



***La quale fu cantata molto bene* – The performances of Alessandro Striggio's monumental 40-part compositions in Munich 1567/68**

***La quale fu cantata molto bene* – Les interprétacions de les monumentals composicions en 40 parts d'Alessandro Striggio a Munic 1567/68**

***La quale fu cantata molto bene* – Las interpretaciones de las monumentales composiciones en 40 partes de Alessandro Striggio en Múnich 1567/68**

***La quale fu cantata molto bene* – As representações das monumentais composições de 40 partes de Alessandro Striggio em Munique 1567/68**

Bernhard RAINER¹

Abstract: In the 1560s Alessandro Striggio composed monumental works such as his *Missa sopra Ecco si beato giorno* à 40 and a 40-voice motet, both of which can be proven to have been performed in Munich in 1567 and 1568. Analysis of the performing forces of Munich's *Cantorey* of this time concludes not only that the instrumental participation of these performances must have been significant, but also that the works were transposed downward. Furthermore, a hypothesis is proposed that the Munich performance of an untitled 40-voice motet in 1568 involved Striggio's *Ecce beatam lucem* à 40, which itself may constitute a *contrafactum* of *Ecco si beato giorno*, a madrigal that circulated in copies during the decade.

Keywords: 16th c. instrumentation – Transposition – Alessandro Striggio – *Missa sopra Ecco si beato giorno* – *Ecce beatam lucem* – 40-part compositions – Cantorey.

Resumen: En la década de 1560, Alessandro Striggio compuso obras monumentales como su *Missa sopra Ecco si beato giorno* à 40 y un motete a 40 voces, de los que se ha demostrado que se interpretaron en Múnich en 1567 y 1568. El análisis de las fuerzas escénicas del *Cantorey* de Múnich de esta época concluye no sólo que el contingente instrumental de estas representaciones debió ser importante, sino también que las obras

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fueron transpuestas a la baja. Además, se propone la hipótesis de que la interpretación en Múnich de un motete a 40 voces sin título en 1568 incluyó el *Ecce beatam lucem* à 40 de Striggio, que a su vez puede constituir un *contrafactum* de *Ecco si beato giorno*, un madrigal que circuló en copias durante la década.

Palabras clave: Orlando di Lasso – Instrumentación del siglo XVI – Transposición – Alessandro Striggio – *Missa sopra Ecco si beato giorno* – *Ecce beatam lucem* – Composiciones a 40 voces.

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It has been known for some time that Alessandro Striggio (ca. 1536–1592) composed works for many voices in the 1560s that still fascinate us today by virtue of their monumentality.² Iain Fenlon and Hugh Keyte³ as well as David S. Butchart⁴ have noted that Striggio's 40-voice works were also heard in Munich: a 40-voice motet of the composer was played and sung during celebrations of the Crown Prince's wedding in 1568, and in the previous year, a performance of his 40- and 60-voice mass took place at the court of duke Albrecht V (1528-1579).⁵ While a manuscript dated from 1587 of Striggio's motet *Ecce beatam lucem* à 40 has been associated with the 1568 Munich performance,⁶ his largest mass was presumed to be lost until Davitt Moroney

² This article is based on results of a larger research project on instrumental music at the Munich court in the 16th century. See: RAINER, Bernhard. *Instrumentalisten und instrumentale Praxis am Hof Albrechts V. von Bayern 1550-1579*, Vienna: Hollitzer, 2021.

³ FENLON, Ian. *Music and patronage in sixteenth-century Mantua*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, p. 141/42 and: FENLON, Ian – KEYTE Hugh. 'Memorials of great skill: A tale of five cities'. *In: Early Music* 8 (1980), pp. 329-34.

⁴ BUTCHART, David S. 'A musical journey of 1567: Alessandro Striggio in Vienna, Munich, Paris and London'. *In: Music and Letters* 63 (1982), pp. 1-16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶ LEUCHTMANN, Horst. *Die Münchner Fürstenhochzeit von 1568. Massimo Troiano: Dialoge*. Munich/Salzburg: Katzbichler, 1980, p. 415.



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rediscovered it in 2007 and described it extensively.⁷ This article revisits sources related to Striggio's monumental compositions and draws on the rich source material on the musical practice of the Munich *Cantorey*⁸ under Orlando di Lasso (1532–1594) to show that instrumental participation in the musical practice of the period was much more extensive than is generally assumed today.

I. Striggio's 40- and 60-voice Mass

Early in 1567 Alessandro Striggio found himself upon a diplomatic journey, carrying in his luggage a mass for many parts. A performance of the work at the court of Emperor Maximilian II had failed, because the composer had arrived in Brno (Czech Republic) only to find him with a selection of his musicians. Thus, on January 22nd Striggio travelled onwards to Munich. In a letter the composer sent from Augsburg to his employer Cosimo I. de' Medici on March 3rd 1567, we learn the following about his visit to the Bavarian *Residenz*:

Then, after the departure of his Majesty for Troppau and Prague the same day [22 January] I too made my departure, to visit the court of Bavaria and to hear the music there. As soon as the Duke [Albrecht V] learnt of my arrival in Munich, he wished me to perform on all of my instruments and also wished to hear my Mass for 40 voices at sung Mass in his great hall, at which I was forced to give him my own copy; and it was sung very well. I stayed for ten days in Munich, where his Excellency granted me infinite favours and made me infinite offers ...⁹

⁷ MORONEY, Davitt. 'Alessandro Striggio's Mass in Forty and Sixty Parts'. In: *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 60/1 (2007), p. 1-69.

⁸ "Cantorey" is the name given to the music ensemble at the court of Albrecht V which provided figural music. It included all singers, organists, and instrumentalists but the trumpeters, percussionists and pipers i.e instrumentalists in a military context. See: RUHNKE, Martin. *Beiträge zu einer Geschichte der deutschen Hofmusikkollegien im 16. Jahrhundert*. Berlin: Merseburger, 1963, p. 274.

⁹ BUTCHART, David S. *Op. cit.*, 1982, p. 14/15: "Poi partito sua Maestà per Troppa et per Praga, il giorno istesso anc'io feci partita / per veder la corte di Bavera et sentire la sua musica, ove, agionto in Monicho, subito il Signor Duca il seppe et mi volse sentire de tutti I miei istrumenti, et volse sentire in la sua sala grande la mia Messa a 40 a messa cantata, dove son sta sforciato di donarli la mia coppia istessa, la quale fu cantata molto bene. Son stato dieci giornj in Monacho dove sua Eccellentia mi a fatto infinitissimi favori et proferte ...". Translation after: *Ibid.*, p. 3/4.



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It is clear from this passage that Striggio's large mass was performed in February 1567 in Munich to the great satisfaction of its composer, even though there could only have been a short preparation and rehearsal period – evidence for the excellent quality of the Munich *Cantorey* and its musical director Lasso.¹⁰ In recognition of his art and for relinquishment of a copy of the work, Striggio was bestowed with a generous financial gift, as emerges from the court's treasury accounts of that year.¹¹ Especially interesting is that the performance took place in the Residenz's St. Georg's Hall of *Neuweste* ('*la sua sala grande*'), and that it was a liturgical mass, as indicated by the formulation '*a messa cantata*'. It is highly unusual to have mass celebrated in a secular place, but this may well have had spatial considerations.

The court church at this time, St. Georgskapelle, would certainly have been too small for a performance of 60 musicians, as the only surviving illustration of this chapel in the second volume of the so-called *Bußpsalmcodices* makes clear.¹² After Davitt Moroney rediscovered this mass, whose forces are increased from 40 voices in the first four mass movements to 60 voices for the *Agnus Dei*, we can attempt to reconstruct the following roster of those who participated in the Munich performance.¹³ First we should determine whether the Munich Court was even able to realize a piece for 60 parts.¹⁴

¹⁰ In 1564 Duke Albrecht received a 40-voice composition sent from Emperor Maximilian II which most likely originated from Striggio, and probably served as the model for this mass (see more below). The Munich *Cantorey* and Lasso were therefore probably already familiar with the structure and music of Striggio's large-scale work, which may help explain why this performance was so successful despite lack of rehearsal time.

¹¹ SANDBERGER, Adolf. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der bayerischen Hofkapelle unter Orlando di Lasso* (Vol. 3). Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1895, p. 30: "Ainem Florentiner stritio genant Inhalt der Zetl 100 fl."

¹² [Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mus.ms. A II](#) (1, p. 186). If the work really was performed during a liturgical event, this would indicate that Albrecht held sacred music in such high regard that one could even leave the church to make it happen. Thus the actual purpose of the liturgy appears secondary.

¹³ That also the *Agnus Dei* for 60 voices was also included in his luggage is made clear through the other confirmed performance during this trip, on May 11th 1567 at the French court in Saint-Maur-des-Fosses near Paris; a further performance may have followed in England. MORONEY, Davitt. *Op. cit.*, 2007, p. 10.

¹⁴ The French performance a few months' later wasn't afforded by a single institution. It was organized by Luigi Ludovico Gonzaga (1539-1595), who was Duke de Nevers since 1565. Gonzaga presumably



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Table 1: The *Cantorey* of Albrecht V, 1567/68¹⁵

Basses:

Kaspar Kemeter	(1552–1568)
Kaspar Kummer	(1555–1581)
Hans Fischer	(1557–1602)
Franz Flori	(1557–1588)
Francesco Fenerolo	(1558–1576)
Gallus Rueff	(1558–1580)
Octavian de Alberto	(1561–1582)
Bartholomäus Fanndenfeld	(1563–1570)
Johann Margkhet	(1563–1570)
Richard von Genua	(1563–1571)
Augustino Persi	(1564–1579)
Wolf Fischer	(1564–1600)
Georg Grasser	(1568–1570)
Hans Neitthart	(1568–1569)

Tenors:

Lamprecht Baumhauer	(1550–1570)
Orlando di Lasso	(1557–1595)
Heinrich de Plau	(1558–1613)
Joachim Freithof	(1558–1593)
Hans Kolmann	(1561–1570)
Alexander de Bucy	(1563–1570)
Georg Gattmeier	(1563–1591)
Peter Gattmeier	(1563–1591)
Lienhart Meldarz	(1563–1568)
Wolfgang Schönsleder	(1568–1609)
Cornelius Bonns	(1568–1570)
Don Carolo Brachogin	(1568–1575)
Simon Principe	(1568–1572)

Altos:

Anton Gosswin	(1561–1594)
Francesco Londariti	(1562–1567)
Caspar Pichler	(1562–1606)
Hans Pöckh	(1563–1570)
Wilbold Mader	(1563–1570)
Martino Franz	(1563–1570)
Christoph Haberstock	(1563–1569)
Ludwig Haberstock	(1564–1572)
Francesco Talavera	(1564–1569)
Massimo Troiano	(1568–1570)
Johann de la Huß	(1568–1570)
Wilhelm Niclas	(1568–1582)

Discants:

12 boy sopranos (pupils of Lasso)

maintained his own court, but in addition to this musicians from the French royal court took part as well. MORONEY, Davitt. *Op. cit.*, 2007, p. 10.

¹⁵ Created in consultation with: LEUCHTMANN, Horst. 'Vorarbeiten zu einem neuen Bayerischen Musiklexikon. Namenslisten zur Bayerischen Musikgeschichte. II Musik in München 1550 - 1600'. In: *Musik in Bayern* 10 (1975), pp. 46-63, 11 (1975), pp. 87-100, 12 (1976), pp. 54-68, 13 (1976), pp. 83-104, 14 (1977), pp. 107-125. Years indicate the proven range of occupation at the court. Not included are musicians who were paid by the court as pensioners no longer in active service.



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Strings:

Antonio Morari (1561–1597)
Battista Morari (1561–1577)
Annibale Morari (1561–1592)
Lucio Terzo (1561–1577)
Matthias Besutio (1561–1599)
Carbonio Besutio (1561–1579)
Giovanni Batt. Tiburtini (1566–1569)

Winds:

Domenico Aldigheri (1565–1570)
Phileo Cornazzano (1560–1628)
Sebastiano di Alberto (1563–1580)
Francesco Guami (1567–1580)
Simone Gatto (1567–1571)

From Table 1 it appears that with 39 mature singers, twelve boys and twelve instrumentalists, a total of 63 court musicians were available to perform single voices. To this can be added two organists, Ivo de Vento (1564–1575) and Gioseffo Guami (1567–1579), who probably worked as instrumentalists supporting the bass line.¹⁶ It is therefore safe to assume that a performance of Striggio's mass involved the vast majority of Albrecht's *Cantorey*, but was indeed possible.

The basic structure of the mass, which divides into five choirs of eight voices each, is expanded in the *Agnus Dei* to twelve voices per choir. Thus the five main choirs are divided into three subchoirs of four voices each (see Table 2).

Table 2: A. Striggio, *Agnus Dei*, *Missa sopra Ecco si beato giorno*' – Assignment of the 60 Voices in 40 Partbooks and their Clefs¹⁷

Voices	Subchoir	Found in partbooks	Clef groupings
I: FIRST TRIPLE CHOIR (a12):			
1–4	1st subchoir (a4)	1 / 2 / 3 / 4a	G2 / C2 / C3 / F3
5–8	2nd subchoir (a4)	5a / 6a / 7a / 8	C1 / C3 / C4 / F4
9–12	3rd subchoir (a4)	4b / 5b / 6b / 7b	G2 / C2 / C3 / F3
II: SECOND TRIPLE CHOIR (a12):			
13–16	1st subchoir (a4)	9 / 10 / 11 / 12a	G2 / C2 / C3 / F3
17–20	2nd subchoir (a4)	13a / 14 / 15a / 16a	G2 / C2 / C3 / F3

¹⁶ The complete manuscript of Striggio's masses preserved at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) contains 42 partbooks, 40 of which contain single voices (including 20 extra voices for the *Agnus Dei*), while two contain a *Bassus ad organum* part. MORONEY, Davitt. *Op. cit.*, 2007, p. 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.



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21–24 3rd subchoir (a4) 4b / 5b / 6b / 7b G2 / C2 / C3 / F3

III: THIRD TRIPLE CHOIR (a12):

25–28 1st subchoir (a4) 17 / 18 / 19 / 20a G2 / C2 / C3 / F3
29–32 2nd subchoir (a4) 21a / 22 / 23a / 24a C1 / C3 / C4 / F4
33–36 3rd subchoir (a4) 20b / 21b / 23b / 24b G2 / C2 / C3 / F3

IV: FOURTH TRIPLE CHOIR (a12):

37–40 1st subchoir (a4) 25 / 26 / 27 / 28a G2 / C2 / C3 / F3
41–44 2nd subchoir (a4) 29a / 30a / 31a / 32 G2 / C2 / C3 / F3
45–48 3rd subchoir (a4) 28b / 29b / 30b / 31b G2 / C2 / C3 / F3

V: FIFTH TRIPLE CHOIR (a12):

49–52 1st subchoir (a4) 33 / 34 / 35 / 36 G2 / C2 / C3 / F3
53–56 2nd subchoir (a4) 37a / 38a / 39a / 40a C1 / C3 / C4 / F4
33–36 3rd subchoir (a4) 37b / 38b / 39b / 40b G2 / C2 / C3 / F3

The partbooks contain twenty-seven soprano and mezzo-soprano parts, with the clefs G2, C1 and C2, against fourteen alto (C3), three tenor (C4), twelve baritone (F3) and only three bass (F4) parts.

From closer observation, it is clear that great problems would arise in Munich if a performance of this work with a vocal ensemble of an even somewhat proportional disposition to the vocal ranges SATB were attempted. The tessitura and range of the parts called for in Striggio's score do not fit any normative four-part choral ensemble. In Munich, only twelve boy singers were available to sing the soprano and mezzo-soprano lines, since alto lines were sung by high tenors singing in their chest voices.¹⁸

¹⁸ That altos in Albrecht's Chapel consistently sang with their chest voice can be confirmed in Lasso's own handwritten list of performers (which provides the names of all male voices) of Brumel's *Missa Et ecce terrae motus* à 12, which was created around 1568/69 (Chorbuch Mus.ms 1 der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, fols.1v-2r.): of the three alto parts of the mass, only the *Primus Altus* is a high tenor voice of the ambitus *d-a1*. Both *Secundus Altus* (*e-g1*) and *Tertius Altus* (*B natural-g1*) are normal tenor voices often in a low range. The discant-, tenor- und bass voices of the mass by Brumel are active in normal registers. Proof of castrati active at the Bavarian court is first evident in 1573. BOETTICHER, Wolfgang. 'Orlando di Lasso. Studien zur Musikgeschichte Münchens im Zeitalter der Spätrenaissance'. In: *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte*, Vol. 19/3 (1956), p. 503.



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Even if all twelve instrumentalists played high parts in addition to the boy sopranos, three soprano or mezzo-soprano parts would still be left to assign. Yet according to Massimo Troiano's report on the performance of Striggio's 40-voice motet at the prince's wedding in 1568, the reverse appears to have been true: in large multi-voiced works, the instrumentalists played the lower voices. Troiano describes viol consorts, large recorders (8' consort) and trombones.¹⁹

This implies that Striggio's mass in the mixolydian mode at G was transposed downward. The usual praxis for this is to transpose to a fourth below, though it is also possible to transpose down a fifth, as Michael Praetorius relates to us:

Every piece with high clefs ... when written with a B flat, it is to be taken down a fourth and a B natural used; if however in an untransposed mode, it should be taken down a fifth and B flat used. Yet in several modes, such as Mixolydian, Aeolian and Hypoionian, transposition by a fifth produces a dull and heavy sound because of the lower range. Therefore it is far better and more enjoyable to listen to if these modes are transposed down a fourth, ex duro in durum [that is to say, without a B flat, but with an F sharp].²⁰

While three of the fifteen subchoirs do possess a "normal" clef system of C1 / C3 / C4 / F4 in the *Agnus Dei* of Striggio's mass, the remaining twelve have a high clef system of G2 / C2 / C3 / F3, and thus are '*hoch Claviret*'. Through a transposition to a fourth or fifth below, an ideal range for the disposition and instrumentation of the mass for Munich's *Cantorey* can be reached: out of the twelve subchoirs in high clefs, choirs in a normal SATB range appear. These forty-eight voices can be divided among the twelve Munich boy sopranos, as well as the twelve altos, tenors and basses of the *Cantorey*.

¹⁹ See further below for more.

²⁰ PRAETORIUS, Michael. *Syntagma musicum*, Vol. III, *Termini musici*. Wolfenbüttel: Elias Holwein, 1619, p. 80/81: „Ob zwar ein jeder Gesang/ welcher hoch Claviret ... Wenn er b mol, per quartam inferiorem in durum; Wenn er aber b dur per quintam inferiorem in mollem ... gebracht unnd transponieret werden muss: So befindet sich doch/ dass in etlichen Modis, Als in Mixolydio, Aeolio vnd Hypoionico, wenn sie per quintam transponieret, ein languidor & pigrior harmonia propter graviores sonos generiret werde: Darumb es dann vngleich besser/ vnd wird auch auch der Gesang viel frischer und anmuthiger zuhören/ wenn diese Modi per quartam ex duro in durum transponieret werden.“



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The three remaining choirs become low choirs in ATBarSb range after transposition, which ideally could have been played by the instrumentalists of the *Cantorey* on low stringed instruments and trombones. It is conceivable that one choir was created with a viol consort consisting of three tenor viols in D and a bass viol in contra-G, as well as another choir with three tenor trombones in A and a bass trombone in D.

Although in the year 1567 the instrumentalists consisted of seven string players and just five wind players, nominal string players Matthias Besutio and Cerbonio Besutio also played the typical wind and brass instruments of the day; since another string player, Antonio Morari, is mentioned as being also a cornetto player, it is possible that another member of the strings took on an easier middle trombone part.²¹

The third low choir, rather than being another homogenous viol or trombone consort, could of course have been a mixed choir with two stringed instruments and two trombones. As a result, we can see that, apart from a few singers, it is highly probable that Duke Albrecht's complete *Cantorey* was involved in performing Striggio's mass in Munich 1567.

II. *Ecce beatam lucem*

At the start of 1568, the wedding of the Crown Prince Wilhelm V (1548–1626) to Renata von Lothringen (1544–1602) was celebrated. We have exceptionally good information about the musical program from court alto Massimo Troiano. As an insider, Troiano offers valuable advice regarding general performance practice issues, as well as detailed information regarding the high degree of instrumentation used in specific pieces.

On Sunday, March 7th 1568, the final day of the lengthy and opulent wedding festivities, Orlando di Lasso had a special motet performed:

²¹ LEUCHTMANN, Horst. *Op. cit.*, 1980, p. 391: “Antonio Morari ... e non solo di questo si diletta ma di Cornetto ... Cerbonio Besutio, e Mattio Besutio ... sono tutti strumenti di fiato”.



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On Sunday [March 7 1568] ... at lunchtime the most famous among other musicians Orlando Lasso had – in addition to other works that he had composed – a motet for 40 voices be sung and played, which deserved every honour and praise it received. MAR. Tell me, how the parts were distributed? FOR. Eight trombones, eight viole da gamba, eight large flutes, a harpsichord, a large lute, and the remaining parts filled by voices. The motet was played twice and listened to most attentively. MAR. Who created this unbelievable composition? FOR. Alessandro Striggio, a nobleman from Mantua ...²²

Indeed a motet has survived in a copy from the year 1587, which appears to concern the composition Troiano mentioned: Alessandro Striggio's *Ecce beatem lucem* à 40.²³ At the Munich performance twenty-four players of melodic instruments were involved, in addition to a harpsichordist and a lute player. On occasion of the Crown Prince's wedding in 1568, the number of instrumentalists in Albrecht V's *Cantorey* had been increased from twelve to sixteen in the previous year,²⁴ yet for this performance, more additional forces were necessary.

Since the Innsbruck court (including its instrumentalists) had already left a few days prior,²⁵ it is more than probable that eight instrumentalists of Graz's court played the extra musical parts, particularly since its director Annibale Padovano (1527–1575) was personally present, and they are recorded as having received a gift of money from the Munich court.²⁶ A further report by Hans Wagner regarding the Prince's wedding discloses the names of all of the instrumentalists from Graz (see Table 3).²⁷

²² *Ibid.*, p. 308/309: "La domenica [7 March 1568] ... nel desinare il famisissimo Orlando Lasso tra le altre Musiche, che hauea fatto; fece cantare e sonare un Motetto a quaranta uoci, il quale fu degno d'ogni honore e laude. MAR. Ditemi a che modo furono compartiti le parti? FOR. Otto tromboni, otto uiole da arco, otto flauti grossi, uno instrumento da penna, & un liuto grosso, e tutto il restante supplirono le uoci, e fu detto due uolte con grandissima udiienza. MAR. E chi fu l'autore di questa inaudita compositione? FOR. Il signor Alessandro Striggio gentilhuomo Mantuano ...".

²³ STRIGGIO, Alessandro. *Ecce beatam lucem*, Ratsschulbibliothek Zwickau/Sa., Sign.: Mus.109.1, Ms., dat. 1587.

²⁴ LEUCHTMANN, Horst. *Op. cit.*, 1975-77.

²⁵ WAGNER, Hans. *Kurtze doch gegründte beschreibung des Durchleuchtigen Hochgebornen Fürsten vnd Herren Wilhelmen ... gehalten Hochzeitlichen Ehren Fests*. Munich: Adam Berg, 1568, fol. 64r.

²⁶ SANDBERGER, Adolf. *Op. cit.*, 1895, p. 32.

²⁷ WAGNER, Hans. *Op. cit.*, 1568, fols.17v/18r.



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One can even find reason to believe that the Italians among the musicians from Graz made music together with their fellow compatriots of the Munich *Cantorey*: among the Italian musicians at German courts, there were often intimate, family-based connections, as the example of Baldassare Cornazzano (Graz) and his son Phileno Cornazzano (Munich) makes clear.

Table 3: Instrumentalists of the Graz court at the Crown Prince's Wedding in 1568

Trumpeter and Instrumentalists:

Martin Cammerlander
Hans Cammerlander
Joseph Nicolai
Baldassare Cornazzano
Peter Segolin
Christoph Riedel
Peter von Jaca
Francisco Pergamin
Fabiano Ferdellis
Lorenz Allebey
Bernhart Zeiler
Hans Wolff (percussionist)

Cornetto players:

Giovanni Patart
Damian Vergelli

Leuchtmann identified the untitled motet in Troiano's report as *Ecce beatam lucem* in 1980,²⁸ and this hypothesis wasn't contested until Davitt Moroney raised doubts about it in 2007.²⁹ Upon analysis of the instrumentation as Troiano listed, what follows will confirm Leuchtmann's hypothesis.

²⁸ LEUCHTMANN, Horst. *Op. cit.*, 1980, p. 415.

²⁹ MORONEY, Davitt. *Op. cit.*, 2007, p. 11: "[...] it was certainly Lassus who, one year later [1568], directed the three performances of another (unidentified) forty-part work by Striggio, as discribed by the Neapolitan composer Massimo Troiano, who worked in Munich.", p. 26/27: 'Nearly seven years later, on 22 February 1568, a forty-part motet [...] was sung and played in Munich, under Lassus's direction [...] (This is the occasion with which *Ecce beatam lucem* had traditionally been associated until Fenlon and Keyte proposed the speculative earlier date of July 1561, but once again the association is unproven.) [...] Anthony F. Carver confidently claims (as do many scholars) that the 1568 work is "doubtless" *Ecce beatam lucem*, despite the identification being problematic". Moroney



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Moroney already stressed that Striggio's *Missa sopra Ecco si beato giorno* à 40 and 60 has (despite some structural differences) fundamental parallels to *Ecce beatam lucem*. Both works share the same mode (G mixolydian) as well as the same clef system in the individual parts.³⁰ However, the 40 voices of the mass are divided into five choirs of eight voices each, while the Zwickau manuscript structures the 40 voices of *Ecce beatam lucem* into four choirs of eight, ten, sixteen and six voices.

The commentators of the Zwickau manuscript, Fenlon/Keyte and Moroney, find no reason for this structural subdivision.³¹ Yet 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 (see **Musical Example 1**).

is mistaken about the date of the Munich performance, which took place on March 7th 1568, not February 22nd of that year.

³⁰ MORONEY, Davitt. *Op. cit.*, 2007, p. 42.

³¹ FENLON, Ian – KEYTE Hugh. *Op. cit.*, 1980, p. 330/31: "Despite Troiano's description and the indications in the Zwickau parts, *Ecce beatam lucem* is in no sense a four-choir motet. The voices are numbered 1-40, and it is clear from the music that the performers were intended to be placed in that order. It is easy to see from the opening entries how a four-choir format could be misconstrued [...] But if there is a division, it is into ten groups of four voices". MORONEY, Davitt. *Op. cit.*, 2007, p. 41: "The traditional description of *Ecce beatam lucem* as being in four choirs of eight, ten, sixteen and six voices is not convincing musically, despite this division into choirs being apparently stated on the 1587 Zwickau parts (although not, as is often stated, in Troiano's description of the Munich 1568 motet). A more recent view of *Ecce beatam lucem* as being in "ten groups of four voices" hardly does much to advance our understanding of the ways the voices are combined in the motet (see Fenlon and Keyte, "Memorials," 331)".



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**Musical Example 1: Alessandro Striggio, *Ecce beatam lucem* à 40, beginning:
Transposition alla quarta bassa**

Nr. 1 primo choro a 8
Ecce beatam lucem!

Nr. 2 (primo choro a 8)
Ecce beatam lucem!

Nr. 3 (Primo choro a 8)
Ecce beatam lucem!

Nr. 4 (Primo Choro a 8)
Ecce beatam lucem!

Nr. 5 (Primo Choro a 8)
Ecce beatam lucem!

Nr. 6 (Primo Choro a 8)
Ecce beatam lucem!

Nr. 7 (Primo Choro a 8)
Ecce beatam lucem!

Sc. VIII Primo Choro a 8
Ecce beatam lucem!



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Nr. IX Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - pi	ter - - - num!
Nr. X Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - pi	ter - - - num!
Nr. XI Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - pi	ter - - - num!
Nr. XII Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - pi	ter - - - num!
Nr. XIII Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - pi	ter - - - num!
Nr. XIV Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - pi	ter - - - num!
Nr. XV Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - pi	ter - - - num!
Nr. XVI Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - pi	ter - - - num!



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Nr XIII Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - - pi - - - ter - - - num!
Nr XIV Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - - pi - - - ter - - - num!
Nr XV Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num sem	sem - - - pi - - - ter - - - num!
Nr XVI Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - - pi - - - ter - - - num!
Nr XVII Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - - pi - - - ter - - - num!
Nr XVIII Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - - pi - - - ter - - - num!
Nr XIX Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - - pi - - - ter - - - num!
Nr XX Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - - pi - - - ter - - - num!
Nr XXI Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - - pi - - - ter - - - num!
Nr XXII Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - - pi - - - ter - - - num!
Nr XXIII Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - - pi - - - ter - - - num!
Nr XXIV Tertio Choro a XVI		Ec - - - ce	bo - - - num	sem - - - pi - - - ter - - - num!



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Nr. XXV Quarto Choro a 6		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. XXVI Quarto Choro a 6		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. XXVII (Quarto Choro a 6)		Vos, tur - bu c - le
Nr. XXVIII Quarto Choro a 6		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. XXIX Quarto Choro a 6		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. XXX Quarto Choro a 6		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. 31 (Secundo Choro a 10)		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. XXXII Secundo Choro a 10		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. 33 Secundo Choro a 10		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. XXXIV Secundo Choro a 10		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. XXXV (Secundo Choro a 10)		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. 36 (Secundo Choro a 10)		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. XXXVII (Secundo Choro a 10)		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. XXXVIII (Secundo Choro a 10)		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. XL Secundo Choro a 10		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Nr. XI. Secundo Choro a 10		Vos, tur - bi e - le
Ritornello cantato dalla parte più bassa		



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If one attempts to reconstruct the instrumentation of *Ecce beatam lucem* with the aid of Troiano's list of instruments, it becomes clear that this is indeed very much possible if the motet is transposed down a fourth or a fifth. This solution is unsurprising given that for the performance of Striggio's structurally related mass à 40 (à 60) in Munich 1567, a transposition has been confirmed (as we have already seen).³² Furthermore, Troiano makes another clear indication of *Ecce beatam lucem* having been transposed downward in his mention of a '*liuto grosso*', a bass lute.

Here the description of the extra part numbered 41 in the Zwickau manuscript mentions a lute and a harpsichord, as already has been reported for the Munich performance.³³ This involves a *Basso seguente* part which must play the lowest sounding voice in the polychoral composition. After transposing e.g. a fourth below, the range of this part becomes C–e and thus demands a lute able to tune this low. In addition, a harpsichord built by Franciscus Patavinus in 1560 and listed in the Munich inventory in 1655 could have been used for this performance.³⁴ It is probable that this instrument was purchased in Venice in 1567 by Munich court organist Gioseffo Guami (1542–1611) especially for the Crown Prince's wedding, as receipts from the court treasury registers indicate.³⁵

In the inventory of 1655, it is described as '*Alla quinta doppelts Instrument*,' indicating a harpsichord in a lower tuning, in essence made expressly to transpose downward.³⁶ Troiano's mention of '*flauti grossi*' is to be understood as an 8-foot recorder consort.

³² Another argument made explicit for the transposition of *Ecce beatam lucem* a fifth downward at the Munich performance in 1568 has been made by VAN HEYGHEN, Peter. 'The Recorder Consort in the Sixteenth Century'. In: *Musicque de joye: proceedings of the International Symposium on the Renaissance Flute and Recorder Consort, Utrecht 2003*, LASOCKI, David (ed.). Utrecht: STIMU, 2005, p. 227-321, at p. 305.

³³ STRIGGIO, Alessandro. *Op. cit.*, 1587, part 41: "Bassone cauato dalla parte piu basie del 40 Persona nimerro tescircalo con un bronbone No 41 per sostenramento della armonia persona riscon Orgono Lauto (a&?) cimboli o viole."

³⁴ WACKERNAGEL, Bettina. *Musikinstrumentenverzeichnis von 1655*. Tutzing: Schneider, 2003, p. 72.

³⁵ SANDBERGER, Adolf. *Op. cit.*, 1895, p. 33.

³⁶ WACKERNAGEL, Bettina. *Op. cit.*, p. 72.



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Also, trombones as well as viols were able to provide low, homogenous consorts as well.³⁷

There are multiple ways to musically and organologically combine the twenty-four instruments mentioned by Troiano in a transposed arrangement of *Ecce beatam lucem*. Table 4 presents one possible example.³⁸

Table 4: A. Striggio, *Ecce beatam lucem* à 40 – Reconstruction of a possible Munich Performance in consultation with the Zwickau Partbooks

Choir	Voice Number	Clef	Instrument/Voice Type
Primo choro a 8	1	G2	descant viol in <i>a</i>
Primo choro a 8	2	C2	tenor viol in <i>D</i>
Primo choro a 8	3	C3	tenor viol in <i>D</i>
Primo choro a 8	4	F3	bass viol in contra- <i>G</i>
Primo choro a 8	5	C1	tenor viol in <i>D</i> (descant viol in <i>a</i>)
Primo choro a 8	6	C3	bass viol in contra- <i>G</i> (tenor viol in <i>D</i>)
Primo choro a 8	7	C4	bass viol in contra- <i>G</i>
Primo choro a 8	8	F4	contra bass viol in contra- <i>D/E</i>
Tertio Choro a 16	9	G2	boy soprano
Tertio Choro a 16	10	C2	alto
Tertio Choro a 16	11	C3	bass recorder in <i>c</i>
Tertio Choro a 16	12	F3	great bass recorder in <i>F</i>
Tertio Choro a 16	13	G2	basset recorder in <i>g</i>
Tertio Choro a 16	14	C2	bass recorder in <i>c</i>
Tertio Choro a 16	15	C3	tenor
Tertio Choro a 16	16	F3	bass
Tertio Choro a 16	17	G2	boy soprano
Tertio Choro a 16	18	C2	alto

³⁷ Troiano mentions 'otto uiole da arco' in a further edition of his *Dialogue* from 1569. That it concerns viols is made clear in the first edition, in which he describes 'otto viole da gamba.' LEUCHTMANN, Horst. *Op. cit.*, 1980, p. 415.

³⁸ Another possible example is provided by Peter Van Heyghen; see: VAN HEYGHEN, Peter. *Op. cit.*, 2005, p. 306. Roland Wilson pursues a further plausible distribution of instruments in the CD recording *Lasso, Striggio, Padovano. The Royale Wedding, Munich 1568*, Roland Wilson, La Capella Ducale, Musica Fiata (Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, 2019).



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Tertio Choro a 16	19	C3	tenor
Tertio Choro a 16	20	F3	bass
Tertio Choro a 16	21	C1	tenor trombone in <i>A</i>
Tertio Choro a 16	22	C3	tenor trombone in <i>A</i>
Tertio Choro a 16	23	C4	bass trombone in <i>D</i>
Tertio Choro a 16	24	F4	bass trombone in <i>D</i>
Quarto Choro a 6	25	G2	boy soprano
Quarto Choro a 6	26	C2	alto
Quarto Choro a 6	27	C3	bass recorder in <i>c</i>
Quarto Choro a 6	28	F3	great bass recorder in <i>F</i>
Quarto Choro a 6	29	G2	basset recorder in <i>g</i>
Quarto Choro a 6	30	C2	bass recorder in <i>c</i>
Secondo Choro a 10	31	C3	tenor
Secondo Choro a 10	32	F3	bass
Secondo Choro a 10	33	G2	boy soprano
Secondo Choro a 10	34	C2	alto
Secondo Choro a 10	35	C3	tenor
Secondo Choro a 10	36	F3	bass
Secondo Choro a 10	37	C1	tenor trombone in <i>A</i>
Secondo Choro a 10	38	C3	tenor trombone in <i>A</i>
Secondo Choro a 10	39	C4	bass trombone in <i>D</i>
Secondo Choro a 10	40	F4	bass trombone in <i>D</i>
„Basso seguente”	41	F4	harpsichord/bass lute

Limitations in the deployment of performing forces occur due to the fact that the three lowest voices (part numbers 8, 24 and 40) can only be played by the bass trombone or viol. The lowest tone of great bass recorders reaches only *F*, which eliminates them from playing parts that after downward transposition demand a *C* or *D* respectively.

In a similar way, it is improbable that these three voices would be sung, since those basses would find themselves in an extreme part of their range. The eight viols were probably divided into one four-voiced consort at usual range, with another at a low range. In terms of practicality, however, the usual consort disposition of three different sizes of instrument could be abandoned and instead make use of four sizes (descant, tenor, bass, contrabass).



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Alongside the twenty-four instruments, according to Troiano, the other sixteen voices were sung. It is highly likely that four quartets of SATB were formed, which after transposition could be distributed in an ideal fashion to (in each case four) boy sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses. Presumably one singer per vocal part was the case, per usual.³⁹

It is unlikely that Striggio composed the work specifically for the Munich performance, or its *Cantorey* forces. The text of *Ecce beatam lucem* was written by New-Latin poet Paul Melissus (Paul Schede 1539–1602) and was published in 1595.⁴⁰ It originates from the second and third parts of an ode with the title *De nova Hierosolyma*:

Antistrophe.

Ecce beatam lucem!

Ecce bonum sempiternum!

Vos, turba electa,

Celebrate IEHOVAM, eiusque natum

Aequalem patri,

Deitatis splendorem.

Virtus alma et maiestas

Passim cernenda adest.

Quantum decóris

Illustri in Sole!

Quàm venusta es Luna!

Quàm multo clara honore

Sidera fulgent!

Quàm pulchra quaeque in orbe!

Behold the blessed light!

Behold eternal goodness!

You, a select assembly,

Praise Jehovah as well as his Son,^{[1][SEP]}

Equal to the Father

In splendor of deity.^{[1][SEP]}

Benign strength and majesty

May be seen all around.

How wonderfully

Illuminated by the sun!

How beautiful are you, the moon!^{[1][SEP]}

With what great clarity

The stars are shining!

How beautiful is everything on the planet!

Epodos.

O quae perennis esca

Tam sanctas mentes pascit!

Praestó gratia et amor,

Praestó ver novum,

O, how the everlasting food

Nourishes such pious minds!^{[1][SEP]}

Grace and love are outstanding here,

And not new,

³⁹ In his report, Troiano repeatedly uses expressions such as *scelti cantori*, *scelte voci* for the soloistic execution of vocal parts, and thus documents usual praxis at the court of Albrecht V.

⁴⁰ MELISSUS, Paul. *Meletematum piorum libri VIII*. Frankfurt: Commelinus, 1595, liber tertius, Ode XV, pp. 89/90.



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Praestó est fons perpes vitae.
Heic Patriarchae cum Prophetis:
Heic David,
Rex David, ille vates,
Cantans sonans adhuc aeternum DEUM.
O mel et dulce nectar!
O fortunatam sedem!
Haec voluptas, haec quies,
Haec meta, hic scopus
Nos hinc attrahunt rectâ in Paradisum.

The fountain of perpetual love is present.^[L]_[SEP]
Here are Patriarchs with Prophets:
Here is David,
King David, the prophet himself,
Singing and playing to the eternal GOD.
O honey and sweet nectar!
O fortunate place!^[L]_[SEP]
This voluptuousness, this peacefulness,
This goal, and this target,
They draw us from here directly into Paradise.

This text, although not an *epithalamium* in a true sense, seems well-suited to be performed as a motet text at a wedding ceremony. King David stands out among the patriarchs and prophets towards the end, and praises God with singing and playing (*Rex David, ille vates, Cantans sonans adhuc aeternum DEUM*). At the Crown Prince's wedding in 1658, the music-loving Duke Albrecht was able to be identified with King David, who praises God through his *Cantorey*. The occasional composer Paul Melissus was closely befriended with Orlando di Lasso, as evidenced by multiple poems of praise written by Melissus to the *Münchener Kapellmeister*.⁴¹

They may well have gotten to know each other at the Reichstag in Augsburg 1566, in which both took part.⁴² 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; in 1561, Striggio had indeed already composed a 40-voice *canzona*.⁴³ As we learn from correspondence in 1564, Duke Albrecht had received a composition with 41 voices from Emperor Maximilian II that same year.⁴⁴ This refers to a composition for 40

⁴¹ LEUCHTMANN, Horst. *Orlando di Lasso. I. Sein Leben*. Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1976, p. 280, BERGMANS, Paul. 'Deux amis de Roland de Lasso: les humanistes Charles Utenhove et Paul Melissus Schede'. In: *Academie royale de Belgique, Bulletins de la classe des beaux-arts*, Tome XV Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1933, p. 101-112.

⁴² FECHNER, Jörg-Ulrich – DEHNHARD, Hans. art. 'Melissus, Paulus'. In: *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 17 (1994), p. 15.

⁴³ FENLON, Ian. *Op. cit.*, 1980, p. 87.

⁴⁴ Letter of Maximilian to Albrecht, July 26th 1564: "Was mier auch dise tag zuckhumen, ubersende ich E. L. hiemit sambt dem gesang mit den 41 sctimen" (What I have recently received, I send



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voices (the 41st voice seems already to have represented the *basso seguente* part, as in the Zwickau manuscript) that Maximilian had obtained from Rome from Cardinal Cristoforo Madruzzo (1512–1578) before he allowed a copy to be delivered to Albrecht.⁴⁵ This anonymous composition *à 40* could well be Striggio's '*canzona*' which was performed in Florence on July 13th 1561 in honor of Cardinal Ippolito d'Este.⁴⁶

Indeed Cardinal Madruzzo could have received it from his Roman colleague Ippolito. In this consequential way, it is within the realm of the possible that there was only ever one monumental composition by Striggio, which circulated in multiple copies, and ultimately served as the source for the contrafactum *Ecce beatam lucem* in Munich. This assumption is supported by the fact that Striggio's 1561 '*canzona*' seems to have been a work in Italian. This composition could well have been the source of Striggio's *Missa sopra Ecco si beato giorno à 40/60*.

The similarity between the titles is obvious enough to form the following comprehensive hypothesis: in 1561, Striggio composed a madrigal entitled "Ecco si 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 7th 1568 in Munich.⁴⁷

herewith to your Grace, together with the composition for 41 voices). See: BIBL, Viktor. *Die Korrespondenz Maximilians II.*, Vol. 1. Vienna: Holzhausen, 1916, p. 2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3. Unfortunately Davitt Moroney misunderstands the correspondence between Albrecht and Maximilian completely. He confuses Lasso's compositions, which Albrecht sent to Maximilian, with the 40-voice composition, which went in the other direction. MORONEY, Davitt. *Op. cit.*, 2007, p. 23/24. The same mistake was made by Robert Lindell. See: LINDELL, Robert. 'Stefano Rossetti at the Imperial Court'. In: *Musicologia Humana. Studies in Honor of Warren and Ursula Kirkendale*, GMEINWIESER, Siegfried – HILEY, David – RIEDERBAUER, Jörg (eds.) Florence: Olschki, 1994, p. 163.

⁴⁶ FENLON, Ian. *Op. cit.*, 1980, p. 87.

⁴⁷ In unpublished program notes for concerts and booklets for CDs, Davitt Moroney and Hugh Keyte are of the opinion that Striggio composed *Ecce beatam lucem* for the wedding of Francesco di Medici to Johanna von Österreich, daughter of Emperor Ferdinand I., in Florenz 1565 ([Download link](#)). This argument rests on the sole assumption that Melissus studied in Vienna for a time, and was awarded a poet distinction by Emperor Ferdinand I, which is less convincing than the connection between Lasso



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Conclusion

Works from the 16th century with many parts are fascinating testimonies to the art of the composers of the time. Since all the voices in the sources of Alessandro Striggio's large-scale works are provided with text, one might think that they were conceived as vocal works. However, the analysis of the local performance situations makes it clear that the performance of the *Missa sopra Ecco si beato giorno* à 40 and 60 voices in Munich could only have taken place with the help of musical instruments, and that the piece was transposed downwards. It follows that the score of the work provides only partial information about how the piece was performed in the 16th century.

Similar observations can be made for the Munich performance of a 40-part motet of Striggio in 1568. In this case, there even exists a description of the instruments involved, which can be used as a starting point for a reconstruction of the instrumentation of this performance during the wedding festivities in 1568. In addition to these new insights into Renaissance musical practice, it can now be assumed with certainty that the work in question is indeed *Ecce beatam lucem* à 40. Furthermore, it has been hypothesised that both *Ecce beatam lucem* and the *Missa sopra Ecco si beato giorno* are based on the same madrigal, which unfortunately has not survived.

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and Melissus. It would however be possible to consider that Melissus had already created a *contrafactum* to Striggio's composition for Maximilian, actual owner of the work, so that *Ecce beatam lucem* could be performed at the Reichstag in Augsburg 1566. The role of King David would also be quite fitting for the music-loving emperor.



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