



Unveiling the Sensory Sinfonia: Re-imagining the Sonorous and Sensuous Essence of Medieval Pilgrimage¹

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This study is an attempt to reconstruct the sensuous and sonorous nature of medieval pilgrimage in the British Isles in terms of both sound, music and the senses, in ways that make it 'accessible' to a twenty-first century audience. To demonstrate that if we are really to approximate the phenomenological experience of medieval pilgrimage *at the pre-reformation time* and understand the miracle stories attached to this experience, it will be necessary to think about pilgrimage sensually, particularly in terms of how it would have *sounded* as well as how it looked.

The 'Soundscape' theories of Raymond Murrey Schafer (Schafer1992) and Jean-Marie Fritz are well known to many and can be used with reference to analyse the sounds which pilgrims would have experienced. Schafer begins by explaining 'soundscape' with concern for noise pollution all over the world. He distinguishes between *Hi fi* (or superior quality listening), and *Lo fi* (which has become noise because there is a background of unwanted noise and distortion).² Schafer in his reflection on what music *ought* to do, dismisses hedonism and invokes Robert Fludde's *The Tuning of the World* when he quotes:

¹ Headline Image: Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License 4.0. Monk-angels in the *Altarpiece of the Mystic Lamb* (no wings) and are in monk vestments in St Bavo's Cathedral, Ghent. 1420-32.

² Schafer, R.M. (1994) *Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*.pp.8-12., 43-45. Destiny Books, Rochester.US.

“Earth forms the body of an instrument across which strings are stretched and tuned by the divine hand. We must try again to get the secret of that tuning.”³ Jean Marie Fritz (Fritz, J M, 2000) develops the idea back to the Middle Ages and asserts that written descriptions and images of singers and can be examined—a process he called *ekphrasis* to recreate the sonority of the Middle Ages. Music was assessed differently by Schafer to the general sounds made by the pilgrims in the church or Holy Shrine, but perhaps it should not be, because what was being imparted to pilgrims was far more than organised musical notes flooding the sacred space.

Consider singing and music, which had quite a different nature in these sacred spaces of Gothic temples and chapels in the Middle Ages. It was considered *angelic*, and when examining this description with which monks regarded singing, we first observe the soundscape, and then the composition of a piece of music, which (considered later) was until recently a dusty manuscript at Worcester Abbey of St Winefride in its fourteenth century form. The medieval mindset was to link life on earth with the certainty of saints and angels in heaven, and we will see how the monks or clergy guarding these sites would do just that. The whole of a monk’s mission was to link earth and heaven. When soundscapes are published, they are often in scientific form in terms of charts and tables. I shall be following Fritz’s version of recording actual sounds, often in terms of what was recorded by Fritz’s term of *ekphrasis*. We can in addition, estimate other sounds because the sacred spaces still exist, from worship in churches and sounds of pilgrims being stewarded around the area. Fritz moved specifically into the Middle Ages, taking note of descriptions of sound and sounds recorded on images.⁴

Students and scholars, considering medieval pilgrimage, often imagine a calming of inner noise, a movement into a place of silent awe. Reading about pilgrimage in the medieval period, minds catapult into silent conceptions of spiritual journeying, but this is not the reality of medieval pilgrimage, a sensuous and richly sonorous encounter with the divine. It represented a world in which angelic singing met with earthly choirs and pilgrims

³ Schafer, R.M. (1944) p.6.

⁴ Fritz, J.M. (2000) *La Cloche et la Lyre: Pour un poétique du paysage sonore*. Libraire Geneva, Droz 473. Paris.

enjoyed the *Kairos*⁵ experience, kneeling before God in his holiness in the darkness of a candlelit sacred space, or on the pilgrim way, a moment of commitment and choice.

Christopher Page speaks of medieval singers as at Cluny who held that they sang in the presence of angels, not visible to them, but nonetheless with them in their choir stalls when they were singing, because for medieval singing monks, the veil between this world and the next was very thin. The Nicene Creed of Catholic Christianity believing “*visibilium omnium et invisibilium*” (*all things visible and invisible*) meant they believed angelic singers were with them as they sang. Regarded as angelic singers themselves, the monks singing made them a conduit to the angels.⁶ They were trained but after the Plague years (from 1347-8) professional singers were often hired. Monks sometimes experienced an “after-effect” of voices in reverberation, a feature which the hard walls and ceilings of gothic buildings were designed to accentuate because sound waves behave according to the unique architecture of those buildings.

They were aware that the entire Church prayed and sang together (2015).⁷ The concept of reverberation following singing is not new and has been recorded in historical accounts, including the life of Pope Celestine V (1294-1296) previously known as Pietro de Marana, who built an oratory on a mountainside in 1294. (There were many such remains of

⁵ *Kairos*. Greek meaning 'right or opportune moment'. Describes *God's* time with potential for grace. Contrasting with '*chronos*', meaning 'ordinary or chronological time'. '*Kairos*' means *holy or God-given time*, laden with meaning and choice.

⁶ Page, C. (2015) '*Chant as cure and Miracle*', Gresham College Lectures. YouTube. Available at: <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/watch-now/medieval-music-chant-cure-and-miracle>. (Accessed: 4 October 2023). Martha G Newman (2020) in *Cistercian Stories for Monks and Nuns: The sacramental Imagination of Engelhard of Langheim* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia) writes the “incession of the monks' and nuns' communal prayers and the actions of their patron saints was a standard trope, which portrayed monastic prayer on earth as participating in an angelic praise of God. The Benedictine Rule reminds its adherents that they pray in the sight of God and his angels, and numerous monastic stories depicted angels and monks singing together. The monastery of Cluny found this association of monks with angels especially important. Already by the tenth century, Cluniac monks considered their abbey as a holy place where monastic silence, chastity, and prayer mirrored the bearing of angels. Abbot Odo thought life at Cluny demonstrated that human behaviour could be angelic. Peter Damian described Cluny's abbot Hugh as an archangel who fostered an angelic life among his monks, and Ralph Glaber compared Cluny's masses to the work of the angels.” Patron saints also seemed to bring heaven to earth.

⁷ New Testament: 1 Cor. 12:12,27; Rom. 12:5; Col. 3:15; Eph. 4:4—we are the members of the one body of Christ, supernaturally linked together by our partaking of the Eucharist. Heb. 12:1: “We are surrounded by a great glory cloud (shekinah) of witnesses. The “cloud of witnesses” are saints who are not only watching us from above but cheering us on in the race to heaven.” Most importantly Daniel itself: Dan. 4:13,23; 8:23—we also see that the angels in heaven are also called “saints.” The same Hebrew word “qaddiysh” (holy one) is applied to both humans and angels in heaven. Hence, there are angel saints in heaven and human saints in heaven and on earth. Loving beings (whether angels or saints) are concerned for other beings, and prayer is the spiritual way of expressing that love.

isolated chapels and oratories in the landscapes of Britain, France and other European countries.) According to Guillaume de Nangis the biographer of Pietro de Marigny⁸, (Gérard 1843) this was a way to claim desolate land for God. He wrote,

[A] great sound of office chanting was often heard in that mountainous place and sometimes in the cell of a certain brother and the theme song was readily intelligible. One brother often heard the sweetest voices mixed with the sound of the monks while they sang the office so that when the monks ceased those voices could still be heard.⁹

The sound of voices in a lonely chapel in a wild place were believed to be angelic or had visionary intensity. Christopher Page tells us of a passage from the life of a saint who was a monk at the Cistercian Abbey of Abbaye Royale de l'Épau, Le Mans, Sarthe. (Leclerc, 1953) Chrétien d'Aumone describes the experience of seeing an infinite number of angels in two choirs on either side of a cross, honouring it, whilst singing *Kyrie Eleison* and *Christe Eleison* just like the earthly singers of the Latin Mass.¹⁰ The monk approached the company of angels and listened to their singing carefully, delighting at the wondrous music. The sweetness of the singing that the angels produced overwhelmed him so much that from then until Matins, he remembered it in his head. The medieval psyche seemed to expect angels to share the music of the Church as there was singing throughout the scriptures, especially in the *Gloria in excelsis* during the nativity account in St Luke's gospel (2:14). The Canticle known as the *Benedicite* (Daniel 3:51-90) sung by the young men in the burning fiery furnace directly relates to the *Gloria* and sings that all creatures to "praise and exalt God forever!"¹¹

⁸ Géraud, H. (ed.) (1843) *Guillaume de Nangis*. Died 1300. Scribe of St Denis. '*Guillaume de Nangis*.' *Chronicon* (Latin), an introduction in French, and part of a continuation up to 1368). Part of this, the *Chronicon Anglicanum* contains the material about Clement V

⁹ Géraud (1843) Guillaume de Nangis: *Chronicon Anglicanum*. Vita Papae Clementis V.

¹⁰ Leclerc OSB, J. (ed.) (1953) *La vie de Chretien d'Aumone*. RI OPAC: *Authors opac.regesta-imperii.de*. Available at: http://opac.regesta-imperii.de/lang_en/autoren.php?name=Leclercq%2C+Jean+%28Theologe%29 (Accessed: 4 October 2023). Ex Codici Parisiansi Arsenal no.500 MS. Analecta Bollandiana vol 71 p.30- 35. Leclerc: Leclercq, J. (Theologe) (1953) '*Le texte complet de la Vie de Christian de L'Aumône*', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 71, pp. 21–52. Available at: http://opac.regestaimperii.de/lang_en/anzeige.php?aufsatz=Le+texte+complet+de+la+Vie+de+Christian+de+L%27Aum%3%B4ne&pk=424178 (Accessed: 4 October 2023).

¹¹ In the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, Edward Sri points out the first part is directed to God, the second to God the Son. He points out that the next part of the *Gloria* relates the life of Christ, from his advent and birth, his death on the Cross and ascension, then the triumphant resurrection and ascension into heaven. The *Benedicite* follows this pattern of praising and exalting. Pope John Paul explained, "This hymn, sung by three young Hebrews who invite all the creatures to praise God, develops dramatically. The three young men, persecuted by the king of Babylon, are cast into a fiery furnace because of their faith. Even facing martyrdom, they do not

Page suggests that angel choirs may have needed no liturgy of their own because the liturgy with earthly Church on earth was shared with angels in heaven.¹² So it was an easy transaction between a Christian on earth in the choir stalls and the invisible angelic presence next to him in the choir. Angelic singing in the Middle Ages was a common concept and represented a bridge between heaven and earth, a way of bringing the heavenly beings close to those still living and toiling on earth through liturgy and especially music. As Page remarks, the reward for a lifetime of singing and Christian, virtuous living was, after all, “an eternal life of song in the physical and breathing body.”¹³ The angelic singing of the liturgy of the monks of Cluny was renowned and especially Abbots Odo and Hugh, who were responsible for perfecting the endless singing of the liturgy. Even a musician like Hildegard of Bingen affirmed this when she acknowledged the relationship between text and music as a teaching function to learn about “inward things” (Baird and Ehrmann, 1994).¹⁴

It is also the structure of the music sung, which creates its performance effect on the spirituality of the pilgrim, uniting Earth and Heaven. If we look at the low tones from the (cf.) *Dies Irae* from the Requiem Mass, it creates a menacing sound, as plainchant with bass voices, a relentless, Dorian mode, low pitched and steadily paced creating a heightened sense of “Fear of Judgement” of the human soul after death, yet it can also draw the soul to the knowledge of *Lumen Gentium*¹⁵ (Flannery 2014) that is-the light of the nations-to the faith. Ripperger refers to Aquinas’s view in the effect of being in a church listening to such

hesitate to sing, rejoice, and praise God.” He went on: “The pain of their harsh and violent trial disappears, seeming as it were to dissolve in the presence of prayer and contemplation. It is this very attitude of confident abandonment that elicits the divine intervention. Indeed, as the vivid account in Daniel testifies, “the angel of the Lord came down into the furnace to be with Azariah and his companions, and drove the fiery flames out of the furnace, and made the midst of the furnace like a moist and whistling wind, so that the fire did not touch them at all or hurt or trouble them” (vv. 49-50).” The Three Holy Youths, surrounded by the forces of nature, took inspiration from this experience. Their Creation Song known as *Benedicite* invites the entire universe to worship God—the angels, the sun, moon and stars, the climate, the landscape, the animals and finally, the whole human race.” The pope also noted: “Three verbs of divine glorification constantly resound, as in a litany: “*Bless, praise, exalt*” the Lord. This is the true heart of prayer and song: ceaseless celebration of the Lord with the joy of being part of a choir that includes all creation.” This explanation blends beautifully into the music and theology of St Winefride’s motet, where they are linked through the musical structure.

¹² Page, C. (2015) *Chant* 8:03’-8.09’ [Online] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dj3q8jDqB9o&t=872s> Accessed: 03/05/2023.

¹³ Page, C. (2015) *Chant* (2:41’)

¹⁴ Baird and Ehrmann (1994), *The Letters of Hildegard von Bingen*. Volumes I and II. Hildegard, S., Baird, J.L. and Ehrman, R.K. The letters of Hildegard of Bingen. Vol. I. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press., Letter 23 and 78. “Thereby, both through the form and quality of the instruments, as well as through the meaning of the words which accompany them, those who hear might be taught, as we said above, about *inward* things.”

¹⁵ Flannery, A. (2014) *Lumen Gentium*. Liturgical Press a document of the Second Vatican Council issued November 21, 1964.

music of Gregorian Chant or polyphony as “walking into the hall of Heaven” because while there is the ‘harmonic ordering’ affect for the upper faculties, the lower ones are also moved by others to consider the faith in tranquillity and peace, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶ St Augustine called peace “Tranquillity of Order” and believed the Universe was musical.¹⁷

As for miracle accounts at the shrines, hagiographies woven into the fabric of pilgrimages are studied, by embracing their auditory dimensions and re-engaging with the medieval experience of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries but the tranquil and silent introspection often associated with medieval pilgrimage is gone. In truth, these spiritual expeditions were teeming with sensual encounters, resounding with a chorus of rich chants and polyphonies, bringing together the earthly and celestial realms. The particular focus here will be on the auditory landscape, as the phenomenological encounter of these pilgrims is observed as they participated in the Divine Liturgy.

I shall be reconstructing something of the sensuous and sonorous nature of medieval pilgrimage, in terms of sound, soundscape, the senses and especially music, which would engage pilgrims with their view of heaven and their desire for healing and/or salvation. While they are reaching the goal of their pilgrimage, feeling they had arrived at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb, they could not fail to realise they had to fulfil their Christian lives with obedience and virtue until the end if they wanted to reach the Beatific Presence. So, beginning with soundscape there is an introductory exploration of the new perspective of soundscape *and* music in pilgrimage. We need to cast aside the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, and consider the makeup, catechesis, motives, and mind of the average unlettered pilgrim of the thirteenth and fourteenth century.

Two very old shrines in Wales, extant until approximately 1536 are studied, the sixth century shrine at St David’s in southwest Wales, founded by St David, and secondly, Holywell: founded in the seventh century in Northwest Wales by St Winefride (Virgin Martyr). A second shrine was created at Shrewsbury Benedictine Abbey where her bones were translated in 1137.¹⁸ Both these Saints are patron Saints of Wales. As a control, we

¹⁶ Ripperger (2014) *The Devil Hates Gregorian Chant*. 9.36’-9.45’13.56-40.00. [Online] <http://https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afgtx1r5xVo&t=601s>.

¹⁷ Augustine: *Civitas Dei*. City of God. Book XIX; *Summa Theologiae. Secundiae Secundiae*: Aquinas: Question 29.(Union of Appetites

¹⁸ The British Pilgrim Trust. Available at <https://britishpilgrimage.org/>.

shall also be comparing and contrasting with Canterbury, an incredibly famous and well documented medieval pilgrim destination.

The Natural Soundscape – Human Sounds

Concerning Fritz's *ekphrasis*, let us briefly concentrate on the natural sound in the Abbey and Cathedral Churches. What could we be expected to hear? The picture of the singing angels on the cover page of this paper can discern which of the choristers is a soprano, alto tenor or bass, from the positions of mouths, teeth and tongues. The trebles and tenors have lines between their eyebrows as they focus forward to allow voices to resonate on the skull. Altos and basses reverberate more in the pharynx on resonance from there.

A soundscape of a typical cathedral pilgrim is documented in the *Tale of Beryn*,¹⁹ a contemporary account of the behaviour of a fairly conventional group of London pilgrims at the shrine. "Loud and boisterous, their speech and raucus laughter is admonished by shrine keepers and the knight."²⁰ They are admonished for making a noise and laughing at the pictures in the pilgrim windows. When the bells rang, they came forward and used their wooden or stone beads, and recited prayers together, which would have made sound. A monk kindly showed and explained the relics of St Thomas Becket, and they remained there until the end of Mass, when they went to dinner, and on the way bought pilgrim badges, of which the miller had stolen many.

Then passid they forth boystly, goglyng <i>with</i> hir hedis, Knelid a down̄ to-fore the shryne, & hert[i]lich hir bedis. [164]	They passed by wagging their heads and knelt down before the shrine and heartily told their beads. (prayed) [164]
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They preyd to Seynt Thomas, in such wise as þey couth; And sith, the holy relikis, ech man <i>with</i> his mowith [166] Kissid, as a goodly monke þe names told & tau3t. And sith to othir placis of holynes þey rau3te, [168]	They prayed to St Thomas in such a way as they could. Each man with his mouth kissed the holy relics while a kind monk told them their names and taught them. And then they went to other places of holiness. [168]
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¹⁹ Attributed to Chaucer (2005), *Tale of Beryn with a prologue of the Merry Adventure of the Pardoner with a Tapster at Canterbury*.

²⁰ *Tale of Beryn*. Facsimile of 1909 edition by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd., London. Elibron Classics, pp.6-7.

And were in hir devocioun tyl service wer al doon;
And sith þey drow3 to dynerward, as it drew to noon.
Then, as manere & custom is, signes þere þey bouzte,
ffor men of contre shuld[e] know whom þey had[de]
ouzte,— [172]

And they were in devotion until the end of Mass
and heard all the service. And sat down to dinner
as it came to noon. Then as the manner and
custom were, they bought “signes” (pilgrim
tokens) so that the men of the country should
know whom they had visited. [172]

Ech man set his sylvir in such thing as þey likid:
And in þe meen[e] while, the Miller had l-pikid. His
bosom ful of signys of Cauntirbury brochis:

Each man bought what he liked with his money,
And meanwhile the Miller had stolen many pilgrim
badges. His chest hid a number of pilgrim badges
from Canterbury.

The footfall and talking of the pilgrims being shown around the shrine would have contributed, and no doubt babies and infants can be estimated for intermittent sound, from the descriptions of the scribes.

Healing Sounds of Sick Pilgrims and Other Miracles

The screams and cries of the sick and dying, inevitably distressed all pilgrims present. If healing did not happen instantaneously, the sick pilgrim, often in a wooden vehicle, was usually prepared to wait for some time in the sacred space of the shrine. Nilson comments on lengthy vigils at the shrine, day, and night in all sacred spaces. Night watchmen were present, and clearly there was interaction between them and sick pilgrims who were locked in overnight “on site.” David Knowles points out that the wardens “made it necessary to sleep next to their charges.”²¹ Knowles cites a soldier who was cured during a vigil, who woke up the monks with his thanksgiving.²²

The sounds would have been brutal. At Canterbury, Henry of Fordwych²³ in a miracle account of Benedict of Peterborough “*dragged over the flagstones,*” (*ad sanctam trahitur*) struggling and screaming “with his hands tied” (*colligatus a tergo manibus*) remained at the shrine all day. While the noise must have been difficult to bear, his screaming began to recede as the day wore on. Another miracle recorded by Benedict of a truly distressing

²¹ Knowles, D (1963) *The Monastic Order in England*. Second Edition. Cambridge University Press, p.481.

²² *The Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, ed T. Arnold,(1890) 3vols., 1:p.78. Rolls Series 96. London

²³ *Materials*, II:66.

sound and visage was the mad woman, Matilda of Cologne,²⁴ who appeared in a “violent fury” (*coram nobis mire insanientem abhorruimus*) “shrieking, tearing off her linen shift and, almost naked” (*nam et linteum quo solo corpus contexerat in minutias scidit*), “she raved in front of Becket’s tomb all day and was restrained from strangling a nearby child” (*Parvulum etiam sibi occurrentem suffocasset , nisi a circumstantibus citius fuisset ereptus*). She was chained and eventually claimed to be healed by St Thomas, telling Father Benedict she had had a vision of the martyr, with the blood streaked on his face, as he had been represented to people. She was given some water of St Thomas and agreed to go to St James of Compostela in thanksgiving for her healing and penance for her acts.

Looking at the miracles of St David’s, we have a miracle in the context of environmental sounds of stone and woodworking in the abbey, with an eight-year-old boy surviving death after a fall from scaffolding. Another miracle celebrated after a huge Mass in the Cathedral, after the reunion of two Crusader inmates, both having been miraculously freed in the Holy Land by the intercession of God through St David. The celebrations, singing and dancing and jubilant shouts were a common description for successful cures. It was written that at the end of Mass:

With faces bathed in tears, they ran towards one another, mingling embraces and tears, recounting for the bishop, the clergy, and the people what and how St David had worked on their behalf. The bishop rejoiced, the clergy were happy, the people applauded, crying one moment, laughing the next, for joy over such a manifest miracle, and as a group they praised joyfully the miracles of the dead.²⁵

The joy of a miracle granted must have resounded in the hearts of pilgrims and locals. The final words *tripudio laudantes Dei magnolia* probably meant many shouted exclamations and the singing of the *Te Deum* as well.

²⁴ *Materials*, II:208.

¹⁹Curley, M (2002): “*Five Lecciones for the Feast of St Nonita: A text and its context.*” *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 43. p. 195 (*Translation* Curley) and p. 184 (Lat) *Quem Wallensis nuper socium suum intuens, admirans non minimum stupefactus valde, et umecto uisu, adinuicem concurrent, amplexum autem cum fletu mixtum commiscendo, quid et qualiter Sanctus David cum eius operatus est seratim episcopo , clero populoque exponentes . Gaudet episcopus, laetatur clerus, plaudent populos, nunc flendo, nunc ridendo, pro gaudio de tam aperto miraculo cateruiatim cum tripudio laudantes Dei magnolia.* (lines 29-35) *Traditio*.

The miracles of the Holy Well of St Winefride took place against the powerful force of the waves there. The spring is carefully described by fourteenth and fifteenth century Welsh bards who thronged the wondrous place, and created a vibrant sonic landscape, there since the seventh century. A mistake by the water board in the twentieth century reduced its force from the overwhelming stream it was. We know here too, that in the early Middle Ages, the Well was geographically a more localised phenomenon, but by the late Middle Ages, Abbot Thomas Pennant of the nearby Cistercian Abbey of Basingwerk, built new accommodation for the pilgrims, conducted night time offices in the Abbey, and the Shrine Keepers would personally guide the pilgrims up from the abbey after breakfast in procession to the Well and attendant Church (no doubt to singing and prayers). The resounding echoes of footsteps in these places will have reverberated throughout the shrines depicting a human composition of devotion and transformative experience. As monks, priests and a diverse assembly of laity passed their boots, sandals, and bare feet over these stone flags, often reciting their prayer beads, these sacred spaces bear witness to a profound interplay of spirituality and human emotion. Imagination in all these cases can provide the soundscape of such events, as well as the texts, which reflected biblical miracles. Canterbury is next for consideration because of pressure of space, and Canterbury rituals will be present at the other shrines.

Christchurch, Canterbury – Sonic Pilgrimage – The Guided Tours

Erasmus's tour at the 1420 'Canterbury Jubilee' describes the Canterbury pilgrim tour. Busy groups of pilgrims entering through the nave can be heard, crossing to the left to the martyrdom site of St Thomas's murder, and taking the stairs down to the crypt, the site of tomb and altars, to the original position of the Martyr's remains. The stairs to the north aisle would be reverently re-climbed and venerated. Pilgrims were then given the view of the altars and up through the presbytery behind the altar to the Trinity Chapel behind the High Altar, where the main shrine was to be found. The stewards would have led groups from the nave up to this shrine. No doubt this route information was explained by the shrine keepers and stewards, marshalling the pilgrims to the correct places, and then returning them to the nave. The shrine keeper carefully showed the majority of pilgrims the relics they had wanted to see. More elite visitors like Erasmus and John Colet, were shown special

reliquaries and relics, such as: ships in silver or wax, wax votives of men, limbs in silver or wax, wax animals, vehicles left by cured cripples, nightgowns (given by infertile women who had been granted a child), gold and silver rings, garments of golden thread and silk (similar to those left at the shrine at St Thomas Cantelupe in Hereford).²⁶

The sounds of the people were generally pronounced. Chantry priests employed to sing Mass in their side chapels for the dead who had left money to pray for their souls. Peter Lombard had written in his Sentences that the gifts, Bread and Wine brought to the priest, were transubstantiated by *epiclesis* into the body blood soul and divinity of Christ.²⁷ However, from the tenth century onwards, priests were dismayed to note that people were not consuming the Eucharist with their mouths. Because of their belief in intromission—holding to Plato’s view of rays coming out of the eyes (extramission) and the viewed object (the transubstantiated Bread) being *drawn back into the body* as an image (intramission)—there was a belief that simply *seeing* the priest *in persona Christi* elevating the host and drinking from the chalice was sufficient to receive the Eucharist. Called “ocular communion,” they felt they had “seen their God.”²⁸ There was a great commotion as they ran down the aisles and ambulatories of the cathedrals begging the priests to lift the hosts higher and higher so they could more easily be seen. “Higher, Sir Priest! Higher!” they called at the chantry masses in existence then.

Pilgrims could hear other sounds, reflecting prayer, the *Paternoster* and later beads and *Rosary Beads*, the medieval ritual of confession, and the sounds made by businesses carried on by monks in the cathedral or abbey. This was not greed on their behalf because all the facilities of the shrine, its building maintenance and furnishings needed to be maintained as the years went by. The Beads were grouped in decades, and a prayer counter for lay brothers, unable to read allowed to recite the *Paternoster* (Our Father) one hundred and fifty times a day in place of the psalms, which had been memorised by the monks and nuns. The rattling of the beads around the church would feed into the soundscape and whilst it may have distracted some pilgrims from their prayers, they may have reminded

²⁶ Nilson, B: *Medieval Experience* quoted p 105 AASS Oc 1st 595.

²⁷ Lombard, P.(ca.1140-50), *Sentences: Liber IV:I:IV*. PIMM. Fourth ed. Trans: Guilio Silano.

²⁸ Clergy were not happy with this custom and from Fourth Lateran Council (ca 1215) directed that all Christians should take communion at least once a year at Easter. (Canon 21) In the same way *touching* a statue or relic, meant the pilgrim had partaken of the object’s religious power through feeling it, and the soul been touched by the holiness of that saint’s relic according to the ancients, and current belief as explained above.

those entering the Holy site of their obligations to say their beads that day and they were anyhow used to the sound.

Later with the inclusion of the Dominican Order, St Dominic promoted the Rosary, a similar plan as for the lay brothers, but as a Meditation Prayer Book on the Life of Christ. There would be 150 beads, a Credo or declaration of faith, prayer for the Pope, a *Paternoster*, a *Gloria tibi* doxology and each Joyous, Sorrowful, or Glorious Mystery would be announced and meditated upon. For a largely unlettered population, it was their memorised prayer book and told the most important stories of Jesus Christ. When said in a pilgrimage it resulted in a resonant by muffled sound, one group, or a solo voice alternating with the other and often took place in procession.

The Olfactory senses were also in play. The incoming pilgrim would have had all their senses engaged providing a truly immersive experience. The Church needed to impress on all its adherents, the beauty and power of God. Beautiful music engaged the ears and pilgrims tasted the Eucharist, even though we must discuss this separately because of a medieval custom which related to this. Pilgrims touched the relics, made the sign of the cross, and touched the pax at the sign of peace. In the Book of Revelation/Apocalypse the purpose of incense is intimated and copied by priests today. The aim of this was to bring the pilgrim as close to Heaven as possible, reminding them that whilst their earthly pilgrimage was at an end by reaching the destination, their spiritual pilgrimage to heaven is ongoing.

3. And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. 4. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel.²⁹

The information about incense begins with God telling Moses to build an altar of setim wood to burn incense.³⁰ This is pure frankincense in equal parts to be blended into incense.³¹ This fragrant powder was expertly prepared, salted and kept pure and ground

²⁹ Apocalypse/Rev. Ch. 8:3-4.

³⁰ Setim Wood also known as Shittim wood and is Red Acacia. The wood was also used to make the Tabernacle the Arc of the Covenant and contained the aromatic substances storax and onycha and galbanum. Also, of course Frankincense was often added.

³¹ Exodus 30:1-10.

into dust and treated as most sacred. Moses' brother in tradition, the High Priest Aaron was to burn sweet smelling incense before God in the morning when he dressed the lamps, and also in the evening, and not to offer it to anyone else. Incense, flowers, and candlewax smells floated throughout the church. The hard rasp of the chains of the *thurible* or incense burner could be heard as the priest placed incense granules on the charcoal and then pulled them hard against the burner with a grating sound to cover it to shake it. Three swings were made (with the sound of sacring bells to alert the faithful to holy moments) for everything in Mass representing Christ, the altar, transubstantiated Bread and Wine, the Sacrament, the priest *in persona Christi*, altar servers and choir, the Paschal candle and the Faithful at the Mass. Saints and relics merited two swings with one swing for the priest processing. In succession were: introit, altar, cross, consecration of Eucharist, priest, and people before communion at the *Alleluia*. It reminded the pilgrims that their prayers were wafting up to God like those in the golden bowls of the saints in the Book of Revelation.³² St David's too seems to have owned a big golden *thuribulum*, like Compostela, described by one of the bards writing about the pilgrimage.

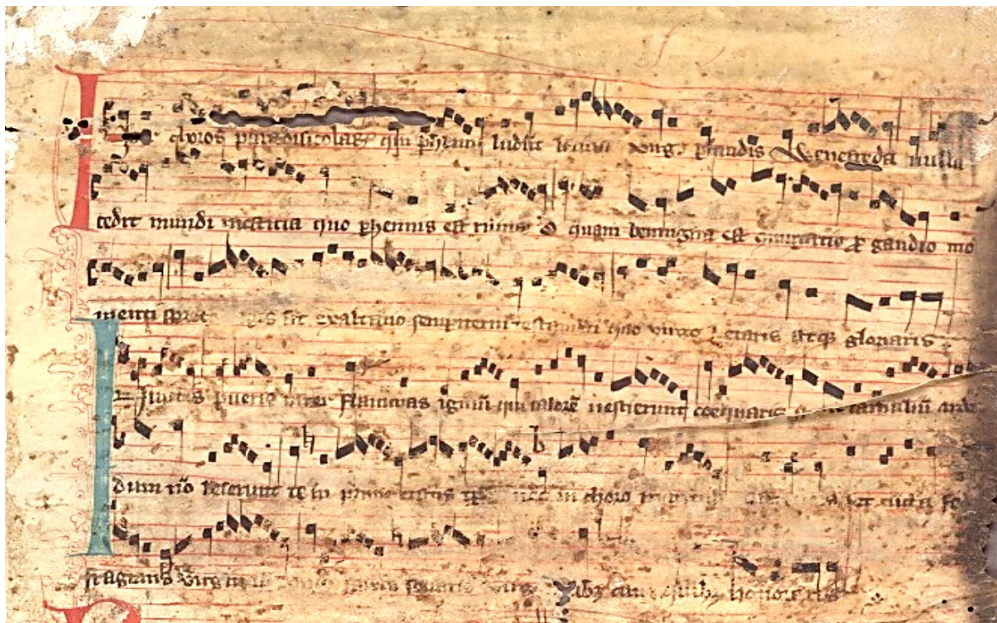
There were other natural sounds, the spluttering of the tallow candles brought by pilgrims. Only beeswax could be used on the altar, but the monks measured some people for candles or votives (candlewax body parts, sometimes an offering of a whole candle, the size of the patient) and this would have involved human interaction. There was also a business of the *Water of St Thomas*, the sale of water from the Canterbury indoor well, combined with the blood and brain matter saved from the floor of the Martyrdom where the crown of the head of St Thomas was cleft and was saved by the witnesses, allegedly Benedict and William, the recorders of the miracles. They were businesses necessary to pay for maintenance of such a vast building and there would have been sounds associated with them, payment, instructions, and measurements.

In addition, the Mass was attuned to all the Sacraments as Christian milestones in a Pilgrim's (often short) life and the incense aligned to all the important markers in life, from baptism, Communion and confirmation, Sundays, Saints' days, festal days like Christmas and

³² Revelation/Apocalypse 5:3-4. And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. 4. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel. Douay Rheims.

Easter and it would be the last thing they experienced on earth as they were given *viaticum*, the “food for the Journey,” the last eucharist. The smells reawakened all these religious memories, bringing the pilgrimages into the pattern of the whole religious life of the pilgrim and importantly with the pilgrims throughout the ages who had travelled the route before him. The hermeneutic of continuity, walking in the steps of former pilgrims, the pilgrim ways and rituals became sacred in themselves, often to this day. Touching and reverencing saintly sculptures was traditional as they were beloved images of the Christian family.

Now to consider music played on a Saint’s feast day in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. There is a development of the *motetus*, which used mensural notation to use words (“*le mot*,” word) to tell a story. The development to this stage came via St Gall, St Martial, Limoges and Notre Dame through *Organum*, monks adding parallel fifths or fourths (“perfect” interval) to lines of a plainchant. As notes began to be divided and set to syllables, Gregorian chant was often the foundation line or *tenoris* (held line) of the motet called the *cantus firmus*.



DIAMM Vers.,
MS 79.³³

Red I: (Inter)
Symbolises
martyrs, blood,
a passion,
torture.

Green I:
(Invictus) Hope,
growth, the
saints on earth
will gain their
reward.

Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Motets

We should not underestimate the challenges faced on this quest until the English fourteenth century. The wholesale destruction of "popish ditties," manuscripts containing Latin church music, during the iconoclastic period of Henry VIII (and for Worcester definitely Edward VI),

³³ Inter Choros Paradisicalarum/ Invictus Pueris. Worcester: Cathedral Library, Additional 68, fragment xii, fol. 1v (#79); Worcester Add. 68, Madrid, Bib. Nationale de France. Publications of Medieval Music Manuscripts 5, 27.

dealt a devastating blow to the annals of musical heritage. Also, monks themselves were constantly updating their music by scraping off the vellum of old-fashioned songs and writing new arrangements. So, from the eleventh century to the fifteenth, the passage of time has left us devoid of intact collections of English polyphonic music. Instead, we are left with fragments and individual leaves, surviving against all odds. Monks had also destroyed and scraped ink from old-fashioned music sheets. These surviving “scraped off” vellums and parchments (*palimpsests*) were now repurposed and used as paste downs for fly leaves, protective stiffeners for covers and spines, or even as remedies for stuffing down leaky organ pipes to stop irritating noisy ciphers!

By reconstructing the traces of such fragments as we have, it is also possible to unveil the hidden gems, revive the echoes of a bygone era, as we study to increase missing knowledge about music in medieval England.

I discovered manuscript 79 in the Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music (DIAMM) edited by Peter Lefferts at Oxford University. It was written in Franconian notation on a palimpsest and was in poor condition, having been used as binding material for a newer book or codex. It was a manuscript of a motet written for St Winefride of Holywell in North Wales or Shrewsbury Abbey, although the music was found in Worcester, believed to be the greatest Scriptorium in Medieval England. I was able to find two transcriptions of the extant notation, one in Bristol University’s Special Collections and one in their library. Whilst the pilgrims will have known Winefride’s story, recounted in the sequence, the young men’s text and virgin’s text were different and reflected the interest of these groups, one persecuted but protected on earth and one rejoicing in heaven, having reached their destination.

While I only had access to two original texts out of the three, they proved to be intriguing. The highest part, to be sung by the sopranos and altos, reflected Winefride's identity with the Virgin Martyrs, even though most virgin martyrs were martyrs from the Roman patristic period before Constantine, and Winefride did not, after all die, having been miraculously resuscitated by her uncle St Beuno. It eloquently recounted the stories of Virgin martyrs and Winefride engaging in a circular dance in heaven, reminiscent of the many depictions in paintings of the time and in English parish churches. These words carried a profound emotional impact, touching the listener's heart and reminding them of Winefride's

heavenly reward. Overall, the arrangement combined its unique rhythmic structure and counterpoint with evocative texts, painting a vivid picture of the narrative and capturing the listener's imagination. The text mentions the joy of the everlasting covenant with Abraham.

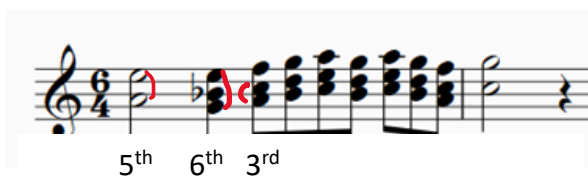
She is first among the dancers in paradise.	O the exaltation of Salvation!
who will play in eternal happiness	The everlasting covenant!
Applaud the maiden Wenefreda!	Rejoice and glory in this Maiden!
Nothing can stop the sadness of the world,	
Which is perpetually ruined.	
O how blessed is the joyful moment of that reversal!	

The second line of the Duplum were the words of the young men. As the young women had gone through painful torture and suffering to remain pure, the boys were being burned in the burning fiery furnace of King Nebuchadnezzar for not bowing down to his golden idol but were joined by a mysterious angel figure who prevented their destruction. The fire being turned to that of the Holy Spirit the angel protected them. This was a lesson for the listeners that those on earth would also have a reward.

Invictus Pueris:

You undefeated boys. In the midst of the flames of fire
 You had no knowledge of the heat.
 You are equal to the devil's horns
 You are to be venerated and not harmed
 You were not the first in the dances,
 But fragrant Winefride Saint and Virgin,
 You are celebrated!
 You are honoured!

A noteworthy example is the use of the flickering flame motifs, occurring throughout employed by the Worcester monk composer serving as *quasi*-Leitmotifs, connecting the



joyful and lively dance-like passages of the Virgin martyrs with the depiction of the flames from the burning fiery furnace in the bass line. You can see the thirds and sixths in this motif.

The bright shining sound at the top contrasting with the solid ground of the tenor sung by the young men would have been thrilling to most pilgrims, who often came from country churches which had neither the singers, skills, nor composers to sing such extrovert and glorious music. It was quintessentially English too with the inherited interest in the thirds from the *gymel* of Viking sources.³⁴ English composers also admired high notes and descants. This interest in the rich sounds of musical thirds and sixths, was one of the main facets of the development of the “English Countenance” which added by European composers during the Renaissance.

Examining the folio numbers on these surviving fragments at Worcester and referring to extant tables of contents, written by illustrious scholars, something interesting is clarified. The manuscripts from which these fragments originated were once great volumes, rivalling renowned codices and collections like the *Liber Magnus* of Léonin and Pérotin at Notre Dame, Paris, which remarkably safeguard the considerable French polyphonic repertoire and reputation of the 13th and 14th centuries. It becomes evident, therefore that pre-

³⁴ Shai Burstyn. (1983) in *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 2, No. 2 Spring. pp. 135-150 analyses Gerald of Wales' report of Welsh singers whilst with Archbishop Baldwin in Wales recruiting Christians for the third Crusade in 1188. *Gymel (Gimellus)* is a musical style found in Orkney Cathedral's *Hymn to St Magnus*. Orkney, inhabited by the Vikings from the time had embraced Christianity and the hymn had definitely been notated by a monk from its performance. The entire hymn is harmonised with intervals of thirds, giving a rich and concordant effect upon the ear. This tradition was also found in the Viking areas of what is now South Wales and the North of England areas also inhabited by Danes and Norwegians. It was different enough for Gerald of Wales to comment on in his tour of Wales. He writes: “As to their musical euphony, they do not sing uniformly as is done else-where, but diversely with many rhythms and tunes, so that in a crowd of singers, such as is the custom among these people, you will hear as many different songs and differentiations of the voices as you see heads, and hear the organic melody coming together in one consonance with the smooth sweetness of B-flat.” (This indicates polyphony as well) Moreover, in the northern part of Great Britain, that is across the Humber and on the borders of Yorkshire, the English people who inhabit those parts employ the same kind of symphonious harmony in singing, but in only two parts: one murmuring below and the other in a like manner softly and pleasantly above” (*gymel?*). “Both nations have acquired this peculiarity not by art but by long usage which has made it, as it were, natural. Moreover, it prevails in both countries and is now so deeply rooted there that nothing musical is performed simply, but only diversely among the former people and in two parts among the latter. And what is more remarkable, children scarcely beyond infancy, when their wails have barely turned into songs observe the same musical performance. Since the English in general do not employ this method of musical performances but only the northerners, I believe that it was from the Danes and Norwegians, by whom these parts of the island were more frequently invaded and colonised, that they contracted this peculiarity of singing as well as their manner of speaking.” Burstyn comments upon this. “The many attempts to fathom Gerald's meaning come down to three basic explanations: singing in parallel intervals, heterophony, and voice exchange.” Parallel perfect 5ths might seem likely, but he points to the likely parallel thirds from *Nobilis Humilis, Hymn to St Magnus*. (See) James F. Dimock, (ed.), *Giraldi Cambrensis opera, Rerum Britannicum medii aevi scriptores*, 21 (London, 1868), VI, 189-91. Translated by Lloyd Hibberd in 'Giraldus Cambrensis on Welsh Popular Singing,' *Essays on Music in Honour of Archibald T. Davison* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), pp. 17-1. Burstyn also suggests looking at translations by Dom Anselm Hughes (*Music in Fixed Rhythm* 1954, New Oxford History of Music. II. p.315-6.) and Ernest Sanders partial translation (*Rondellus* 1980, *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, London. XVI. p.71.)

Reformation Britain boasted a prolific output of polyphonic music manuscripts, surpassing any other country during that era. Pilgrims would have heard this style of music when they arrived at shrines at the great cathedrals either in processions or in spaces reserved for the motet.

There was also an overlap between the sacred and the secular, and one example is 'Summer is i-cumin in' is a well-known tune which may have begun as a hymn *Perspice Christicola*,³⁵ (even sung in procession the present time, Spring 2023, as a 17,000 strong youth pilgrimage entered into Chartres from Paris). Whilst it may also originally have been a secular song taken into the church, the complexity of the sound, the *cantus firmus* displaying the Gregorian chant of the Easter Marian antiphon *Regina caeli, laetare* the Latin words of the motet depicting the victory of the Cross at Easter seem to point to an ecclesiastical origin. It is a round, or *rota*, and the thick compositional texture creates a rich polyphonic sound, with its constant use of consonant intervals, particularly in its accompanying chords. There is a copy of *Perspice Christicola* in the Worcester Fragments, so it is roughly from the same era as *Inter choros*.

Inter choros paradiscularum is also polytextual,³⁶ and isorhythmic,³⁷ the second extant text being *Invictus Pueris*, and the third, my addition of *Gaude Virgo Venefreda* on the quadruplum line, which became my alto line. I was fortunate that Ernest Sanders had transcribed the two lines of counterpoint and sketched in the others, since there are no courses to learn to do this, although I was familiar with the notation, I learned this from him. Nevertheless, the *tenore* (my bass line) was changed from a sketch to a more solid part, and the quadruplum, the other sketched in line, needed to come down an octave to form the alto line, so changes were needed there too.

³⁵ *Sumer is i-cumen in* and *Perspice Christicola*. Folio 11v, British Library, MS. Harley 978.

³⁶ It had originally three different texts, and an untexted tenor line (my bass line) sung on a vowel, making the motet in four vocal parts.

³⁷ *Isorhythmic* (from the Greek for "the same rhythm") is a musical technique using a repeating rhythmic pattern, called a *talea*, in at least one voice part throughout a composition.

Inter chorus paradiscolorum
Invictis Pueris.
Motet for St Winefride's Day.

Worcester Fragments

Anonymous

Triplum
In - ter cho rus pa - ra di si co la rum

Quadruplum
In - ter cho rus pa - ra di si co la rum in so - la rum,

Duplum
In vi ctus pu - er e ris in - ter flam - mas

Tenore
In ctus Pu - e -

5
qui per hen ni lu - dunt lae - ti - ti a Vi - rgo plau - dis
qui per hen ni ti - ti a Vi - rgo plau - dis
Ig - ni um qui cal - lor - um - ne - sci e runt
ris Ig - ni um

9
Wi - ne - fre - da Nu - lla ce dit mun - di me -
Wi - ne - fre da Nu - lla ce
co - e qua lis spi ne car - na li u - m Ar - do - re dum
um A men Ar - dor

First Version: Quadruplum on 2nd line texted with the same text as triplum (sound recording 14 Feb 2023).

Inter Choros Paradisicolarum/Invictis Pueris

Worcester Fragments

Triplum
Soprano 1
In - ter cho - rus pa - ra - di

Quadruplum
Soprano 2
Gau - de - vir - go, Ven - e fre - da vit - i

Duplum
Alto
In - vi - ctus

Tenore
Alto
In -

3
si co - la - rum qui per hen -
o - rum sper - nans foe - da, sanc - te ple - na fla - mi -
pu - er e - ris in - ter flam - mas Ig - ni um -
ctus Pu - e - ris

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Second version, Including *Arbuthnott Sequence* as Quadruplum line (Soprano 2). Tenor will sing “Alto” line and Bass a voiced vowel, or boys’ text. The Men would sing the lower two lines if sung Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass (SATB). Or this could also be sung in four parts: S S A A by women or trebles. Bass or Alto II sing a voiced “Ah” for the entire part. Not yet recorded as of 21 Nov 2023. Copyright 2022 by Evelyn Nicholson.

The legend of Virgin Martyr Winefride, linked to Daniel Chapter 3 in the Bible, serves as a unifying thread, bridging heaven and earth and celebrating Winefride's story through

the Sequence. All the parts are united-the bass part (or Medieval *Tenoris*) was the bass line “grounding” all the harmony, symbolising the Earth. This also linked with the “everlasting covenant” the Promise of Salvation for the Just or people saved for Heaven and the New Earth. The Virgin martyrs and angels dance in heaven in the beatific presence. The men too have survived and look up to the hope of Salvation. So, Heaven is united with Earth within the structure of the polyphony. It brings St Winefride and the Virgin saints into the Bible as a pure and faithful woman and brings the salvific reward of the three boys forward to the legend and Communion of Saints to encourage them and offer hope. Throughout these compositions, a tonic around F stays constant, Peter Lefferts giving us the information that 50 per cent of the thirteenth and fourteenth century motets had a similar F *tenoris* (my Bass line) providing a consistent tonal foundation and stability. He is one of the only music scholars from this period to concern himself with the themes the monks used. With more space, there are many more things I could expand upon, but I hope this introduction has been interesting for readers interested in medieval music and its experience by pilgrims in the great shrines of England and Wales.