sigonio (Bologna), the antiquarian Jacopo Strada (Mantua) and the editor Aldo Manuzio (Venice) – all addressed in odes by Melissus.

<sup>52</sup> See Schäfer, *Deutscher Horaz*, p. 71, citing an imitation (parodia) of Horace's Ode I.29, addressed to Justus Lipsius, composed in Siena in 1579, first published in Nuremberg in 1581 and reprinted in Melissus' *Meletemata pia* (see n. 64 below), pp. 362–3, at p. 363, making that intention clear: '... Quis neget alteris/Senes renasci posse formas/Matribus, et juvenes reverti; // Cum multum amatos nunc ego nobiles/Libros Horati, Pindaricam & chelyn/Mutare vexillis Etruscis,/Lucra petens meliora, tendo?' (Who could deny that from new/mothers age-old beings will be born again?/and as youths could once more return, // if I now seek to exchange the much-loved, noble/books of Horace and Pindar's lyre/for Tuscan banners/striving for better advantage?)

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Czapla, 'Zwischen politischem Partizipationsstreben', p. 243. On Nuremberg, see G. Strauss, *Nuremberg in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1966); on its musical culture, see S. Gattuso, 'Nuremberg', *New Grove*, XVIII, pp. 241–3; eadem, 'Sixteenth-Century Nuremberg', in *Man and Music: The Renaissance: from the 1470s to the End of the 18th Century*, ed. I. Fenlon (London, 1989), pp. 286–303; S. L. Hammond, *Editing Music in Early Modern Germany* (Aldershot, 2007), especially chap. 2: 'Friedrich Lindner: Working for a Local Clientele', pp. 45–65.

<sup>54</sup> *Schediasmata poetica* (21586), III, p. 113: *Ad suavissimum musicae patriciae sodalium in urbe Noribergae, 'Quo primum peramica die consortia vestra'.*



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as did the presence of important musical printers.<sup>55</sup> Although not a direct pupil of Lasso (Ivo de Vento was his teacher), Lechner was a follower of the Munich Kapellmeister – and a fervent Lutheran convert. He had been a boy chorister in the Munich Kapelle in the late 1560s. Lechner set several poems by Melissus, notably the epithalamium *Quid, Chaos, aptarum* – a striking dialogue between Amor, Chaos and God, with a final Chorus – in a twenty-four-voice setting (three eight-part choirs) for the wedding of the patrician and banker Sebald Welser to Margarete Imhoff, daughter of the mayor, in January 1582.<sup>56</sup> It has been compared to *Ecce beatam lucem* and *Spem in alium* as ‘one of the most extravagant musical works of the 16th century’;<sup>57</sup> indeed, there are several points of comparison with *Ecce beatam lucem*. Lechner was Melissus’ closest musical associate during this period, and a good friend too, as testified by several poems addressed to the musician.<sup>58</sup> Their collaboration represents a highpoint of late Renaissance musical culture in Germany.

In 1584, as tutor to two young Austrian noblemen, one of whom was the Calvinist Georg Erasmus Freiherr von Tschernembl, Melissus embarked on a second journey to Paris, where he supervised the publication of a much extended second edition – over 1,000 pages in length – of the *Schediasmata poetica* of 1574. The new edition was dedicated to Elizabeth I of England, whom Melissus had admired for many years as a defender of the Huguenot cause and financier of the Dutch Protestant rebels. Many poems are addressed to Elizabeth and to members of her court, including Sir Philip Sidney; she wrote one in reply (in Latin).<sup>59</sup> In the autumn of 1585, Melissus travelled with the Tschernembls to Richmond to present the Queen with a copy of the collection (perhaps a manuscript copy), which is mentioned in the Calendar of State Papers (‘musters Verses of Melissus, the poet’).<sup>60</sup>

<sup>55</sup> The quotation is from K. Ameln, ‘Lechner, Leonhard’, in *New Grove*, XIV, pp. 441–4 (and bibliography). On musical printing, see Hammond, *Editing Music*.

<sup>56</sup> The text does not appear in any of Melissus’ poetry collections; modern edn of the music in L. Lechner, *Werke*, ed. U. Martin (Kassel, 1998), XIV, pp. 39–75; see also Introduction, pp. 22–8, which includes a translation of the text into German.

<sup>57</sup> See W. Rombach, CD booklet for L. Lechner, *Geistliche Festmusik (1582)* (Christophorus CD 77367, 2013), p. 11. Martin, Introduction to Lechner, *Werke*, XIV, p. 22, describes it as ‘one of the most interesting and most complex works of the sixteenth century’.

<sup>58</sup> See *Schediasmata poetica* (21586), I, pp. 51–2 (a Pindaric ode); III, pp. 106–7, 114, 117, 118. There is also a *Dialogus in gratiam Nicolai Comitis Ostrorogii: Octo vocum harmonia concinnatus a Leonardo Lechnero*, ‘Unde novum precor ignotae venistis in orbem?’, *ibid.*, III, pp. 152–3; the music does not seem to have survived.

<sup>59</sup> See J. E. Philips, ‘Elizabeth I as a Latin Poet: An Epigram on Paul Melissus’, *Renaissance News*, 16 (1963), pp. 289–98. She called him ‘vatum princeps’.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1581–1590*, ed. R. Lemon (London, 1868), p. 300; cited in Schäfer, ‘Paulus Melissus Schedius’, p. 253.

Admiring him for his talents as both poet and musician, Elizabeth even wished to retain him in her service, and she probably valued him as a useful contact to the Calvinist groups she supported in Europe.

Bringing together poems written over a period of 25 years (i.e. going back to 1565/6) and organised according to genre, the collection begins with *Emmetra, ad aemulationem Pindari modulata* (Verses composed in imitation of Pindar), the first time Melissus had brought his Pindaric odes together, works composed, most likely, over the previous ten years. Twenty-seven in all, they were given pride of place in the collection. The first, addressed to the Queen herself, had originally been written in 1582. It was the most extended and most elaborate. There followed odes to Frederik II, King of Denmark (also from 1582), the Doge of Venice, Nicolò da Ponte, and the Bishop of Bamberg; then to scholars, including several Italians: Pietro Vettori, Pietro Angèlio da Barga, Carlo Sigonio, Aldo and Paolo Manuzio and Gioseffo Zarlino ('Zarline princeps ordinis harmonici'); there were three odes in the form of epithalamia; and the sequence was rounded off with odes to Leonhard Lechner (characterised by very short lines), Rosina (Melissus' idealised love) and Ugo Boncompagni (better known as Pope Gregory XIII; written 'In gratiam Germanicae nationis, quae erat Bononiae, Anno 1579', 'as a thanksgiving of the German nation at the University of Bologna in 1579'). In the following section, entitled *Melica*, a Horatian ode, 'Festas choreas, et genialium', is addressed to Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, on the occasion of his wedding to Margherita Gonzaga in 1579.<sup>61</sup> All in all, there is a strong Italian current running through the collection, indicating that much had been composed either in Italy (1577–80) or as a result of Melissus' Italian journey. In addition, there are several poems addressed to musicians, and poems about or referring to music.<sup>62</sup> At some stage, Melissus and the publisher of the collection,

<sup>61</sup> *Schediasmata poetica* (21586), I, pp. 29–30 (Zarlino), 51–2 (Lechner), 53–4 (Rosina), 55–7 (Boncompagni), 85–7 (Este wedding). The first three books of *Melica* are ordered according to the status of the person addressed. Books 4–9 are autobiographical in character: 4: Youth (1560–77); 5: Italy (1577–9); 6: Nomination as Comes Palatinus (Knight of the Palatine, 1579–80); 8: Nuremberg and Augsburg (1583–4); 9: Paris and preparation for visit to England. All the odes in the *Melica* are Horatian in form.

<sup>62</sup> Musicians addressed in *Schediasmata poetica* (21586), III, include Lasso (pp. 88–9, 121–2), Theodor Cyssa (p. 90), Meiland (pp. 93, 101), Goudimel (pp. 99, 263–4), Lechner (pp. 106–7, 114, 117, 118), another to Zarlino (pp. 108–9), Valentin Greff Bakfark (p. 109), Andrea Gabrieli (pp. 118–9), and Jacques Edinton, 'Regum Franc. musico' (p. 122). In a poem to Rosina (pp. 89–90), Melissus mentions that he set it to music himself ('Cantionem quinque vocum harmonia/a se concinnatam'). There is also a poem in praise of music (*In praefationem Ulrichi Sitzingeri ic. De laudibus musicae*, pp. 119–20), which ends 'Musica res sancta est. obscenum et turpe facessat;/Non habet in sacris lingua profana locum.'

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Arnold Sittart, seem to have realised that the size of the volume was becoming unwieldy. A further series of poems was announced in the list of contents ('In sequentibus partibus expectato'), including the *Carmina sacra* that were to make up part of Melissus' final collection, the *Meletemata pia* ('Devotional Contemplations' or 'Meditations' – also punning on Melissus' name) of 1595.

In 1586, having declined Elizabeth's offer to join her court, Melissus returned to Heidelberg at the behest of Johann Casimir, who held the regency for his nephew Friedrich IV in the Electoral Palatinate (restored to Calvinism since 1583). There he assumed official positions as Kurpfälzischer Rat (electoral councillor) and librarian at the Bibliotheca Palatina, Germany's most illustrious library. Alongside the jurist and humanist Georg Michael Lingelsheim (1556–1636), he became part of 'an elite circle of high-level Heidelberg civil servants, highly educated, marked by classical-humanist and French culture'.<sup>63</sup> Melissus lived in Heidelberg for the remaining sixteen years of his life. In 1593, at the age of 54, he fulfilled his life's dream of marriage, and in 1595 published his final comprehensive volume of poems, the 411-page *Meletematum piorum libri VIII*.<sup>64</sup> In its dedicatory letter, addressed to Friedrich IV, Melissus recalled his publishing enterprise in Paris in 1584–5, when he had hoped to bring out a whole series of additional poems but was prevented from doing so by lack of time and the civil unrest in France ('tempora & bella', sig. ¶ 2<sup>r</sup>); since then, he wrote, his responsibilities in Heidelberg had caused further delay ('ut mihi quotidianis alióquin adsiduisque functiunculae meae occupationibus impedito', sig. ¶ 2<sup>v</sup>).

The *Meletemata*, mainly a collection of religious, edificatory poems, also includes verses addressed to his wife and one poem on the death of his infant son, indicating that some of it, at least, was written after 1593. Most, though, seem to have originated in the 1580s or perhaps even earlier. In the dedicatory letter Melissus indicated that, as he was getting older and had suffered a serious illness from which he had since recovered ('revalescentem', sig. [¶ 4]<sup>r</sup>), he had become ever more aware of the 'conditio humana' (sig. ¶ 2<sup>v</sup>). As a result, he now wanted to dedicate the first part of a large edition of his works to edifying texts – eight books of meditative poems, including prayers (Books 1–5) in ode form. Among the visionary odes in Book III is one 'concerning the New Jerusalem' ('De novâ Hierosolymâ') entitled

<sup>63</sup> J. Robert, 'Manierismus des Niedrigen: Paul Schede Melissus und die deutsche Lyrik um 1600', *Daphnis*, 39 (2010), pp. 577–610, at p. 579.

<sup>64</sup> *Melissi Meletematum piorum libri VIII; Paraeneticorum II; Parodiarum II; Psalmi aliquot* (Frankfurt am Main, 1595).

*Enthusiasticon*,<sup>65</sup> from which *Ecce beatam lucem* is extracted. It is the only Pindaric ode in Book III and one of only two among the 130 odes in the volume, an indication, perhaps, that Melissus' interest in that particular form was fading by that time.

Melissus died in 1602, at the age of 62, having pursued his destiny – in which he firmly believed: 'Manet immutabile fatum' (Immutable fate awaits) was his motto – as a poet. After his death much of his work, including 36 volumes of love poems, remained unpublished or was lost. A forerunner of German Baroque poetry,<sup>66</sup> he maintained his reputation into the seventeenth century; but his work was severely criticised by Martin Opitz, the 'father and renewer of the art of poetry' in Germany ('Vater und Wiederhersteller der Dichtkunst'). Melissus' reputation suffered irreparably as a consequence.

As well as illustrating the breadth of his culture and his international fame, this review of Melissus' career indicates that he essentially cultivated the Pindaric ode in the 1570s, initially encouraged by his acquaintance with members of the Pléiade in Paris in 1567 and inspired by his admiration for Ronsard's work. His course of instruction with Henri Estienne in Geneva from 1568 was also crucial.<sup>67</sup> The Pindaric ode was absent from his poetry collections of 1574 and 1575, which bring together his early work and the fruits of his informal poets' society in Heidelberg in 1572–3. It was only after 1575 that he developed the 'elevated lyric style' appropriate for the Pindaric ode,<sup>68</sup> arguably adumbrated in the ornate style of his German Psalm settings of 1572. This innovation – the application of Pindaric forms and modes of expression in an elevated style in Latin – was what was received so positively by the intellectual elite during his Italian sojourn in the later 1570s.

Any association of the text of *Ecce beatam lucem* with the 1561 performance in Florence of an unnamed forty-part composition by Striggio<sup>69</sup> – which would mean the text had been written by an

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, Lib. III, Ode XV, pp. 89–90.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Robert, 'Manierismus', 580, who cites Melissus' biographer Adam, *Vitae Germanorum philosophorum*: 'His poems, especially the lyrics, were so carefully and elegantly polished, that in his time he was judged to be the leading poet not only in Italy, France and Germany but also as one who, because of his talent, overshadowed the poets of previous centuries'. But even Melissus realised by the end of his life (1598) that the time of Latin verse was over (*ibid.*).

<sup>67</sup> This is not to say that Melissus had not become acquainted with Ronsard's verse, which enjoyed considerable acclaim, before he left Vienna. Nollac, *Un poète rhénan*, suggests avenues by which Melissus would have known about Ronsard through contacts at the Imperial court.

<sup>68</sup> Schäfer, *Deutscher Horaz*.

<sup>69</sup> Originally proposed by Fenlon and Keyte, 'Memorials of Great Skill', pp. 333–4.



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unknown 21-year-old student from the provinces, just arrived in Vienna – has to be discounted. In terms of Melissus' poetic development, it is equally unrealistic to connect it with the Florentine wedding of 1565 (not to mention to present it as a text appropriate for a wedding – see below). Nothing in his surviving work up to then indicates he was particularly inclined to or, indeed, capable of writing odes in the Pindaric style at that time. The identification of *Ecce beatam lucem*'s text with that of the motet performed at a banquet in Munich for the wedding of 1568 is also problematic for the same reasons. As we shall see, this latter association – the one most commonly accepted – is also questionable because both the theme of the text and the vocabulary it employs make it inappropriate for a (Catholic) wedding in 1568.<sup>70</sup> In another respect, however, its connection with the 1568 motet mentioned in the description of the Munich celebrations merits further consideration.

### THE TEXT

As mentioned above, *Ecce beatam lucem* was first published in the *Meletemata pia* of 1595, Melissus' final major collection of poetry. Dedicated to the Calvinist Elector Palatine Friedrich IV (1574–1610), who assumed his position in 1583 on the death of his Lutheran predecessor, Ludwig VI, each book (or section) of the volume is prefaced by a poem addressed to Friedrich, and the collection as a whole contains many poems directed towards the young ruler, both edifying and didactic in intent.

In the *Meletemata* an atmosphere of 'last things' is never very far away. For the modern German editors of the anthology *Humanistische Lyrik*, the context is one of apocalyptic tension that drove the poet towards dreams, visions and ecstasy.<sup>71</sup> The text of *Ecce beatam lucem* is found in the fifteenth of twenty-one odes that make up Book III of the collection, ostensibly brought together for the twenty-second birthday ('in natalem') of the young Friedrich. Almost half are addressed directly to God or Christ. Six, with religious themes, are dedicated to

<sup>70</sup> The terms applied to describe the forty-part works in 1561 should also be borne in mind. The Florentine diarist Agostino Lapini, who was also a bass singer at Florence Cathedral, referred in 1561 to a forty-part 'Canzona' being performed; a month later, Striggio sent what he called a 'Musica' in forty parts to Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga in Mantua, celebrating the duke and his recent marriage to a Habsburg princess. Both terms, Canzona and Musica, almost certainly indicate that the words set were in Italian rather than in Latin.

<sup>71</sup> See *Humanistische Lyrik*, pp. 1470–1.

illustrious contemporary, or recently deceased, figures, at least two of whom were theologians or professors in Heidelberg. Almost all of these odes can be characterised as Horatian, mostly consisting of four-line stanzas in a variety of metres.

Only Ode XV of Book III is in the authentic Pindaric mode. Entitled *Enthusiasticon*, it has as its subtitle ‘De novâ Hierosolymâ’ (literally, Enthusiasm on the New Jerusalem).<sup>72</sup> Formally, it conforms to the classic triadic structure associated with Pindar: strophe (‘Vivon’ an extra me ipsum’), antistrophe (‘Ecce beatam lucem’), epode (‘O quae perennis esca’), each set in ‘free’ metrical verse.<sup>73</sup> In *Enthusiasticon* there is only one triadic block, which is fairly typical of Melissus’ Pindaric odes. By contrast, the ode addressed to Elizabeth I in the collection of 1586 consisted of four such blocks; in general, the more important the addressee, the more blocks there are. As prescribed, the strophe and antistrophe are metrically identical, each consisting of three stanzas for a total of 14 lines (6 + 4 + 4) of variable length (3 to 11 syllables) in a variety of metres. The epode has a different metrical structure but also consists of three stanzas for a total of 14 lines (5 + 4 + 5). The text’s physical appearance, as a poem, is strikingly different from the manner in which it has usually been represented in the scholarly literature or in concert programme notes and CD booklets, where it is either printed as if it were plain prose or without any precise regard to its original structure. As we shall see, this has important bearings on the character of the music to which it is applied (even though, it will be argued, the text is not the one originally set to that music).

Melissus’ adoption of the Pindaric ode as a genre relates essentially to its formal aspects, which he found in Ronsard (who, by contrast, had studied the original texts).<sup>74</sup> In Pindar (c. 520–after 445 BCE) the ode is a hymn generally to the winners of sporting events.<sup>75</sup> Beginning

<sup>72</sup> More freely, ‘Song of the divinely inspired, in praise of the New Jerusalem’. See *Meletemata*, pp. 89–90. Schäfer, *Deutscher Horaz*, p. 86, discusses the text and reproduces the strophe, with a translation into German. The full text, with German translation and commentary, is included in *Humanistische Lyrik*, pp. 846–9, 1470–2.

<sup>73</sup> Literally ‘turn’, ‘counterturn’ and ‘after-song’, respectively, referring to the movements of the chorus members as dancers: Anderson, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Greece*, p. 95. Schäfer, *Deutscher Horaz*, p. 83, writes: ‘Melissus’ Pindaric verse owes a debt to classical testimony and to Estienne’s versions: they are to be understood partly as traditional lyric poetry with free variations, partly as combinations of different poetic feet, and are much closer to Pindar than the Pindaric odes of Ronsard.’

<sup>74</sup> The following section is indebted to J. Schultheiss, ‘Pindarrezeption bei Paulus Melissus Schede: Zu drei Epithalamien in den *Schediasmata*’, in *Würzburger Humanismus*, ed. Thomas Baier and Jochen Schultheiss, NeoLatina, 23 (Tübingen, 2015), pp. 245–67.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, pp. 17 ff.

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in the 1540s, Ronsard adapted this to include those who had achieved success in military and diplomatic spheres, addressing a range of important Frenchmen from the nobility (including members of the royal family), the clergy and literary figures; his intention was patriotic, and in his odes he extolled the greatness of France, with the king and queen at its head. As with Pindar, Ronsard integrated mythological passages into this praise for purposes of comparison. He introduced neologisms and adopted an ‘elevated style’ that is deliberately complex, even confusing – a reflection of the ‘fureur poétique’ (furor poeticus), the inspiration felt by the poet (in German also expressed by the word *Enthusiasmus*). Above all, Ronsard established the strophic form and the free construction of metre in the ode; but he exercised restraint in the Pindaric use of overlapping strophes – what Horace compared to a mountain stream splitting into several paths – tending generally to keep strophe and sentence under control.

Melissus, as well as adopting this Ronsardian model, also extended it in several ways, especially regarding themes that could be treated. He might still address royalty, like Elizabeth I or the King of Denmark or Venetian doges or Pope Gregory XIII, in his odes; but, as one of his major audiences was the patrician middle class in cities like Nuremberg, he also wrote several wedding odes (epithalamia) – a subject certainly not found in Pindar (or Ronsard, for that matter) – varying them in both tone and approach.<sup>76</sup> And he clearly extended the thematic range in his religious odes, not least in works like *Enthusiasticon* and *Ecstaticon*: visions of the heavenly city, prophecies for the end of time. In *Enthusiasticon* the initial strophe, ‘Vivon’ an extra me ipsum’ (not set to music) captures well the bewilderment and confusion of the poet, who, in a series of breathless questions, asks himself if he is alive, if he has been abducted or carried off (‘Vivon’ an extra me ipsum/Raptus agor?’, lines 1–2), and appeals to the Holy Ghost (‘Sancte Flatus’, line 2) to tell him where in the world he finds himself (‘Quas partes mundi/Colo?’, lines 3–4). He seems to see the face of Christ (‘Videor Christi vultus’, line 6), who who touches him in the midst of saints (‘Me dextra tangit/Divis immistum’, lines 9–10), as the poet stretches out a palm branch (‘Palmeam tendentem/Manu virgam’, lines 11–12). Still questioning, he half-realises he may be in the New Jerusalem (‘Urbs Solyme’, line 13), shining with the jewels and gold (‘Gemmis nitens et auro’, line 14) mentioned in the

<sup>76</sup> See Schultheiss, ‘Pindarrezeption bei Paulus Melissus Schede’, pp. 252–8, for a detailed discussion of three diverse epithalamia.

Revelation of John. It is a virtuosic display, a dramatic recitative that brilliantly conveys the poet's disorientation and at the same time evokes an ecstatic vision. While the tone is consistent with the Pindaric mode, Melissus' model here was actually the Horatian ode 'Quo me Bacche, rapis tui' (*Carmina* III.25), in which the poet addresses the god Bacchus in a similarly bewildered tone; Melissus even takes over two items of vocabulary from his Horatian model ('rapis' and 'agor', lines 1, 2).<sup>77</sup>

In the antistrophe, *Ecce beatam lucem*, the counterpart to the strophe, we share in the poet's vision of the New Jerusalem. He addresses a chosen assembly ('turba electa', line 17) and invites them to celebrate Jehovah and his son, equal to the father ('aequalem patri', line 18). He marvels at the wonders of the Sun and Moon and God's creation (but their light is rendered redundant by the 'blessed light' of Heaven). In the concluding epode, 'O quae perennis esca', traditionally analogous to a choral song or hymn, a series of exclamations sets out the wonders of the city and its inhabitants: here is grace and love ('gratia & amor', line 31), here are Patriarchs and Prophets (line 34); King David, the famous seer ('vates ille', line 36), singing and playing to the glory of the eternal God (line 37).<sup>78</sup> There is nectar and honey, bliss and repose, an aim and a purpose – all leading us to Paradise (lines 38–42).

The concept of the New or the Heavenly Jerusalem, already found in Old Testament texts (for example, in the Psalms and Ezechiel), was more fully elaborated in the Revelation of John (21:1–2, 5), as being the opposite of the earthly world (a concept developed by St. Augustine in *The City of God*, also a source for the poem).<sup>79</sup> The text of Revelation 21 finds many echoes in *Enthusiasticon*.<sup>80</sup> The theme was developed in the literature of edification from the time of the Church Fathers, in meditations, sermons and other writings, which also find an echo here. Fateful dates or cosmic events (for example, the

<sup>77</sup> 'Bacchus, where am I? Flushed/With god, to what groves, caves am I being rushed/ Inspired?' *The Odes of Horace*, transl. J. Michie (Harmondsworth, 1967), pp. 202–3.

<sup>78</sup> The text sung in all recordings and reprinted in concert programmes contains a crucial error here, one that is relevant to its interpretation. The fourth line of the first verse should read 'Praesto *ver* novum' (Here is a new *spring*), not 'Praesto *nec* novum' (variously translated as 'Here and not new' or 'and always have been' or 'as they always have been') – in other words, something to look forward to, not something that belongs to the past. Cf. Fenlon and Keyte, 'Memorials of Great Skill', p. 330, the apparent source of the original error. Bañá, 'Remarks', p. 32, reprints the correct Latin text but perpetuates the wrong translation, as does Rainer, '*La quale fu cantata molto bene*', p. 217.

<sup>79</sup> See, for example, the phrase 'Haec voluptas, haec quies' in the epode, line 40, and cf. Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. and trans. W. C. Greene, Loeb Classical Library, 416 (Cambridge, MA, 1960), Book XIX, p. 100: two of the four 'primary wants of nature', pleasure and repose.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. the commentary to the poem in *Humanistische Lyrik*, pp. 1471–2.

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appearance of a comet – something that Melissus himself followed up in his poetry) could bring to mind serious apocalyptic moods and searches for meaning in all social classes.<sup>81</sup> It was a theme that held particular resonance for the early Reformed church and in particular for Calvinists: the idea of building the heavenly city on earth was what they saw themselves doing in Geneva, for example. As one recent writer has remarked, ‘Calvin in Geneva sought to remake society in line with his theology – to build a heavenly city on earth’.<sup>82</sup>

Although Melissus is hardly concerned with the propagation of dogma here – describing graphically, rather, the emotions experienced in a vision – the vocabulary he employs inevitably reflects his Calvinist beliefs. From ‘turba electa’ (line 17) to ‘gratia’ (line 31) he introduces signifiers that clearly derive from principal Calvinist tenets of election and grace. His mention of a ‘ver novum’ (new spring, line 32) points to the possibility of change and renewal that has come over the world; and his equating the Son of God with God himself (‘aequalem patri’, line 19) reaffirms the Calvinist belief in the Trinity that had been seriously challenged in his time by other Reformers (notably Michael Servetus). The Calvinist desire to create the Heavenly City on earth – most clearly exemplified in Geneva, but also in cities like Heidelberg, which had been restored to Calvinism as recently as 1583 – finds a visionary parallel in the New Jerusalem depicted in Melissus’ poem. His evocation of King David, the famous seer (‘Heic David/Rex David, ille vates’, lines 35–6) reflects a desire to emphasise the importance of a biblical figure who, as well as being a famous musician, is said to have unified his kingdom – a circumstance that resonated with Electoral Palatine rulers.<sup>83</sup> (In the musical setting the introduction of the name coincides with a notably dramatic forty-part tutti.)

The ode, then, originated within a culture of Calvinism, a circumstance that inevitably stands at odds with the idea that it was written, and set to music by Striggio, for the Cardinal of Ferrara’s visit to Florence in 1561, or for wedding celebrations of 1565 in Florence, or, indeed, those in Munich in 1568. Iain Fenlon and Hugh Keyte’s

<sup>81</sup> Cf. *Humanistische Lyrik*, p. 1470. With his poem Melissus stands at the period immediately before the great edifying writers Leonhard Hutter, Johann Gerhard and especially Johann Matthäus Meyfart, who presented at length the Protestant doctrine of ‘last things’ – see Meyfart’s well-known hymn ‘Jerusalem du hochgebaute Stadt’, in *Gedichte des Barock*, ed. U. Mache and V. Meid (Stuttgart, 1986), pp. 41–3.

<sup>82</sup> See M. Massing, *Fatal Discord: Erasmus, Luther, and the Fight for the Western Mind* (New York, 2018), Introduction, p. xiv; pp. 763–72.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Laube, *Music and Confession in Heidelberg*, pp. 17–18.



speculative proposal in 1980 that the text – given its ‘doubtful suitability’ for the Bavarian wedding of 1568 – was ‘appropriate to the reception of a luminary of the church [Cardinal Ippolito d’Este in Florence, 1561] entrusted with the task of defending Catholic orthodoxy’, cannot be reconciled with the Calvinist overtones, nor indeed the stated theme (the New Jerusalem); the textual correction mentioned above (‘ver’ for ‘nec’; see n. 78) also undermines the case for its defence of Catholicism.<sup>84</sup> Seen in this general context, too, Davitt Moroney’s proposal, in 2012, that the text (contrary to what Fenlon and Keyte wrote) is ‘highly appropriate’ for a wedding – namely that of 1565 between Francesco de’ Medici and Archduchess Johanna of Austria in Florence – is difficult to accept. His interpretation of the ode views the ‘chosen assembly’ as the wedding guests, and the prophets and patriarchs mentioned as the cardinals and archbishops present.<sup>85</sup> Most recently, Bernhard Rainer, while acknowledging that the text is not ‘an epithalamium in a true sense, seems well suited to be performed as a motet text at a wedding ceremony’; he also admits ‘it is unlikely that Striggio composed the work especially for the Munich performance’.<sup>86</sup> In fact, as the analysis above has shown, the text is not an epithalamium in any sense. An interpretation that accepts its avowed subject (‘concerning the New Jerusalem’) seems more natural and makes any connection to the weddings in question untenable. The work *could* have been performed at an important wedding, but not as an integral part of specific wedding celebrations, for it would have formed a decidedly odd text for such an occasion (Melissus’ somewhat disconcerting text for Lechner’s 24-part *Quid, Chaos?* of 1582 at least reveals its purpose in its final stanza). However much one may wish to play down the significance of the Calvinistic vocabulary and overtones, the idea of a planned performance before a Catholic audience seems highly unlikely – unless the actual meaning of the original text was ignored or regarded as irrelevant in that context; perhaps the intelligibility of the words was a minor consideration in the context of a banquet or in the case of forty-part music. At most, one could argue, as Rainer to a

<sup>84</sup> Fenlon and Keyte, ‘Memorialls of Great Skill’, pp. 333–4; when they wrote, the text had not yet been identified as being by Melissus.

<sup>85</sup> Moroney, ‘The Polychoral Splendors of Renaissance Florence’, pp. 20–5.

<sup>86</sup> Rainer, ‘*La quale fu cantata molto bene*’, 217–18. Rainer also suggests that ‘music-loving Duke Albrecht was able to be identified with King David, who praises God through his *Cantorey*’ and that ‘it is even within the realm of the possible that Lasso engaged Melissus to write a contrafactum to an existing composition that Striggio had made’ (p. 218). For *Ecce beatam lucem* as a contrafactum, but in a quite different context, given the likely circumstances of the text’s composition, see below.

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certain extent does, that the text in itself was not an epithalamium but could be used for a large wedding celebration – regardless of its content.

It is impossible to say exactly when Melissus wrote the *Enthusiasticon*. The publication date of 1595 provides at most a *terminus ante quem*; German literary scholars have been inclined to place the ode late in his oeuvre. There are Melissus' own words in the preface of his *Schediasmata poetica* of 1586 that indicate the existence of a body of religious poetry (the *Carmina sacra*) ready and intended for publication; the apocalyptic theme of the ode fitted the scheme and the prevailing culture of the time. But the existence of the musical source of *Ecce beatam lucem*, clearly dated 1587, indicates a date of composition – for the text – before that; and the ode does not appear in any of Melissus' earlier poetic collections from the 1570s. Presumably, it would have been published in the 1586 *Schediasmata poetica*, had there been space for it there. What can be affirmed is that the text's Calvinist overtones suggest it was composed after 1568, when Melissus embraced that faith. If that is the case, a musical setting of the ode-text during the 1560s is excluded. Arguably – following most modern German neo-Latin scholars – Melissus' body of Pindaric odes belongs to the period after 1575, when his poetic style became fully developed.

One external event that could have inspired the composition of the text – but it is really no more than speculation – was the restoration of a Calvinist régime in Heidelberg in 1583, when the death of the Lutheran Elector, Ludwig VI (who had himself displaced the previous Calvinist régime in 1576), resulted in the accession of the 10-year-old Friedrich IV, mentored by his uncle Johann Casimir, who was appointed regent. Stimulated by this happy turn of events, Melissus may have written the *Enthusiasticon* – incorporating *Ecce beatam lucem* – around that time, to celebrate the possibility of the creation of a New Jerusalem there, in a manner analogous to that of Geneva, which had become the New Jerusalem for Calvin and his followers in the 1540s. Some of the imagery of the text certainly underpins such an idea, especially its reference to 'David, King David, that famous seer', a figure interpreted as uniting the kingdom of Judah for the first time (cf. n. 83 above). Indeed, a performance of *Ecce beatam lucem* in Heidelberg, despite its Calvinist régime, cannot be excluded.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Laube's discussion of court wedding festivities in *Music and Confession in Heidelberg*, pp. 233–50. The idea that Calvinists did not favour elaborate music has to be qualified.

The unique surviving manuscript source of *Ecce beatam lucem* is preserved in the Ratsschulbibliothek in Zwickau, Saxony.<sup>89</sup> Established in 1537, this public library (Bibliotheca publica, originally founded in the fifteenth century) was one of the earliest and most renowned in Germany.<sup>90</sup> Most important for its holdings of Reformation materials, it is also famous for its music collection, which was established as the result of a series of bequests beginning in the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>91</sup>

The manuscript itself probably stemmed from Georg Forster, a musician in the service of the Dresden chapel, who served as singer, deputy Kapellmeister and finally Kapellmeister there from 1568 to his death in 1587. He had served in Zwickau as Oberkantorat from 1556 to 1564.<sup>92</sup> According to recent research at the library, the manuscript belonged to the estate of Cornelius Freundt (1535/40–1591), the Kantor at Zwickau's principal church St. Marien und Quartus from 1565 to his death.<sup>93</sup> Remembered for a Christmas song collection and German psalm motets, Freundt was a teacher at the Ratsschule but also a collector of music manuscripts and prints. The library acquired his collection in 1594, establishing its holdings of the first two generations of Reformation composers in central Germany. Freundt's

<sup>88</sup> I am most grateful to Dr. Gregor Hermann, Deputy Librarian of the Ratsschulbibliothek in Zwickau, for his help and advice in the writing of this section. A new printed catalogue of the library's manuscript sources from the 16th and 17th centuries is in preparation.

<sup>89</sup> Shelfmark Mus. 109.1.

<sup>90</sup> See H. Nickel, *Die Inkunabeln der Ratsschulbibliothek Zwickau: Geschichte und Bestand der Sammlung, mit einem Anhang zu den Einblattgedrucken des Stadtarchivs Zwickau* (Wiesbaden, 2017); G. Hermann, "Liberia ecclesiae" – "bibliotheca gymnasii" – "bibliotheca publica": Genese und Funktion der Ratsschulbibliothek Zwickau im Spiegel bürgerlicher Bildungsvorsorge um 1500', in *Bürgers Bücher: Laien als Anreger und Adressaten in Sachsens Literatur um 1500*, ed. C. Fasbender and G. Mierke, Euros, 6 (Würzburg, 2017), pp. 25–6.

<sup>91</sup> The historic collection, comprising around 2,500 manuscripts and printed editions dating from the 15th to the 18th centuries, was first organised and catalogued by the Kantor Reinhard Vollhardt (1858–1926): see R. Vollhardt, *Bibliographie der Musik-Werke in der Ratsschulbibliothek zu Zwickau* (Leipzig, 1893–6).

<sup>92</sup> Not to be confused with the composer, doctor and music publisher of the same name (Amberg, 1510–Nuremberg, 1568). See G. Hermann, 'Handschriften aus dem Umfeld der Dresdner Hofkapelle', in *Die mehrstimmigen Musikhandschriften des 15. bis 17. Jahrhunderts der Ratsschulbibliothek Zwickau*, ed. idem, *Dresdner Schriften zur Musik*, 18 (Baden-Baden, 2023), pp. 128–37, at pp. 132–3. I am most grateful to Gregor Hermann for sending me an uncorrected proof of this chapter.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. G. Hermann, 'Die historische Musiksammlung', in *Ratsschulbibliothek Zwickau: Kleiner Bibliotheksführer* (Zwickau, 2015), pp. 21–30, esp. pp. 21–2, 25. On Freundt, see L. Hoffmann-Erbrecht, 'Freundt, Cornelius', in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 5 (1961), p. 414 (online at <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz17116.html>); W. Brennecke, 'Freundt, Cornelius', in *New Grove*, IX, p. 255.

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collection also included contemporary, large-scale works by Netherlandish and Italian composers. These are not listed, however, in the handwritten catalogue compiled in the library between 1546 and 1698.<sup>94</sup>

The manuscript of *Ecce beatam lucem* was copied on paper manufactured in Dresden, 116 kilometres (72 miles) northeast of Zwickau. It has a clear watermark corresponding to Briquet 1416 and was first produced in 1583.<sup>95</sup> The manuscript may have originated at the Dresden Hofkapelle, where Freundt is also known to have had contact. The Saxon Bergstädte (mining towns) – for example Freiberg, Chemnitz, Annaberg and Zwickau – regularly sent boy sopranos from their Latin schools to the Hofkapellmeister in Dresden for audition. When successful, the boys were taken on at the court, and this in turn led to the development of personal relations between Zwickau and the singers of the Kapelle. The Elector of Saxony at the time, Augustus (1526–1586; elector from 1553), had occasion to admonish both the members of the choir and the Hofkapellmeister for copying works belonging to the court and selling these copies to other centres (documented especially in connection with Leipzig in the 1560s and 1570s). In the case of Zwickau in particular, the anthology Ms. 75.2 now in the Ratsschulbibliothek, which dates from the mid 1580s and contains works by the contemporary composers Michael Hagius, Franz Sales and Georg Furter, was sent to Zwickau from the Dresden court.<sup>96</sup>

By comparison with other, analogous manuscripts in the collection, which have more indications about performance, the manuscript of *Ecce beatam lucem* is viewed by Gregor Hermann as a theoretical study object rather than a collection of performing parts. For him, more important for its status is its ‘exotic’ character – the fact that the music comprises forty parts. For such an extravagant piece of music, the single source that preserves *Ecce beatam lucem* is disarmingly modest, almost flimsy in its physical state: forty single sheets of letter paper, little larger than modern A4 in size (c. 32.7 × 20.5 cm; top and bottom edges are frayed), and a single bifolium of the same paper, referred to as Bassone in prefatory remarks on the part (a basso

<sup>94</sup> Ratsschulbibliothek, Ms. 165 [Repositorium Ratsschulbibliothek 1546–1698]; catalogue record at [https://rsb.zwickau.de/cgi-bin/hans/hans.cgi?x=u&t\\_show=x&wertreg=SIG&wert=Ms.165&reccheck=2935](https://rsb.zwickau.de/cgi-bin/hans/hans.cgi?x=u&t_show=x&wertreg=SIG&wert=Ms.165&reccheck=2935).

<sup>95</sup> Cf. C. M. Briquet, *Les filigranes: Dictionnaire historique des marques du papier des leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600*, 2nd edn, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1923; repr. Hildesheim, 1991), I, p. 115; first cited and reproduced in Bafa, ‘Remarks on the Festivities’, p. 30.

<sup>96</sup> Private correspondence with Dr. Gregor Hermann, Deputy Librarian of the Ratsschulbibliothek, Zwickau.

seguinte). There are seven staves per recto page and a variable number on the verso, depending on the length of the individual part (some versos are empty). All the sheets of voice parts have, at some stage, been folded in half in the middle, then in half again, vertically – like a letter, in fact. Only the Bassone double sheet does not appear to have been folded. There is no general heading or title page on any of the parts, and no original outer packaging; today, the parts are preserved in a simple card folder.

The vocal parts, arranged in the manuscript in ten groups of four according to cleffing, have a variety of similar superscriptions. They are numbered consecutively from 1 to 40, in a hand that may be different from that of the music and text underlay.<sup>97</sup> Fourteen name the composer (but not consistently) and give the number of voices, e.g. ‘Alexandro Strigio a 40’ (voice 8), ‘Al. St: à 40’ (voice 9); ‘Al: Strigio à40’ (voice 15), etc. The parts are grouped into four choirs of, respectively, eight voices (Primo coro, voices 1–8), sixteen (Tertio Choro, voices 9–24), six (Quarto Choro, voices 25–30) and ten (Secondo Choro, voices 31–40). This, however, is no more than a reflection of the order in which the forty voices make their first entry; the division into four choirs refers only to the *first four entries* of the voices.<sup>98</sup> Here is the source of the misunderstanding which led to the work’s being consistently described in those terms (‘for four choirs’), starting with Vollhardt’s catalogue of 1896.<sup>99</sup> The descriptions of the choirs themselves are also inaccurate. To take just one example: the Fourth Choir (voices 25–30) is headed as being for six voices, because six voices sing together for the first time at ‘Vos turba electa’

<sup>97</sup> The possibility of there being more than one copyist involved in the source cannot be discounted; indeed, it seems likely, given some significant divergences in the shapes of clefs, notes and finals, and also in the form of capitals in the text underlay. It should also be borne in mind that the Zwickau copy was based on a previous copy which may have been responsible for the introduction of several of the errors and discrepancies discussed below.

<sup>98</sup> Rainer, ‘*La quale fu cantata molto bene*’, p. 209, suggests that ‘the naming and hierarchy of the choirs in the manuscript do follow a custom of this time: as was usual in the case of polychoral works then, each choir in the Zwickau manuscript is described according to the order of its entrance.’ But the division into four choirs does not reflect the nature of the composition itself, which may be described as polymorphous.

<sup>99</sup> This error has been repeated and extended in the modern literature, from Gustave Reese, *Music in the Renaissance* (1954), Leuchtman (1980), Fenlon and Keyte (1980), Haar, *Man and Music* (1989), *New Grove* (2000) and *MGG*, to Moroney (2005 and 2012). Fenlon/Keyte (1980) and Moroney (2012, p. 21) also state that Troiano in his *Dialoghi* of 1568/9 specifically referred to the four-choir division of the work performed in Munich – but this is not the case. Had Troiano done so, there would be a clear link between the surviving source in Zwickau and the Munich wedding motetto. Troiano, *Discorsi*, p. 183; *Dialoghi*, fols. 146–147, specified ‘Eight trombones, eight bowed viols, eight large flutes, a harpsichord and a large lute, and the voices supplied all the rest’.



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(bars 9–13); but this ignores the fact that voices 31–3 (belonging to the Second Choir a10) also sing that text at the same time. As has been pointed out by several writers, the division of the parts into ‘choirs’ in *Ecce beatam lucem* is both variable and fluid: clear-cut divisions between ‘choirs’ are almost more of an exception than the rule.<sup>100</sup> This is all the more striking when *Ecce beatam lucem* is compared with the forty-part Mass setting by Striggio, where the voices follow a much more schematic division – with the Mass it is realistic to speak of five eight-part choirs.

While the individual parts of *Ecce beatam lucem* make an initial impression of reasonably careful copying with regard to the calligraphy of the notes, both long and short values, and the underlay, there are also signs of haste, with some deterioration in the quality of the copying observable in the course of several parts. The copyist’s (or copyists’) uncertainty about the differing lengths of the parts and how to deal with them, in terms of using the reverse side of the paper, rather belies the initial impression. In several cases, too, many notes are squeezed in at the end of the recto pages, which in turn creates difficulties in dealing with the text underlay. Because of the resulting space problem, much text underlay is simply omitted or at most indicated by an ‘iterum’ sign (:||:). Mistakes and omissions are sometimes recognised and rectified by the copyist himself; but over a hundred additional errors are noted in the modern edition. As might be expected, the text underlay is free of punctuation, and the capitalisation of the original poetic lines is erratic – something that rather compromises the modern edition, which presents the text as prose (though the identification of the text as part of a Pindaric ode was only made decades later). There are also minor errors, for example regarding case endings in the text, which would seem to indicate that the original copyist of the work (not the copyist of the Zwickau manuscript) was not using the original text of the poem. For example, the first line of the Epode has ‘qm’ [= ‘quam’] for ‘quae’. Although this may raise questions about the relationship of the text used in the source and the poetic text of *Ecce beatam lucem* printed in 1595, the discrepancies are no more serious than those which are typically encountered when comparing musical and literary sources in sixteenth-century prints.<sup>101</sup> One cannot say that

<sup>100</sup> Cf. for example, Fenlon and Keyte, ‘Memorialls of Great Skill’, pp. 330–1; Moroney, ‘Alessandro Striggio’s Mass’, p. 37.

<sup>101</sup> Some examples: ‘qm’ (‘quam’) for ‘quae’, ‘met’ for ‘meta’ (elision), ‘paradissum’ or ‘paradysum’ for ‘Paradisum’ (l. 42). Note also that ‘DEVM’ is found in both manuscript and edition.

the manuscript's text is necessarily an earlier version or a corrupt version of the printed text of the ode.

The forty-first part, the basso seguente, has especially drawn the attention of musicians and scholars for its prefatory remarks, which are written in a neatly copied but garbled Italian, regarding the use of instruments in the work; and also for its chronogram, which dates the copying of the manuscript. The original text was first disentangled by Max Schneider in 1918, and his proposed solution has generally been accepted; in 1980 Iain Fenlon and Hugh Keyte made some additional suggestions, above all with regard to the indication for performance in a semicircle rather than a circle.<sup>102</sup> The recognisably confused nature of the text indicates that the copyist was a non-Italian – i.e. most likely a German – misled by the style of letter formation on the original from which he was working (the first example in the text is 'canato' for 'cavato').

At the end of the part (fol. 2<sup>v</sup>) the copyist signs off with the Greek word Telos (the End), written in Greek letters; with praise to God, and a chronogram: 'Laus Deo/Anno./O DeVs aVXILIVM fer qVqVe ferre potes' (O God, grant me the aid that only you can). The upper-case letters (apart from the 'O') can be reordered to form M D L X X [V+V] X [V+V] V I I, giving 1587. The text of the chronogram itself is derived from Ovid's *Heroides* (Heroines),<sup>103</sup> now adapted into a direct plea for God's help. While it may be a reflection of the copyist's educational background (if he indeed is its originator), the exhortation is too general for any other conclusions to be drawn; and while acrostics and anagrams were much cultivated by poets like Melissus and his circle, there are insufficient clues here about the author, apart from his classical education.<sup>104</sup>

The manuscript raises questions but provides few answers regarding the origins of the work itself. As Bařa indicated, with its

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Fenlon and Keyte, 'Memorials of Great Skill', 333, for transcription and discussion. A literal transcription (taking account of Gregor Hermann's version) reads: 'Bassone canato dalla parte piů basce del. 40 Per/sona nimerro [the two r's are unlike] tescircalo con un bronbone [un tronbone] No. 41/per sostentamento della 'armonia per sona/ris con Orgono Liulo et Cimboli o uiole'.

<sup>103</sup> Epistula V, lines 151–3 (the nymph Oenone to Paris, son of King Priam of Troy): 'Quod neque graminibus tellus fecunda errantis, /Nec deus, auxilium tu mihi ferre potes./Et potes, et merui' (Skilled in an art, I am left helpless by the very art I know; The aid that neither earth, fruitful in the bringing forth of herbs, nor a god himself can give, you have the power to bestow on me. You can bestow it, and I have merited), See Ovid, *Heroides; Amores*, 2nd edn, ed. and trans. G. Showerman, rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library, 41 (Cambridge, MA, 1977), pp. 68–9.

<sup>104</sup> Following the chronogram, the copyist signs off with what appears to be a decorative flourish, in which a rudimentary stave, two treble-clef-like shapes and rest-like signs can be discerned.

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mistakes and corrections, it appears to be a copy of a lost original (at the very least).<sup>105</sup> Whether it is a ‘document’ for study, as Gregor Hermann proposes, rather than ‘clearly intended for use’, as Fenlon and Keyte suggest,<sup>106</sup> remains hard to say. As a document in its own right, the former proposal may be more realistic, despite the prefatory remarks in the Bassone regarding instrumentation that certainly indicate a performance, but not necessarily from this source. Certainly, a performance in Zwickau, from around 1587, though conceivable – under Kantor Freundt there were 32 singers and the Stadtpfeifer were available – seems unlikely.<sup>107</sup>

We know that the version of the text found in the manuscript, copied in 1587, predated the final version printed in the *Meletematum* of 1595, a fact apparently borne out by its errors, however minor, and lack of editorial finesse. Even if the sequence of transmission remains unclear, the differences and discrepancies between the two sources suggest that Melissus himself, a careful editor of his own texts, was not involved in the manuscript’s preparation or production.<sup>108</sup>

With regard to provenance, if the Dresden Hofkapelle connection – based on circumstantial evidence – is justified, a performance of the work at that well-stocked musical court, which employed several Italian musicians, seems possible.<sup>109</sup> Striggio, however, had no known contact there, although in 1629 the traveller Philipp Hainhofer of

<sup>105</sup> Bafa, ‘Some Remarks’, p. 30.

<sup>106</sup> Fenlon and Keyte, ‘Memorials of Great Skill’, pp. 330, 334, n. 8.

<sup>107</sup> Hermann, ‘Handschriften aus dem Umfeld der Dresdner Hofkapelle’, p. 133. No possible occasion is mentioned in the contemporary Zwickau chronicles of Peter Schumann and Johannes Tretwein. In the surviving manuscript sources in Zwickau which were known to have been used for performance, there is no music for more than 12 voices. Cf. also M. Schoppe, ‘Zwickau’, *New Grove*, XXVII, pp. 892–3, who mentions the boys of the cathedral choir and its organists, the Ratsschule, where choral singing took place, and the Stadtpfeiferei.

<sup>108</sup> Unless, of course, the original copyist, using the final text, deliberately modified it – taking out punctuation and capitalisation, for example – in the manuscript copy; but this seems unlikely. Questions are raised, too, by the exclusion of the Ode’s first part, the Strophe, from the musical setting.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. W. Steude, ‘Dresden’, *New Grove*, VII, pp. 566–7, and bibliography. See now *Kurfürst August von Sachsen: Ein nachreformatorischer ‘Friedensfürst’ zwischen Territorium und Reich*, ed. W. Müller, M. Schattkowsky and D. Syndram (Dresden, 2017), pp. 212 ff. See above all Hermann, ‘Handschriften aus dem Umfeld der Dresdner Hofkapelle’. In 1554 the electoral Kantorei included 25 singers and seven Netherlandish musicians. On Antonio Scandello (1517–1580), the Kapellmeister at the electoral court from 1568 to his death, ‘one of the most important musicians in Germany during the second half of the sixteenth century’ (D. O. Heuchemer, ‘Scandello, Antonio’, *New Grove*, XXII, p. 369), see D. O. Heuchemer, ‘Italian Musicians in Dresden in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century, with an Emphasis on the Lives and Works of Antonio Scandello and Giovanni Battista Pinello di Ghirardi’ (PhD diss., University of Cincinnati, 1997).

Augsburg mentioned a portrait of the composer (referred to as ‘Alessandro Stuchio’) that he saw in the Dresden Palace, which may be significant, given that the former locations of other lost Striggio portraits (Innsbruck and Munich) – are places he is known to have visited.<sup>110</sup> There is scant evidence for even the widely networked Melissus having had much to do with Dresden literary or court culture.<sup>111</sup>

TEXT AND MUSIC: THE WRITING OF A CONTRAFACITUM

For the reasons given above – the course of Melissus’ biography, his development as a poet and the history of his publications – the text of *Ecce beatam lucem* cannot have been the one used in the original sources of the music by Striggio. Allowing for the possibility of intermediary copies, the most likely model for *Ecce beatam lucem* was the motet performed in Munich in 1568, whose text, unlike that of *Ecce beatam lucem*, would probably have been more suitable for a specific wedding celebration. Here we must assume that the compiler of *Ecce beatam lucem* had access to such a source, perhaps through contact or friendship with Lasso or Lechner. This is impossible to prove at present. In fact, the 1568 wedding text could well have aided the compilation of *Ecce beatam lucem*, for it probably celebrated the bridal pair – and the text of *Ecce beatam lucem* also celebrates the godhead, ‘Jehovah and his son/equal to the father’. Whoever came to apply new words to the music had as a model an existing score or partbooks with a text, in Latin, that corresponded in many respects, formally, syllabically and metrically, to the text of *Ecce beatam lucem* – the arranger was not starting from scratch, as it were.

What did the arranger find, what did he have to work from? A longish text – 28 lines or so – of Latin verse (here, the description of the work in the Munich account, as a ‘Motetto’, strongly implies the text was in that language); many short lines; a clear bipartite structure; and words and phrases that reflected the occasion, the nuptials of Wilhelm and Renata (‘celebrate’, ‘cantans sonans’). With this material, a new text could be concocted, now praising Jehovah and his Son, equal to the Father (a Protestant trope),<sup>112</sup> rather than the

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Leuchtman, *Orlando di Lasso*, pp. 249–50; Kirkendale, *The Court Musicians*, p. 81, citing O. Doering (ed.), *Der Augsburger Patriciers Philipp Hainhofer Reisen nach Innsbruck und Dresden* (Vienna, 1901), p. 233.

<sup>111</sup> Leonhard Lechner had closer dealings with the Dresden electoral court: he was in contention for the post of Hofkapellmeister there in 1584.

<sup>112</sup> The denomination ‘Jehovah’, in reference to the Supreme Being, is similarly associated with the Protestant movement in the early 16th century.

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ducal bridegroom; and the event could evoke the singing and playing of the heavenly host directed by King David, just as it had contributed to the celebration in Munich many years before. As Davitt Moroney has argued (though coming to quite different conclusions), ‘Melissus could easily have made the Latin version to fit exactly the same rhythms of an earlier Italian text; in that way there would have been absolutely no difficulty fitting it to existing music. This would explain why something published as a Latin “ode” should have such irregular – and sometimes indefinable – metric qualities’.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, when shown in its original poetic form, Melissus’ text allows us to see how skilfully he shaped the syntax and metre to fit the music.

Much of the musical setting of *Ecce beatam lucem* is, paradoxically for such a large-scale work, not particularly complex (there is relatively little writing for forty voices, for example). It can be described for the most part as a sequence of compact, succinct phrases – for Philip Brett, ‘short-winded’ phrases.<sup>114</sup> Few lines receive the emphasis of a repeated setting. The typical dactylic rhythms at the beginning (those of the *canzona francese*), as well as being a reminder of the Italian original of 1561, produce chordal phrases that are surprisingly neutral, given that it is an apocalyptic vision being depicted. Only with ‘Vos turba electa’ (with its syncopating soprano outlier), and the rhythmically pointed call to celebrate, does the music take off (bars 9–13). Extended contrapuntal sections are found in conjunction with words that would have been appropriate for both the 1568 motet and *Ecce*: ‘celebrate [Jehovam]’, ‘cantans sonans’, for example. The repetition of a section of music in the Epode presumably reflects textual repetition in the original. In the case of *Ecce beatam lucem* this involves two extended exclamations beginning with ‘O’ (‘O quae perennis esca . . .’ (lines 29–30) and ‘O mel et dulce nectar . . .’ (lines 38–9)), both set for the full complement of voices (bars 53–61, 88–96 respectively). Towards the end, the musical setting introduces for the only time in the work a harmonic shading of Bb. In *Ecce beatam lucem* (bars 99–100) it provides a subtle emphasis, albeit in forty voices, for ‘quies’ (repose).<sup>115</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Moroney, ‘The Polychoral Splendors’, p. 24.

<sup>114</sup> P. Brett, ‘Facing the Music’, *Early Music*, 10 (1982), pp. 347–50, at p. 347.

<sup>115</sup> A similar unique use of Bb occurs in Striggio’s two Mixolydian settings in his *Primo libro de madrigali a sei voci* (Venice, 1560): *Madonna, poich’occidemi volete* (no. 5, bar 57, ‘doglia’) and *Se ben di sette stell’ardent’e belle* (no. 6, seconda parte, bars 115–18, ‘Facesti col tuo duol’), ed. D. S. Butchart in *Alessandro Striggio: Il primo libro de madrigali a sei voci*, 2 vols., Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance, 70–1 (Madison WI, 1986), pp. 42, 50 respectively.



The compiler had to take the model, assess its basic characteristics (number of lines, number of syllables per line, vocabulary, bipartite structure), and write an appropriate or corresponding text. The notion that such a text could be simply ‘found’ independently – in a poetic anthology, for example – seems distinctly unlikely. In other words, Melissus must have written his ode specifically for adaptation of an existing musical source. Apart from the major bipartite division (corresponding to that between antistrophe and epode), however, the internal divisions of Melissus’ text (i.e. the three stanzas in each section) are not clearly delineated or emphasised in the setting; there are considerable overlaps between parts at the ends of stanzas; cadencing is not clear-cut. This also underlines the fact that the music used predated the Melissus text, as there were undoubtedly limits to the combination of the original music with the new text.

The procedure found in *Ecce beatam lucem* is not dissimilar from that undertaken by Melissus in his edition of Psalms of 1572, where he translated a French text into German and applied Huguenot melodies to make new settings. Even here, with a forty-part texture, he may have taken on the challenge himself – though, as has been argued above, the state of the Zwickau manuscript’s text rather argues against that idea. More likely, perhaps, a patron or sponsor wanted a new text for the forty-part music in their possession and commissioned him to supply it, which he did, making use of the existing text. That he should make a Pindaric ode out of the material is, indeed, remarkable, not to say problematic. The necessary ‘addition’ of an opening strophe to counterbalance the antistrophe and epode undoubtedly raises several questions – at present, unanswerable.<sup>116</sup> Whatever the case, it seems most likely that the text was written after – perhaps long after – the original music was composed; and it later assumed an independent existence in Melissus’ poetic oeuvre. In the 1586 edition of the *Schediasmata*, he occasionally gave out information about texts of his that had been set to music,<sup>117</sup> but there is no such reference in the printed edition (1595) of the *Enthusiasticon*.

\* \* \*

<sup>116</sup> The possibility that, at one time, there existed a musical setting of the strophe – involving a solo voice, with instrumental accompaniment – has been put forward by Hugh Keyte. Although this would provide a more natural ‘solution’ for the existence of the complete ode, there is no documentary evidence that such a composition existed.

<sup>117</sup> See, for example, *Schediasmata* (21586), III, p. 89: ‘Mittit Rosinae Cationem quinque vocum harmonia a se concinnatam’; pp. 152–3: ‘Dialogus in gratiam Nicolai comitis Ostrorogii, Octo vocum harmonia concinnatus a Leonardo Lechnero’.

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The circumstances of Melissus' life and the course of his literary career strongly suggest that he wrote the text of *Ecce beatam lucem* after 1568, when he embraced the Calvinist faith and came under the influence of the Pléiade in Paris. It is more likely to have been written in the 1570s or 1580s. As a consequence, there is little likelihood that the text was set by Striggio and performed at the well-known celebrations either in Florence (1561, 1565) or Munich (1568), and this possibility is further limited by the character of the text and the denomination of the work in 1561 ('Canzona', 'Musica'), which indicates that the text set at that time was in Italian. Since we know, however, that the music of *Ecce beatam lucem* was written before 1566 – given its links to Striggio's forty-part Mass – its identification with the forty-part music of 1561 does not seem unreasonable. Knowing that the music in the Zwickau source of 1587 preserves this 'early' music by Striggio, or at least a version of it, also makes a connection with the Munich motetto all the more likely; as has been argued, Melissus may have derived *his* text from that. The implication is that there was just one forty-part work, apart from the Mass, by Striggio, which was reused, refitted or 'retreaded' with new texts, and perhaps with musical revisions, in the course of two or more decades.<sup>118</sup>

A second, unavoidable consequence of the arguments presented above is the loosening of the link between the music that survives – evidently by Striggio – and the text to which it is now attached. Striggio made his second and final visit north of the Alps in 1574, when he was paid extremely well by the Wittelsbach court for services rendered; but there is no indication at present that he wrote or took part in the performance of a forty-part work during that period. The further we become removed in time from Florence and Munich – large centres where the performance of such music was conceivable – the more difficult it is to imagine an occasion at which such 'exotic' music could be presented, especially in a Calvinist context, as implied by the text. Dresden or Nuremberg are not to be discounted as possible venues for performance, but we are left with the somewhat unsettling conclusion that by the time the parts were copied out on Dresden paper in 1587, the work may have become more of a curiosity than a blueprint for performance, an object of study rather than a piece of

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Rainer's 'comprehensive hypothesis', '*La quale fu cantata molto bene*', p. 219: 'in 1561, Striggio composed a madrigal entitled *Ecco sì beato giorno à 40* which, circulating in different copies, landed in Munich in 1564 and received a contrafactum from Paul Melissus for the royal wedding in 1568, and for which (as reported by Troiano) Lasso designed instrumentation as *Ecce beatam lucem*, to be performed on March 7<sup>th</sup> 1568 in Munich.'

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music to be performed by an array of singers and instrumentalists. How Melissus' text came to be so appositely woven into Striggio's music still raises many questions. *Ecce beatam lucem*, even as a contrafactum, will always remain Striggio's composition, but its direct connection to the text by Melissus may be at best tenuous.