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Music, text and structure in fourteenth-century English polyphony: the case of *Ave miles celestis curie*

Recent studies of polytextual music in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century French sources have radically changed our understanding of the repertory, through detailed and often highly thought-provoking studies of individual pieces examined from diverse analytical standpoints. Stimulated in no small part by the work of scholars such as Sylvia Huot and Dolores Pesce, more recent work has extended and developed their frameworks for dealing with musico-textual relationships in music around 1300.[1] Polyphonic songs, and motets in particular, have been interrogated for their use of borrowed materials, for their allegorical, extra-musical cultural reference points, and for their tropic relationship with sacred and secular poetry.[2] This flourishing interest in French motets has demonstrated the sophistication of a genre that often served both sacred and secular purposes. For various reasons – many of them concerning only the prevailing fashions in the study of medieval music – Peter Lefferts's comprehensive analytical study of fourteenth-century English motets has not yet stimulated similarly radical explorations of individual insular motets.[3] It is the purpose of the present article to consider how the analysis of English music might benefit from the available models used in French motets, and to what extent it might require a different set of tools. By way of answering these questions, I will consider a

fourteenth-century polyphonic song, *Ave miles celestis curie*, which offers a series of challenges.

Previous work on medieval English music, including my own, has considered questions of manuscript and literary context, identity, politics, and reception. In part the choice of these approaches has been led by the pre-existence of detailed studies of genre, notation, and musical and textual structures; put simply, it did seem that the musical aspects of the repertory had been treated exhaustively, or had little more to offer, in comparison with French motets. Text-music relationships in English motets have been neglected in part because of the relatively general, devotional thrust of the Latin poetry typically employed. In 1984, before many of the studies of French motets to which I have referred, Lefferts argued that 'the [English] motet texts offer virtually no opportunity for the kinds of interpretive analysis that musicology has seen so successfully applied to the rich, figurative language of 14th-century isorhythmic motets and grandes ballades, whose political, often polemical texts can usually be associated to definite historical circumstances'.[4] Although Lefferts's point about the limitations of examining English motets to determine their relation to datable historical events is reasonable, one of the fundamental roles of the present article is to challenge the underlying perception that English examples have less to offer than do French motets.[5]

Ave miles celestis curie

My central example is a four-part work in honour of St Edmund, King and Martyr, *Ave miles celestis curie / Ave rex patrone patrie /* T. *Ave rex gentis /* Tenor secundus (found uniquely in Oxford, Bodleian Library, e museo 7 (hereafter GB-Ob 7), ff. V*v*-

VI*r*, item 7).[6] The host source of the front and rear musical flyleaves is a twelfth-century copy of St Augustine's commentary on the psalms that belonged to the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, East Anglia, throughout the later Middle Ages.[7] GB-Ob 7 was an important part of the heritage of the Abbey, and the book's rebinding in the fifteenth century further protected the main contents by the addition of these parchment flyleaves. The leaves had probably been discarded from a choirbook whose musical notation was by that point outmoded. Although most repurposed parchment was likely randomly selected for use as flyleaves, the choice of folios that included two motets in honour of Bury's patron saint may have added a local significance, effectively visually reaffirming GB-Ob 7 as a Bury St Edmunds book.[8] *Ave miles celestis curie* is one of two motets in honour of St Edmund, King and Martyr in this collection: the second, *De flore martirum / Deus tuorum militum /* T. *Ave rex gentis*, sets the identical antiphon as part of its three-part texture. Ex. 1 reconstructs the chant on which these motets are based, whose melody does not precisely match that found in extant chant sources; it has thus been projected from the chant melody used in the motets as well as with reference to versions surviving in chant sources.[9] The flyleaves contain motets, some of French and many of English origin (or at least adapted for English use), as well as a textless, three-part piece that may be a Kyrie; several pieces are closely related to specific feasts of the liturgical year, though others are more difficult to place.[10] Their copying has been placed to around 1340.[11]

Ave miles celestis curie challenges perceptions of convention for polyphonic song of this period. Its generic classification presents challenges, since it has features that relate both to the motet and to what has been claimed as a peculiarly 'English genre': the troped chant setting.[12] There is some disagreement as to the extent to

which these categories are distinct from one another. Lefferts outlined the features of troped chant settings of the thirteenth and early fourteenth century as follows:

> These chant settings are polytextual and notated in the musical sources in parts. The tenor […] is a single statement of a plainsong or some well-defined subsection of a chant […]. The two parts composed above it bear texts troping the words of the chant. These new words are often artfully written and aligned so that the syllables of the tenor text are articulated simultaneously in all three voices […]. Though troped chant settings are very similar to motets in technique and source layout, they are distinguishable by a number of features: there is no repetition of tenor *color*; liturgical specificity is clear and contextuality assumed for the performance of the setting; the melody and syntax of the chant determine most features of overall form; and the text is closely allied to that of the tenor.[13]

Having listed the substantial corpus of English troped chant settings from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Lefferts noted that by the first decades of the fourteenth century, the lines between this genre and the motet had become blurred. Scribes no longer distinguished between them in ordering their collections, and with greater diversity in the selection and manipulation of tenor materials as the century progressed, the distinction became unhelpful. Within this context, it met the needs of Lefferts's study to consider *Ave miles celestis curie* – and other pieces that he classed as English troped chant settings of the fourteenth century – as motets. Other surveys of English musical genres view English troped chant settings as a sub-type of the motet.[14]

Evidently, composers had a wide range of structural techniques available to them, enjoying the slippage between possible approaches. *Ave miles celestis curie* shares features with the compositional, aesthetic, and practical concerns of several markers used to distinguish between polyphonic genres of the period: its use of a

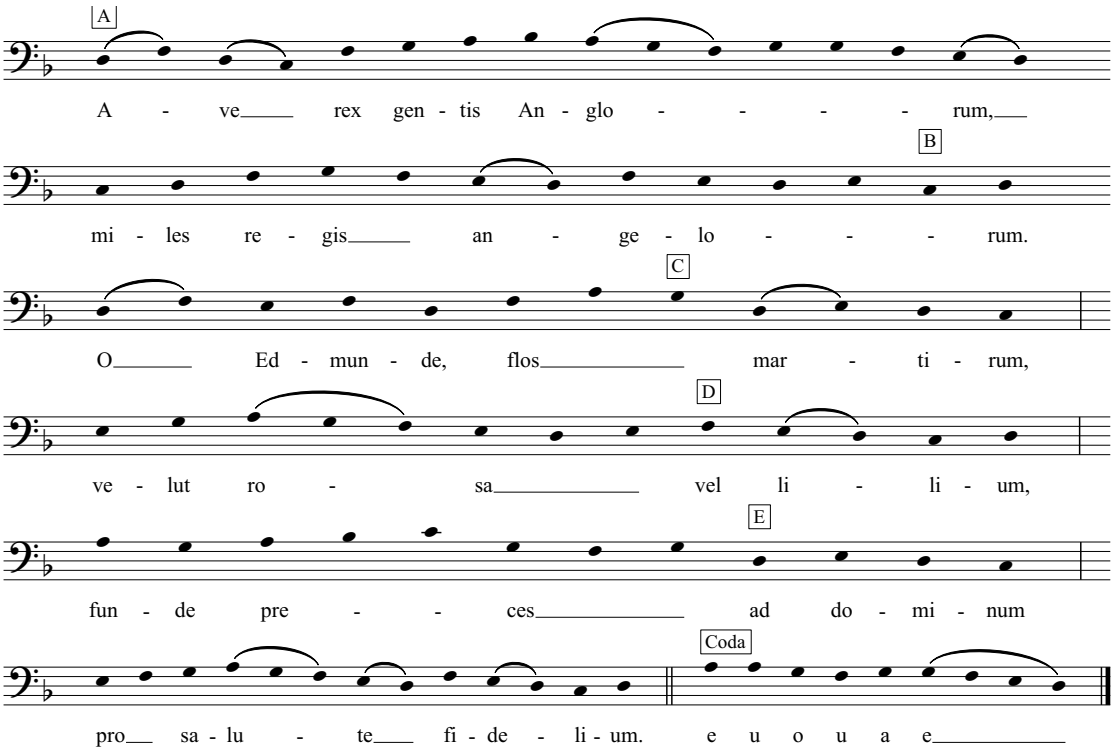
cantus firmus seems to detach it from the conductus, yet its final, untexted section recalls the *caudae* of earlier examples of that genre; its use of voice exchange relates it to the type of repetitive structures promulgated in numerous insular works in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, from rotas like 'Sumer is icumen in' to the rondellus structures commonly used in conductus and motet; its upper texts are at once freely composed and strongly intertextual with the plainchant cantus firmus.

As Harrison pointed out, repetition (of sections of a piece, or exchange of material between parts) was one device available to composers wishing to create extended structures. He cited, by way of examples, the large-scale design of the four-part conducti *Ovet mundus letabundus* and *Hostis Herodes* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 81, copied *c*. 1330), both of which used voice-exchange in order to allow 'considerable enlargement of the design'.[15] Crucial to the present article is Harrison's point about the way in which longer pieces might be composed and developed from pre-existent materials such as the chant itself. For a period from which we lack precise theoretical information about how English composers sought to create motets, it is worth considering whether – in voice-exchange repertoire – we might encounter pieces that hint at compositional processes and decisions. And while this may be relatively self-evident in many examples of voice-exchange – notably those in which sections maintained neat boundaries and straightforward relationships – *Ave miles celestis curie* proves a useful, and more complex, case study in its handling of chant material.

Liturgical context of the motet and its plainchant

It is immediately clear from the modern practice of referring to polytextual works by the first words of their various texted lines (*Ave miles celestis curie / Ave rex patrone patrie /* T. *Ave rex gentis /* Tenor secundus) that there is a strong relationship between the poetic texts, and that this relationship is rooted in the choice of the plainchant tenor (see Ex. 1). Such verbal relationships are typical of the period and of polytextual music more generally. Although French motet upper lines also often 'bore strong assonant and tropic relationships to the text of their tenors', this aspect of *Ave miles celestis curie* is equally common in English motets and troped chant settings, especially as the fourteenth century progressed; examples from northern Europe extend from the opening gestures of thirteenth-century Parisian motets to later fourteenth-century English motets such as *Herodis in pretorio* / *Herodis in atrio / Hey hure lure* (Durham Cathedral, MS C.I.20, f. 1*r* , item 1, copied *c.* 1350–60), in which the tenor melody may have been selected primarily for its verbal resonance with the upper lines.[16]

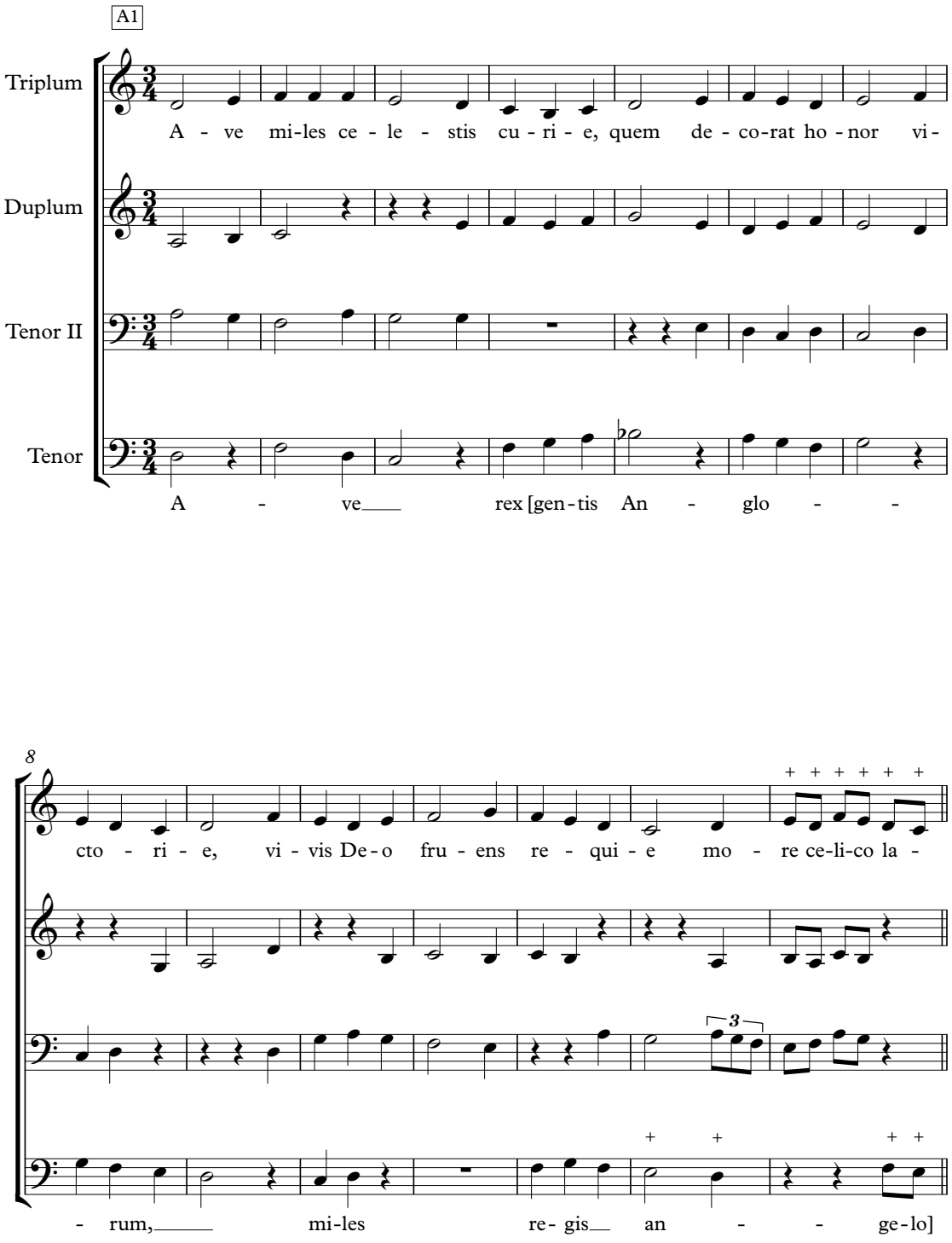
Ex. 1 Antiphon ‘Ave rex gentis anglorum’, reconstructed from surviving chant sources and from the motets *Ave miles celestis curie* and *De flore martirum*

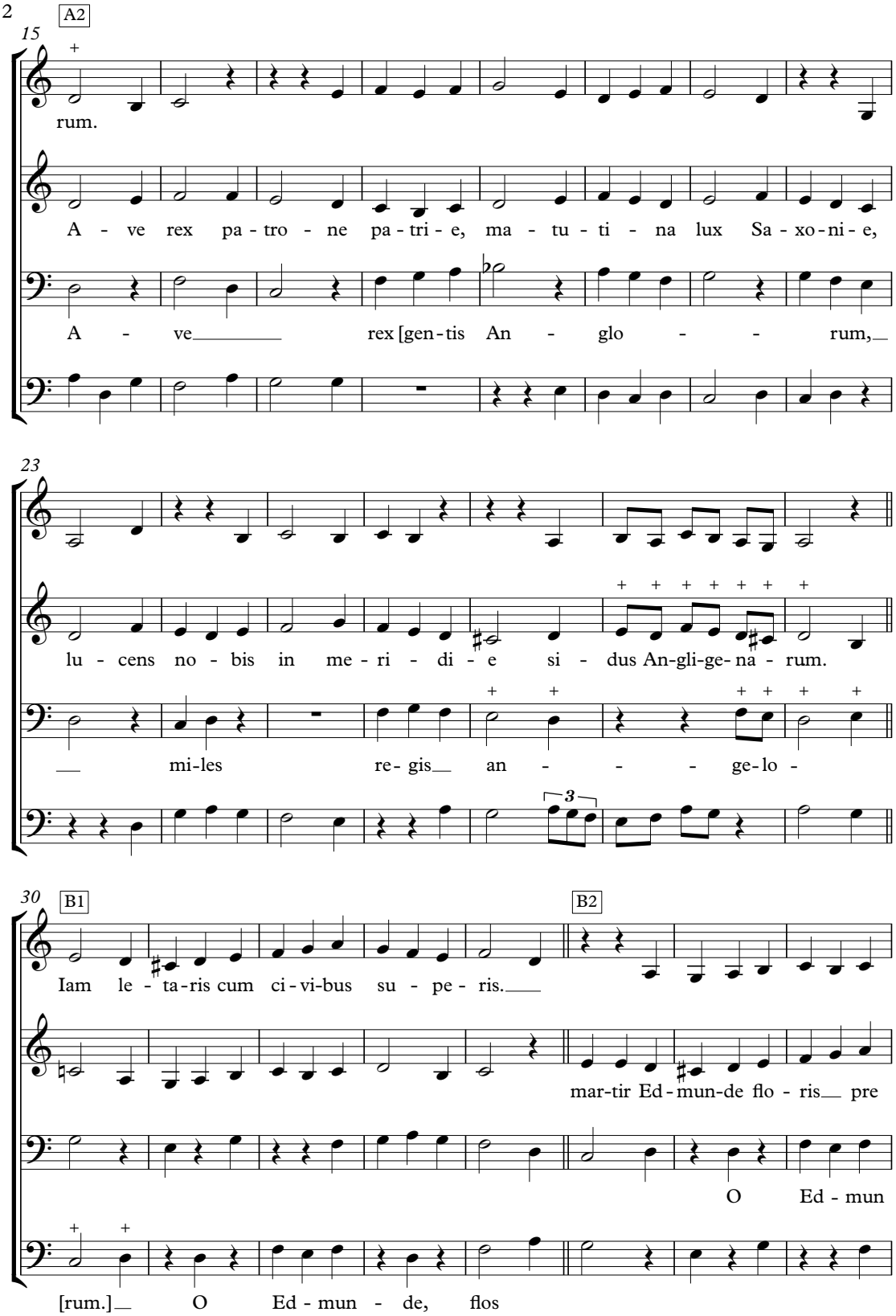


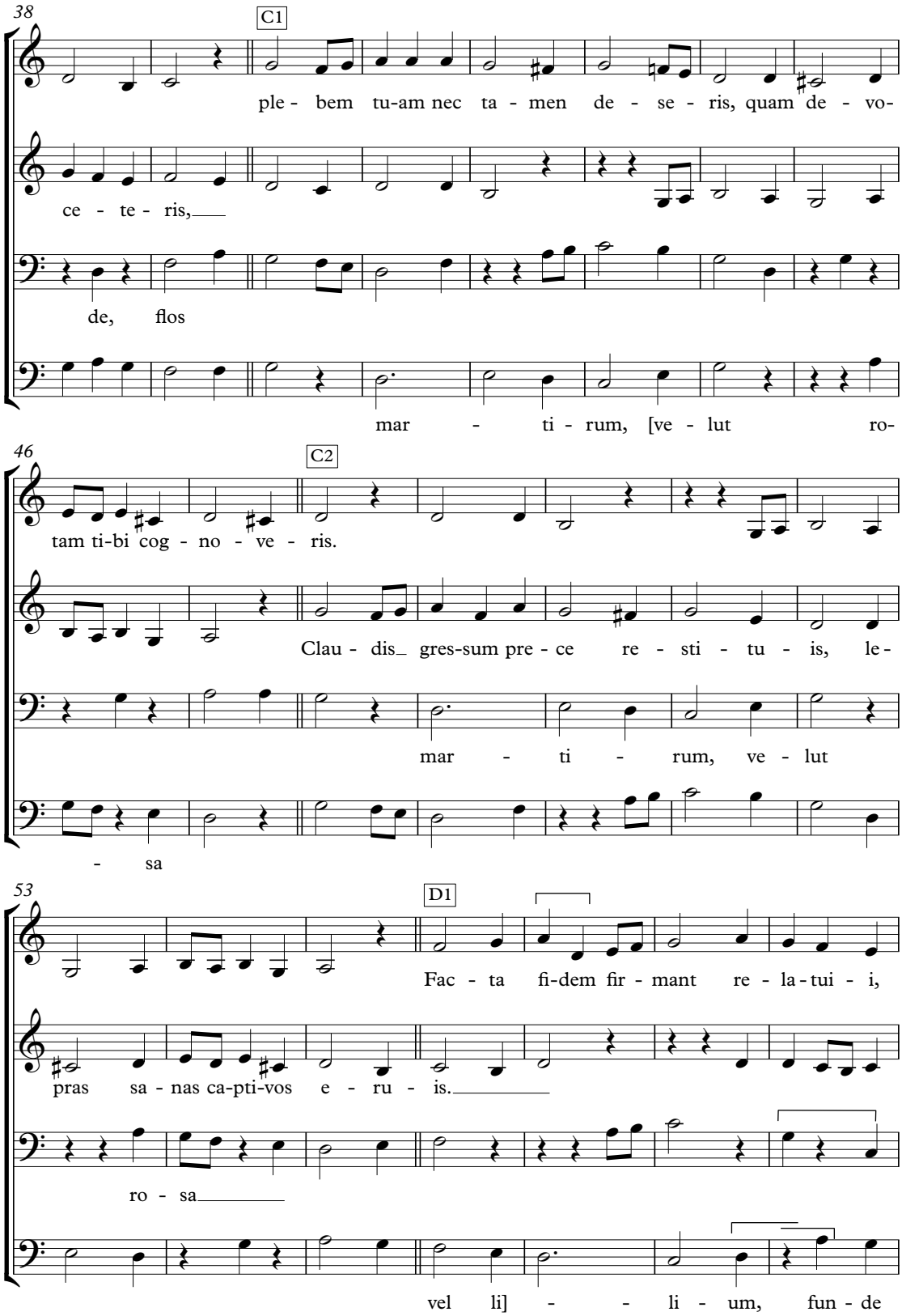
Unlike motets like *Herodis in pretorio*, *Ave miles celestis curie*’s two upper texts are not presented superimposed aurally at the outset; the duplum incipit, ‘Ave rex patrone patrie’, does not appear until bar 15 (see Ex. 2). This is on account of the motet’s voice-exchange structure, in which the two upper and two lower lines function as pairs, exchanging melodic material in each section. The tenor and secundus tenor take turns to sing the cantus firmus, while the other line is freely composed. Each segment of the chant – as well as each segment of upper-voice melody – is therefore heard twice. There are minor differences between the last notes of the cantus firmus as it appears in each section of the motet (for example at the end of section A), where the second part of each section appears to present a fuller or more faithful reading of the original chant. The chant’s segmentation by the composer was not made strictly in relation to the musical and poetic sections of its original lyric or melody, and this feature – as well as some minor variants along the way – has

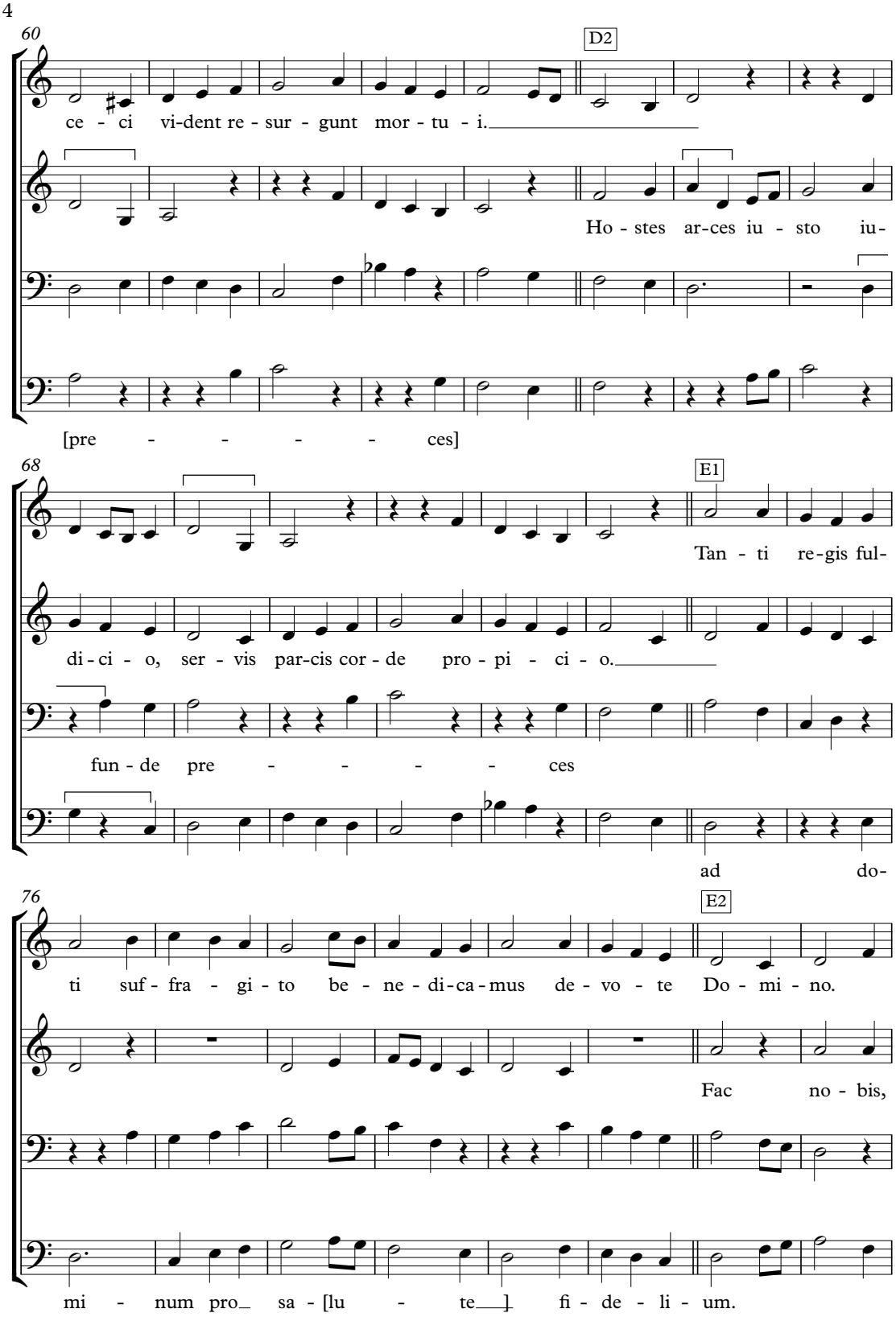
made it difficult to see where the chant is found in some places within the motet. Overall, however, the internal repetition in the tenors and the use of the same cantus firmus in *De flore martirum* lend confidence that the composer used his chant source reasonably faithfully throughout the piece.

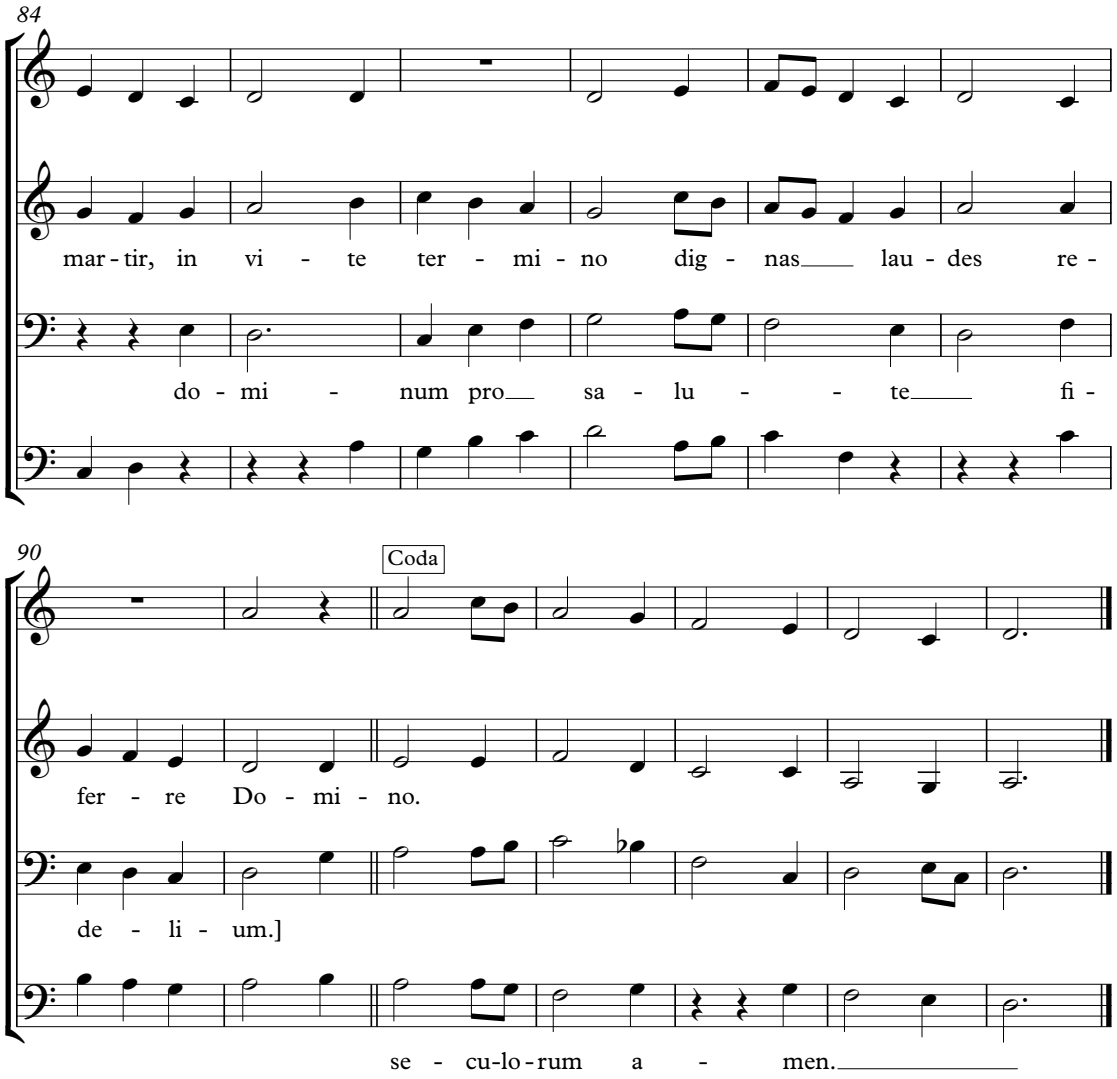
Ex. 2 *Ave miles celestis curie*




2
15
A2
rum.
A - ve rex pa - tro - ne pa - tri - e, ma - tu - ti - na lux Sa - xo - ni - e,
A - ve rex [gen - tis An - glo - - rum,
23
lu - cens no - bis in me - ri - di - e si - dus An - gli - ge - na - rum.
mi - les re - gis an - - - ge - lo -
30
B1
Iam le - ta - ris cum ci - vi - bus su - pe - ris.
B2
mar - tir Ed - mun - de flo - ris pre
O Ed - mun
[rum.] O Ed - mun - de, flos


38
C1
ple - bem tu-am nec ta - men de - se - ris, quam de - vo-
ce - te - ris,
de, flos
mar - ti - rum, [ve - lut ro-
46
C2
tam ti-bi cog - no - ve - ris.
Clau - dis_ gres-sum pre - ce re - sti - tu - is, le-
mar - ti - rum, ve - lut
- sa
53
D1
Fac - ta fi-dem fir - mant re - la - tui - i,
pras sa - nas ca-pti-vos e - ru - is.
ro - sa
vel li] - - li - um, fun - de


4
60
D2
ce - ci vi-dent re - sur - gunt mor - tu - i.
Ho - stes ar-ces iu - sto iu-
[pre - - - - - ces]
68
E1
Tan - ti re-gis ful-
di - ci - o, ser - vis par-cis cor - de pro - pi - ci - o.
fun - de pre - - - - - ces
ad do-
76
E2
ti suf - fra - gi - to be - ne - di-ca-mus de - vo - te Do - mi - no.
Fac no - bis,
mi - num pro sa - [lu - te] fi - de - li - um.



Much of the chant's text is found underneath the first tenor line, so that the origin of the now rhythmicized melody is made obvious to the performer. For the second tenor, which opens with freely composed melodic material, an incipit 'Ave rex' is also found where that part first quotes the antiphon. The tenors alternate in presenting phrases of the plainchant, so that by the end of the piece the whole chant has, in fact, been heard twice. The plainchant 'Ave rex gentis anglorum' was one of the best known in England, through its function in St Edmund's liturgy, through its use (in slightly adapted form) in the liturgy of a range of other saints, some also kings, such as St Ethelbert, St Oswine, St Alban, and Edmund's namesake, St Edmund of Abingdon, and through its appearance in diverse literary and iconographical settings

(such as in stained glass and engravings) that referenced Edmund's Office.[17] Its melody and text are also nearly identical to the Marian antiphon *Ave regina celorum, mater regis*. The selection of this plainchant for polyphony in honour of St Edmund was unsurprising, and offered rich opportunities for troping its basic message with elements of his *vita* in any newly composed poetry. The presentation of the incipits beneath the tenor lines invites us to consider how the text of the whole chant, not simply its opening words, might have been sung or imagined as part of performance.[18] It is perhaps significant that the most well-known part of the chant, 'Ave rex' is signalled by the first two words, where subsequent chant text is more fully indicated in the manuscript:

> Ave rex [gentis anglorum, miles regis angelorum]
> O Edmunde flos martirum, [velut rosa vel li]lium
> funde [preces] ad dominum pro sa[lute] fidelium. euouae.

It is possible that *Ave miles celestis curie* was employed in the liturgy as a formal substitution, essentially replacing the monophonic chant 'Ave rex gentis' with a polyphonic piece based upon its liturgical melody. The chant was widely employed as part of St Edmund's Office, in both monastic and secular contexts; although the source GB-Ob 7 was owned by the Bury monks, the original provenance of the pieces within it is unknown. At Bury's Abbey, 'Ave rex gentis' would have been used as the first antiphon at Vespers in the Office of St Edmund on the saint's feast day (20 November), but in this position the incorporation of the 'seculorum amen' formula (euouae) within the final coda of *Ave miles celestis curie* would not make particular liturgical sense. However, as Harrison and Lefferts have identified, 'Ave rex gentis' was also more widely employed as the Magnificat antiphon for that feast day, and can

be found in the Sarum Breviary with the euouae formula, which was in this case the second ending of the psalm-tone for the first mode.[19] The second of the two polyphonic songs on the same chant in GB-Ob 7, *De flore martirum*, is textually identified with the saint's cult by the label 'Edmundus' underneath the triplum as well as its upper parts in the saint's honour and its use of the opening of the chant 'Ave rex gentis' (without the euouae) for its tenor. The upper texted parts of *De flore martirum* are more reflective of the saint's legend than those in *Ave miles celestis curie*. The monks of Bury had available to them two settings of the most well-known chant to their patron, and were therefore able to take musical and intellectual delight in hearing the transformation of the chant into a polyphonic texture drawing on Edmund's broader hagiography.

Bukofzer interpreted the final word of the motet text, 'Domino', as suggestive of *Ave miles celestis curie* acting as a double trope on *two* chants: 'Ave miles' and the well-known 'Benedicamus Domino', on account of the poetic text's incorporation of that phrase. Certainly, the dismissal offered ample opportunity for polyphony. The records of Lincoln Minster, for example, suggest that polyphony was sung at the end of second Vespers and Lauds on double and semi-double feasts as early as 1258 by the vicars choral or by the boys of the choir.[20] Examples such as this led Harrison in particular to view conductus and many motets as likely substitutes for the 'Benedicamus Domino' in liturgical celebrations in various capacities, a theory that remains unproven and, to my mind, is rather too proscriptive.[21] My own view in the case of *Ave miles celestis curie* is that the appearance of the phrases 'benedicamus devote Domino' and 'referre Domino' in the upper lines trope the appearance of the phrase 'ad dominum' in the final phrase of the chant *Ave rex gentis*. In any case, the treatment of the plainchant led Bukofzer to classify the motet as 'a polyphonic trope

paraphrasing the words of the underlying antiphon'.[22] The use of red ink for the plainchant tenor (see Figs 1 and 2) is reminiscent, visually, of liturgical rubrics, perhaps suggesting the prominence of ritual in the mind of the composer; Harrison was of the contrasting opinion that the red ink used for the tenor and for 'euouae' was indicative that the tenor words 'are for information, and are not to be applied to the tune'.[23]

Plainchant into polyphony

Let us examine how the chant is incorporated into its polyphonic setting. Voice exchange is used to present the tenor in short, repeated chunks, divided between the first and second tenors, who take turns to present (and then repeat, almost identically) each section of the plainsong. The upper lines are freely composed, and lyrics are only heard in one voice at any one time in contrast to most other three- or four-part motets of the period. Lefferts's examination of voice-exchange, rondellus and rota in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century English motets identified *Ave miles celestis curie* as one of eight five-section, four-voice, voice-exchange motets to have survived, six of which have a coda.[24] Voice-exchange can also be found in earlier and contemporary repertory, and is not limited to a particular genre, cantus firmus treatment, or structural element such as the presence of a coda. Within English polyphony of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the notion of structural convention is highly problematic. As a result, close examination of a piece like *Ave miles celestis curie* is valuable not so much for what it might reveal about generic norms, but for demonstrating the ways that English composers appear to have sought creative strategies that were not limited by archetypes.

The source chant falls into six sections, but these do not entirely match the main structural points of the polyphonic song; a new line of chant is not simply mapped onto a new section of polyphony except at the opening. The relationship between chant and polyphonic structures can be seen in Example 1, where letters A–E and Coda are marked above where they begin the corresponding section in the motet. Harrison and Lefferts found the tenor 'arbitrary' in its structural arrangement.[25] The edition that Bukofzer presented in support of his study included arrows that signalled the movement of pre-existent chant material between the two tenor lines, so that chant material and what he saw as freely composed sections could be easily distinguished from one another. Within the passages where the tenors are citing the chant melody, apparent variations from it could be explained either by the particular variants of the melody used, or by minor adjustments made by the composer to allow for the voice exchange design. My own analysis suggests that the chant has also been laid out so as to afford opportunities to build other lines with as many poetic and musical references to the chant tenor as possible.

Whether or not the chant text might have been sung fully in performance, or simply called to mind by the performer, the troping of the tenor line is often rich and powerful. Arguably, the intertextuality extends beyond lyric to the melodic properties of the chant being present in some of the newly composed parts. In particular the ear is drawn to several synch points – to borrow terminology from film music scholarship – in ways that reveal the central preoccupations of the composer: Edmund was a king and martyr who was English by appropriation, his holiness a result of the combination of the three elements of nationality, rank, and martyrdom. Section endings appear to offer the composer the most opportunities to wed the poetry to the text of the original chant line. For example, at the close of section A1, as the chant line is slightly awry,

the triplum echoes the shape of the same part of the chant melody, shadowing its pitches in a way that helps to signal that music is about to be exchanged (see cross markings above Example 2, bars 14–15 and bars 27–30). At the point where the word 'angelorum' (of angels) should occur, the chant line is slightly distorted (to the extent that Bukofzer considered it to be freely composed); the referential triplum melody is furnished with text that completes the chant (-rum, from 'more celicorum').

The second part of sections A, B, D and E is where the greatest level of troping occurs. In A2, for example, the phrase 'lux Saxonie' (light of Saxony: reference both to Edmund's birthplace but also using a term sometimes deployed as a synonym for England, poetically) is heard above the chant whose text would be 'Anglorum' (of England), emphasising nationality (bars 19–23), before the equivalent phrase-end at the tenor 'angelorum', raised (heavenwards?) into the duplum, is re-texted with the phrase 'sidus Angligenarum' ('star of the English/Angles') at the end of section A2. This is an intertextual moment that plays on a pun found across many writings of this period, in which the English are seen not only as people of Anglia but are likened to the angels in heaven (bars 24–29).[26]

The chant line 'O Edmunde, flos martirum' is textually disrupted after its third word so that the entry of the duplum with 'martir Edmunde floris' seems to complete its idea and echo its sentiment (B1, tenor, bars 31–34, appearing to continue into the duplum at B2, bars 35); voice exchange extends the focus on Edmund's martyrdom to bar 51. In section D2, alliteration and poetic allusion occur again: parcis is 'heard' against the chant's notes for 'preces'. In both D1 and D2, the striking melodic leap of a perfect fifth in the chant line (from the final syllable of 'lilium' to the opening syllable of 'funde') is perhaps the creative stimulus for the freely composed melodies, since they include complementary falling gestures otherwise highly unusual in this

piece (indicated by square brackets above the stave in Example 2). It is particularly fitting to have this level of energy for the upper lines, whose poetry articulates the holy deeds of the saint, such as setting captives free and bringing the dead to life. Section E is framed by the words 'dominum' and 'Domino', which overall occur four times. The tenor's 'dominum' is the first word of the cantus firmus for each half section; each half section's upper parts close with 'Domino', the final utterance leading neatly into the coda.

Some of the intertextual references discussed here would be most obvious in performance if the tenors sang the fully texted plainchant, a performance practice that cannot be categorically confirmed or refuted by the sources available for this repertoire. Less controversially, consideration might be made of the role of the art of memory in this sort of musical setting. The powerful function of memory, and its ability to be prompted by a text to recall or imagine related musical or non-musical media, would benefit from closer study for medieval English music.[27]

The upper texts: one stanza or two?

What one would expect to hear simultaneously in *c*. 1300 motets from France or (especially) England – an assonant or alliterative opening with three texts simultaneously presented (triplum, duplum and tenor incipit) – does not happen in *Ave miles celestis curie*.[28] Why? Because the voices only present text in alternation, delaying or staggering, for example, the most obvious places where texts might be expected to coincide alliteratively or in other poetic ways. Julie E. Cumming has written that 'Most voice-exchange motets and rondelli have extensive textless passages and only one text, sung in one voice at a time', noting the flourishing of

four-part voice-exchange motets in England after 1300.[29] Indeed, the editors of *Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century* presented the motet's triplum and duplum parts as a single poem of praise to Edmund, representing the piece as what some might describe as a monotextual motet.[30] Bukofzer had likewise viewed the piece as having only 'the appearance of a polytextual double motet', one lyric being exchanged between two upper voices.

Lefferts's study of the motet described it as containing 'paired stanzas sung successively in all sections except the second, which is the shortest and therefore divides a single stanza between the voices'.[31] This reading understands the motet as presenting one multi-sectional poem, comprising a series of paired stanzas. I would prefer to understand the lyric as two complementary poems of praise to Edmund. The presentation of the text in a single column in *Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century* is misleading, and confuses the original separation of two quite discrete verses.

Heard as a single text, the lyric appears to start twice (both times with 'Ave'), and ends 'twice' (both with 'Domino'); it lacks coherent meaning in lines 9–20. The texts make better narrative sense divided rather than interwoven (see Ex. 3a–b). They are, of course, presented separately in the manuscript, on opposing folios (see Figs. 1 and 2). Despite sharing poetic characteristics, the poems present quite different sides of Edmund's legend and reputation. The triplum depicts Edmund as *miles Christi*, a soldier of Christ whose actions are courageous and powerful: recounting them in stories or devotional songs may thus bring miracles. The duplum emphasises his sanctity not through chivalric actions but through the power of his prayer and martyrdom, and conveys his nationality prominently. It is possible to see the triplum

as taking inspiration from the opening phrases of the chant text, and the duplum as glossing the remainder ('O Edmunde' to the end).

[Insert Figs. 1 and 2 near here]

Fig. 1 The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, e museo 7, f. V*v*

Fig. 2 The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, e museo 7, f. VI*r*

Ex. 3a: Texts presented as one continuous poem, divided between triplum and duplum (after *PMFC* xv, in which the text is presented in a single column). Underlined text matches words in the cantus firmus.

Triplum	Duplum
Ave miles celestis curie quem decorat honor victorie, vivis Deo fruens requie more celicolarum.	
	Ave rex, patrone patrie, matutina lux Saxonie, lucens nobis in medidie sidus Angligenarum.
Iam letaris cum civibus superis;	
	Martir Edmunde floris pre ceteris;
Plebem tuam	

nec tamen deseris, quam devotam tibi cognoveris.	
	Claudis gressum prece restituis lepras sanas captivos eruis.
Facta fidem firmant relatui: ceci vident, resurgunt mortui.	
	Hostes arces iusto iudicio servis parcis corde propicio.
Tanti Regis fulti suffragio benedicamus devote Domino.	
	Fac nobis, martir, in vite termino dignas laudes referre Domino.
Tenor Ave rex gentis anglorum, miles regis angelorum O Edmunde flos martyrum, velut rosa vel lilium funde preces ad dominum pro salute fidelium. euouae.	

Ex. 3b: Triplum and duplum presented separately rather that as one text divided, in translation (after Lefferts's translation in *PMFC* xv)

Triplum	Duplum
Hail, soldier of the heavenly court, whom the honour of victory adorns; you live with God, enjoying rest in the manner of heaven dwellers. Now you are rejoicing with the citizens above, yet you do not abandon your people, whom you know to be devoted to you. Your deeds strengthen faith through their narration: the blind see, the dead rise from the grave. Strengthened by the support of so great a king, let us devotedly bless God.	Hail king, patron saint of our native land, morning star of Saxony, shining on us at midday, star of the Englishmen / Angles / East Anglians. O martyr Edmund, you are eminent above all others. By prayer you restore the footstep of the lame, you heal lepers, you set captives free. You fend off enemies by just judgement; you spare your servants with gracious heart. Enable us, O martyr, at the end of life, to render fitting praises to God.
Tenor	
Hail king of the people of England, soldier of the king of angels O Edmund, flower of martyrs, like a rose or lily	

Pour prayers to God for the salvation of the faithful. euouae.

It is a curiosity of this song, and similar voice-exchange pieces, that the musico-textual resonances that would be so prominent with superimposed alliterative or otherwise tropic upper texts must have been detected through listening for tropic material expressed through the piece in a more linear, consecutive fashion. Instead of hearing the verses 'Ave miles' and 'Ave rex' together – highlighting the identical opening word – the textual troping is signalled through the change of texted voice; the aural disruption created by passing the role of textual declamation to the duplum was an additional way to indicate the intertextual relationship between all four parts, as well as to signal the introduction of the second poem. By presenting the texts in succession, however, the textual resonances at important structural points between the newly composed lyrics and the plainchant tenor become prominent. This sort of textual echo, a moment in which poems heard in succession are well equipped to trigger memories of their related textual neighbours, is something prominent in contrafacta of the period.[32]

Conclusion

Ave miles celestis curie was one part of the diverse devotional practices in honour of St Edmund; it achieved its votive function through the delicate manipulation of text and music deriving from the plainchant tenor. Although some of these aspects are comparable to French motets of a similar period, in other ways they are divergent, and the piece reminds us that much remains to be learned about English polyphony, and in

particular the way in which new lines of music were crafted around their chosen tenor. In exploring *Ave miles celestis curie* in some detail, I have begun to counterbalance the claim that English composers took little interest in the power of text-music interconnections, or in the relationship between troping and textual memory. *Ave miles celestis curie* exhibits features of what one might expect of an English troped chant setting. However, and in contrast to the motet's presentation format in *Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century*, its upper lines are furnished by what are demonstrably two separate lyrics; arguably they have been written to complement one another, sympathetically articulating two sides of the saint's character as conveyed in the two sections of the plainchant.

Ave miles celestis curie reminds us that English composers were experimental, even ambivalent, in their attitude to genre in terms of its governance of structural parameters (or vice versa). English musicians perhaps felt freer than the French to pick and choose the ways in which their text and music were structured, and the interrelationship of those structures. The development of the upper lines of *Ave miles celestis curie* – both textually and melodically – from material originating in the chant reveals something of the composer's priorities. In contrast to the prevailing understanding of English music as lacking the subtleties of text-music relationships found and explored in the French motet, a closer examination of *Ave miles celestis curie* shows something of the potential for a deeper understanding of English examples.

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[1] S. Huot, *Allegorical play in the Old French motet* (Stanford, 1997); D. Pesce ed., *Hearing the motet: essays on the motet of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (New York and Oxford, 1997) included relevant articles by R. A. Baltzer, D. Pesce, A. Walters Robertson, and M. Bent.

[2] Studies are too numerous to list here, but significant literature on these perspectives includes S. Clark and E. E. Leach eds. *Citation and authority in medieval and renaissance musical culture: learning*

from the learned (Woodbridge, 2005); E. Dillon, *The sense of sound: musical meanings in France, 1260–1330* (Oxford and New York, 2012); J. Saltzstein, *The refrain and the rise of the vernacular in medieval French music and poetry* (Cambridge, 2013); A. Zayaruznaya, *Monstrous new art: divided forms in the late medieval motet* (Cambridge, 2015).

[3] See M. Bent, 'What next? Recent work and new directions for English medieval music', *Early Music* THIS VOLUME, pp. XX.

[4] P. M. Lefferts 'Text and context in the fourteenth-century English motet', *L'ars nova italiana del trecento*, vi (1984), pp. 169–92, at p. 171.

[5] The notion of English motets as politically significant will form part of L. Colton, *Angel song: medieval English music in history* (Abingdon, 2016).

[6] A digital image of this manuscript can be found on www. diamm.ac.uk..The dating of the front leaves is based on Lefferts, *The motet in England*, p. 25. The lower voice labelled 'tenor ij', *tenor secundus*, in the manuscript source should not be confused with the fact that the editors of *Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century* reversed the parts in the presentation of the piece, calling the first tenor 'Tenor 2'.

[7] On this volume, and the original contents of Bury's library more generally, see R. Sharpe, 'Reconstructing the Medieval Library of Bury St Edmunds Abbey: The Lost Catalogue of Henry de Kirkstead.' In Antonia Gransden ed., *Bury St Edmunds: Medieval Art, Architecture, Archaeology and Economy* (Leeds, 1998), pp. 204–18.

[8] For a comparable example, see Durham, Cathedral Library, A.III.11, f.1*v*, in which the front flyleaf contains a troped polyphonic Kyrie in honour of their patron St Cuthbert, Kyrie *Cuthberte prece*.

[9] Both Edmund motets were described by H. Besseler, who published the opening of *Deus tuorum militum*; *Die Musik des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Potsdam, 1930), p. 172. G. Reese published the second half of this motet in *Music in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1940), p. 402. Both motets were edited in M. Bukofzer, 'Two fourteenth-century motets on St Edmund', *Studies in medieval and renaissance music* (New York, 1950), pp. 17–33, at pp. 29–33. The most recent edition is F. Harrison and P. M. Lefferts eds., *Motets of English provenance. Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century*, xv (Monaco, 1980), in which Harrison edited the music and Lefferts edited and translated the texts. *De flore martirum* sets the opening of the same version of the chant as that found in *Ave miles celestis curie*, with the exception of a four-note extension to complete the piece, which is not unusual in English motets.

[10] For an assessment of the devotional significance of polyphony owned by monks at Bury St Edmunds, see L. Colton, 'Music and identity in medieval Bury St Edmunds', in *St Edmund, King and Martyr: changing images of a medieval saint*, ed. A. Bale (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 87–110.

[11] Harrison, 'Ars nova in England', p. 69.

[12] Lefferts, *The motet in England*, p. 4.

[13] Lefferts, *The motet in England*, p. 4.

[14] See, for example, J. E. Cumming, 'Motet and cantilena', *A performer's guide to medieval music*, ed. R. Duffin (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2000), pp. 52–82, at p. 59.

[15] F. Harrison, 'Ars nova in England: a new source', *Musica Disciplina*, xxi (1967), pp. 67–85, at p. 74; the date of the source is listed on p. 69. Lefferts's later study agreed with Harrison's dating, *The motet in England*, p. 25. A further four-part motet in GB-Ob 81, *Salve cleri speculum*, exchanges chant material between two lower parts; my thanks to Amy Williamson for alerting me to this example.

[16] Lefferts, *The Motet in England*, p. 185. The dating of this manuscript is taken from Harrison, 'Ars nova in England', p. 69; Lefferts placed the front leaves of the source in a group copied *c*. 1330–60.

[17] R. M. Thomson, 'The Music for the Office of St Edmund King and Martyr', *Music and Letters*, lxv (1984), pp. 189–93. Music for the Office of St Edmund is printed in *Antiphonale Sarisburiens: a reproduction in facsimile of a manuscript of the thirteenth century*, ed. W. H. Frere (Repr. Farnborough, 1966). For the liturgy of St Ethelbert, see J. Caldwell, 'St Ethelbert, King and Martyr: his cult and Office in the west of England', *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, x (2001), pp. 39–46. For a discussion of the places that 'Ave rex' was used in reference to St Edmund in music, literature and other devotional contexts, see Colton, 'Music and identity in medieval Bury St Edmunds'.

[18] Bukofzer's edition of the two Edmund motets laid the chant text out underneath the tenor line(s) in each motet, to correspond with the melody, where Harrison opted to present only the words that appear in the motet manuscript itself in *Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century*.

[19] Harrison and Lefferts, *Motets of English provenance*, p. 162.

[20] R. Bowers, 'Music and worship to 1640', in D. Owen ed. *A history of Lincoln minster* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 47–76, at p. 52.

[21] See F. Harrison, *Music in medieval Britain* (London, 1958), especially pp. 74–76 and pp. 104–14. Lefferts discussed various arguments for and against understanding the liturgical placement of

polyphony in Mass and Office as part of his doctoral thesis, which was then incorporated into his book *The motet in England***.**

[22] Bukofzer, 'Two fourteenth-century motets on St Edmund', p. 23.

[23] Harrison, in Harrison and Lefferts, *Motets of English provenance*, p. 162.

[24] The others are *Cuius de manibus*, *O pater excellentissime*, *Triumphat hodie*, *Salve cleri*, *Quid rimari cogitas, Viri Galilei*, and *Rota versatilis*; Lefferts, *The Motet in England*, p. 34. Harrison identified structural similarities between *Ave miles celestis curie* and *Salve cleri*; 'Ars nova in England', p. 74.

[25] Lefferts, *The motet in England*, p. 35; Harrison, 'Ars nova in England', p. 75.

[26] For a full discussion of the angel / angle pun in the Middle Ages, and its place in musical discourse in particular, see Colton, *Angel song*.

[27] There is scope, for example, to consider similar examples within the context of studies such as A. M. Busse Berger, *Medieval music and the art of memory* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2005). One study along these lines is H. Deeming, 'Music, memory and mobility: Citation and contrafactum in thirteenth-century sequence repertories' in *Citation, intertextuality and memory in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Vol. 2: Cross-disciplinary perspectives on medieval culture*, ed. Giuliano Di Bacco and Yolanda Plumley (Liverpool, 2013), 69-85.

[28] The use of assonance or alliteration as one of a number of parameters that might prove or disprove national origin for English music lies beyond the scope of this article. The presence of assonance in, for example, the French-texted GB-Ob 7 motet *Deus creator omnium* / *Rex genitor ingenite* / *Doucement me reconforte* might variously be seen as indicative of English provenance, English influence, or other interpretations.

[29] J. E. Cumming, 'Motet and cantilena', p. 60.

[30] Harrison and Lefferts, *Motets of English provenance*, pp. 85–9.

[31] Lefferts, *The motet in England*, p. 276.

[32] See Deeming, 'Music, memory and mobility'.