

Introducing a central European fragment of medieval polyphonic song

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ABSTRACT. *A newly identified musical source (Columbus, Ohio, Private collection, JP.MS.220, here Ohio 220) was publicised on social media in 2019. Recognising the value of the fragment, our research prioritised establishing its contents and provenance. The single parchment folio contains four polyphonic songs for two and three voices that once sat within a larger collection. Although aspects of the notation and repertoire within Ohio 220 resemble Ars Antiqua or early Ars Nova motets from northern Europe – with which one lyric shares a poetic concordance – our examination of the source’s artistic, textual and musical features supports a provenance within central European devotional culture approximately a century later. The polyphonic songs – not motets, but in the tradition of cantiones – draw on material and notational strategies with a long, pan-European heritage. We present an edition of all four pieces, outlining, in broad terms, the original provenance for the fragment and its music.*

A newly identified source of polyphonic song, Columbus, Ohio, Private collection, JP. MS.220 (hereafter Ohio 220), was publicised on social media in 2019. Its discovery invites us to consider musical and devotional cultures across central Europe.¹ Recognising the value of the fragment – a single parchment folio with four polyphonic compositions – the present authors sought to establish its contents and provenance. At first glance, one piece’s textual concordance with Parisian sources of the thirteenth century suggested that the music might be aligned with northern European *Ars Antiqua* or early *Ars Nova* motets. However, examination of Ohio 220’s artistic, textural, generic and melodic features took our study in a different direction: to central European devotional activities more than a century later. Here, we present an edition of all four pieces and identify and analyse compositional features that point towards the original provenance for the music, in particular considering musical form and style, the approach taken to notation and the devotional contexts of the lyrics. While we have not identified the exact institution where this polyphony was composed and copied, the constellation of features analysed here suggests a production context within a central European devotional community in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century.

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¹ We are grateful to Eric Johnson (Ohio State University Libraries, Columbus, United States of America) for sharing notice of the source and facilitating our access to it; at the time of writing, the leaf is in private ownership.

Overview of contents and physical description

Ohio 220 is a collection of four hitherto unknown polyphonic songs; titles are provided in Table 1, editions in Examples 1–4, and the texts and translations in the Appendix. As Paweł Gancarczyk has described, compositions of this type belong to a central European tradition of polyphonic *cantiones*.² These songs are characteristically bipartite in structure: the first section of a *cantio* is called the *versus* and the second is the *repeticio*.³ Items 1 and 4 are dedicated to St Dorothy and St Margaret, respectively, while items 2 and 3 are both

Table 1. Contents of Ohio 220

Position in Ohio 220	Item	Subject	Number of voices	Music	Text
<i>Recto</i> Staves 1–6	1. <i>Ave gemma virtuosa</i> / Tenor	St Dorothy	2 extant Possibly for 3 voices: one (or two) unsupported fourths suggest the absence of a contratenor	Scribe A	Scribe a
Staves 7–11 and the end of stave 6	2. <i>Virgo decus castitatis</i> / Tenor	BVM	2 extant Definitely for 3 voices: numerous unsupported fourths require the presence of a missing contratenor	Scribe A	Scribe a
<i>Verso</i> Staves 1–7 and the end of stave 8	3. <i>Virginis ascensus divinitus</i> / Contratenor / Tenor	Ascension of BVM	3 extant; complete	Scribe B	Scribe b
Staves 8–11	4. <i>O preclara Margaritha</i> / Tenor	St Margaret	2 extant; complete	Scribe B	Scribe b

² We thank Paweł Gancarczyk (University of Warsaw, Poland) for his generous advice during our research, for his assistance in confirming the features of Ohio 220 as typically central European and for drawing our attention to relevant work by Czech scholars. Ohio 220 is from a similar cultural context to that described by Gancarczyk in ‘Fragments of Local Polyphony in Late Medieval Central Europe: Towards a Semiotic Interpretation of Musical Sources’, in *Disiecta Membra Musicae: Studies in Musical Fragmentology*, ed. Giovanni Varelli (Berlin, Boston, 2020), 165–82.

³ See Paweł Gancarczyk, ‘A New Fragment of 15th-Century Polyphony in Silesia and the Tradition of the Central-European Repertory’, in *The Musical Culture of Silesia before 1742: New Contexts – New Perspectives*, ed. Paweł Gancarczyk, Lenka Hlávková-Mráčková and Remigiusz Pośpiech (Frankfurt, 2013), 45–54, at 46, as well as Gancarczyk, ‘Local, International or Central European? Repertories of Mensural Polyphony in Fifteenth-Century Silesia’, in *Imitatio - Aemulatio - Superatio? Vokalpolyphonie des 15./16. Jahrhunderts in Polen, Schlesien und Böhmen*, ed. Jürgen Heidrich (Münster, 2016), 23–35, at 26. See also the edition of *cantiones* found in Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, MS 2464: Charles E. Brewer, ed., *Collectio cantilenarum saeculi XV rkp. Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej KJ 2464* (Kraków, 1990). Jaromír Černý, in his groundbreaking work in the 1970s and 1980s on fifteenth-century Czech music, argued that the tradition of improvised instrumental dance music of the fourteenth century formed the basis of many fifteenth-century *cantiones* and emphasised the need for further systematic work to be undertaken for this repertoire. As examples of *cantiones* with improvised dance music as their basis, Černý lists *Angelica Christi turma*, *Flos florum inter lilia*, *Stola Jacob*, *Gentis mens labilis* and *Quem elegit*; *Flos florum* and *Quem elegit* are discussed later. Jaromír Černý, ‘Vícehlasé písně konduktového typu v českých

in praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Items 3 and 4 – those on the verso – are fully extant, with three and two voice parts, respectively,⁴ but item 2 on the recto is missing an essential contratenor; this may also be the case for item 1.⁵ Further musical and formal details to support these structural observations are discussed later.

Ohio 220's isolated leaf is parchment, and measures approximately 194 mm at its widest point and 273 mm at its tallest (Figures 1 and 2).⁶ The writing block is 155 mm × 239 mm. Both recto and verso contain eleven staves, ranging from 14 to 16 mm in height. Although the writing block was ruled in dry point, suggesting an organised approach, a rastrum was not used, and the staves do not consistently match up in both the left and the right margins, which range from 15 to 20 mm on the recto and 17 to 24 mm on the verso. The bottom margins measure between 15 and 17 mm, while those of the top are approximately 15 mm. The top of the fragment has presumably been trimmed – the initial at the top of the recto would not otherwise have been decorated to the very top edge – while the bottom edge of the fragment is likely unaltered. There is evidence of sewing stations (see especially the bottom left of the recto), of which there were probably five. Given the more extensive wear and glue stains on the recto (and the annotation in the top margin of this page to be discussed presently), it is likely that the polyphonic leaf served at some point as either the front of a parchment wrapper or the front flyleaf to another codex or libellus (with the recto facing frontwards), and – at some point – the recto was glued to the cover of the book's binding.

The manuscript fragment is distinctive in its appearance, though not atypical of other central European manuscripts of the period. Ohio 220 features large black initials on both recto and verso, with decorative knots and filled spaces, including an informal human face in the lower initial of the verso; the initials on the recto are further edged in red ink.⁷ The lowest voice in all four songs is labelled 'tenor huius', that is, 'tenor of this [song]' (and the second low voice of *Virginis ascensus* 'contratenor huius'). In terms of these features of decoration and tenor labelling, a plausible comparand is CZ-Pn II C 7 (the Jistebnice Cantional), a source from the 1420s whose

pramenech 15. století', *Miscellanea musicologica*, 31 (1984), 39–142, at 45–7. See also Černý, 'Die Ars nova-Musik in Böhmen', *Miscellanea Musicologica*, 21–23 (1970), 47–106. On the genre of the *cantio*, with a particular emphasis on the monophonic variety, see Jan Ciglbauer, 'Cantiones Bohemicae – Komposition und Tradition', PhD diss., Charles University (2017), and most recently, on *cantiones* and specific examples of their generic flexibility, see Ciglbauer, 'Closing Formulae of Central European *Cantiones*: Witnesses to Tradition and Functional Fluidity in Fifteenth-Century Bohemia', in *Music and Liturgy for the Benedicamus Domino c.800–1650*, ed. Catherine A. Bradley (Turnhout, 2024), 67–79.

⁴ The three voices of *Virginis ascensus* are notated in Ohio 220 in the order cantus–tenor–contratenor (see Figure 2). However, since the tenor lies below the contratenor for the majority (but not all) of the time, the tenor has been notated on the lowest stave throughout Example 3, and the order cantus–contratenor–tenor is employed in Tables 1 and 2.

⁵ The recto and verso of the leaf can be established through various features, including the partial presence of sewing stations (see below).

⁶ At its narrowest points, the fragment measures 190 × 269 mm.

⁷ A search for similar-looking initials has mostly proved fruitless, but the intertwining design is also employed for the initial of a polyphonic *cantio* notated on a recently discovered fragment of Silesian provenance, PL-WRu XV Q 1066a; see Gancarczyk, 'A New Fragment', 54, for a facsimile. Other comparable initials appear on fol. 1r of CZ-Pu V H 11 (www.manuscriptorium.com/apps/index.php?direct=record&pid=AIPDIG-NKCR_V_H_11_41HKNAACs) and fol. Fr of CZ-VB 42 (<https://melodiarium.musicologica.cz>). (All cited websites were last accessed 11 May 2025.)



Figure 1. Ohio 220, recto (reproduced with permission).

precise provenance is unknown.⁸ CZ-Pn II C 7 includes black initials with red penwork decoration in various styles throughout the book, comparable to those found in

⁸ A full facsimile is available at www.manuscriptorium.com/apps/index.php?direct=record&pid=AIPDIG-NMP__II_C_7____4347P97-cs#search.



Figure 2. Ohio 220, verso (reproduced with permission).

Ohio 220 (see [Figure 3](#), discussed further later). The same approach to labelling lower vocal parts ('tenor huius') is also present. Examination of central European sources suggests that these features are too common to indicate a single location for their origin, but do hint at the copyists' awareness of contemporary scribal norms.

A short phrase at top of the recto, some of which is illegible, appears to bear no relation to the musical contents:¹¹

This annotation references the incipit of Alexandre de Villedieu's well-known *Doctrinale puerorum* (written at the turn of the thirteenth century into the fourteenth), a grammar text in verse that begins 'Scribere clericulis paro doctrinale novellis'. The reason for this annotation is unclear, but it might have a connection to a now lost host volume, if this music fragment was reused as binding material (or as a wrapper) for a manuscript or printed book that began with the *Doctrinale puerorum*.¹² An allusion to

¹² This popular educational text was widely copied across Europe, with hundreds of extant manuscripts. See Philip J. Ford, 'Alexandre de Villedieu's *Doctrinale puerorum*: A Medieval Bestseller and Its Fortune in the Renaissance', in *Forms of the 'Medieval' in the 'Renaissance': A Multidisciplinary Exploration of a Cultural Continuum*, ed. George Hugo Tucker (Charlottesville, 2000), 155–71. It is possible that the annotation and the copying of the music were relatively contemporaneous. While the stems in the first stave appear to be drawn over the annotation, thus indicating the annotation preceded the copying of the music, these stems were gone over later in a darker ink. It does imply, however, that the annotation

Villedieu's well-distributed book may not help in establishing a specific provenance for the music, but it does add weight to the likelihood of the manuscript source having emanated from an institution such as a song school in a cathedral or monastery, where Latin would be taught to young learners.

The music and text were entered by two scribes, in at least two stages (see Table 1). On both the recto and verso there is some ambiguity to the order of working for scribes, and it may be that amendments were made in several stages. In general, it appears that the text was written before the music notation, and the initials appear to have been drawn before the notation was added, however, using the same dark black ink as the music notation. The compressed minim with a right flag at the beginning of the tenth stave on the verso indicates that the notation was entered after the initial, although the red ink decoration on the recto was added after the notation (the red ink is now visible on top of the black ink). The music hand ('B') on the verso is certainly different to the music hand ('A') on the recto: scribe B draws thicker, blacker stems, occasionally with a slight flick of the pen stroke at the top of the stem, and breves are drawn with slightly protruding vertical strokes on each side. The minim stems of music scribe A, on the other hand, are drawn with a much lighter brown ink, although it is possible that another hand (possibly scribe B, or the individual who added the words 'Ave gemma' and 'munde' in another text hand under stave five of the recto) went over some of these stems on the first two and half staves of the recto with the blacker ink. The text scribe of the recto ('a') uses this light brown ink, and apparently also added the clefs, which look to have the same light brown ink composition, and the filigree decoration on the second initial on the 'A' of 'Ave'. The text, clefs and initial decoration on the verso are all in the same black ink as the music notation, and it is likely the case that music scribe B and text scribe b are the same individual. Similarly, given the light brown ink recipe used for the text, clefs and minim stems on the recto, it seems that music scribe A and text scribe a are another individual.

Notational features and musical style

To some extent, the notation of Ohio 220 reflects core practices of the notational system associated with the French *Ars Nova*, whose fullest theorisation occurred in the first half of the fourteenth century.¹³ The mensuration of all four compositions is imperfect *tempus*, major prolation: note values range from imperfect longs to minims, with trochaic motion predominantly in semibreves and minims, although with stretches of breves in the lowest voice(s). Minim stems are mostly ascending, but at times are

was made in between the original copying of this song, and the point when another hand traced over the stems with black ink (as discussed in the next paragraph of this article).

¹³ For the most recent discussion of the formulation of *Ars Nova* theory and its use in practice, see Karen Desmond, *Music and the modern: The ars nova in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, 2018). On the wide dissemination of these theoretical ideas, see Charles E. Brewer, 'The Introduction of the *ars nova* into East Central Europe: A Study of Late Medieval Polish Sources', 2 vols., PhD diss., The City University of New York (1984).

<versus>

tenor huius

9

ve gem

16

ma vir tu o sa

21

Do roth e a ver nans ro sa

Ave gemma

Example 1. *Ave gemma virtuosa* / Tenor.

descending, perhaps reflecting an exemplar or simply scribal inconsistency.¹⁴ Rests are infrequent, with three semibreve rests in the cantus in *Ave gemma* and two breve

¹⁴ Several of the descending stems might be explained by the desire to avoid overlap with the V initial on the recto and the O initial on the verso, but a few others remain unexplained. A comparand discussed

28 <repeticio>

mun-di vi-te pa-tens glo-sa sis pro-no-bis spe-ci

R° tenoris munde vite

35

-o sa. O be-nig-na Chris-ti cel-la Do

42

-roth e a fla-grans stel-la pro

47

no-bis de-um in-ter-pel-la

Example 1. Continued

rests in the upper voice of *Virgo decus*. There are no minim rests. Ligatures are mostly found in the lower voice(s): in *Ave gemma* the tenor's activity approaches that of the

below, *Quem elegit*, has a similar use of occasional descending minim stems (see stave two of [Figure 3](#) and throughout [Figure 4](#)).

<versus>

Vir - go de-cus cas - ti - ta - tis vir-go re - gi-a vir - go ma - ter

tenor huius (c.o.p. stem on E missing)

8

pi - e - ta - tis vi - ri nes - ci - - -

14

- a vir-go tem-plum tri-ni-ta-tis ce - li re - -

21

- gi - a vir - go pu - ra pra - vi - ta -

29

tis de - le vi - ci - a.

Example 2. *Virgo decus castitatis* / Tenor.

cantus, with *cum opposita proprietate* (or *c.o.p.*) ligatures (two semibreves) the only type of ligature in the tenor. In the other three compositions, a greater variety of ligatures is used in the tenor and contratenor voices, with up to fifteen notes joined in ligature. The most advanced notational feature in these compositions is the occasional instance of remote imperfection: a breve is imperfed by a minim in the cantus at bars 28 and 35 of *Virginis ascensus* (Example 3) and at bars 22 and 36 of *O*

37 <repeticio>

Nos

R^o tenoris

44

e - mun - das a pec - ca - tis per suf - fra - gi - a per te no - bis

52

pe - ne da - tis de - tur ve - ni - a ne - dam - pne - mur pro pec - ca - tis in

59

mi - se - ri - a sed fru - a - mur cum be - a - tis ce - li glo - ri - a

Example 2. Continued

preclara (Example 4), and an imperfect long is imperfected by a minim in the cantus at bars 18–19 of *O preclara*. In each case, the remote imperfection is highlighted with a flag added to the right of each minim stem and followed by a stroke of division, and in the instance of the imperfected imperfect long, a descending stem is added to the left of the long to indicate that this note is a long. It is possible that this figuration is

<versus>

cantus
Vir - gi - nis as - cen - sus di - vi - ni - tus ex - co - gi -

contratenor
contratenor huius

tenor
tenor huius

10
ta - tur ut ho - nor in - men sus a plas - ma - tis tri - bu - a -

18
tur. En cho - rus an - ge - li - cus que - vis fun - gens spi - ri - ta -

25
li plau - su mi - ra - tur re - so - nat

Example 3. *Virginis ascensus divinitus* / Contratenor / Tenor.

used here to indicate a particular vocal delivery that in *Ars Antiqua* and early *Ars Nova* sources could have been notated with a plicated long or breve, and in fact that is how this figuration is notated in the tenor voice of *O preclara*, where a plicated long is found, with descending stems on the left and the right of the square note head, and a longer stem on the left, to sound simultaneously with the remote imperfection in the cantus at bars 18–19.¹⁵

¹⁵ For a discussion of the notation of remote imperfections and the possible relationship to *plicae* and their vocal delivery in Machaut's compositions, see Emily Korzeniewski, 'Changing the Breve's

32

cum vo - ce cho - ra - - - - - li.

41 <repeticio>

Hec est que - dam mu - li - er scan - dens ad as - tra po - ten - ter.

R^o iterum incipias

51

Et hanc gen - ti - cu - lam lau - det ad - - - - - huc.

T: 51-59 (repetition of 41-49) not notated in MS; *iterum incipias* tells performer to repeat

(*l* and *b*
corrected to
breves on
repeat)

60

cre - du - lam.

finalis
(60-63 notated)

Example 3. Continued

This straightforward rhythmic language, and the relative lack of notational complexity, speaks to the copying or genesis of Ohio 220 during the very late fourteenth

Quality in Theory and Practice', paper delivered at the International Symposium on Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Music at Kloster Neustift/Novacella, 26 June–1 July 2023.

<versus>

O pre - cla - ra Mar - ga - ri - tha a - ve de - cus vir - gi - num

tenor huius

10

sanc - ti - ta - tis re - di - mi - ta ser - to can - dens li - li - um.

18 <repeticio>

Mar - ga - re - tha

Rº tenoris

25

flos vir - tu - tum tu - a per suf - fra - gi - a nos

32

per cal - lem vir - go tu - tum duc ad ce - li gau - di - a.

Example 4. *O preclara Margaritha* / Tenor.

century or the first few decades of the fifteenth century. Its notational features can be readily compared with central European sources of the same decades, and this date range concurs with our observations on style and genre. Although French-style notational treatises were found in central Europe, notably in Bohemia, several central European musical sources of the same period use an adapted and simplified system,

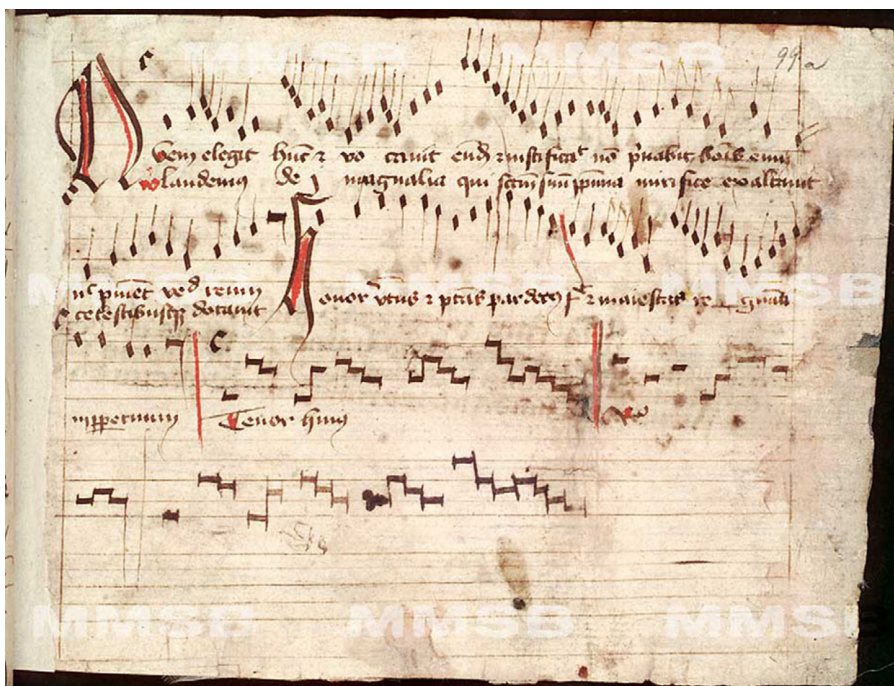


Figure 3. *Quem elegit* in CZ-Pn II C 7, fol. 56r (99a) (Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0).

which is not represented in any extant contemporaneous theoretical work.¹⁶ Martin Horyna has argued that the notational method found in such sources did not require its own theorisation, being in essence a pared-down version of earlier French models.¹⁷ In particular, this notation employs a simplified system for ligatures: breves and longs, for example, are typically notated in the same way in ligatures as they are individually (see especially the descending ligatures in the lower voice(s) in Figures 1 and 2, as well as in Figure 3 discussed later). Styling this type of writing ‘Bohemian mensural notation’, Horyna proposes that its earliest examples date from no earlier than 1390.¹⁸

¹⁶ For example, the so-called ‘Breslau’ mensural treatise, copied in the fifteenth century, is firmly within the Vitrican theoretical tradition, and cites numerous examples from fourteenth-century *Ars Nova* motets. See Johannes Wolf, ‘Ein Breslauer Mensuraltraktat des 15. Jahrhunderts’, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 1 (1918–19), 331–45. For a discussion of the interrelationships between the various central European witnesses of *Ars Nova* theory, see Elżbieta Witkowska-Zaremba, ‘A New Source for Fifteenth-Century “musica mensuralis”’, *Revista de Musicologia*, 16 (1993), 943–56. Martin Horyna discusses Bohemian manuscripts containing a simplified mensural notation: CZ-Pn X A 6 (c.1450), CZ-Pn XII A 1 (c.1390) and CZ-Pu V H 31 (c.1400); Horyna, *A Prague Fragment of Organ Tablature and the Earliest Attempts in the Middle Ages to Notate Organ Music* (Prague, 2021), 66 and n. 126. To these we can add CZ-Pn II C 7 (first half of fifteenth century), discussed below, and now Ohio 220.

¹⁷ See Horyna, *A Prague Fragment*, 66–7, for a brief explanation of the simplified system.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 66. Gancarczyk’s analysis of manuscripts of Silesian mensural polyphony (*musica mensuralis*) finds that the grouping of sources that date before c.1450 are all notated in black mensural notation (‘Local, International or Central European?’, 25). See also Marie Louise Göllner’s comments on the adapted rhythmic qualities of Parisian motets found in German and Italian sources: ‘The Transmission of French Motets in German and Italian Manuscripts of the 14th Century’, *Musica Disciplina*, 40 (1986), 63–77, esp. 67–70.



Figure 4. *Quem elegit* in CZ-HKm Hr-6, fol. 344r (Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0).

Table 2 summarises the most salient musical and formal features of the four Ohio 220 songs. Each presents the characteristic binary structure of a *cantio* with uneven section lengths, and is relatively short, ranging from 39 to 65 breves. In actual performance, however – as demonstrated shortly – these songs may have been longer. The four songs favour C, D and to a lesser extent E as tonal centres; *Virgo decus* stands out from the others with different tonal foci for its two sections (E, then D). All four exhibit similar ranges for their respective voice parts: the cantus always falls within G–aa and the tenor/contratenor within C–d. Perhaps the most striking melodic feature is the use of lengthy melismas; see, for instance, the opening of *Ave gemma* (Example 1) or the beginning of the second section of *O preclara* (Example 4), where the melodic device is used to highlight the song’s subject, ‘Margaretha’. In general, the cantus of

Table 2. Structural and stylistic features of the songs in Ohio 220

Song	Range	Structure, tonal characteristics	Dissonances	Melismas	Other comments
1. <i>Ave gemma virtuosa</i> / Tenor	<i>a-aa</i> 8ve <i>C-d</i> 9th	Two sections I. D-D 1-27 II. D-D 28-52	(unsupported?) 4th: 15, 31.5 9th: 11.5, 12.5 7th: 13.5, 25, 31, 49 2nd: 50	I: A-ve 1-13; Do-roth-e-a 22-24 II: spe-ci-o-sa 33-36; Do-roth-e-a 41-44; in-ter-pel-la 49-52	hocket on a single syllable, 14-16 D (?) missing in tenor, 43
2. <i>Virgo decus castitatis</i> / Tenor	<i>b-aa</i> 7th <i>C-d</i> 9th	Two sections I. E-E 1-36 II. D-D 37-65	unsupported 4th: 10, 11, 14, 34, 35-36, 43, 48, 60, 61 11th: 4, 20 9th: 30 7th: 39	I: nes-ci-a 11-15 re-gi-a 19-22 vis-ci-a: 33-36 II: Nos 37-43	missing <i>c.o.p.</i> stem in tenor, 4 tenor concludes on <i>Ave gemma's</i> last stave, which is signalled with <i>pertinet ... Virgo decus</i> (i.e., belongs to ... <i>Virgo decus</i>)
3. <i>Virginis ascensus divinitus</i> / Contratenor / Tenor	<i>G-aa</i> 9th <i>C-c</i> 8ve <i>C-d</i> 9th	Two sections I. C-C 1-40 II. C-E 41-50 C-E-C 51-63	4th: 5, 26, 29, 34 9th: 12, 17, 21, 45.5 (and 55.5), 47.5 (and 57.5) 7th: 13, 36, 37 11th: 4, 20, 42 (and 52) 2nd (uppermost-sounding voices): 14, 37.5, 38, 48 (and 58), 61	I: cho-ra-li 34-40 II: ad 44-46; ad-huc 54-59	II: 41-49=51-59 (all three voices), cantus and CT written out in full, but T repetition indicated with <i>iterum incipias</i> , 'second ending' of T labelled <i>finalis</i>
4. <i>O preclara Margaritula</i> / Tenor	<i>b-aa</i> 7th <i>D-d</i> 8ve	Two sections I. D-D 1-17 II. D-D 18-39	7th: 7, 14.5, 29, 37.5	II: Marga-re-tha 18-24; gau-di-a 36-39	cantus notated a third too low

each song moves predominantly in stepwise motion, with occasional leaps up to a fifth. The tenors (and contratenor of *Virginis ascensus*) are for the most part much more disjunct; peculiar here are the ascending sevenths in *Ave gemma* (Example 1, bars 1–2 and 16–17).¹⁹

Regular small-scale dissonances between the melody and supporting line(s) typify the harmonic language; see, for example, the ninths on the second semibreves of bars 11 and 12 of *Ave gemma*, and the seventh in bar 13. This leads to a curious moment in the song: there is hocket on a single syllable from bars 14 to 16, with two semibreve rests; this moment suggests that the text may be a contrafact, since there is no obvious reason why a hocket would be meaningful here. Moreover, the *a/d* fourth in bar 15 might indicate a missing lower voice, but this is the only moment in the song that really calls for it (though the second half of bar 31 would also benefit from a contratenor). In contrast, unsupported fourths abound in *Virgo decus*, as shown in the table, thereby indicating a missing contratenor; since these two songs appear together on the recto, perhaps indeed *Ave gemma* is also missing its contratenor, with both contratenor voices possibly occupying part of the opening's missing facing verso (though such a *mise-en-page* is speculative). All four songs include examples of parallel fifths and octaves. Towards the end of *Ave gemma*'s first section, the name 'Dorothea' is highlighted with a series of homophonic fifths (the second half of bar 22 to bar 24); the same song includes one example of parallel unisons (bar 2).

There are textual concordances for three of the items, but no discernible musical relationship between the Latin-texted polyphonic songs in Ohio 220 and the melodies found with the same texts in other sources. Most significantly for tracing the longer heritage of the materials in Ohio 220, the text of *Virgo decus* is transmitted within a motet family witnessed in many of the well-known sources of *Ars Antiqua* polyphony and is cited as an example in two *Ars Antiqua* theoretical treatises (Table 3).²⁰ Within the surviving sources there are four main musical presentations of this text: as the motetus in the three-voice Marian motet *Res nova mirabilis / Virgo decus castitatis / ALLELUIA*; as the motetus of a two-voice motet; as a three-voice conductus motet (where both triplum and motetus sing the same text *Virgo decus castitatis*); and the three-voice devotional song transmitted in Ohio 220. The first three of these are closely related musically, with the same music for the motetus and tenor voices. The earliest sources for this *Ars Antiqua* motet family are associated with mid-thirteenth-century

¹⁹ Although the tenor of *O preclara* features two leaps of a fifth, a good deal of it moves by step; see especially the stepwise descent of a fifth at the end of both sections, as well as the complete descent of an octave to begin *R*^o. Also, its opening *D–E–G* motive in breves is soon stated twice more at bars 5–7 and 9–11. This tenor comprises some of the qualities associated with instrumental music and secular song that led Černý to hypothesise origins in improvised dance music (see n. 3 above).

²⁰ A search of the *Thesaurus musicarum latinarum* (<https://chmtl.indiana.edu/tml/>) reveals no citations in theory treatises for the incipits of the remaining Ohio 220 *cantiones*. An incipit for a composition identified only as 'Margaritha' is found within the early fifteenth-century Silesian mensural treatise, Anonymous Anonymus BOZ/1 (PL-Wn BOZ 61, fols. 285v–286r); however, the context of the theoretical citation, which is given as an example of red notation indicating a change of prolation, does not match the notation of Ohio 220's *O preclara Margaritha*. See 'Anonymous Boz1 "De musica mensurali"', in *Notae musicae artis: Music notation in Polish sources, 11–16th century*, ed. Elżbieta Witkowska-Zaremba (Kraków, 2001), 491–508, at 505. We thank Elżbieta Witkowska-Zaremba for her help with this citation.

Table 3. Concordances for the text *Virgo decus castitatis*

Title	Genre	Sources	Comments
<i>Res nova mirabilis</i> / <i>Virgo decus castitatis</i> / <i>ALLELUYA</i>	Three-voice double Latin motet	F-MO H 196, fol. 96v D-BAs Lit. 115, fol. 59v BnF NAF 13521, fol. 373v E-BULh s/n, fol. 105v D-Mbs Clm. 16444, fol. IIbv E-Tc BCT 98.28, fol. 234v	Triplum and motetus texts swapped in D-Mbs Clm. 16444
<i>Virgo decus castitatis</i> / <i>ALLELUYA</i>	Two-voice Latin motet	F-Pa 3517, fol. 118r ^a F-BSM 119 (148) V, fol. 92r GB-Ob Lyell 72, fol. 172v BL Add. 30091, fol. 5v	
[<i>Virgo decus castitatis</i>] / <i>Virgo decus castitatis</i> / <i>ALLELUYA</i>	Three-voice conductus motet	GB-Ctc O.2.1, fol. 216v	Triplum is unique to this version
' <i>Virgo decus castitatis</i> '	Citations in two thirteenth-century theoretical treatises	<i>Discantus positio vulgaris</i> St Emmeram anonymous ^b	Notated music examples of the motetus and of the tenor of the <i>Ars Antiqua</i> motet (given separately) are included in St Emmeram anonymous citations
<i>Virgo decus castitatis</i> / Tenor	Two-voice polyphonic devotional song (<i>cantio</i>)	Ohio 220	Music of both voices unique to this version

^aF-Pa 3517 transmits a two-voice version of the motet on fol. 118r (motetus and tenor), however, the triplum *Res nova mirabilis* is copied independently on fol. 2r.

^b*Discantus positio vulgaris* in Hieronymus de Moravia, *Tractatus de musica*, ed. S. M. Cserba, *Freiburger Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 2 (Regensburg, 1935), 189–94, at 193; Heinrich Sowa, ed., *Ein anonymes glossierter Mensuraltraktat* 1279, *Königsberger Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 9 (Kassel, 1930), 1–132, at 80.

France (one of the earliest French sources, F-BSM 119 (148) V, has a colophon directly next to, and in the same hand as the motet tenor, with a date of 1264), but examples are also found from the royal nunnery of Las Huelgas and, in the conductus-motet version, in a source associated with Ely Cathedral in East Anglia (GB-Ctc O.2.1).²¹

The evergreen and simple poetic style of *Virgo decus* – essentially a list of epithets appropriate to the Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven (*virgo regia*), with its lilting accentual verse with regular syllable counts and rhyme scheme – likely contributed to its wide dissemination.²² The use of linguistic tropes and refrains was a

²¹ Friedrich Ludwig, *Repertorium organorum recentioris et motetorum vetustissimi stili*, ed. Luther A. Dittmer, 2 vols. in 3 (New York, 1964–78, first published 1910), vol. 1, part 2, 394–5; Hendrik van der Werf, *Integrated Directory of Organa, Clausulae and Motets of the Thirteenth Century* (Rochester, NY, 1989), 93.

²² For a discussion of the music and text of the *Ars Antiqua* motet, including a translation of its texts, see Sean Paul Curran, 'Vernacular Book Production, Vernacular Polyphony, and the Motets of the "La Clayette" Manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouvelles acquisitions françaises 13521)', PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley (2013), 107–11. While Ludwig and van der Werf list the tenor as unknown, Curran identifies it as from the *Alleluia. Confitemini nos* (ibid., 107).

fundamental part of composing both devotional and secular lyrics, which were very often deliberately intertextual; it is not unusual to find such phrases in texts with very different functions and social contexts.²³ Given the compositional strategies of other items in Ohio 220, it is possible that the text *Virgo decus* had an independent transmission for use within a Marian liturgical service; indeed, one of the sources for *Virgo decus* in Table 3 (GB-Ob Lyell 72) is a north Italian processional. The motet is copied within the sequentiary portion of this chant manuscript in the midst of a handful of polyphonic sequences and motets. The text that is transmitted with *Virgo decus* in the triplum of the *Ars Antiqua* three-voice Latin double motet – *Res nova mirabilis* – is found independently as a sequence in a German manuscript dated to the final third of the fifteenth century, D-Mbs g716 (fol. 34r).²⁴

What sets the copy of *Virgo decus* in Ohio 220 apart, however, is that it appears to be completely unrelated musically to the *Ars Antiqua* motet. The *Ars Antiqua* motet follows the accentual pattern and regular structure of the text, setting it syllabically in first mode to phrases of 7 longs that subdivide into subphrases of 4 longs+3 longs, accommodating the 8- and 5-syllable lines of verse. The tenor matches the first-mode rhythms of the motetus.²⁵ Yet the setting in Ohio 220 completely disregards the patterns of syllable count and rhyme, with a more melismatic setting of irregular phrase lengths that includes lengthy virtuosic melismas, most dramatically at the beginning of the 'B' section on 'Nos' (Example 2, bars 37–43). In general, when the setting is syllabic, the rhythms mostly reflect the Latin accents, with accented syllables set to semibreves and unaccented syllables set to minims (see, for example, bars 3–4 or bars 17–18).

Comparisons with central European examples

Comparison with the object of the aforementioned study by Horyna – *Que est ista* – is instructive, since there is much in common between his example and the four pieces in Ohio 220 from notational and stylistic perspectives.²⁶ *Que est ista* is preserved securely

²³ The literature on lyrics and intertextuality is substantial, but see especially Suzannah Clark and Elizabeth Eva Leach, eds., *Citation and Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Musical Culture: Learning from the Learned. Essays in Honour of Margaret Bent* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2005).

²⁴ D-Mbs g716 has been catalogued by Calvin Bower in the CANTUS database (available at <https://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/source/124030>). Revision of the previous dating of this manuscript is drawn from Karin Schneider, *Die deutschen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek Munchen: Cgc 691-867. Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum Bibliothecae Monacensis*, Tom. 5, Edition altera, Pars 5 (Wiesbaden, 1984), 93–99, at 93. As in note 'a' of Table 3, *Res nova mirabilis* is also copied separately within F-Pa 3517, a manuscript source for Gautier de Coincy's *Miracles de Nostre Dame*, but which also transmits six motets.

²⁵ Indeed, this is why this motet is cited in the two theoretical treatises: as an example of homorhythm of first-mode rhythms in both motetus and tenor.

²⁶ Horyna, *A Prague Fragment*, 66; facsimile at 68, and edition at 69–70. Horyna describes this *cantio* as a 'cantilena of the rondellus type' at 66. In Ohio 220, the three-voice *Virginis ascensus* is also thematically connected to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (15 August). Jaromír Černý has also published an edition of *Que est ista*; see Jaromír Černý, David Eben, Jan Frei, Martin Horyna, Jan Kouba, Jiří Matl, Hana Vlhová-Wörner and Jana Vozková, *Historical Anthology of Music in the Bohemian Lands (up to ca 1530)* (Prague, 2005), 133–5.

in his main source (CZ-Pn X A 6, front pastedown), from Český Krumlov, and is also found more imperfectly in a second.²⁷ Its three voice parts, as in *Virginis ascensus*, comprise a texted melody, underpinned by an untexted tenor and contratenor; the lower voices do not appear to derive from chant.²⁸ As in all four pieces within Ohio 220, regular small-scale dissonances between the melody and supporting lines in *Que est ista* typify the harmonic language, as do occasional parallel octaves, and melismas in the cantus feature prominently, most notably on the first syllables of each of the song's two sections. The syllabic text-setting is sometimes not entirely satisfactory however it is arranged, suggesting either a flexible attitude or perhaps that the well-known text of the Assumption antiphon is a contrafact. That these stylistic features can be detected across all four pieces in Ohio 220 strongly suggests – if not confirms – that the new source was part of a comparable tradition in a similar location.

Two additional comparands selected from the extant central European polyphonic *cantiones* can further contextualise our four songs. *Flos florum*, uniquely preserved as the lone musical item in the Czech source CZ-Pu V H 31, exemplifies those features just mentioned, but, additionally, the text written below its tenor voice provides a tantalising piece of information: 'Tenor huius pulcerrimi rundelli ach du getruys blut von alden soln', that is, the 'beautiful rondellus, *Ach du getruys blut von alden soln*' is concealed in 'this tenor'.²⁹ As mentioned, the contours of the lower voices in the four songs in Ohio 220 certainly do not suggest an origin in chant, and although we have yet to identify any musical relationship between their tenor melodies and any pre-existent songs, it seems plausible that they are likewise drawn from secular song.

A second comparand, *Quem elegit*, is preserved in at least four manuscripts – now all housed in Czech libraries and presumed to be of Czech origin – and sheds light on two aspects of performance practice. First, in CZ-Pn II C 7 (the Jistebnice Cantional from the 1420s discussed briefly earlier), the tenor moves along in rhythms similar to the four songs in Ohio 220 (Figure 3).³⁰ In the other three manuscripts, however, the tenor might be described as 'riffed on', often with lilting trochaic semibreve–minim motion, and there are even occasional semiminims; see, for example, Figure 4, from

²⁷ The second source, also Bohemian, is shown in facsimile and discussed in Jan Ciglbauer, 'Wolfenbüttel, HAB, Cod. Guelf 30.9.3: ein neues Bohemicum (?)', in *Musical Culture of the Bohemian Lands and Central Europe Before 1620*, ed. Jan Bařa, Lenka Hlávková and Jiř K. Kroupa (Prague, 2011), 64–70.

²⁸ Melodies for *Que est ista* can be consulted at <https://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/chant/232275>.

²⁹ The first published edition of this song notates the cantus a fifth too low, which results in both sections of the song concluding on a D/G fourth, and the second section beginning on an F/b tritone; *Dějiny české hudby v příkladech*, ed. Jaroslav Pohanka (Prague, 1958), 8–9, no. 12. See Černý's more recent edition (*Historical Anthology*, 132–3) for a correct version. It is uncertain whether 'von alden soln' is part of the vernacular lyric or is some form of authorial attribution.

³⁰ For an edition of this manuscript, see Jaroslav Kolár, Aneřka Vidmanová and Hana Vlhová-Wörner, eds., *Jistebnice Kancionál: MS. Prague, National Museum Library II C 7; Critical Edition. Vol 1: Graduale, Monumenta Liturgica Bohemica 2* (Brno, 2005) and Hana Vlhová-Wörner, ed., *The Jistebnice Kancionál: Prague, National Museum Library II C 7; Critical Edition. Vol 2: Cantionale, Monumenta Liturgica Bohemica 3* (Brno, 2019). On the dating of the manuscript to the 1420s, see Stanislav Petr, 'A Codicological and Paleographical Analysis of the Jistebnice Kancionál', in *Jistebnice Kancionál* 1, 55–71, at 55–6.

CZ-HKm Hr-6 (Codex Franus, olim II A 6).³¹ The repeated pitches in the final section might suggest that the second manuscript is an attempt at notating how *Quem elegit* would have been rendered in performance, perhaps even an artefact of a particular instrumental style, where the repetition of individual notes is driven by performance on an instrument less capable of sustaining a long note easily, such as a keyboard instrument or a psaltery. Regardless, the lively tenor line suggests the influence of vernacular music on *cantiones*, and *Quem elegit* must have been a popular song due to its preservation in four separate extant manuscripts, three of which have decorated rhythms in the tenor voice.³²

A second aspect of performance practice relates to form. In CZ-HKm Hr-6 (Figure 4), two additional verses for the 'A' music are added as residuum texts after the music, signalled by two Vs in red, indicating that the repetition of the A section is sung with different texts (perhaps AaB AaB). However, in CZ-Pn II C 7 (Figure 3), where there is underlay of the second *versus* directly under the first *versus* in the cantus (only one additional verse is provided in this source), the written-out repetition of the pitches of the 'A' music in the tenor at the end of this voice part (final stave in the figure) indicates that another statement of the 'A' music would be sung *after* the 'B' section (R^o) is sung. Thus, given the tenor's first 'A' being enclosed in red 'bar lines', the song's form as performed would be AaBA, similar to the form of some virelais.³³ In light of the remarkable stylistic and formal similarities of the four Ohio 220 songs with these comparands, it is entirely possible that the four Ohio 220 songs would be sung with a repeat of their first sections even though in the source no additional text is provided for the return to the *versus*.³⁴

³¹ The other two manuscripts preserving *Quem elegit* are: CZ-HKm Hr-7 (Codex Specíálník, olim II A 7), fol. 261r (p. 521) and CZ-CHRM 12580, fol. 325r. Images of all four sources are available at www.manuscriptorium.com/. An edition of *Quem elegit* appears in *Geistliche Lieder und Gesänge in Böhmen*, 2. Vol. 2: 1420–1475, ed. Brigitte Böse and Franz Schäfer, Bausteine zur slawischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte, new edn, ser. B, 14 (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 2000), 114–15, no. 44.

³² CZ-Pn II C 7 (the Jistebnice Cantional) also contains a record of the two-voice song but with the Czech devotional text *Shlédniž na nás, zmilelý pane*. The clearly demarcated *versus* and *repeticio* of the cantus appear on fol. 39r and the two sections of the tenor on fol. 39v of the source (a link to images of the manuscript is provided above in n. 8). The tenor is likewise rhythmically decorated, and – remarkably – is also fully texted with the same lyric as in the cantus. In this case, the rhythmic decoration in the tenor is dictated by the text of the upper voice, yielding a syllabic rendering; that is, the tenor is rhythmised to allow for enough tenor pitches to sing all the syllables of the Czech text. In all versions of *Quem elegit* with tenor decoration, however, as in Figure 4, the rhythms of the tenor do not correspond to the syllables of the text in the cantus. Furthermore, at the very bottom of fol. 39r in CZ-Pn II C 7, immediately under the cantus voice of *Shlédniž na nás*, a later hand has sketched in the pitches (only) of the tenor in entirely red ink, and in decorated rhythms, but the pitches lack stems and only the pitches for its first section (the *versus*) are provided. It seems as though this later scribe was familiar with the (seemingly) more usual practice of performing the song with the text only in the cantus and was providing the pitch for the tenor on the same folio as the upper voice, albeit only for its first section. See Vlhová-Wörner, ed., *The Jistebnice Kancional*, 2, 143–6 for an edition of the song with the Czech devotional text.

³³ See, for example, the virelai *Providence la senée* in the interpolated Roman de Fauvel manuscript BnF 146, fol. 23v.

³⁴ In commercial recordings of *Flos florum*, there is no consensus on performance practice in this regard: the Rožmberk Ensemble, for example, returns to A (even though there is not a different text for a second *versus*), while St George's Canzona ends their performance with B, the *repeticio*. These two recordings are available online: www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JrgyvSaBk and www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnPiRiXakD4. It is plausible that any additional *versus* text may at one time been provided on a facing page.

Virginis ascensus stands apart from the other songs in Ohio 220, not only because it has an extant contratenor, but also because its second section is essentially the same music stated twice, but with different text the second time, and with a four-bar cauda to conclude. As shown in [Example 3](#), bars 51–59 are an exact repetition of 41–49. In the cantus, the repetition is signalled in the manuscript ([Figure 2](#)) with a faint single vertical line and with a larger E initial for *Et*. And while the repetition of the contratenor in the song's second section is written out in full – see the right-hand portions of staves 7 and 8 – it is not in the tenor: at the end of stave 6, the label indicating the second section, R^o, is followed by the text *iterum incipias* (start again) and then at the beginning of stave 7 is the word *finalis* (final; that is, what we would call the second ending).³⁵ The musical structure of the song as a whole, as notated, is ABb. If the *versus* were then sung again in performance, then its form would be ABbA, resembling that of a typical virelai. This structure supports the idea that the song may have originated as a secular virelai and was then repurposed by the substitution of a Latin, devotional text.

Devotional context of texts and music in Ohio 220

Institutions most likely to own a group of devotional pieces include churches, monastic foundations or secular cathedrals, and we have already identified a possible connection with an institution of this type that maintained its own song school. That the four pieces honour the Blessed Virgin Mary and two other women – St Dorothy and St Margaret – arguably suggests either that the section of the original book contained a group of pieces relevant to the sanctorale (though there is no ostensible liturgical ordering), or that these female saints held some special meaning for the source's copyists or users. It is possible to speculate further: the clustering of only female devotional figures would be appropriate for a book used in a nunnery, perhaps one dedicated to one of these women. Certainly, the tone of each lyric takes the women's virginity as its central theme, and indicates the role of Mary, Dorothy and Margaret in intercession (see the texts and translations in the Appendix). Although some books from female houses incorporated vernacular items in response to uneven Latin literacy, the use of Latin text remained commonplace.³⁶ We can also look to the compilation of female saints' lives as exempla more widely: it was typical for high status women and nuns to receive books focused on virgin martyrs (such as St Catherine of Alexandria), and women were involved in the production, dissemination and reception of female-centred hagiography.³⁷

³⁵ At bar 59 in the edition, the *b* and *E* in the contratenor and tenor, respectively, have been corrected to breves in order to accord with the *e* breve in the cantus. It is curious that section II of the contratenor was not notated in the same condensed way as the tenor; this would have avoided bleeding over into the first stave of *O preclara*.

³⁶ See David N. Bell, *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries* (Kalamazoo, 1995) and Anne Bagnall Yardley, *Performing Piety: Musical Culture in Medieval English Nunneries* (New York, 2008). On the relatively higher Latin literacy of nuns in continental Europe, see chapters in Virginia Blanton, Veronica O'Mara and Patricia Stoop, eds., *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue* (Turnhout, 2013).

³⁷ There is a considerable literature on the didactic purposes of early hagiographical texts and their exchange as gifts and exempla. See, for example, Katherine J. Lewis, 'Model Girls? Virgin-Martyrs and the Training of Young Women in Late Medieval England', in *Young Medieval Women*, ed. Katherine J. Lewis, Noël James Menuge and Kim M. Phillips (Stroud, 1999), 25–46.

Marian song was so ubiquitous as to make establishing a provenance based on dedication alone impossible. Yet praise of other holy figures can sometimes be more informative. The first item on Ohio 220, *Ave gemma*, represents one of very few extant polyphonic songs in honour of Dorothy.³⁸ St Dorothy was martyred on 6 February 287 or 304 in Caesarea, Cappadocia, though the details of her life remain obscure.³⁹ Her cult was disseminated widely, especially from the eleventh century. The oldest surviving version of her legend is that by St Aldhelm (639–709), whose *De laudibus virginittatis* ('On the praise of virginity') was written for the Abbess of Barking Abbey in England.⁴⁰ The earliest vernacular *historiae* are from Germany: the *Dorotheen Passie* originated in Ostfalen c.1400, although its earliest copy dates to 1476, and a fragmentary life *Von sent Dorothea* may have been created in early fourteenth-century Bavaria.⁴¹ St Dorothy's Office is preserved in various manuscripts across Europe, all of which indicate provenance from central Europe.⁴² The prominence of St Dorothy's cult in Silesia, which lies across parts of modern Poland, Germany and Czechia, would offer a useful geographical context for the song. The church of Saints Dorothy, Wenceslaus and Stanislaus (Wrocław/Warsaw) once held an important relic of the saint's skull and would therefore have been a focus of her cult.⁴³

A Prussian anchoress is also a potentially attractive, if secondary, proposition for the use of the song: St Dorothy of Montau (hereafter Dorothea von Montau, feast day 25 June), was born on St Dorothy's feast day, 6 February 1347 and died in 1394.⁴⁴ The proliferation of hagiographical materials in honour of the more widely known St Dorothy in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century central Europe sometimes makes distinguishing between references to the two women challenging, though their *vita*e could not have been more different. Where there are ample sources for the Office of St Dorothy, no office has survived for Dorothea von Montau.⁴⁵ Dorothea was married at

³⁸ *Dorothee festo*, a very brief two-voice *cantio* of the conductus variety, appears in Pl-Kd XV. 18, fol. 15a. The song is discussed and transcribed in Černý, 'Vícehlasé písně', 93–5.

³⁹ Kirsten Wolf, 'The Legend of St Dorothy: Medieval Vernacular Renderings and their Latin Sources', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 114 (1996), 41–72, at 41.

⁴⁰ Larissa Tracy, 'The Middle English Life of Saint Dorothy in Trinity College, Dublin MS 319: Origins, Parallels, and Its Relationship to Osbern Bokenham's Legendys of Hooly Wummen', *Traditio*, 62 (2007), 259–84, at 260.

⁴¹ Wolf, 'The Legend of St Dorothy', 51, 53–4.

⁴² See <https://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/feast/2191>.

⁴³ A description of the reliquary, provided by the National Museum in Wrocław, may be found at <https://mnwr.pl/en/silesian-art-of-14th-16th-century>.

⁴⁴ See also Johannes von Marienwerder, *The Life of Dorothea von Montau, a Fourteenth-Century Recluse*, trans. Ute Stargardt, Studies in Women and Religion, 39 (Lewiston, NY, 1997); Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago, 1984); Dyan Elliott, 'Authorizing a Life: The Collaboration of Dorothea of Montau and John Marienwerder', in *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*, ed. C. M. Mooney (Philadelphia, 1999), 168–92; Cordelia Heß, *Heilige machen im spätmittelalterlichen Osteeraum: Die Kanonisationsprozesse von Birgitta von Schweden, Nikolaus von Linköping und Dorothea von Montau*, Europa im Mittelalter 11 (Berlin, 2008).

⁴⁵ Our thanks to Hana Vlhová-Wörner for her assistance with identifying office materials for these figures. On the complex historiography of Czech musical history, see Hana Vlhová-Wörner, 'Zdeněk Nejedlý's Historical Narrative and Ideological Construction of Czech Medieval Music History', in *Nationality vs Universality: Music Histories in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Sławomira Żerańska-Kominek (Newcastle, 2016), 175–95.

a young age and bore nine children, only one of whom survived childhood; she experienced visions during her marriage, travelled with her husband to holy sites such as Cologne, and was eventually widowed during her husband's pilgrimage to Rome c.1390. In 1391, Dorothea moved to Marienwerder (Kwidzyn in modern-day Poland) and was installed as anchoress in the cathedral in 1393. With the assistance of her confessor, Johannes of Marienwerder, Dorothea produced many Latin and vernacular books based on her life. Her personal piety was focused on Christ's Passion, and she received the stigmata. She was quickly venerated after her death as a patron saint of Prussia, and within the decade a large collection of evidence had been compiled for her canonisation, though this did not take place fully until 1976. Archbishop Jan of Jenštejn (d. 1400), well known for his role in promoting the adoption of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, drove the initial campaign for Dorothea's canonisation.⁴⁶ Though *Ave gemma* was most likely created in honour of St Dorothy, about whom the epithets of youth and beauty were more appropriate, it could have been repurposed for Dorothea in places where her cult flourished.

The text of *Ave gemma*, which lacks direct mention of St Dorothy's martyrdom, is constructed from two extracts from the Office of St Dorothy, found across several sources (Table 4).⁴⁷ Newly composed local office materials regularly drew on more established figures of veneration, deliberately using *imitatio* to strengthen the authenticity of an emergent cult, so it is possible that St Dorothy's Office drew on that of other saints. The composite nature of the lyric in Ohio 220 argues against its use as a direct replacement for liturgical plainchant, but there would be nothing to prevent the song being used in broader devotional celebrations.

Identifying the Margaret to whom *O preclara Margaritha* might be dedicated is also challenging, on account of multiple candidates and the shortness of the lyric. Musically, the song appears to be complete in its two extant voice parts. The text is similar to one found in CZ-Pn XIII A 2, fol. 202r–v, a chant book with fifty-six added items of polyphony, whose copying in Kolin – by Martinus Baccalarius Vyskytna – has been dated to 1512 (Table 5).⁴⁸ This strongly suggests that the text of the two-voice piece was adapted from a pre-existent office text for St Margaret. There is a structural

⁴⁶ The political and intellectual networks invested in the piety of lay women and in devotion to Dorothea von Montau are explored in Stephen Mossman, 'Dorothea von Montau and the Masters of Prague', *Oxford German Studies*, 39 (2010), 106–23. Mossman highlights the interwoven roles of academic authors from the University of Prague and at Marienwerder in the promulgation of the cult. On Jenštejn, see Rhianydd Hallas, 'Two Rhymed Offices Composed for the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Comparative Study and Critical Edition', PhD diss., Bangor University and Charles University (2021). See also *The Cathedral of Marienwerder and the Castle of Marienburg* (Leipzig, c.1920), available at https://kpbk.umk.pl/Content/252577/PDF/Gromadzenie_POPC_031_56.pdf, and W. Douglas Simpson, 'The Cathedral and Capitular Castle of Marienwerder in Pomesania', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association, second series*, 37 (1931; published online 2017), 47–74; at 47 Simpson identifies the southern chamber of the cathedral as the likely location of Dorothy's cell.

⁴⁷ See office materials for St Dorothy in G. M. Dreves, ed., *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 55 vols. (Leipzig, 1886; rpt. Frankfurt am Main, 1961), 5: 163–5, to which should be added DK-Kk 3449 8o III, used in Table 4. The *Analecta Hymnica* edition (at 165) is based on six sources whose provenances cluster around central Europe from the middle of the fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries.

⁴⁸ CZ-Pn XIII A 2, fol. 202r–v: www.manuscriptorium.com/apps/index.php?direct=record&pid=AIPDIG-NMP__XIII_A_2__315HOB2-cs. This source is described as a Graduale-Cantionale since it includes chant and over fifty items of polyphony, including motets, settings of the Credo and

Table 4. Relationship of Office materials for St Dorothy to the polyphonic song *Ave gemma virtuosa*

Office materials as DK-Kk 3449 8o III, fol. 55r	Ohio 220 (// indicates musical structure)
<i>Antiphon at 1st Vespers</i> Ave gemma virtuosa Dorothea vernans rosa mundae vitae patens glosa sis pro nobis speciosa. Interventrix gratiosa.	Ave gemma virtuosa Dorothea vernans rosa // mundi vite patens glosa sis pro nobis speciosa.
<i>3rd Responsory at 2nd Nocturns, verse</i> O benigna pacis cella Dorothea flagrans stella pro tu servis interpella	O benigna Christi cella Dorothea flagrans stella pro nobis deum interpella.

Table 5. Relationship of office text for St Margaret to the polyphonic song *O preclara Margaritha*

CZ-Pn XIII A 2, fol. 202r–v	Ohio 220
1. O preclara Margareta ave tu decus virginum serto candens lilium sponsa Christi gloriosa caeli scandens solium eyelle cordis lolium R ^o Salva Christi, te laudantes, tibi laudes concrepantes cordis cum tripudio	O preclara Margaritha ave decus virginum sanctitatis redimita serto candens lilium.
2. A praefecto concupita eius spernis munera caeli fulge gloria Margareta, flos virtutum, tua per suffragia duc ad caeli gaudia R ^o Eia, Iesu, rex benigne fac, vivamus tibe digne nunc et in perpetuum.	[R ^o] Margaretha flos virtutum tua per suffragia nos per callem virgo tutum duc ad celi gaudia.

mismatch between the lyrics associated with the *repeticio* in each version, where the material that forms the *repeticio* in Ohio 220 is not signalled as such in the office source (CZ-Pn XIII A 2). This sort of treatment is not necessarily significant, given the adaptive practices that were fundamental to the creation of devotional poetry at the

Sanctus and one ‘Czech sacred piece’. See *Census Catalogue of Manuscript Sources of Polyphonic Music 1400–1550*, which is reproduced with permission on DIAMM. Although later in date than Ohio 220, the inclusion of devotional items in honour of St Ursula and her 11,000 virgins and Epiphany (honouring the Three Kings of Cologne), all of whose relics were preserved at Cologne cathedral, indicate the regional significance of the collection. Many pieces are attributed to Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz (1392–c.1480).

time, and the necessity of adaptation when working with contrafaction, as seems likely in all the *cantiones* in Ohio 220.

There are two possible candidates for the Margaret specifically referenced in the polyphonic song, and both enjoyed enthusiastic veneration in central Europe. The orthography of the name in Ohio 220, given as both *Margaritha* and *Margaretha*, accords with the flexible spellings of her name common across central Europe. The office materials in CZ-Pn XIII A 2 are preserved as a (monophonic) *cantio* in honour of St Margaret of Antioch (13 July), the most ubiquitous holy figure of that name; the identity of Margaret in this chant source is not in doubt, since the *cantio* is immediately followed by the feast of the Dispersion of the Apostles (15 July). That said, neither the chant source nor the abridged text of Ohio 220 mentions the best-known aspects of Margaret of Antioch's *vita*: her martyrdom and the dragon whom she dramatically defeated, and thus the lyric could be easily appropriated for eponymous saints. The poem praises Margaret's virginity and virtue, shining through 'the interweaving of a glistening lily', her 'garland of holiness'; the Antioch chant text names her as a 'bride of Christ', but this is not transferred to the polyphonic song. The lily was commonly representative of virginity and purity, and found across diverse texts and visual representations; poet John Lydgate (d. c.1451), for example, named St Margaret of Antioch 'The chaste lely of whos maydenhede / Thorough martyrdom was spreynt [covered] with roses rede.'⁴⁹ However, it may be significant that the Dominican nun Margaret of Hungary (d. 1270, feast day 18 January) is traditionally depicted holding a lily and a book, and the text would therefore be appropriate to her veneration; nuns were also considered brides of Christ. Margaret of Hungary was not officially made a saint until 1943, but she was considered a holy figure from her own lifetime, remained one of the most celebrated figures in central Europe, and there were several unsuccessful attempts to canonise her in the intervening centuries.⁵⁰ If in honour of St Margaret of Hungary, which is certainly plausible if difficult to explore with a lack of comparable office materials, the polyphonic song *O preclara Margaritha* would be the sole example of a piece of music so dedicated. As with *Ave gemma virtuosa*, the more widely known saint is the more likely dedicatee, but it is important to consider alternatives in the light of the complex and intertwined devotional contexts of these texts.

Conclusions

Our research has identified four previously unknown polyphonic songs – not motets, but *cantiones* – from the later Middle Ages, composed and copied in the last decade of

⁴⁹ John Lydgate, *The Lyfe of Seynt Margarete*, lines 27–8, in Sherry L. Reames, ed., *Middle English Legends of Women Saints* (Kalamazoo, 2003).

⁵⁰ The primary sources relating to the promotion of St Margaret of Hungary's cult can be found in Ildikó Csepregi, Gábor Klaniczay and Bence Péterfi, eds., *Legenda Vetus, Acta Processus Canonizationis et Miracula Sanctae Margaritae de Hungaria / The Oldest Legend, Acts of the Canonization Process, and Miracles of Saint Margaret of Hungary*, trans. Ildikó Csepregi, Clifford Flanigan and Louis Perraud (Budapest and New York, 2018). See also Gábor Klaniczay, 'Efforts at the Canonization of Margaret of Hungary in the Angevin Period', *The Hungarian Historical Review*, 2 (2013), 313–40.

the fourteenth century or the first few decades of the fifteenth century. The songs are melodically driven, and their uppermost text carries Latin devotional verse that may have been borrowed from office chants to serve as a contrafact to pre-existent lyrics. Their dance-like supporting line(s) are untexted, so may have been sung or performed instrumentally, or some combination of the two.

Several aspects of notation, text and structure of the items within this single leaf stand out as typical of central European musical culture of that period. These features include the use of non-liturgical (possibly secular or instrumental) tenors, the alignment of the structure with known *cantiones*, and the inclusion of items in honour of saints whose cults flourished there.⁵¹ The textual focus on Mary as Queen of Heaven and on other holy women would suit the use of Ohio 220 to a range of institutions, though in particular ones dedicated to particular women, with relics of female saints, or which ministered to women. A future identification of the now unknown host volume – which, as noted earlier, may have begun with a copy of Alexandre de Villedieu's *Doctrinale puerorum* – would almost certainly help in narrowing down the provenance of the polyphonic fragment to an establishment with a song school, as would the discovery of additional leaves from the original polyphonic source. Our suggestion that at least some of these pieces are devotional contrafacta is consistent with their debt to earlier redactions that may have been connected with far-reaching networks of lyrics and melody. Marie Louise Göllner's study of the French motets transmitted in German and Italian manuscripts found that most of them had been transformed from secular double motets into reduced texture versions with Marian, Latin lyrics; we note an equivalent process here, though only one of our songs has any connection with the motet corpus, and in which the relationship is only textual.⁵²

Several features – the errors in the notation, the rough application of devotional texts to conflicting musical structures and the presence of textual corruption – point to these four pieces being contrafacts of earlier songs. Judged within a central European context, the collection is a rare and valuable new example, exceptional in several regards, but relatively normative in others. Through our identification, edition and analysis of this previously unknown repertory, this study adds to understandings of late medieval notational developments, dissonance treatment, practices of textual adaptation including the appropriation of vernacular song and the ways in which composers of the region drew on pre-existent materials over time. More broadly, Ohio 220 is indicative of rich and complex intellectual exchange over many decades, from the fourteenth-century roots of many of its compositional strategies to this compilation of a coherent set of *cantiones* honouring holy women.

⁵¹ In this way, we would identify a similar origin for them as the many fragments from 'Upper Hungary (present-day Slovakia), Bohemia, Silesia, southern Poland, Mazovia and Pomerania' described by Gancarczyk, 'Fragments of Local Polyphony', 168–9.

⁵² Göllner, 'The Transmission', 65.

Appendix: Ohio 220 texts and translations⁵³

1. Ave gemma virtuosa

Ave gemma virtuosa
Dorothea *vernans* rosa
mundi vite patens glosa
sis *pro nobis* speciosa.

O *benigna Christi* cella
Dorothea *flagrans* stella
pro nobis deum *interpella*.

(Hail the virtuous gem Dorothy, spring rose, may you be beautiful for us, an open explanation of the life of the world. O kindly chamber of Christ, Dorothy, glowing star, intercede with God for us.)

2. Virgo decus castitatis

Virgo decus castitatis
virgo regia
virgo mater pietatis
viri nescia
virgo templum trinitatis
celi regia
virgo pura pravitatis
dele vicia.

Nos emundas a peccatis
per suffragia
per te nobis pene datis
detur venia
ne dampnemur *pro* peccatis
in miseria
sed fruamur cum beatiss
celi gloria.

(Virgin, grace of chastity, royal Virgin, Virgin, mother of piety, knowing no man, Virgin, temple of the trinity, royal palace of heaven, pure Virgin, take away the sins of depravity! You cleanse us of our sins through prayers, through you may pardon be granted to us, who have been handed over to be punished, so that we not be damned

⁵³ We thank Leofranc Holford-Strevens for his assistance with the translations. Italics in the Latin texts indicate the expansion of abbreviations.

for our sins in misery; but [instead] let us delight in the glory of heaven with the blessed saints.)

3. Virginis ascensus

Virginis ascensus
divinitus excogita[tur]⁵⁴
ut honor inmensus
a plasmatis *tribuatur*.

En chorus angelicus
quevis *fungens spiritali*
plausu *miratur* resonat
cum voce choralis.

Hec est quedam mulier
scandens ad astra potenter.

Et hanc *genticulam*
laudat adhuc *credulam*.

(The ascension of the Virgin is devised by divine providence so that an immense honour may be given by created beings. Lo! the angelic chorus, performing all things with spiritual applause, marvels, resounds with a choral voice. This is a certain woman ascending to the stars powerfully. And let it [the chorus] praise this small people still believing.)

4. O preclara Margaritha

O preclara Margaritha
ave decus *virginum*
sanctitatis redimita
serto *candens lilium*.

Margaretha flos *virtutum*
tua *per suffragia*
nos *per callem virgo tutum*
duc ad celi gaudia.

(O renowned Margaret, hail, the splendour of virgins, shining, garlanded with the chaplet of holiness, glistening lily. Margaret, flower of virtue, through your prayers lead us, Virgin, by a secure path to the joys of heaven.)

⁵⁴ MS reads 'excogitare'.