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Approaching a New Chronology for Josquin: an Interim Report

David Fallows

"I have been clearing out the wardrobe of my mind", says an elderly politician in a play by Harley Granville-Barker, "finding threadbare ideas that should have been thrown away long ago". For any student of Josquin today there must seem to be almost nothing in the old mental wardrobe that can still be worn. The findings of the last two years have made a stern reconsideration doubly urgent.¹

Only in the summer of 1998 did it become definitively clear that the birthdate ca. 1440 for Josquin des Prez cannot stand. The essay by Lora Matthews and Paul Merkley showed beyond any question that the singer "Josquin" at Milan Cathedral from 1459 to 1472 and at the Sforza court until about 1482 was another man, who died in 1498, over twenty years before the composer.² In an astonishing series of archival discoveries they had found, among much else, documents naming the fathers of both men, and they are different. Moreover, the death-date comes from documents concerning the prebend at Gozzano that had been held by the Milanese singer. For the last forty five years those two decades in Milan have counted as the beginning of Josquin's career and the basis for an improbably early birthdate; now the earliest documentation of the composer is almost twenty years later at the court of King René of Anjou in Aix-en-Provence.

The idea may not be entirely new. In 1996 I published an article arguing that various details would be far easier to understand if the singer in Milan were not Josquin des Prez—on the basis of musical style, source survival and various biographical details discovered over the preceding fifteen years.³ At around the same time Adalbert Roth read a paper arguing the

1 The sketch offered here has benefited enormously from the kindness of many friends who have listened and reacted, among them particularly Joshua Rifkin, Jeffrey Dean, Herbert Kellman and Rob Wegman. Preliminary versions were presented in Vienna, Bloomington, Bern, Basel, Zürich, Princeton and Duke University, all followed by helpful observations for which I am most grateful.

2 Lora Matthews and Paul Merkley, "Iudochus de Picardia and Jossequin Lebloitte dit Desprez: The Names of the Singer(s)", in: *The Journal of Musicology* 16 (1998), pp. 200–226.

3 David Fallows, "Josquin and Milan", in: *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 5 (1996), pp. 69–80.

same on mainly prosopographical grounds.⁴ But these were hypotheses. Matthews and Merkley have now made the arguments unnecessary. At a stroke it is unchallengeably clear that the Milan singer is irrelevant to the story of Josquin des Prez.

What does remain unsupported is my tentative case for putting his birthdate in the mid-1450s. That was partly based on the newly known date of Obrecht's birth, around 1457, as shown by the portrait of him that came to light only in 1991. In terms of the musical sources, Josquin and Obrecht have such similar early careers that it seemed absurd to think that they were born twenty years apart. There is still no objective hint of when Josquin was born; merely the guess that he must have been at least twenty years old when he appeared at the court of René in the mid-1470s. But before 1954, when Claudio Sartori published the documents about the Milanese singer from 1459, most scholars had put his birthdate in the 1450s.⁵

For nearly half a century, attempts to establish a chronology of Josquin's music have suffered from the need to spread the available work across a professional career of some sixty years, from 1460 until his death in 1521. My suggestion here is that if we think in terms of a career of only about forty years, nearly everything falls much more easily into place.

First, though, a brief summary of his biography as it now looks.

Documents discovered by Matthews and Merkley show that his full name was Jossequin Lebloitte dit Desprez, that his father was called Gossart Lebloitte (in one document "de Bloittere") dit Desprez, and that he had an uncle in Condé-sur-Escaut called Gille Lebloitte dit Desprez. The name Lebloitte could be a corruption of something originally Flemish; but the suffix "dit Desprez" had been used already by his father and his uncle. His aunt in Condé was called Jaque Banestonne, so it seems possible that the composer was related to the singer Antoine Baneston, active in Milan, Ferrara and the Papal Chapel—he acted as procurator for one of Josquin's benefices in 1489.

4 Adalbert Roth, "Judocus de Kessallia and Judocus de Pratis", read at the American Musicological Society annual meeting in Baltimore, 1996, and kindly made available to me by the author. I should record here that my own active concern with the matter goes back to a conversation in June 1992 when Adalbert Roth remarked that the words "des Prez" do not appear in any of those Milanese documents.

5 Claudio Sartori, "Josquin des Prés cantore del Duomo di Milano (1459–1472)", in: *AnnMl* 4 (1956), pp. 55–83.

We first hear of Josquin at the court of King René d'Anjou between 1475 and 1478;⁶ perhaps he stayed there until René's death in August 1480. When René died, King Louis XI engaged his entire choir at the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, because—according to an early chronicler—he thought it the best choir in the world. There is no proof that Josquin was among them at this point; but I am personally convinced by the arguments of Patrick Macey, who showed that the motet *Misericordias Domini* is likely to have been composed for King Louis in the anguished last months before his death in 1483.⁷

The first hint of any of this was when the first Aix document was published, as recently as 1981. Now it suddenly looks as though Josquin's entire early career before 1483 was not in Milan but in France. That will inevitably become a springboard for much of the new picture.

In June 1484, the year after Louis died, Josquin appears in Milan, appointing procurators for a benefice near Bourges—a detail that adds further plausibility to the theory of his having been in France and associated with the royal court. How long Josquin stayed in Milan is not yet clear; but quite a lot becomes easier to explain if we guess that he remained there from 1484 until 1489, when another document describes him as a ducal singer.⁸ What is now clear is that his entry to the papal chapel was not in 1486 but in 1489, as recently demonstrated by Pamela Starr.⁹

It is worth registering that all these documents have been discovered since 1980, and a very large proportion has emerged only in the last two years with the work of Matthews and Merkley; every detail of his life before 1489 mentioned either by Osthoff or in the *New Grove* concerns other people.

The rest remains more or less as before, though a remarkable number of new details have been added (and indeed subtracted) in the last thirty years—notably by Lewis Lockwood, Herbert Kellman and Richard Sherr. He sang in the papal chapel from 1489 until 1495, and perhaps a little longer

6 Yves Esquieu, "La musique à la cour provençale du roi René", in: *Provence historique*, 31 (1981), pp. 299–312; Françoise Robin, "Josquin des Prés au service de René d'Anjou?", in: *RML*, 61 (1985), pp. 180–81. The beginning date of 1475 is established in the unpublished paper by Lora Matthews and Paul Merkley, "Josquin Desprez's Early Biography and Service in the Court of King René: Some New Documentary Evidence", read at Duke University, North Carolina, on 20 February 1999.

7 Patrick Macey, "Josquin's *Misericordias domini* and Louis XI", in: *EM* 19 (1991), pp. 163–77.

8 Matthews and Merkley, op. cit. On the broader front, it is intriguing to note that this is only a few months before Isaac first appeared in Italy.

9 Pamela F Starr, "Josquin, Rome, and a Case of Mistaken Identity", in: *The Journal of Musicology* 15 (1997), pp. 43–65.

since no documentation survives from the papal chapel for the next few years. 1495 to 1503 is blank: he may just be the Josquin who was in the household of Ascanio Sforza in 1499,¹⁰ but in April 1503 he was in Lyon. From Spring 1503 to Spring 1504 he headed the court chapel at Ferrara. Then in May 1504 he was received as canon and provost of Condé-sur-Escaut, where a scattering of documents appears to confirm that he remained for the last seventeen years of his life. The only point that needs to be made about his years in Condé is that it would be risky to call them retirement years: by the old chronology he was around sixty five when he arrived there; now it looks as though he may have been under fifty.

On the other hand, moving gently towards his music, while it is now clear that much of it has been dated far too early, I can see little sign that any of it has been put too late (with one important exception to come later). The view that the songs in five and six voices all come from the Condé years—apart from the very different *Nymphes des bois*, presumably of 1497—seems hard to shake. Similarly, the motets in five and six voices nearly all still seem to be after 1500—apart from *Illibata*, which must surely be much earlier. Those genres in any case account for relatively little music, even if they contain some of his finest work: only four six-voice and seven five-voice motets are today accepted with confidence; and the songs in five and six voices, detailed though they are, amount to very few bars of music.

The contentious matters of chronology are therefore the masses, the motets in four voices, and the songs in three and four voices.

The earliest manuscript with any quantity of Josquin's music seems to be the songbook now in the Biblioteca Casanatense (I-Rc), MS 2856. Its date is not at all secure: judging from the coat of arms on the first page, Llorens and others concluded that it was assembled for the wedding of Isabella D'Este and Francesco Gonzaga in 1490; since then, however, Arthur Wolff and Lewis Lockwood have argued that it must be from far earlier, perhaps the time of their engagement in 1480.¹¹ A payment record of 1483 appears to

10 Claudio Gallico, "Josquin nell'Archivio Gonzaga", in: *RIDM* 6 (1971), pp. 205–10.

11 Arthur S. Wolff, *The Chansonnier Biblioteca Casanatense 2856: its History, Purpose, and Music* (diss., N. Texas State U., 1970); Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400–1505*, Oxford 1984, pp. 224–6. In the light of various challenges, Lockwood re-asserted that date in "Music at Florence and Ferrara in the Late Fifteenth Century: Rivalry and Interdependence", in: Piero Gargiulo, ed., *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, Florence 1993, pp. 1–13.

describe the source but disconcertingly states that it has the ducal arms (*con l'arma ducale*)—which is plainly not the case. In fact certain features would make it easy to argue that this manuscript is indeed from 1490 (as originally proposed by Llorens). On balance, though (and after much hesitation), I am inclined to support the dating of ca. 1480 proposed by Wolff and Lockwood.

Certainly its Josquin songs fit well with such a date if we accept that he was only about twenty five years old at the time and had spent all his career up to that point in France. Each of the six pieces ascribed to him has his name spelt differently, as though the young French composer were effectively unknown to the Ferrarese copyist. Most of them fit well into a French tradition of the 1470s; and some of them may have been misunderstood on the assumption that Josquin had been in Milan for the previous twenty years. There was some discussion about whether *Adieu mes amours*, for example, was really composed to carry two different texts in different *formes fixes* or was a textless piece in the Italian tradition. Placing Josquin in central France when it was composed instantly aligns it with works in the combinative chanson repertory. In Ockeghem's *S'elle m'amera*, Busnoys' *Mon mignault musequin* and the anonymous *Quant je suis* there is exactly the same alignment of a five-line rondeau stanza with a virelai form treated quasi-canonically in the lower voices; and in the last two of these the medial cadence of the rondeau coincides with the return of the opening music in the lower voices, just as in *Adieu mes amours*. In Ockeghem's *S'elle m'amera* as well as two more such songs by Busnoys, *On a grant mal* and *Vous marchez du bout du pied*, the opening of the upper voice reflects the melody in the lower voices; all three contain an element of repeat in all four voices for the final section. The only detail that is special about Josquin's piece is the exact repeat for the entire last section. But in every other respect—including style—it reflects what Busnoys was doing during the 1460s and thereby adds to the many later details in Josquin's work that show the influence of Busnoys.

Another Josquin song in the Casanatense chansonnier is the three-voice rondeau *Que vous madame*, built on a Latin tenor, very much in the style of what Loÿset Compere was doing during the 1470s. Yet another, the three-voice *Ile fantazies de Joskin* strongly reflects the manner of Johannes Martini's textless chansons, a genre that seems to have started with his *La martinella* of the 1460s. Josquin's *Et trop penser*—sadly missing from the New Josquin Edition, though I do believe it to be his—has no obvious stylistic precedent.¹² But the last two of his Casanatense pieces are perhaps the most interesting, since they are both canonic at the fourth, a technique that

12 But its manner is reflected in the four-voice chanson *Je sey bien dire*.

seems to have been almost unknown at the time apart from Ockeghem's triple canon *Prenez sur moy* and the double mensuration canons in his mass *Prolationum*.

Before exploring those two canonic pieces, it seems important to turn briefly to two sacred works in the light of the picture so far: five entirely different styles, all but one reflecting different composers of the previous generation.

It has long been accepted that the mass *L'ami Baudichon* is one of Josquin's earliest known works; several writers have even remarked on its similarity to Dufay's style, though only Sparks was bold enough to mention specific works, citing the *secunda pars* of Dufay's motet *Ave regina celorum*, probably of the early 1460s, and mentioning the mass *Se la face ay pale*, probably of the very early 1450s.¹³ Even when it was thought that Josquin was born by 1440, this seemed an odd model. If he was born in the mid-1450s, it seems odder still; moreover, as Sparks was quick to note, Josquin's style here is enormously simpler than Dufay's. In fact there is another model for this closer to home: the first of the six anonymous *L'homme armé* masses now in Naples though apparently composed for the Burgundian court of Charles the Bold.¹⁴ This mass shares *L'ami Baudichon*'s C-major tonality, shares the unbelievably tiny and simple cantus firmus (only four notes) presented at various pitches, shares its long opening duos in which the pair of voices is changed half way through, where the bass enters; and above all shares its voice-ranges and melodic style. None of the other Naples masses has any of those features. So far as we can tell, these Naples masses were composed in the early 1470s, therefore a thoroughly plausible model for the young Josquin. It is as though this formidably gifted young man could write in almost any style and consciously did so.¹⁵

13 Edgar H. Sparks, *Cantus Firmus in Mass and Motet, 1420–1520*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1963, pp. 355–6.

14 They have all been edited by Laurence Feininger in *Monumenta Polyphoniae Liturgicae Sanctae Ecclesiae Romanae*, ser. 1, vol. 3, Rome 1957–74, and by Judith Cohen in *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae*, ser. 85 (1981).

15 It might be mentioned that if he was at all following Dufay's (also C-based) mass *Ecce ancilla Domini*, he took over from there the unusually high proportion of two-voice writing; and that if he was really emulating Dufay's (F-based) mass *Se la face ay pale*—which has a slightly similar motto—he did so by enormously simplifying the cantus firmus: just as in *Adieu mes amours* he had built in the exact repeat, thereby exaggerating what was already implied in Busnoys, here in the mass *L'ami Baudichon* he exaggerated the simplicity of Dufay's style with his laughably simple tenor cantus firmus. At the same time it must be stated clearly that these Dufay works are enormously richer and more full of incident than the mass *L'ami Baudichon*.

One other work gives a case for having been composed well before 1480, namely the motet *Ave Maria ... virgo serena*, copied into the Leopold Codex at Innsbruck on paper that dates from around 1476.¹⁶ Even if closer scrutiny of the scribal layers makes it possible to put the copying around 1480, this is extremely early for so polished a work—which is part of the reason why the *New Grove Dictionary* roundly rejected the manuscript dating and placed the motet as mature. Three points could be made in this context. First, as we have already seen, at this point Josquin had already composed another of his most widely copied works, the song *Adieu mes amours*. Second, for all its beauty, *Ave Maria ... virgo serena* does not actually contain anything that is at all contrapuntally difficult: technically speaking, it could have been composed by almost anybody. Third, in several respects it shows the most astonishing similarities to another C-major work of the early years, namely the mass *Lami Baudichon*: a glance at the last page of the motet and that of the Credo in the mass is enough to suggest a strong similarity of musical language there.

If we accept that Josquin was born in the mid-1450s, then these works would both need to have been composed at around the same time, and hardly much before 1475, when he would have been about twenty years old. But the range of pieces we have now put in the years between 1475 and 1480 tells the same story, one that could be told of many young composers over the centuries: here is a brilliant young man who can mimic almost any style but has not yet evolved a style of his own. Despite that, he has already produced one or two peerless masterpieces.

16 Thomas L. Noblitt, "Die Datierung der Handschrift Mus. ms. 3154 der Staatsbibliothek München", in: *AfMw* 27 (1974), pp. 36–56. The information is updated and laid out in greater detail in the commentary to the last volume of his edition of the entire manuscript, *Der Kodex des Magister Nicolaus Leopold*, Das Erbe Deutscher Musik 80–83: Abteilung Mittelalter 17–20, Kassel 1987–96. A serious challenge to Noblitt's conclusions, noting that the music was added later to that fascicle, perhaps as late as the early 1480s, was proposed in Elizabeth Cason, "The Dating of MS Munich 3154 Revisited", presented at Duke University, North Carolina, on 19 February 1999.

It is now time to return to the two canonic pieces in the Casanatense manuscript, and particularly to the four-out-of-two canon, *En l'ombre d'ung buissonnet*. There are in fact three more secular works of Josquin that are built in exactly the same way, namely *Se congié prens*, *Baisiés moy* and *Dictez moy bergere* (this last is not yet published, since the ascription to Josquin is only in the fairly recently discovered Herdringen manuscripts). All are four-out-of-two canons with the second pair of voices entering a fourth higher after a *brevis* (in one case after a *semibrevis*); all are very short and contain substantial repeats; all are in the same tonality, ending on G; and it looks very much as though all are intended to have no staff-signature in the *dux* voices but one flat in the *comes* voices. In all except *Baisiés moy*, it is the upper voice of each pair that carries the received melody, which we know from several other sources apart from *Dictez moy bergere*, where the style of the lines makes that conclusion inevitable; all have brief texts that unmistakably belong to the *chanson rustique* repertory. It looks very much as though Josquin spent a relatively short time concentrating on this particular apparently novel canonic technique, sorting out his contrapuntal skills. And I would suggest that these pieces lead towards his four-voice canonic *Salve regina*, a much longer motet that works in just this way, also with repeated sections, and also with the borrowed melody paraphrased in the upper voice-pair. Materials from all four pieces find their way into this work.¹⁷ And just before the end we find a passage from the other Casanatense piece: *Une mousse de Biscaye*, in which only the upper two voices are in strict canon at the fourth, but with elements of canon in the lower pair—elements that find their way into the final paragraph of the *Salve regina*.

In this way, *Une mousse de Biscaye* may perhaps be the remnant of another canon that he could never get right. I cannot imagine how the remainder of the lower voices could have been structured in such a piece; but there are contrapuntal disasters in his *Se congié prens* that suggest similar problems. The three quite unacceptable clashes here seem absolutely unavoidable.

Briefly, though, there seem two conclusions from this group of pieces. First, given that two of them are in the Casanatense chansonnier, I would suggest that all six canonic pieces were done in the years around 1480. Second, if it is right to see the little secular pieces as preparatory work to the much larger *Salve regina*, there may be a broader conclusion to be drawn about his secular music. I suspect that quite a lot of it is really preparatory works for larger pieces.

17 Although many of his later works are built on canonic techniques, none of them has a four-out-of-two canon apart from those very different canons built into the six-voice third Agnus Dei movements of his masses *L'homme armé sexti toni* and *Malheur me bat*.

That may well explain why his songs in three and four voices have as a whole attracted relatively little attention or enthusiasm. Several seem to be exercises in which he worked through particular technical problems. Just to take two more examples: *A l'heure que je vous p.x.* in Petrucci's *Canti C* has a canon at the 9th, also found in the first Kyrie of the mass *L'homme armé super voces musicales*; and the four-voice *De tous biens plaine* is a unison-canon at the interval of a *minima*, as in the last Agnus Dei of the masses *L'homme armé sexti toni* and *Malheur me bat*.

Obviously that does not account for all. The four-voice songs include several that are masterpieces from any viewpoint, especially *Adieu mes amours*, *Entree suis*, *Le vilain* and *Plus nulz regretz* of 1508. These are in no sense technical exercises.

But the upshot of these considerations is, first, that a relatively large proportion of his secular works in three and four voices was written early, before about 1480; second that the four-voice *Salve regina* could well be from the same date; third, that Josquin was at this point enormously gifted and able to write in almost any manner but had not yet evolved a personal style; and fourth, that he seems to have been exploring difficult contrapuntal techniques.

The story must now turn to the masses. Since Edgar Sparks in 1972 showed beyond all reasonable doubt that the mass *Da pacem* is by Noel Bauldeweyn,¹⁸ the canon of Josquin's masses stood for some years fairly securely at eighteen: the seventeen printed by Petrucci in his three volumes of Josquin masses, and the mass *Pange lingua*, perhaps composed too late to have appeared in Petrucci's Third book of 1514. Gradually, however, there has been a certain erosion even among these eighteen: Jaap van Benthem mounted a substantial case against the mass *Une mousse de Biscaye*;¹⁹ Barton Hudson threw doubt on the mass *Di dadi*;²⁰ both Joshua Rifkin and Richard Sherr, in as yet unpublished observations, have doubted the mass *Ad fugam*; for many years it has been obvious that the mass *Mater patris* is quite unlike anything we otherwise know of Josquin;²¹ and most recently there has been a published report of Jeremy Noble's views doubting that he composed the

18 Edgar H. Sparks, *The Music of Noel Bauldeweyn*, New York 1972.

19 Jaap van Benthem, "Was 'Une mousse de Biscaye' Really Appreciated by L'ami Baudichon?", in: *Muziek en wetenschap* 1/iv (1991), pp. 175–94.

20 *New Josquin Edition*, Utrecht 1987 [hereafter: NJE] vol. 9, Commentary (1995).

21 The case is fully assembled in an as yet unpublished article by Jennifer Bloxam.

mass *D'ung aultre amer*.²² None of these is entirely conclusive, but two points could be emphasised: that all those doubts are more widely shared than the documentation I have provided; and that they are based on a range of considerations, including style, mensural practice, treatment of borrowed material and source dissemination. If we accept these doubts for a moment, the picture of Petrucci's Josquin mass volumes looks as in Table 1. In this list the works are named in the order Petrucci printed them, with a hash-sign preceding the doubted works.

I: 1502 and later editions

L'homme arme super voces musicales
La sol fa re mi
Gaudeamus
Fortuna desperata
L'homme armé sexti toni

II: 1505 (30th June) and later editions

Ave maris stella
Hercules dux Ferrarie
Malheur me bat
L'ami Baudichon

- # Une musique de Buscaya
- # D'ung aultre amer

III: 1514 and later editions

- # Mater patris
- Faysans regres
- # Ad fugam
- # Di dadi
- De beata virgine
- Sine nomine

Table 1: Ottaviano de' Petrucci: Josquin Mass Books

It has long been accepted that Josquin's departure from Italy to become provost of Condé contributed to odd features of the Third book. But only recently have doubts been expressed about works in the Second book. Since Josquin left Ferrara in April 1504, fourteen months before the publication of the Second book, the new picture would seem to suggest that Petrucci had already lost contact before the Second book was finished. The sudden growth of Petrucci's publishing activity makes it likely that a Second book of Josquin masses to succeed the First of 1502 was a commercial idea without any particularly long forethought.

²² NJE vol. 7, Commentary (1997).

A third point must now be made about the most recent doubts: most of them have been rumbling along for some years, but during that time no scholar, to the best of my knowledge, has ever questioned any of the remaining cycles.²³ So it is notable that two choirbooks in Vienna contain between them these remaining cycles and no others, as shown in Table 2.²⁴

11778

1	Missa super l'homme armé (super voces)	Jos despres	PI/1
2	Missa L'homme armé sexti	Josquin	PI/5
3	Missa super Gaudeamus	Ockeghem	PI/3
4	Missa Fortuna desperata	Josquin	PI/4
5	Missa La sol fa re mi	Josquin	PI/2
6	Missa Lami baudechon	[Josquin]	PII/4
7	Credo [Chaschun me crie]	Josquin des pres	
8	Credo [Vilayge II]	Josquin des pres	

4809

1	Missa de Venerabili Sacramento [Pange lingua]	Josquin	
2	Missa de Domina [De Beata Virgine]	Josquin	PIII/5
3	Missa Hercules ducis ferrarie	[Josquin]	PII/2
4	Missa Malhuer me bat	Josquin	PII/3
5	Missa Faysant regretz	[Josquin]	PIII/2
6	[Missa sine nomine]	Josquin+	PIII/6
7	Missa Ave maris stella	Josquin	PII/1

Missing

Missa Una mousse de Biscaye (Petrucci II)	dubious per v Benthem
Missa D'ung aultre amer (Petrucci II)	dubious per Noble
Missa Mater patris (Petrucci III)	dubious per almost everybody
Missa Ad fugam (Petrucci III)	dubious per Sherr/Rifkin
Missa Di dadi (Petrucci III)	dubious per Hudson
Missa Da pacem (probably Bauldeweyn)	
Missa Allez regretz (probably Stokem)	

Table 2: Alamire-Josquin Choirbooks in Vienna

- 23 There has been a rumour of a prominent German musicologist doubting the mass *Pange lingua*; but this is a case of Chinese Whispers based on a misunderstanding. Joshua Rifkin privately alerts me to his own unhappiness about the mass *Lami Baudichon*; if he is right, some of what follows will need serious reconsideration.
- 24 A word should be added about the two Credo settings at the end of A-Wn 11778: the Credo *Chaschun me crie* (or *Des rouges nes*) and the Credo *Vilayge II* (they are edited in the Smijers *Werken* as *Fragmenta missarum* nos. 5 and 4). Both are ascribed to Brumel in D-Mbs, Mus.ms. 53, and to Josquin in Petrucci's *Fragmenta missarum* (RISM 1505¹). For the case that both are indeed by Josquin, see Barton Hudson, "Josquin and Brumel: the Conflicting Attributions", in Willem Elders with Frits de Haen, ed., *Proceedings of the International Josquin Symposium, Utrecht 1986*, Utrecht 1991, pp. 67–92; Adeline van Campen, "Conflicting Attributions of *Credo Vilayge II* and *Credo Chascun me crie*", in the same volume, pp. 93–99, argues largely on the basis of style that the Credo *Chaschun me crie* could well be by Josquin.

These two choirbooks both come from the Alamire workshop in Mechelen or Brussels; and both must have been compiled in about 1521, if only because one of the cycles has Josquin's name followed by a cross, the normal procedure in this workshop for showing that the composer was dead.²⁵ Perhaps these choirbooks have been given less than their due attention because choirbook 11778 ascribes the mass *Gaudeamus* to Ockeghem, an ascription that has never been given a moment's notice by students of either Ockeghem or Josquin;²⁶ and three other works are presented anonymously. But they are coherently assembled volumes; and their contents do correspond precisely with what the sternest current research considers Josquin's definitive mass output. Moreover it should be obvious that Petrus Alamire, working so close to where Josquin lived the last seventeen years of his life, was in a better position to know what belonged in the canon than Petrucci in faraway Venice.

Much recent research (largely unpublished) has been devoted to identifying the various different scribes involved in the "Alamire" manuscripts; but for the present enquiry it is not relevant who actually held the pen: what is important is that the manuscripts unquestionably come from the premier scribal workshop of the Low Countries, apparently directed by a man who had extensive contacts throughout the area. (He was, after all, also active as a spy.) Alamire's view needs to be taken seriously. It may just be a bizarre coincidence that his view agrees with recent research; but it may also be worth asking what can be concluded if we suggest that he was right.

If Josquin was born in about 1455, and if we accept that current views on authenticity are valid and that the two Vienna choirbooks represent Alamire's identical and apparently authoritative view, some further conclusions look plausible. When it looked as though the publication of Petrucci's first book in 1502 came when Josquin was over sixty years old, the evident and obvious starting assumption was that much or even most of the music substantially antedated its earliest known sources. While that continues to be a wise initial approach (after all, there are several early sixteenth-century prints that contain music forty or more years old), it is no longer quite so necessary.

25 See also the entries in the *Census-Catalogue of Manuscript Sources of Polyphonic Music 1400–1550*, Renaissance Manuscript Studies, ser. 1, Neuhausen 1979–88, vol. 4 (1988).

26 The Alamire manuscripts contain a surprising number of apparent jokes, as though the copyist were attempting to add levity to the task of the singers. It might be mentioned in passing that the recently discovered *Arte novamente inventada pera aprender a tanger* by Gonzalo de Baena (Lisbon 1540) includes the "In nomine" section of this mass (labelled "Pleni sunt") with an ascription, in the index, to "Obrec"—though it is immediately followed by the "Benedictus" with its correct ascription to "Jusquin".

The mass *Lami Baudichon* could hardly have been composed much earlier than about 1475; and, as I have mentioned, the available information suggests that he had not yet at that point evolved a personal style. The five masses in Petrucci's First book are astonishingly assured works, and extremely complicated in their counterpoint. It now seems very hard to think that they were composed less than ten years after *Lami Baudichon*.

With that as a backdrop, the combined information of the Petrucci prints and the Vienna choirbooks offers further possibilities. Vienna 11778 contains all the masses in Petrucci's First book (albeit in a different order and with somewhat different readings) together with the one work that now seems substantially earlier in style than any other surviving Josquin mass, the mass *Lami Baudichon*. Petrucci's Second book opens with three works that give some reason for believing that they were composed later than the First book masses, even after the publication of the First book: Joshua Rifkin has recently argued that the mass *Hercules dux Ferrarie* was in fact composed during Josquin's year in Ferrara, 1503–4, effectively demolishing received views that it had to be much earlier;²⁷ Jeremy Noble long ago suggested that the mass *Ave maris stella* was composed later than the mass *Gaudeamus*;²⁸ and I would suggest that the mass *Malheur me bat* similarly builds on the experience and techniques already used in the mass *Fortuna desperata*.

One more detail points in that direction. The mass *Malheur me bat* also shares with the mass *Hercules dux Ferrarie* the expansion from four to six

- 27 Rifkin, "A Singer Named Josquin", unpublished paper kindly made available to me by the author; the point was made more briefly by Jeremy Noble in *New Grove*, London 1980, s.v. "Josquin". Most recently, Willem Elders has mounted a case that this mass was considerably earlier, see his "New Light on the Dating of Josquin's *Hercules Mass*", in: *TVNM* 48 (1988), pp. 112–49; in particular he suggests that a perfect occasion for its first performance would be 13 September 1480, the 47th anniversary of Ercole d'Este's knighthood (47 being the number of statements of the *soggetto cavato* in the tenor). Much of the objective case rests on motivic similarities between Josquin's mass and Obrecht's mass *Adieu mes amours*; as so often in such cases, it is hard to be sure who borrowed from whom, assuming that borrowing is actually involved. Obrecht's mass is hard to date, since it appears in no source earlier than about 1500; Elders accepts the view in Rob C. Wegman, *Born for the Muses: The Life and Masses of Jacob Obrecht*, Oxford 1994, who very tentatively assigns it to Obrecht's first stay in Ferrara, 1487–8.
- 28 Noble, op. cit.; the same point is made in Edgar H. Sparks, *Cantus Firmus in Mass and Madrigal, 1420–1520*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1963, p. 339. It should be noted, if only to stress the hypothetical nature of all my remarks here, that Willem Elders has argued, in several publications, for precisely the opposite case. On the date of the Vienna manuscript 1783, which contains the mass *Ave maris stella* and is generally dated ca. 1500, I concur with the arguments outlined by Walter Rubsamen in Edward E. Lowinsky, ed., *Josquin des Prez*, London 1976, p. 370, that it more plausibly dates from 1505–6.

voices for the third *Agnus Dei*, something found otherwise only in the mass *L'homme armé sexti toni*, the last mass printed in the first Petrucci book. There is enough in common between those three movements to suggest that they were composed close to one another, as though Josquin found the idea interesting only for a few years at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Both *L'homme armé sexti toni* and *Malheur me bat* build their third *Agnus* with two unison canons at the distance of a *minima*; only *Hercules dux Ferrarie* loosens that rigour, though with a similar musical effect.

That could therefore mean that Petrucci's Second book opens with three very new works, then continues with *L'ami Baudichon*, the single earlier work that had been omitted from his first book (for reasons of its immaturity), and closed with two other early works that may come from Milanese circles but now seem to be spurious. Oddly enough, though, if that hypothesis happens to be correct (on top of the three hypotheses offered earlier) then the two Vienna choirbooks divide neatly between early works (11778) and later ones (4809). Even more oddly, they would divide at around the year 1500, which, by my reckoning, would be almost exactly in the middle of Josquin's forty-year mature career. But then perhaps this is not so odd after all: if Alamire was assembling a corpus of Josquin masses on the basis of first-hand knowledge, it could well have made sense for him to divide them in precisely that way.

Even so, it may be a little more complicated than that. If the mass *L'ami Baudichon* is really from the late 1470s it is obviously some distance from any of the masterpieces in Petrucci's First book. There seems a possibility that many of Josquin's four-voice motets come from the 1480s, a time when he had evolved a personal style of considerable purity but without the sheer density of action or variety of texture and pace found so often in the masses of Petrucci's First book. Briefly, then, I believe that most if not all of these First-book masses were composed in the 1490s.

That would at least be possible in terms of the known earliest manuscript dates as proposed in Richard Sherr's chronology of the Vatican Cappella Sistina choirbooks:²⁹ the mass *L'homme armé super voces musicales* is in CS 197, which he dates 1492–5; the mass *Fortuna desperata* is in a layer of CS 41 for which he gives the same dates (in fact half of it copied by the same scribe); the mass *La sol fa re mi* is in a later layer of CS 41, which he dates

29 Richard Sherr, *Papal Music Manuscripts in the Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries*, Renaissance Manuscript Studies, ser. 5, Neuhausen 1996.

1495–8, a date that happens to fit well with Dawson Kiang's recent discussion connecting the mass with the Turkish prince Cem (or Jem).³⁰ As concerns the mass *L'homme armé sexti toni*, three movements of which appear in the Chigi Codex, generally dated 1498–1503, I would suggest very strongly that the manuscript's exceptionally close relationship (scribally as well as in terms of its repertory and readings) to the securely dated Brussels 9126 of 1505 puts the Chigi Codex well after 1500; that is to say that its manuscript survivals all seem to be later than its printing in Petrucci's First book. Stylistically, too, this mass gives every sign of being one of the latest works in that book.

As concerns the masses in Vienna 4908, the remarks above outline the reasons for thinking that most were composed in the first years of the century. The only other work in that volume that has normally been dated before 1500 is the mass *Faysant regretz*: its earliest source is in fact the Vatican choirbook CS 23, in a section that Richard Sherr dates to 1503–7.³¹ This should absolutely not be taken as evidence that the mass was necessarily that late (and in all these discussions it may be wise to remember Glareanus' later remark that Josquin often kept his works for some years before letting them out in public). I would suggest that its style fits comfortably with the first decade of the sixteenth century; in several ways it is one of the boldest of his technical challenges, with the four-note motif audible in almost every bar—an extension of the challenge offered by the mass *La sol fa re mi*. Beyond that, it incorporates more elements of mass chant paraphrase than any of his other mass cycles. Even so, this is a work that highlights the enormous dangers of attempting a chronology of any composer on purely stylistic grounds, particularly when an outside element (in this case the apparent organization of the Vienna choirbooks) tempts one to reach a particular conclusion. It could be argued that the mass *Faysant regretz* is an earlier attempt at a scheme that was more successfully tackled in the masses *La sol fa re mi* and *Hercules dux Ferrarie*. Pending further exploration, the wise conclusion would be simply that the Vienna choirbooks could just be taken as an indication that the mass was composed after 1500.

30 Dawson Kiang, "Josquin Desprez and a Possible Portrait of the Ottoman Prince Jem in Cappella Sistina Ms. 41", in: *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 54 (1992), pp. 411–25; Willem Elders, "New Light on the Dating of Josquin's *Hercules Mass*", p. 146, note 64, reports a record sleeve note in which Adalbert Roth has argued that the only possible occasion for the mass was a papal high mass on 20 January 1495; see also Rifkin, "A Singer Named Josquin", note 142.

31 See Barton Hudson's analysis in NJE vol. 8, Commentary (1996).

The remaining three works in Vienna 4908 have always been agreed to be well after 1500. While the bases of that agreement are patently open to reconsideration, I shall accept them here because there is a more important point to make, namely that it seems most unlikely that any of them was composed much later than 1510. Too much of the received view hangs on Petrucci's 1514 publication, which contains the masses *De beata virgine* and *Sine nomine*. The mass *Pange lingua*, normally considered to postdate Petrucci's Third book of 1514, may in fact be a little earlier. I have already noted that the recent doubts about works in his Second book suggest that Petrucci may have lost contact with Josquin as early as 1504; whether a work was included in his 1514 book now seems much less relevant than it once did. The mass *Pange lingua* appears in several Italian manuscripts copied within the second decade of the century, among them I-Rvat CS 16 copied by Gellandi in 1515–16 (Jeffrey Dean); I-Rvat Pal.lat.1982, dated 1513–23 (*Census-Catalogue*); I-Rvat Cappella Giulia XII.2, copied by the main Medici codex scribe in about 1518 (Jeffrey Dean); I-Rvat SMM JJ III 4, copied 1516–20 (Adalbert Roth); D-Mbs Mus.ms. 510, dated 1513–19 (Martin Bente); and the Capirola lutebook copied in about 1516–17 (Otto Gombosi). That distribution could suggest that it was composed around 1510. After all, several of its techniques appear to have their roots in the mass *Ave maris stella*; and there are several details that it shares closely with the mass *Malheur me bat*. If *Pange lingua* is his last mass, as all scholars appear to agree, it may well be that he in fact stopped mass composition soon after 1510.

My chronology would therefore suggest that, apart from the very early mass *Lami Baudichon*, all the known Josquin masses were composed between about 1490 and soon after 1510, with only those in Petrucci's First Book being earlier than about 1500. I stress again that it is based on a large number of hypotheses; but it does appear to flow almost inevitably from the various discoveries of recent years; and it seems to offer a pattern that could help with the dating of the other works.

30 Dawson King, "Josquin Desprez and a Possible Portrait of the Oroman Prince Jean in Cappella Sistina Ms. 41," in: *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 54 (1992), pp. 411–25; Willem Elders, "New Light on the Dating of Josquin's *Masses*," p. 146, note 64, reports a record sleeve note in which Adalbert Roth has argued that the only possible occasion for the mass was a papal high mass on 20 January 1495; see also Dawson King, "A Singer Named Josquin," note 146, *Journal of Musicology* 52 (1994), p. 146. 31 See Barton Hudson's analysis in *Musical Manuscripts of the Renaissance* (1996), pp. 146–147.

As concerns the motets, it seems right to accept the received view of those in five and six voices, that they are all likely to be after 1500 apart from the five-voice *Illibata*, which stands well aside from the rest.³²

But the four-voice motets include several that can be dated early, though their transmission does little to help the case. Only three seem likely to have been copied before about 1495: the *Ave Maria ... virgo serena*, already mentioned; and *Domine non secundum* copied around 1490 into two different Roman manuscripts. Joshua Rifkin and Richard Sherr have argued very convincingly that *Domine non secundum* must have been composed at Rome, because it fits closely with the papal liturgy and with other settings of the same text by papal composers.³³ The *Census-Catalogue* dates the appropriate section of Cappella Sistina 35 to the years ca. 1487–90, though other scholars have allowed perhaps another two years. Since Pamela Starr has shown that Josquin arrived in Rome only in June 1489, it is hard to resist the conclusion that it was composed for the Lenten season of 1490 or just possibly 1491. *Domine non secundum* would therefore now seem to be one of the very few precisely datable works in the Josquin canon. Its glorious final section, “Adjuva nos, Deus”, shows all the variety of texture and treatment that we find in the masses of Petrucci’s First book. A particularly glorious moment is towards the end at the words “Propter nomen tuam” where the lower voices move into the bottom register leaving a space of a twelfth below the discantus, a gambit entirely foreign to his earlier works.

Returning to the earliest years of his career, though, we have *Ave Maria ... virgo serena* copied by about 1480; and I have just argued that the four-voice canonic *Salve regina* must be from around 1480.

32 Richard Sherr, “*Illibata Dei virgo nutrix* and Josquin’s Roman Style”, in: *JAMS* 41 (1988), pp. 434–64, argues that this must be Roman largely because nothing of this kind appears in the Milanese repertory. (The Roman motets of Weerbeke and Vaqueras that he presents as material for comparison are not overwhelmingly persuasive.) Much of what he says needs to be reconsidered in view of Josquin’s absence from Milan before about 1484, his presence in France before that, and his arrival in the papal chapel three years later than was then supposed. Sherr does after all argue that at first glance the work is in the Netherlandish style of the 1470s, owing something to the five-voice motets of Regis (several of which seem to be from the early 1470s); and he points to details that strongly suggest the direct influence of Busnoys’ *In hydraulis* and his mass *L’homme armé*. Since I have already argued that Josquin’s *Adieu mes amours* builds on the style of Busnoys, it would not be hard to imagine that this was yet another case of a work from Josquin’s “imitation” years; certainly nothing of its design and style appears elsewhere in his securely ascribed works. I suggest that the case for the date of *Illibata* is once again open.

33 Joshua Rifkin, “Josquin in Context”, unpublished paper read at the American Musicological Society annual meeting in Minneapolis, 1978, and kindly made available to me by the author; Sherr, op. cit., pp. 455–62.

Recently three more early dates have been argued or implied. Patrick Macey has argued that *Misericordias Domini* was composed for King Louis XI in about 1482, mainly because the first and last lines of its unusual text had special meaning to Louis, who had the first line painted on 50 scrolls in 1481 and reputedly uttered both lines on his deathbed.³⁴ One feature of this work is its imitation patterns in a cycle of fifths: B, E, A and D (bars 38–44) and G, C, F, B-flat. That seems rare in Josquin, but similar patterns can be found in Loÿset Compère—as though, once again, the young composer was picking up ideas from older colleagues.

In addition, the latest fascicle of the New Josquin Edition³⁵ recalls Jeremy Noble's observation that the two "Genealogy motets"—*Liber generationis* and *Factum est autem*—use chants exclusive to the liturgy of Tours, which would also imply that they were composed in those same years for Louis XI.³⁶

These three works all show a clear and disciplined style, slightly open in texture, with careful imitation and restrained declamation. They also show a relatively continuous design, without the many changes of metre, texture and harmonic rhythm that characterize all the masses in Petrucci's First book.

If Josquin came to Milan only in about 1484, after the death of Louis, it seems almost certain that the two motet-cycles *Vultum tuum* and *Qui velatus facie* come from the mid 1480s. Patrick Macey's recent arguments that previously seemed to demonstrate that these works came from the Milan of the 1470s can be accepted now as at least demonstrating that they must have been composed in Milan³⁷—which more or less confines them to the years 1484–9. Their style is still disciplined but relatively simple, restrained and continuous, thus again quite different from the freedom and massive invention of the masses in the Petrucci's First book.

34 See note 7 above. The arguments are repeated and slightly expanded in Patrick Macey, "Josquin, Good King René, and *O bone et dulcissime Jesu*", in: Dolores Pesce, ed., *Hearing the Motet*, New York and Oxford 1997, pp. 213–42. The further points made in that article, suggesting that the motet *O bone et dulcissime Jesu* was composed around the time of René's death in 1480, are for the moment rather harder to accept, being heavily reliant on a comparison with Josquin's "Milanese" style.

35 NJE vol. 19 (1998), ed. Martin Just.

36 Jeremy Noble, "The Function of Josquin's Motets", in: *TVNM* 35 (1985), pp. 9–22, at p. 20.

37 Patrick Macey, "Galeazzo Maria Sforza and Musical Patronage in Milan: Compère, Weerbeke and Josquin", in: *EMH* 16 (1996), 147–212.

All these motets are extremely long: *Misericordias Domini* almost 300 bars; the two genealogy motets almost 400; *Qui velatus facie* over 500; and *Vultum tuum* almost 600 bars. Many mass cycles of the late fifteenth century are shorter than that: the mass *D'ung aultre amer* has only 350 bars; the mass *Faysant regretz* only 550. Of the definitely later motets in five and six voices, only the *Miserere* is more than 200 bars long, and even that hardly reaches 400 bars. I would therefore propose that, broadly speaking, the long motets are mainly from the 1480s and the shorter ones from after 1490. If that seems an oddly naive way of looking at the picture, it does at least happen to fit the available information and could well reflect changing priorities.

After all, from the motet-cycles of other composers in these years, particularly Gaspar van Weerbeke or Loyset Compere, it looks as though several people were trying to experiment with new ways of writing extended musical works. The five-movement polyphonic mass Ordinary cycle began its real career with Dufay and Ockeghem only in about 1450; and it quickly became the main form for ambitiously intended music. A quarter of a century later some composers could well have looked for other ways of writing large works. Among them were not only Weerbeke and Compere but also Josquin. After a first attempt to compose a mass ordinary cycle, in the mass *L'ami Baudichon*, Josquin seems to have dropped the idea and explored different avenues, only to return to it in the 1490s as a member of the papal chapel.

That sketchy outline is obviously not enough to make a definitive case. It is no more than a first attempt to draw some conclusions from the new biographical picture. The last statement on Josquin chronology before the new facts came to light may be that of Allan Atlas in his book *Renaissance Music*, in which he wrote that "To ponder the chronology of Josquin's output is to go around in circles".³⁸ I strongly suggest that the main problem was the need to spread the available music across a composing career of some sixty years from about 1460 to 1521, therefore to leap at any possible opportunity to declare a work much earlier than its earliest sources. With a career that begins shortly before 1480, everything suddenly looks a lot simpler. Of course it is still necessary to accept, as with all Renaissance composers, that some works appear in the few surviving sources far later than their

38 Allan W. Atlas, *Renaissance Music: Music in Western Europe, 1400–1600*, New York 1998, p. 257.

date of composition. But it is not so regularly necessary. From about the mid-1490s Josquin seems to have been widely recognized as the leading composer of his time. Particularly with the masses, a very plausible picture emerges if we posit that these major works come from about the date of their earliest sources. If, in addition to that, we accept that there is a good case for thinking that the mass *Pange lingua* was composed not much after 1510, very few works are likely to be later. For his main output, there is therefore a composing career of only about thirty years; and I am suggesting that his music did not become fully characteristic of what we think of as the "Josquin style" until around 1490—though that is obviously not to deny that he composed a number of astonishing masterpieces before then, among them *Adieu mes amours* and *Ave Maria ... virgo serena*.

I must repeat again that the new information does not yet give us a birthdate: it merely shows that the basis for the 1440 birthdate was false; most of my outline hangs on the still unproven theory that he could have been born in the mid-1450s. But on that basis the picture seems to look like this: many of the songs in three and four voices are from the late 1470s; the four-voice *Salve regina* would be from about 1480, *Ave Maria ... virgo serena* slightly earlier and the mass *Lami Baudichon* earlier still; the long motets and motet-cycles are almost all from the 1480s; the masses in Petrucci's First Book are all from the 1490s, the remaining masses all from about 1502 to 1512; the motets in five and six voices remain almost all in the years 1500–1510; and I would suggest that the six-voice *Pater noster/Ave Maria* is still one of his last surviving works.³⁹ Similarly, the songs in five and six voices are mostly from his years in Condé, after 1504. These are obviously all simply suggestions for further discussion, contradiction or refinement; but they seem plausible at least to me. Their main intention is, returning to Harley Granville-Barker's politician, to begin clearing out the wardrobe of our minds, to see whether a new set of clothes may not fit the severely changed body of Josquin des Prez slightly better.

39 Daniel E. Freeman, "On the Origins of the *Pater noster*—*Ave Maria* of Josquin Des Prez", in: *MD* 45 (1991), pp. 169–219, suggests that liturgical considerations place the work considerably earlier.