

SPONSUS

(THE BRIDEGROOM)



An acting version of an 11th-century *Mystère*
founded on the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins

Transcribed, edited, and translated by

W. L. SMOLDON

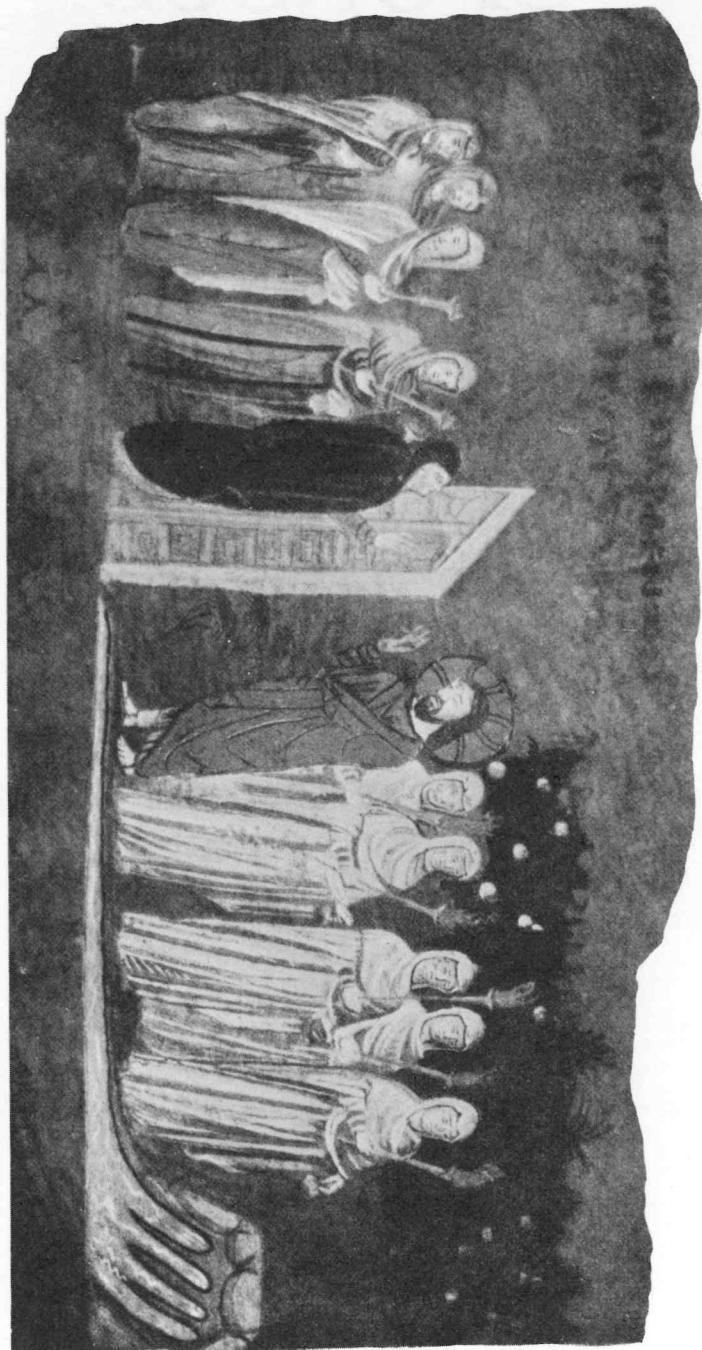
FOR SOLOISTS, UNISON CHORUS, AND
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UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO
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Illegible text — Miniatura dell'Evangelario purpureo di Rossano, sec. V-VI. — Grandezza naturale.



INTRODUCTION

SOURCES

Sponsus, a music-drama found in a troper of the 11th to 12th centuries belonging to the famous abbey of St Martial at Limoges (Paris, *Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 1139, fol. 53r.-55v.*), is based on the parable told by Jesus of the wise and foolish virgins, as reported by St Matthew, XXV, 1-13. I myself do not believe that the work can be classified as a 'liturgical' drama—certainly there is no evidence that it was acted within church walls—and I prefer, using Professor L.-P. Thomas's term, to call it a 'mystère'.* It is in many ways unique, but its use throughout of rhyming stanzas set to rhythmic music of 'troubadour' style suggests a foreshadowing of the world of the open-air mystery-play which in due course expressed itself in *spoken* vernacular verse, musical items being only incidental and mainly in the hands of secular professionals.

The stanzas (unaccountably, on the face of it) are sometimes in Latin, sometimes in a vernacular Romance dialect,** and sometimes in a macaronic mixture of Latin with vernacular refrain. Unlike the usual practice of true liturgical music-dramas, no use is made of prose passages, whether scriptural or otherwise. There is no doubt that both text and musical settings have suffered dreadfully from having been set down in the manuscript by an outrageously careless scribe.† The text has been studied by generations of Western scholars, and there has been much throwing about of brains as to why the mixture of languages came to be, together with various attempts to patch and amend some obviously very corrupt lines, both Latin and vernacular. The latest and probably the most satisfactory editing of the libretto is by Professor Lucien-Paul Thomas, ‡ and most of his textual emendations, together with a number of suggestions by the late Dr Karl Young (*The Drama of the Medieval Church*), are incorporated in this present acting version. The editing of the music to date has been, in my opinion, less satisfactory. The musical settings in the manuscript, written in roughly-heighted Aquitaine notation round a single incised horizontal line, consist of four stanza melodies only, but these, in spite of obvious evidence of scribal blunders, seem to me to work out as attractive rhythmic tunes, varied in style and belonging to the world of the troubadours. Professor L.-P. Thomas has transcribed them into modern notation without making an actual acting version of his edition. I fear that I must disagree with his musical readings on a number of counts.

Because nearly half the text is written in a language understood only by specialist scholars, it is obvious that, in an acting version for use in this country, the vernacular

* There is no evidence, in fact, that it owed its origin to St Martial. We do know that *MS 1139* is a composite affair, a gathering of fascicles of various dates, the earliest section (written 1096-99 A.D.) containing *Sponsus*. The only factual evidence concerning the drama is an annotation on the first folio of *MS 1139*, which records that it was 'bound' (*relié*) for placing in the St Martial library in 1245 A.D. By this time the drama was approximately a hundred and fifty years old. No record exists of any performance.

** W. Cloetta: *Le Mystère de l'Epoux*, in *Romania* xxii (1893) pp. 177-229, assigns this particular dialect to a region some fifty miles west of Limoges.

† I have been informed by the librarian of the Abbey of Solesmes that the text and the music, as far as the writing-down was concerned, were probably two different responsibilities; in which case I should imagine that the musical scribe was the more careless of the two.

‡ LE 'SPONSUS' (*Mystère des Vierges sages et des Vierges folles*) . . . par Lucien-Paul THOMAS, *Professeur à l'Université de Bruxelles* (PRESSES UNIVERSITAIRES DE FRANCE—PARIS, 1951).

part will have to be rendered in English throughout. In the libretto text that I offer, the tonic accents of the original (whether Latin or Romance dialect) have been preserved as far as possible, these agreeing with what I believe to be the original rhythmic stresses of the music. Scholars continue to hold widely divergent views as to why there should be this textual mixture of languages,* and it is certainly difficult to find a reason for some of the switches from one to the other. However, while I have set out the libretto in English throughout, the original Latin is preserved as an underlay so that anyone who wishes may maintain the contrast between Latin and vernacular sections.

I have in a preface set out the original texts (based on the conclusions and suggestions of Karl Young and L.-P. Thomas) against my English version, in parallel columns.

NOTES ON PRODUCTION

The manuscript affords very little information as to the *mise en scène*. As already stated, there is no reason to believe that the work was played within church walls. It may perhaps have been sited on the outside steps of the west front of a church, where there could be found a suitable door to act as the entrance to the 'nuptial-feast hall', and a higher level where the Archangel Gabriel could appear. The few scattered rubrics of the manuscript refer only to the speakers (one of the allocations is clearly misplaced), and to two stage directions which will be noted in their place. Otherwise there is no help for producers, and no hint as to costuming. From the text it is clear that suitable lamps must be provided for the Virgins; perhaps a booth for the Oil Merchants, and also that familiar property of the mystery plays, a hell-mouth (*infernus*) for the Demons.† As for the participants, the anonymous opening group of stanzas may well have been sung, as L.-P. Thomas suggests, by a small choral group.‡ With the evidence of the parable and the words of one of the merchants we can be sure that five Wise and five Foolish Virgins are called for to listen to Gabriel's warning. The introduction of Gabriel and the Merchants is of course the playwright's own idea, as is the appearance of the Demons, who enter music-drama for the first time, and (in this early period) make it even more unlikely that the work was performed inside a consecrated building.§

* See Karl Young, op. cit., II, p. 367.

† Bernard Itier (d. 1225), a librarian of St Martial de Limoges, records in his chronicle the purchase for the abbey of an *infernus*. But this was in 1212, over a hundred years after the writing-down of *Sponsus*. See Chailley, *L'École Musicale de St Martial de Limoges*, p. 374. Nothing is said in the chronicle as to the use to which the *infernus artificiosus compositus* was put.

‡ Thomas suggests also that they represented *Ecclesia*, but surely the Church was personified as the 'Bride' of Christ (not met with in the drama)? I have preferred to keep the group anonymous, even though Thomas advances much evidence in justification of the term (op. cit. pp. 44-6).

§ L.-P. Thomas (op. cit., p. 74) writes: '—il est probable que la mise en scène ne se présentait pas à cette époque sous l'aspect matérialisé qui donnerait un corps, précis à ces mouvements—', and goes on to suggest that the 'présentation plastique' of such properties as 'the door' would not be undertaken, and that the *Prudentes* may well have remained to be present at the dénouement.

I must point out that there is plentiful evidence in the rubrics of the late 11th- and 12th-century Church music-dramas to show that material properties such as 'sepulchres' that could be entered, 'mangers', movable 'stars', armed attendants, the necessities for the supper at Emmaus (a table, bread and wine) were all demanded by the rubrics. In a number of cases, entrances and exits are definitely indicated. The brief and early Easter Sepulchre dramatic representation acted out at Winchester, c. 1080 A.D., was, on the evidence of the manuscript, made as realistic as possible, with rubric directions as to costuming, movements, and tones of voice.

To summarize the action: the first (probably choral) section consists of five Latin stanzas, a dissertation on 'the Bridegroom, who is Christ'. Perhaps this serves to allow the two groups, *Fatuae* and *Prudentes*, to make their entry and place themselves, probably in two distinct groups, ready for the appearance of Gabriel. The five stanzas are set to a single tune (editorially, Melody I). Its hymn-derived pattern is *a b a c*.

The gist of the vernacular second section, Gabriel's four-stanza address to the Virgins, is the note of warning contained in the two-line refrain. As they await the Bridegroom's coming they must 'scarcely sleep' ('Gáire nóí dormét!'). Regarding this point, Karl Young remarks: 'The most original aspect of the dramatic version is the centring of interest upon the foolish virgins, and the emphasis, not so much upon the failure of the *Fatuae* to provide themselves with oil, as upon their sleeping too long'.* In the absence of any specific stage direction we must assume that the 'wise' group obey strictly the first 'vigilate' exhortation and stay awake and alert, while the 'foolish' ones fall asleep during the Archangel's address and awake in due course unprepared. Gabriel's four stanzas are set to a flowing tune (editorially, Melody II), the first two lines and the final one using the same musical phrase.

It is only from the text that we now assume the *Prudentes* to have placed themselves with lighted lamps ready for the Coming, and the *Fatuae* to have awakened and realised their unpreparedness. The next section consists of three Latin stanzas with vernacular refrain, addressed by the *Fatuae* to their wiser sisters. Their plea is for the loan of oil for their neglected lamps, and they lament their basic error in the vernacular sentence: 'Doléntas, chaitívas, tróp i avém dormít!' ('Unhappy, despairing, too long have we slept!'). Melody III, which sets their three stanzas, has the same musical sentence for the first three stanza lines. Can the composer have intended this monotonous effect as an attempt to underline the foolishness of the group?†

The two-stanza reply of the *Prudentes* is firm and down-to-earth, both in text and music (Melody IV). They have no oil to spare; the *Fatuae* must seek to purchase some from the Merchants. After each manuscript stanza comes the *incipit* 'Dolentas . . .', which suggests that they are to take up the *Fatuae's* refrain, modifying it to 'Unhappy, despairing, too long have you slept!' Unfortunately the few notes of music given here for 'Dolentas . . .' are certainly not those of the *Fatuae's* setting. L.-P. Thomas has suggested that the line should be completed to the *Fatuae's* music. This not wholly satisfactory solution seems the only thing to be done.

In the next section the *Fatuae*, apparently debating among themselves, continue with two more stanzas of their previous pattern and setting. Then apparently (there are no rubrics) they make a brief appeal in the vernacular to the *Prudentes*, using, surprisingly enough, the first line of the *Prudentes'* own melody for the purpose. The latter's reply, also in the vernacular and using the second and third lines of the music, reiterates their refusal and their advice to seek help from the Merchants.

It seems reasonable to suspect some kind of hiatus in the manuscript after this (the original scribe was capable of any kind of folly), since the next section consists of two stanzas in the vernacular sung by the Merchants, obviously *replying* to the *Fatuae* and using their tune for the purpose. L.-P. Thomas has suggested that after their rejection by the *Prudentes* the *Fatuae* may have advanced towards the Merchants.

* Op. cit., II, 365.

† One recalls the continually repeated vocal phrase that so well illustrates the bafflement of Belshazzar's soothsayers when, in the Beauvais drama of *Daniel* (12th century) they are called on to interpret the message of the Hand.

singing an additional line, in a final appeal for aid. Whatever the case, the Merchants profess themselves unable to assist and give the barren advice that they should return to their 'five sisters' and try again.

The spirit of the *Fatuae* seems broken. They move back with their unlighted lamps, lamenting among themselves in a Latin stanza. Then arrives the moment for the entrance of the Bridegroom. (At last we have a directional rubric, even though slightly out of place.) We must assume that he opens the door of the 'feast hall' and allows the lamp-bearing *Prudentes* to pass through.* The *Fatuae* rally themselves. In an incomplete stanza to their usual melody they plead to be allowed also to enter. But there is no mercy. 'Verily, I do not know you . . .', says the Bridegroom, and passes on to a threat of eternal doom. The Latin stanza is without music, but Melody I fits its rhythms quite smoothly. This must surely be the musical solution. His succeeding (and concluding) stanza of denunciation, also without music, involves a change of poetic rhythm, and this, with some slight adjustments, suits the rhythm of Melody II (that of the other divine character).

The *dénouement* is swift. The Bridegroom presumably disappears into the feast-hall and the door is closed. A rubric states that the *Fatuae* are to be seized upon by demons and thrown into hell.

A comparison with the concluding verses of the St Matthew parable is inevitable. Christ's words, according to the Authorized Version, are as follows:

'Verily I say unto you, I know you not.
Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day
nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.'

Here is reproof, but no threat of 'everlasting fire'!† However, in the age of religious intolerance and swiftly roused cruelty to which the drama belonged, the *Sponsus* conclusion was no doubt readily acceptable. In little more than a century the flourishing Provençal civilization of the south was to go down in blood and fire as the result of the Albigensian Crusade.

NOTES ON THE MUSIC

As previously mentioned, the musical settings are recorded in the manuscript in Aquitaine notation roughly heightened round a single incised line, which I regard as indicating F and as retaining that pitch throughout. Also throughout, each stanza has its particular stanza tune written out each time (except for brief *incipits* in the case of refrains). These repetitions bring the transcriber a certain amount of doubt and difficulty, since seldom are the notes of a setting reproduced in exactly similar detail. Time and again the transcriber is compelled to strike a kind of consensus of the melody; he feels that the differences are not attempts at variation but just plain blunders. To give but one example—in Gabriel's second stanza (beginning 'Venit en terra . . .') the second line is set to what is normally the third line's very different music. My own guess is that, having completed the setting of the first line, the scribe glanced back and misled himself through seeing the music of the last line of the previous stanza, which happens to be identical, whereupon he quite lost his place and finished the stanza in a musical muddle.‡ He may have been misled

* See Illustration (facing p. iii).

† The author of the drama probably had in mind verse 41 of the same chapter: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels' (but applied to quite a different parable).

‡ On the cover of this edition will be seen a reproduction of fol. 54r. of the manuscript. The top line shows the ending of the first stanza's refrain and the start of the second stanza.

by the scribe responsible for the text (see p. i, first footnote), who has a capital for *aisel* and a small letter for *Venit*. The word 'aisel' begins the second and completing line of the refrain. This line is not written out again in the succeeding stanzas, the *incipit* 'Gaire' being considered enough. It may be that the capital letter was intended as a signpost for any forgetful singers, who wished to refer back for the (subsequently) missing part of the refrain. Other of the more outstanding musical blunders are noted in the course of the transcription.

I must make it plain that I disagree with Prof. L.-P. Thomas's view that the melodies of the work are *directly* inspired by the music of the Church liturgy. *Indirectly*, yes; there is no doubt that the art of the troubadour-trouvères owed much to the forms established over the centuries by the medieval Church—the litany, the hymn, the sequence, etc. However, it is my belief that the melodies of *Sponsus* represent, not the direct influence of Gregorian chant, but rather troubadour-style invention inspired by that influence, the composer being undoubtedly a Church-trained musician. As I shall presently show, the first melody of the work could be in the *major* mode.

Gustave Reese has pointed out (*Music in the Middle Ages*, p. 197) that in *Sponsus* there are examples of the *lai* form, a characteristic troubadour framework. (He mentions also that the *lai* grew from the liturgical *sequence*.) I quote a few lines:

'A particularly interesting form is displayed by the 12th-century play *Sponsus* ("The Bridegroom"), based on the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew XXV, 1-13). Here the melodies accompanying the lines given to the virgins and oil merchants are paired and then repeated as a group, the melodies thus by themselves applying the principle of the sequence with doubled *cursus* . . . while the whole drama, with the music of the introduction recurring in the epilogue, presents the pattern of the reinforced *lai* . . .'

In undertaking to render the four stanza-melodies into modern rhythmic notation I have borne in mind that this process is a very inexact science, and the notable differences seen in versions of troubadour and trouvère tunes by different musicologists (all making use of the principles of the 'rhythmic modes') emphasise this. However, the notation of the period had no means of indicating precise rhythmic values, and it is widely recognised that there may have been considerable latitude in that respect in contemporary performances, except perhaps in the case of dance measures. In dealing with the first three tunes I have made use of triple measure (in the case of the third, employing the second rhythmic mode*). For the fourth tune I have not hesitated to use duple measure, on the ground that this seems to fit best the accents and rhythms of the poetry.† The agreement of poetic and musical stresses has been my principle throughout.

* I cannot agree with the idea sometimes suggested that it is incongruous to use the second rhythmic mode in conjunction with *Latin* dramatic poetry. In my transcription of a 'Fleury Playbook' drama, under the title of *The Play of Herod* (Oxford University Press), Archelaus' fierce war-song, 'Salve, pater inclyte . . .' would have been a very limp affair in other than the iambic second mode. The King's tune 'Ite, ergo . . .' in *Filius Getronis* is another example.

† In each of my several published acting-versions of actual Church music-dramas I have found that some of the stanza groups of Latin poetry which occur from time to time, e.g., in the opening lament, 'Heu, pius pastor . . .' and the Angel's song, 'Vultum tristem . . .' belonging to the 'Fleury' *Visitatio Sepulchri* transcription (Oxford University Press), flow most naturally in duple rhythm.

I come now to what must be a further controversial matter. I have in my *Church music-drama* transcriptions held to the belief that these Latin works were originally sung with little or no musical accompaniment, and elsewhere, in more than one text, have stated my reasons for this view.* I am also well aware that with the rise and spread of the secular mystery plays comes plentiful evidence of the use of professional instrumentalists, both as soloists and in 'orchestras', for the supplying of incidental music to the spoken dramas. Having stated my opinion as to the character of *Sponsus*, and the conditions under which it was performed, it is difficult for me to deny the possibility of the singing being supported instrumentally in some fashion. There seems to be no doubt that the troubadour and trouvère songs were given solo instrumental aid in the form of preludes and postludes, and possibly had free and improvised counterpoints to the vocal line.† I have therefore ventured in the course of this acting-version to supply instrumental additions of an improvisatory nature. I regard them as quite tentative and if a musical director who undertakes this transcription prefers the voices wholly uncoloured, I am ready to bow to his opinion.

There is a final controversial point which must be discussed—the identity of the incised line on the *Sponsus* manuscript pages, around which the musical notes are heightened. On this identification depends the tonality of the four melodies belonging to the work.

During the 10th century most of the various Gregorian neume notations were moving towards a system that would show by definite heighting the relative pitches of the notes of a melody. Early in the 11th century came the use of a horizontal line as an aid towards defining the heightings. Soon, especially in Italy, such lines could be identified as having fixed values.

St Martial and the exponents generally of the Aquitaine notation, in spite of their pioneer originalities, were not so progressive in this respect as centres in Italy and other parts of France. From Jacques Chailley's treatise, *L'École de Saint-Martial de Limoges*, comes the evidence that the widespread Aquitaine neume-style long neglected the use of any anonymous horizontal line at all.‡ Only towards the end of the 11th century did such a line take over a fixed identity in Aquitaine use, but this was applicable only to a single piece. Such an identity could be altered from one item to the next, without an informative clef letter or other kind of notice such as was beginning to be found elsewhere. The portion of *MS 1139* which contains *Sponsus* can be assigned with some certainty to 1096–99 A.D., and thus possible homogeneity of the line value throughout the composition can be assumed. In the manuscript the work begins towards the end of the bottom line of *fol. 53r.*, the setting starting on the same continuous line used by the music of the piece immediately previous. As far as I know, nobody but myself has ever been interested in finding out what this latter music actually is. Its text is 'Vere surrexit Dominus de sepulchro cum gloria, alleluia'. The Abbey of Solesmes does not recognize it as a liturgical piece, and it is here acting as a rounding-off item to a version of the Easter *Quem quaeritis* dialogue

* See (e.g.) pp. iv–vi of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* transcription mentioned above.

† Dr Egon Wellesz has a set of *Six Songs in Provençal* (Oxford University Press), transcriptions of compositions by the famous troubadour Bernart de Ventadorn. The editor has supported the vocal line of each song by a free part for solo instrument, supplying also, in some cases, a prelude and postlude; the added music, it goes without saying, being in the style of the period. There are some similarities between Melody III of *Sponsus* and the Bernart de Ventadorn song: 'Amors e que-us es vejaire?' of Dr Wellesz's collection.

‡ As did that of St Gall.

which precedes it.* I can identify accurately enough the carelessly written dialogue music, but a transcription of 'Vere surrexit . . .' might have remained very much a matter of guesswork had I not had available a photo of (as far as I know) the only other surviving version of the item. It is to be found in a Bibliothèque Nationale manuscript, *MS 784*, of the 13th/14th century, *fol. 106v*. Its setting, in square notation, is easily readable. This fully identifies the roughly heightened neumes of the *MS 1139* version, and shows that the continuous line which runs into the beginning of the *Sponsus* music has indeed the value of F.

The question now arises as to whether, without any notice, the line was given a new identity with the beginning of the new composition. L.-P. Thomas believes that this is so, and advances a number of reasons for assuming that (1) in *Sponsus* the line must indicate G, (2) that this identity continues throughout the work, and (3) that on the G basis the first tune (Melody I) is in the Mixolydian mode. I can agree only that nowhere in *Sponsus* is a change of line-value apparent. Otherwise, I think that Coussemaker† and Liuzzi‡ (among others) are perfectly right in having assumed that the line represents F. As Melody I, on this understanding, begins and finishes on that note we have a 'major mode' tune, since its construction demands the use of a *musica ficta* B flat. Both Coussemaker and Liuzzi in their (plainchant) transcriptions of the music wrote B flat as a clef sign throughout. With this I agree. Liuzzi, in dealing with the tonalities of the four melodies which result from the F (B flat) reading, quotes freely concerning analogous passages to be found in the music of the Roman liturgy. The statement that Melody I of *Sponsus* is in the 'major key' need not surprise anyone. The 'wanton mode' was frequently enough used by troubadours and the secular world of the time generally, and I have encountered several early examples in the course of my work on medieval Church music-drama—rhythmic settings of Latin poetry.§ As for the liturgy, there is the famous 'major mode' antiphon of Herman the Lame, *Alma Redemptoris Mater*, together with other 'Marian' antiphons with F as the final, and B flat used throughout. In my opinion, the result of assuming that the line indicates F gives more attractive modalities to the other

* The numerous musical settings of the Easter *Quem quaeritis* dialogue differ from each other only in small details. Earliest examples (the music is in the second mode) begin almost always on D. Later, the tune is often found transposed up a perfect fourth. Sometimes, when this is done, the necessary B flat is found inserted; sometimes it appears to be 'understood' on *musica ficta* principles.

† In 1860 the great pioneer musicologist, C. E. H. de Coussemaker, published his *Drames liturgiques du moyen âge*, this during the period when the first stirrings of interest in Latin Church music-dramas were beginning. Comparatively few such manuscripts were available at the time, and Coussemaker chose only those (22 in all) which showed the pitch of the notes through the presence of lines and (most of the time) clefs. Knowledge of neume notations was at that time a closed book (it was Coussemaker who first realised the basic principles of their interpretation). In his Introduction he objected to the current practice of 'literary' editors printing the texts of the Church dramas while entirely disregarding their settings. It was a vain protest, for even today treatises are written and theories propounded which continue to take no note whatsoever of the evidence of the accompanying music.

‡ See: Ferdinando Liuzzi, *Le Vergini Savie e Le Vergini Folli* (*Studi Medievali nuova serie iii*, pp. 82–109–1930). Liuzzi's monograph is a study of *Sponsus*, not an acting-version.

§ In the New Oxford History of Music, Vol. II, facing p. 220, can be seen a reproduction of a page from an Italian manuscript of the 12th century. It gives the musical setting of a pilgrim song, 'O Roma nobilis', notated by means of the solmization letters, this method making it certain that we have here a 'major key' tune. The melody is found elsewhere as the setting of a Latin love song.

three melodies than does a G-line reading—the second melody, for example, becomes a Mixolydian one instead of an Aeolian.

It will be observed that though I regard the music as having originally been notated on F, I have for practical purposes transposed it a whole tone higher for performance. As regards the transcription, any editorial additions to the original material (such as suggested stage directions and the names of speakers where these have obviously been omitted) are enclosed in square brackets. All musical directions (as to tempo, expression and dynamics) are of course editorial. I have already confessed to my temerity in the matter of optional instrumental support for the singing.

One final musical point: nothing is said in the manuscript as to a concluding Te Deum or any other liturgical piece; also, all who have figured in the drama have vanished from the scene, the audience alone remaining. I suggest that there should be a massed singing of four verses of the venerable Advent hymn, 'O come, O come, Emmanuel', the sentiments of which seem to bring some softening to the harsh dramatic conclusion. Perhaps at the same time there could occur the re-appearance and recession of the actors themselves.

I have tried to make clear on every occasion what debts are owed to Professor Lucien-Paul Thomas for his brilliant editing of the original texts.

I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the help given me in preparing this edition by Dr Egon Wellesz, the well-known scholar and composer; Charles Farncombe, the musical director of the Handel Opera Society; and Keith and Angela Brooks, together with David Morgan (instrumentalists).

W. L. Smoldon

The cover photograph, a page from the manuscript, is reproduced by permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and the photograph opposite page iii by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum, London.

SPONSUS

A transcription of the original text, based on L.-P. Thomas's reading of it, together with a version in English by Wm. L. Smoldon

1. CHORUS

(a) Adest Sponsus qui est Christus
—vigilate, virgines!—
pro adventu cuius gaudent
et gaudebunt homines.

(b) Venit enim liberare
gentium origines,
quas per primam sibi matrem
subiugarunt demones.

(c) Hic est Adam qui secundus
per prophetam dicitur,
per quem scelus primi Ade
a nobis diluitur.

(d) Hic pendit ut celesti
patrie nos redderet
ac de parte inimici
liberos nos traheret.

(e) Venit Sponsus, qui nostrorum
scelerum piacula
morte lavit atque crucis
sustulit patibula.

2. GABRIEL

(a) Oiet, virgines, aiso que vos dirum!
Aiseet presen que vos comandarum!
Atendet Sponsum! Ihesu salvaire a
nom.
(Gaire noi dormet!)aisel espos que vos hor atendet.

(b) Venit en terra per los vostres pechet,
de la virgine en Betleem fo net;
e flum Iorda lavet e bateet.
(Gaire noi dormet!)aisel espos que vos hor atendet.

(c) Eu fo batut, gablet e laidepiet,
sus e la crot, pendut e claufiget,
eu monumen, Deus soentre, pauset
(Gaire noi dormet!)aisel espos que vos hor atendet.

CHORUS

See, the Spouse, the Christ, is coming;
—virgins, be ye ready then!—
he whose advent brings rejoicings
now and always, from all men.

He is coming to deliver
all those founders of mankind
who, thro' our first mother's sinning,
were by demons held confin'd.

Now behold the 'second Adam'
(so the prophet did him call),
who, for us, has abrogated
all that stemm'd from Adam's fall.

He was on the cross suspended
so that we should heav'n regain;
being by him liberated
from the Enemy of man.

He is coming as the Bridegroom,
he, whose sacrifice for us
wash'd away our stains of evil
through his death upon the cross.

GABRIEL

O virgins, take heed of what I say to you!
Set forth this moment, as we now order you!
Await the Spouse whom Jesus, Saviour they
name.
Sparing be of sleep!
while for this Bridegroom your constant watch
you keep.

He came to this world to wash away your sins;
in Bethlehem the Virgin did him bear.
In Jordan's stream he lav'd and was baptis'd.
Sparing be of sleep!
while for this Bridegroom your constant watch
you keep.

He suffer'd scourging, was mock'd at and
abus'd;
upon the cross he hung, nail-pierc'd, on high;
within the tomb he lay, though soon to arise.
Sparing be of sleep!
while for this Bridegroom your constant watch
you keep.

- (d) E resors es; la scriptura o dii;
Gabriels soi, eu entrames aici;
atendet lo, que ia venra pr'aici
(*Gaire noi dormet!*)
aisel espos que vos hor atendet.

3. FATUAE

- (a) Nos, virgines, que ad vos venimus,
negligenter oleum fudimus:
ad vos orare, sorores, cupimus,
ut ad illas quibus nos credimus.
Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avem dormit!
- (b) Nos, comites huius itineris
et sorores eiusdem generis,
quamvis male contigit miseris,
potestis nos reddere superis!
Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avem dormit!
- (c) Partimini lumen lampadibus,
pie sitis insipientibus,
pulse ne nos simus a foribus
cum vos Sponsus vocet in sedibus!
Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avem dormit!

4. PRUDENTES

- (a) Nos precari, precamur, amplius,
desinite, sorores, ocus:
vobis enim, nil erit melius
dare preces pro hoc ulterius.
Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avet dormit!
- (b) At ite nunc, ite celerius
ac vendentes rogate dulcius
ut oleum vestris lampadibus
dent equidem vobis inertibus!
Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avet dormit!

5. [FATUAE—inter se]

- (a) A misere, nos hic quid facimus?
Vigilare numquid potuimus?
Hunc laborem quem nunc perferimus,
nobis nosmet (ipse) contulimus!
Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avem dormit!
- (b) At,* det nobis mercator ocus
quas habeat merces, quas socius:
oleum nunc querere venimus,
negligenter quod nosmet fudimus.
Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avem dormit!

6. [ad Prudentes]

- (a) De vostr'oleo queret nos a doner!
[PRUDENTES]
- (b) No n'auret pont: alet en achapter
deus merchaans que lai veét ester!

And rise he did; the Scriptures tell us true;
I Gabriel am, his envoy sent to you.
Keep vigil for him, for he will come very soon.
Sparing be of sleep!
while for this Bridegroom your constant watch
you keep.

THE FOOLISH VIRGINS

Behold us, virgins, who now approach to you.
We negligently have wasted all our oil.
We beg of you, sisters, that you will make this
good;
you on whom reposes our ev'ry hope.
Unhappy, despairing, too long have we slept!

The journey we made was in your company;
we are as sisters, being of kindred stock:
though great misfortune we may encounter now,
with aid from you it will be overcome!
Unhappy, despairing, too long have we slept!

O, spare for our lamps some of your means of
light;
have pity on us for this our foolishness,
so that we may not be repelled at the door
when to him the Bridegroom has summon'd you!
Unhappy, despairing, too long have we slept!

THE WISE VIRGINS

We beg of you, O sisters, that you cease
to trouble us from now on with such pleas:
certainly it will not be any use
for a long time to intreat us for oil.
Unhappy, despairing, too long have you slept!

But set forth now, and quickly make your way:
ask the merchants, with ev'ry courtesy,
if for your lamps they will sell you some oil,
even though you have been so negligent!
Unhappy, despairing, too long have you slept!

[THE FOOLISH VIRGINS—among themselves]
What shall we do here, sisters in ill-fortune?
In what way can we show ourselves vigilant?
This trouble from which we are now suffering
we have indeed brought upon our own heads!
Unhappy, despairing, too long have we slept!

Perchance the merchant or his friend there with
will swiftly sell us all the oil he can spare. [him]
Now let us hasten to seek a new supply,
for that which we wasted so foolishly.
Unhappy, despairing, too long have we slept!

[to the Wise Virgins]

We beg of you to give us of your oil!

[THE WISE VIRGINS]

You shall have none: go seek to purchase some
from those merchants that you can see over there!

[FATUAE]

- (c) [Vos merchaan, nos poet coseler?]*
Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avem dormit!

7. MERCATORES

- (a) Domnas gentils, no vos covent ester,
ni loiamen aici a demorer.
Cosel queret, nou vos poem doner.
Queret lo Deu qui vos pot coseler!
***Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avet dormit!*
- (b) Alet areir a vostras sinc seros
e preiat las, per Deu lo glorios,
de oleo fasen socors a vos!
Faites o tost, que ia venra l'espos!
Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avet dormit!

8. [FATUAE—inter se]

- (a) A misere, nos ad quid venimus?
Nil est enim illuc quod querimus!
Fatatum est, non vos videbimus,
ad nuptias numquam intrabimus!
Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avem dormit!

MODO VENIAT SPONSUS

[FATUAE—ad Christum]

- (b) Audi, Sponse, voces plangentium!
Aperire fac nobis ostium
cum sociis! Prebe remedium . . . †

9. CHRISTUS [—ad Fatuas]

- (a) Amen dico, vos ignosco, ‡
nam caretis lumine.
Quod qui perdunt, procul pergunt
huius aule limine!
- (b) Alet, chaitivas; alet, malaüreas!
A tot iors mais vos so penas livreas:
in infernum ora seret meneias!

MODO ACCIPIANT EAS DEMONES, ET PRECIPITENTUR IN INFERNUM.

[THE FOOLISH VIRGINS]

[And you, merchants, can you give help to us?]
Unhappy, despairing, too long have we slept!

THE MERCHANTS

You gentle ladies, it is not meet for you
to stay here, nor to linger upon the way.
We cannot render to you the aid you seek.
Pray for it to God, who may favour you.
Unhappy, despairing, too long have you slept!

Go back to where you have left your five sisters,
and ask them (naming God the most glorious)
to give you some oil from their own for your
needs.

Yet hasten, for soon will the Bridegroom come!
Unhappy, despairing, too long have you slept!

[THE FOOLISH VIRGINS—among themselves]

What refuge have we—we so unfortunate?
Since there is nothing that we can seek for there!
Ah, we are fated! We shall not join with you,
admitted to share in the nuptial feast!
Unhappy, despairing, too long have we slept!

AT THIS MOMENT THE BRIDEGROOM COMES

[THE FOOLISH VIRGINS—to Christ]

Hear us, Bridegroom! Give heed to our laments!
We beg that you will open the door for us
as for our sisters! Grant to us this reprieve . . .

CHRIST [—to the Foolish Virgins]

Verily, I do not know you,
since no gleam of light you show.
Those who squander dwell in exile;
far from heav'nly courts they go!

Depart, unfortunates; depart, ye accurs'd!
To torments, forever, you have been
condemn'd:
You will now in fires of hell be immers'd!

FORTHWITH LET DEMONS TAKE HOLD OF THEM, AND LET THEM BE THROWN INTO HELL.

* Corrected from the manuscript 'Et' by L.-P. Thomas.

* There is apparently a small hiatus here in the manuscript. I have adopted the line suggested by Thomas. See p. 14 of the score.

** There is no clue in the manuscript as to whether this stanza and the following one make use of the usual 'Dolentas . . .' refrain. But it seems to be a reasonable assumption.

† L.-P. Thomas has, in his own edition, added a suggested line of his own devising. I have preferred to leave the text as it stands.

‡ The remaining two stanzas are without music, but seem, respectively, to fit the rhythms of two of the melodies previously used. The page is a palimpsest; the music dimly to be discerned in places appears to have no relationship to the *Sponsus* text. What follows immediately after is the beginning of the *Ordo Prophetarum* music-drama.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CHORAL GROUP	Four Singers (male or female) —in solo and in consort	Five stanzas
GABRIEL	Baritone	Four stanzas
THE FOOLISH VIRGINS	Five Sopranos —lighter tones than the Wise Virgins' group	(Concerned with) four groups of stanzas
THE WISE VIRGINS	Five Sopranos —perhaps Mezzo	(Concerned with) two groups of stanzas
THE OIL MERCHANTS	Two Basses	Two stanzas
CHRISTUS (The Bridegroom)	Bass	Two stanzas
SOME DEMONS (Dumbshow)	These, with grinning masks and the traditional trident pitch-forks, are seen lurking in the hell-mouth during the singing of No. 9b.	

There are no references in the manuscript to costumes or properties, but these should present no difficulties. Boat-shaped lamps should be carried by the Virgins, with some device to enable those of the Wise ones to come alight at the appropriate moment.

Regarding the instrumental accompaniments (see title page and Introduction), the hand-organ range is from middle C to d, and is written so that it can be played by the right hand alone (the left being engaged with the bellows). A chamber organ could of course be substituted. The shawm could be replaced by an oboe, and the rebec by a viola. I should like to make special reference to my optional rebec accompaniment to Melody IV, belonging to the Wise Virgins. I have imagined it as being improvised by a secular minstrel, who would lack any power to *read* music. But he knew the tune and had been told to supply (apart from snatches of it) something resolute and bright. He wasn't a very good jongleur, and so he was glad to keep to his fourths and fifths and his open strings, with not too many fingered notes. By some miracle, probably attributable to St Martial, his improvised flourishes managed to blend quite happily with the sung melody.

Inscribed to Charles Farncombe and the Llantilio Crossenny Festival Players.

SPONSUS

(The Bridegroom)

AN ELEVENTH CENTURY MYSTÈRE FOUNDED ON
THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

[There are two main properties—a large and impressive door representing the entrance to the nuptial-feast hall, and a mystery-play 'hell-mouth' from which in due course the 'demons' emerge.

The WISE and FOOLISH VIRGINS enter in two separate groups, five in each. As they appear, clad in white and bearing boat-shaped oil-lamps, four singers (representing the introductory chorus) begin their stanzas. As the VIRGINS move forward, two long-robed MERCHANTS enter unobtrusively and seat themselves well apart from them.]

[1] **Allegro moderato** [Melody I] (a) *f* (2)

[Unison chorus of four voices]

See, the Spouse, the
Ad - est Spon - sus

[Portative Organ] (1)

(3)

Christ, is com - ing; vir - gins, be ye - rea - dy then! he whose -
qui est Chri - stus - vi - gi - la - te, vir - gi - nes! - pro ad -

ad - vent - brings re - joi - cings now and al - ways, from all - men.
- ven - tu - cu - ius gau - dent, et gau - de - bunt ho - mi - nes.

- (1). Played by a single minstrel, left hand to bellows, right hand to keyboard. The volume of wind would not permit more than single notes.
- (2). These two notes were each written a tone higher in the manuscript, but corrected to the given pitch in the remaining four stanzas.
- (3). As given in the manuscript this syllable has two notes (B, A). Since the remaining four stanzas show the single note A, I have kept the reading consistent. All letter-names mentioned in the edition describe the pitch of the notes *after* the transposition upward of a tone from the original.

(b) [unaccompanied]

[Solo I] *mf*

He is com - ing to de - li - ver all those foun - ders of man - kind
 Ve - nit e - nim li - be - ra - re gen - ti - um o - ri - gi - nes,

who, thro' our first mo - ther's sin - ning, were by de - mons held con - fin'd.
 quas per pri - mam si - bi ma - trem sub - iu - ga - runt de - mo - nes.

(c)

[All voices] *f*

Now be - hold the 'se - cond A - dam' (so the pro - phet did him call),
 Hic est A - dam qui se - cun - dus per pro - phe - tam di - ci - tur,

[P. Organ] *f*

who, for us, has ab - ro - ga - ted all that stemm'd from A - dam's fall.
 per quem sce - lus pri - mi A - de a no - bis di - lu - i - tur.

(d) [unaccompanied for the first line]

[Solo II] *mp*

He was on the cross sus - pen - ded so that we should heav'n re - gain;
 Hic pe - pen - dit ut ce - les - ti pa - tri - e nos red - de - ret

cresc. *mf*

be - ing by him li - be - ra - ted from the E - ne - my of man.
 ac de - par - te i - ni - mi - ci li - be - ros nos tra - he - ret.

[P. Organ] *p cresc.* *mf*

(e)

[All voices] *f*

He is com - ing as the Bride-groom, he, whose sa - cri - fice for us
 Ve - nit Spon - sus, qui no - stro - rum sce - le - rum pi - a - cu - la

[P. Organ] *f*

p

wash'd a - way our stains of e - vil through his death up - on the cross.
 mor - te la - vit at - que cru - cis sus - tu - lit pa - ti - bu - la.

p

[The four singers retire. The VIRGINS are now seated in various attitudes on the ground, in two separate groups. From some high place the angel GABRIEL appears and addresses the assembled VIRGINS:]

[2] **Moderato** [Melody II]

[GABRIEL](1) *mf*

O vir - gins, take heed of
 (2) O - iét, vir - gi - nes, ai -

[Small Harp] *mp*

(3)

what I say to you! Set forth this mo - ment, as
 - só que vós di - rúm! Ai séet pre - sén que

(1). Here the manuscript rubric *Prudentes* is clearly a scribal error.

(2). I have on this occasion underlaid the whole of the first stanza vernacular text, in order to indicate the small differences of musical phrasing it was necessary to make when arranging for an English version.

(3). For these two notes (A) the manuscript reading is F sharp, G. But there is no consistency as to this use through the three stanzas following. See Appendix I.

(1)

we now or - der you! A - wait the Spouse whom Je - sus, Sa -
 vós co - mán - da - rúm! A - tén - det Spón - sum! Ihe-sú sal - vái -

(2)

- viour, they name. Spar - ing be of sleep! while for this
 - re a nóm. Gái - re nôi dor - mét! ai - sél es -

Bride - groom your con - stant watch - you keep.
 - pós que vós hor á - ten - dét.

[As GABRIEL proceeds, the FOOLISH VIRGINS gradually fall asleep, their unlighted lamps beside them. The WISE VIRGINS, some distance apart, remain attentive.]

(b)

He came to this world to wash a - way your sins; in
 [Ve - nít en]

(1). I write D here instead of the G of the manuscript. At the corresponding places in two of the following stanzas, D is given. (All letter-names are a tone higher than the manuscript ones.)

(2). This *torculus* could represent G B G, but in another place it looks like G A G. I prefer the latter reading. So does L. P. Thomas.

Beth - le - hem the Vir - gin did him bear. In Jor - dan's stream he
 [Vir - gi - ne . . .]

lav'd and was bap - tis'd. Spar - ing be of sleep! while
 [ai -

for this Bride - groom your con - stant watch - you keep.
 - sél es - this - pós]

(c)

He suf - fer'd scour - ging, was mock'd at and a -
 [Eu fo - ba - tút]

- bus'd; up - on the cross he hung, nail - pierc'd, on
[Sus é la croc]

high; with - in the tomb he lay, though soon to a - rise.

mp Spar - ing be of sleep! while for this Bride - groom your
[ai - sél es - - pòs]

p

con - stant watch you keep. And rise he
[E ré - sors]

cresc. *mf*

did; the Scrip - tures tell us true; I Ga - bri - el
es;]

am, his en - voy sent to you. Keep vi - gil for him, for

he will come ve - ry soon. *mp* Spar - ing be of sleep! *mf* while
[ai -]

p

for this Bride - groom your con - stant watch you keep.
- sél es - - pòs]

mp

mp

[As GABRIEL concludes and then retires the FOOLISH VIRGINS gradually awaken, gaze around confusedly, and then look across at the WISE VIRGINS, prepared and waiting, with their lamps glowing. They realise their own are unkindled and rise to their feet. During the introductory shawm passage they advance towards the WISE VIRGINS, displaying their empty lamps.]

[3] Allegro moderato (a) [Melody III] *mf*

THE FOOLISH VIRGINS

[Shawm (or Oboe)] *mf*

Be - hold us, vir - gins,
Nos, vir - gi - nes,

who now ap - proach to you. We ne - gli - gent - ly have wast - ed
que ad vos ve - ni - mus, ne - gli - gén - ter o - le - um

all our oil. We beg of you, sis - ters, that you will make this
fu - di - mus: ad vos o - rá - re, so - ró - res, cu - pi -

mf sempre

good; you on whom re - po - ses our ev' - ry hope. Un - hap - py, des -
- mus, ut ad il - las qui - bus nos cre - di - mus. Do - len - tas, chai -

mf sf

- pair - ing, too long have we slept!
- ti - vas, trôp i a - vém dor - mit!

mf colla voce

(1). See Appendix II.

(2). The small note, occurring here and subsequently, indicates a *qualisma*, sung more lightly than the other notes. Among the versions of the melody, the scribe is not consistent in his use of it.

Sponsus

(b) and (c) [These two stanzas might be sung by two separate soloists]

(b) { The jour - ney we made was in your com - pa - ny; we
Nos, co - mi - tes hu - ius i - ti - ne - ris et
(c) { O, spare for our lamps some of your means of light; have
Par - ti - mi - ni lu - men lam - pa - di - bus, pi -

mf

are as sis - ters, be - ing of kin - dred stock: though
so - ró - res e - ius - dem ge - ne - ris, quam
pi - ty on us for this our fool - ish - ness, so
- e si - tis in - si - pi - en - ti - bus, pul -

mf

great mis - for - tune we may en - coun - ter now,
- vis ma - le con - ti - git mi - se - ris,
that we may not be re - pell'd at the door
se ne nos sí - mus a fo - ri - bus

(1) [All voices] *f espress.*

with aid from you it will be o - ver - come!
po - tes - tis nos red - de - re su - pe - ris!
when to him the Bride - groom has sum - mon'd you!
cum vos Spon - sus vo - cet in se - di - bus!

Un - hap - py, des -
Do - len - tas, chai -

sf

- pair - ing, too long have we slept!
- ti - vas, trôp i a - vém dor - mit!

poco allarg. ten. mf colla voce

(1). A single capital D (*Dolentas*) indicates that the refrain is to be sung as in the first stanza.

Sponsus

4 Allegro moderato, risoluto (a) [Melody IV]
mf (1)
 THE WISE VIRGINS
 We beg of you, O
 Nos pre-ca-ri, pre-

[Rebec (or Viola)]
mf

*
 sis - ters, that you cease to trou - ble us from now on
 - ca - mur, am - pli - us, de - si - ni - te, so - ro - res,

with such pleas: cer - tain - ly it will not be a - ny use
 o - ci - us: vo - bis e - nim, nil e - rit me - li - us

for a long time to en - treat us for oil. Un - hap - py, des -
 da - re pre - ces pro hoc ul - te - ri - us. Do - len - tas, chai -

(1). There are certain small note-discrepancies between the music of stanzas (a) and (b). I have compromised. One problem is the four-note group of the third bar, marked by an asterisk. It appears on several occasions, in the majority of cases pitched a tone below that written here. I prefer the present pitch, as do both Liuzzi and Thomas, but anyone opting for the lower reading would have a good case.

f poco allarg.
 - pair - ing, too long have you slept!
 - ti - vas, trop i a - vet dor mit!
mf colla voce

[The WISE VIRGINS indicate the two seated MERCHANTS.]
a tempo (b) *ten. mf* [Solo voice]
 But set forth now, and quick - ly
 At i - te nunc, i - te ce -

a tempo
mf

make your way: ask the mer - chants, with ev' - ry
 - le - ri - us ac - ven - den - tes ro - ga - te

cour - te - sy, if for your lamps they will sell you some oil,
 dul - ci - us ut o - le - um ves - tris lam - pa - di - bus

mf [All voices]
 e - ven though you have been so neg - li - gent! Un - hap - py, des -
 dent e - qui - dem vo - bis i - ner - ti - bus! Do - len - tas, chai -

(1). As mentioned in the Introduction, p. iv, the incipit *Dolentas* seems to indicate the modified use of the previous refrain. However, the notes given are not those of the Fatuae's version, and I have taken up Thomas's suggestion, employing the neumes set down and then continuing with an adaptation of the Fatuae's music. It is a sheer guess.

f poco allarg. *ten.* *Lento*

- pair - ing, too long have you slept!
- ti - vas, trop i a - vet dor - mit!

[Shawm (or Oboe)]

mf *colla voce* *mp*

[The FOOLISH VIRGINS, cast down, confer among themselves.]

[5] [Melody III] (a) and (b)
Allegro moderato

THE FOOLISH VIRGINS
[Perhaps two separate soloists]

mf

(a) What shall we do here, sis - ters in ill for -
A mi - se - re, nos hic quid fa - ci -

(b) Per - chance the mer - chant or his friend there with
At, det no - bis mer - ca - tor o - ci -

[Shawm (or Oboe)]

mp

mf *mf*

- tune? In what way can we show our - selves vi - gi - - lant? This
- mus? Vi - gi - lá - re num - quid po - tu - i - - mus? Hunc
him will swift - ly sell us all the oil he can spare. Now
- us quas ha - be - at mer - ces, quas so - ci - - us: o -

trou - ble from which we are now suf - fer - - ing
la - bo - rem quem nunc per - fe - ri - - mus,
let us has - ten to seek a new sup - ply,
- le - um nunc que - re - re ve - ni - - mus,

[All voices] *ten.* *mf*

we have in - deed brought up - on our own heads!
no - bis nos - met [ip - se]⁽¹⁾ con - tu - li - - mus! Un - hap - py, des -
for that which we wast - ed so fool - ish - ly! Do - len - tas, chai -
né - gli - gén - ter quod nos - met fu - di - - mus.

f poco allarg. *ten.* *mf* *colla voce*

- pair - ing, too long have we slept!
- ti - vas, trop i a - vem dor - mit!

[The FOOLISH VIRGINS look towards the WISE VIRGINS again. They address them, borrowing their melody for the purpose.]

[6] [Melody IV]

(a) **Comodo**

[The FOOLISH VIRGINS
(quasi recit. -
perhaps a solo voice)]

mf *ten.*

We beg of you to give us of your oil!
[Vernacular]

[The WISE VIRGINS reply - quasi recit.]

(b) **Risoluto**

mf *ten.*

You shall have none; go seek to pur - chase some
[Vernacular]

from those mer - chants that you see o - ver there.

- (1). The additional word 'ipse', suggested by several 'text' editors in order to correct the scansion of the original line here calls for two additional A's in the setting.
(2). *Incipit*, ('Dol') only, indicating refrain.

(c) The FOOLISH VIRGINS [quasi recit., perhaps solo.]

mf *3* *mf* *(1)* *mp* [All voices]

And you, mer - chants, can you give_ help to_ us? Un - hap - py, des -
[Vernacular]

- pair - ing, too_ long_ have_ we_ slept!_

[The MERCHANTS reply, using the FOOLISH VIRGINS' own tune; but not until the FOOLISH VIRGINS have approached them more closely, to the sound of the solo shawm.]

7 *Allegro moderato* [Melody III] *mf*

THE MERCHANTS

[Each MERCHANT could sing a stanza] (a) You

[Shawm (or Oboe)] *mf*

(a) and (b)

gen - tle la - dies, it is_ not_ meet for_

(b) back to where you have left_ your_ five sis - - -

[Vernacular]

you_ to_ stay here, nor_ to lin - ger_ up - -

- ters, and_ ask them (nam - ing God the_ most_

(1). This bracketed section which succeeds section (b) is a suggestion of L. P. Thomas's, using the third line of Melody IV. It is all highly speculative, but good dramatic sense. The refrain is justified by the presence of the incipit 'Dol', which follows section (b).

- on the_ way. We_ can - not ren - der

glo - - ri - ous) to_ give you some_ oil.

3 *3*

to you_ the_ aid for you_ seek. Pray

from their_ own_ for your_ needs. Yet

[BOTH] *3*

for it to God, who may fa - vour_ you. } Un -

has - ten, for soon will the Bride - groom_ come!

mf

mf *poco allarg.*

- hap - py, des - pair - - - ing, too_ long_

sf *mp* *colla voce*

ten. *a tempo* *1* *2*

have_ you_ slept!_ (b) Go_ slept!_

ten. *a tempo*

[The FOOLISH VIRGINS retire, dejected and communing among themselves in low tones (some phrases could be sung by solo voices).]

[Melody III]

[8] Comodo

(a) [1st Soloist]

[THE FOOLISH VIRGINS] *mp*

What re - fuge have we we so un -
A mi - se - re, nos ad quid

for - - tu - nate? Since there is no - thing
ve - ni - mus? Nil est e - nim

[2nd Soloist] *mp*

that we can seek for there! Ah, we are
il - luc quod que - ri - mus! Fa - ta - tum

[Addressing the WISE VIRGINS]

fa - ted! We shall not join with you,
est, non vos vi - de - bi - mus,

ad - mit - ted to share in the nup - tial
ad nup - ti - as num - quam in - tra - bi -

[All voices]

feast! Un - hap - py, des - pair - ing, too
mus? Do - len - tas, chai - ti - vas, trop

poco allarg. *ten.*

long have we slept!
i a - vem dor mit!

(1). F sharp in the manuscript. Corrected to A, the normal reading.

(2). Incipit only ('Dol').

[At this moment the BRIDEGROOM comes (perhaps accompanied by a stroke of a gong). He opens the door of the nuptial feast-hall. The WISE VIRGINS pass through. The FOOLISH VIRGINS spring forward, hands raised imploringly. They appeal for mercy as they watch the others pass from sight. The instrumental music begins at a suitable point.]

(b) [Melody III]

Allegro moderato

[All voices] *ff*

[THE FOOLISH VIRGINS]

Hear us, Bride-groom,
Au - di, Spon - se,

[Shawm
(or Oboe)]

ff *f*

[Portative
Organ]

ff (tacet)

[Small Harp]

ff (tacet)

[THE FOOLISH VIRGINS]

give heed to our la - ments! We beg that you will
vo - ces plan - gen - ti - um! A - pe - ri - re

[Shawm]

f

[without break] *ten.*

o - pen the door for us as for our sis - ters!
fac no - bis o - sti - um cum so - ci - is!

mp dim. *ten.*

[fading in despair]

Grant to us this re - - prieve! (tacet)
Pre - be re - me - di - - um! (tacet)

[Shawm]

[P. Organ]

[The door of the feast-hall is shut. CHRISTUS turns to the FOOLISH VIRGINS.]

(a) [Melody I]
Slowly and sternly

CHRISTUS

Ve - ri - ly, I do not know you, since no gleam of light you show.
A - men di - co, vos i - gno - sco, nam ca - re - tis lu - mi - ne.

[P. Organ]

Those who squan - der dwell in ex - ile; far from heav'n - ly courts they go!
Quod qui per - dunt, pro - cul per - gunt hu - ius au - le li - mi - ne!

[Add Shawm]

[CHRISTUS, (continuing, with Melody II):]

Moderato

(b)

De - part, un - for - tu - nates; de -
[A - lét, chaí - ti - vas]

[Rebec]

[Harp]

- part, ye ac - curs'd! To tor - ments, for - e - ver, you have been con -
[A tot - iors]

ff

- demn'd: You will now in fires of hell be im - mers'd!

Shawm and P. Organ

Gong

mf cresc. molto

f

sf

[CHRISTUS retires. Confused noises begin off-stage. At this point the manuscript text ends with this rubric:]

FORTHWITH, LET DEMONS TAKE HOLD OF THEM, AND LET THEM BE THROWN INTO HELL.

[If this drama follows usual mystery-play practices, DEMONS issue from a nearby 'hell-mouth', and uncouth noises, the cries of the victims, smoke and fiery glare bring the work to a conclusion, though it may well be that originally some kind of choral item such as the Te Deum was sung. If some amelioration of the grim conclusion is desired, this might be obtained through a unison singing by the audience (organ accompanied) of the Advent hymn 'O come, O come, Emmanuel': suggesting, especially in stanza II, the possibility of another Harrowing of Hell. While this is taking place the company of performers might appear again and make their recession through the audience, headed by CHRISTUS and including the FOOLISH VIRGINS (quite unscorched), with the DEMONS, pitchforks and all, rounding off the procession. Four stanzas of the hymn follow.]



1. O come, O come, Emmanuel!
Redeem thy captive Israel,
That into exile drear is gone
Far from the face of God's dear Son.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*
2. O come, thou Branch of Jesse! draw
The quarry from the lion's claw;
From the dread caverns of the grave,
From nether hell, thy people save.
Rejoice! Rejoice! ...
3. O come, O come, thou Dayspring bright!
Pour on our souls thy healing light;
Dispel the long night's lingering gloom,
And pierce the shadows of the tomb.
Rejoice! Rejoice! ...
4. O come, thou Lord of David's Key!
The royal door fling wide and free;
Safeguard for us the heavenward road,
And bar the way to death's abode.
Rejoice! Rejoice! ...



Harmonised by J. H. Arnold (1887–1956) from *The English Hymnal* by permission of Oxford University Press.

APPENDIX I

According to the manuscript, Stanza Melody II, on its first appearance, is to be repeated three more times. Its form seems to follow the familiar hymn (and troubadour-tune) pattern of a a b a, but, if we can believe the scribe, modified to a a¹ b a, since the second 'a' phrase differs from the other two in regard to the pitch of a couple of notes. But when we make a check on the manuscript of the other stanzas of the item, this is what we find:

Second Stanza. First line ('Venit en terra . . .') normal. The second line ('de la virgine . . .') shows a disastrous error. The scribe has set the text to the *third* line of music ('b'), and then repeated that music, somewhat muddled, to set its proper line. On p. vi of the Introduction I have tried to account for the scribe's mistake. As for the last line, we must assume it to have the normal 'a' setting, since, the text being a refrain, an *incipit* only is given, two syllables and two notes ('Gaire').

Third Stanza. (First line, 'En fo batut . . .'). The a a b lines, apart from an indeterminate note or two, are as I have them in the first stanza. The 'a¹' change does not appear. The two lines of refrain are indicated once more by the *incipit*.

Fourth Stanza. (First line, 'E resors es . . .'). The scribe employs the 'a¹' version of the music again, but by way of a change uses it for the *first* line, so that we now have the pattern a¹ a b (a)!

I have considered it best to keep the melody constant throughout the stanzas, making the first two phrases the same, as in the third stanza, and using the pattern a a b a, one that is so commonly met with.

I have shed my trust in this particular music scribe; nevertheless I have made one last concession to him. Below is his reading of the music of the second line 'a¹' as given in the first stanza in the manuscript. I have included also the stanza texts that are involved at this point and the optional harp accompaniment, which has needed slight amendment. This is to satisfy those who prefer the first stanza version of the music to be maintained in the other three stanzas:

mf

Voice

Set forth this mo - ment as we now or - der you!
In Beth - le - hem the Vir - gin did him bear,
Up - on the cross he hung, nail-pierc'd on high,
I Ga - briel am, his en - voy sent to you,

Harp

mp

I am reminded of what that eminent scholar, Dom Grégoire Suñol, wrote on p. 124 of his book, *Introduction à la Paléographie Musicale Grégorienne*, concerning medieval scribes in general:

'... nous pourrions nous rendre compte de la différence de capacités intellectuelles chez les copistes. Si beaucoup sont cultivés, il s'en trouve aussi qui ne comprennent probablement ni le sens ni la signification de l'écriture, soit littéraire, soit surtout musicale, qu'ils transcrivent.'

The music scribe of *Sponsus* belongs to the last-named group, a veritable prince among them.

APPENDIX II

A very valuable section of L.-P. Thomas's volume, Chapter VIII—*Les vers du 'Sponsus'*, consists of a detailed prosodic examination of the various types of verse-form, both Latin and French vernacular, employed by the poet. Thomas has pointed out, as every editor of text with music soon discovers, that there are times when the normal textual stresses of a verse line clash with the musical accents of the particular melody. Most of the lines conform, but there is now and again an 'odd man out'. Neither Thomas nor I have felt that the pattern of the melody should be rhythmically altered, especially as to do so would mean often enough tampering with the neume groupings of the manuscript. I give an example from the first three lines of [3] (a). Thomas's scansion of the second and third lines (pp. 121-2) after a straightforward first line, is as below:

Ne-gli-gén-ter ó-le-um fú-di - mus

Ad vos o-rá-re so-ró-res cú-pi - mus

In his modern transcription of the stanza tune he was compelled (as I have been) to make apparent the disagreements referred to above. He uses the first rhythmic mode, (I have preferred the second; I think it definitely better). His reading of the first three lines of [3] (a) is as follows (p. 178):



Regarding *soróres* (here and elsewhere) Thomas demonstrates (pp. 117-8) that we have here a *tribrach*, (a metrical foot best described as $\cup \cup \cup$) and that '... l'accent linguistique est tout à fait ambigu en ce point du vers, où il peut occuper l'une ou l'autre des deux premières syllabes ...'. Before this we have another exceptional situation at *o-rá-re*. The extra syllable, for which the manuscript duly provides an extra *punctum*, throws the verse accent on to a weak musical beat. In the score I have taken no further note of such circumstances except to place above each occurrence the distinguishing sign ††.

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