

INTRODUCTION

1. Joannes Tollius

a. His life

His original name in Dutch may have been Jan van Tol or something like that; he was born around 1550 in Amersfoort, a small town in the province of Utrecht in the Netherlands. We know very little about his life and some facts are not entirely sure as well. Already as a young man – he might have been in his early twenties – he became ‘musices moderator’ in the church of the Virgin Mary in his native town. We know this because in the preface of his first book with motets for five voices Tollius thanks his former colleagues for choosing him unanimously in spite of his young age as their music leader. Around 1580 Tollius left for Italy and – as far as we know – never returned to his native town again. Possibly it was because of the Reformation that he left the Low Countries, but no evidence is found for his motivation. Lots of young artists and scholars went to Italy before him in search for education and adventure. Some of them returned after a while in their homeland, others stayed in Italy or travelled to other places in Europe.

On 2 September 1583 Tollius became ‘maestro di cappella’ in Rieti, a small town not far from Rome. Already a year later he was to be found in the same position in Assisi. In these days he must have joined the Franciscans, but already in 1585 he was cast off from the order. At the same time he lost his position in Assisi and in the years to come we are not sure about his whereabouts. Probably he stayed in Rome for at least a while. On 17 May 1588 Tollius became a singer (tenor) in the cathedral choir in Padua. He stayed for more than ten years in this job. In 1589 he was prosecuted of heresy, but now he was successfully defended by his former employer, the bishop of Assisi.

In 1601 Tollius is to be found in Copenhagen, where he became a job at the court of Christian IV of Denmark. This position – from 10 October 1601 until 18 January 1603 – lasted not much longer than one year and afterwards nothing is known about the whereabouts of Tollius. The fact however that his inheritance was shared not earlier than 1629, we may assume that he lived still many years after 1603. His death will have been closer to 1625 than to 1603.

Although we know some facts, it is not clear why Tollius had problems several times. He became prosecuted sometimes, but rehabilitation followed in all cases we know of. He also is known to have fought. On 21 January 1598 he had a scuffle with his colleague singer Rosseto (both became a penalty of 5 ducats). Was Tollius the initiator or was he the victim? The answer on this question is not to be found anymore. Two contemporary testimonies about Tollius are conflicting with each other. Arnoldus Buchelius wrote about Tollius in his *Vitae eruditorum Belgicorum* and called him a fine musician, but somebody with a rather dark reputation, whilst Eric van der Putte (‘Puteanus’), who personally knew Tollius, called him in his *Epistolarum promulsis* a man with a magnificent character and perfect in music.

From several facts we can distillate how people in his days looked on the musical qualities of Tollius. The two mentioned witnesses are opposite to each other as far as it concerns the personality of the composer, about his musical capacities both are very positive. His being pronounced as music master in the church of the Virgin Mary indicates that people were impressed already by his musicality when he was still a young man. This church was in those days an important place of pilgrimage and the position of music leader in this church was certainly not without prestige. The fact that in Padua twice a madrigal by him as only outsider was concluded in a book with contributions of further solely Italian masters is another hint that his talent was respected. That no one less than Claudio Monteverdi paraphrased a madrigal by Tollius in his own composition on the same text must be indicated as a manifestation of appreciation. The strongest evidence however for the recognition of Tollius as an important musician is to be found in his salary at the Danish court. He earned an annuity of 300 thaler, where his predecessors never got more than 180 to 200 thaler for the same job. Obviously they would spend a lot to connect him to the court and that shows us how high his star was risen at the sky of the European musical world.

b. His works

All the compositions by Tollius that we know of were printed in the nineties of the sixteenth century, the period that he worked in Padua. The printed editions are the only sources, no manuscripts have survived. Three quarters of the oeuvre consist of motets (religious compositions on Latin texts, intended for use in the Catholic Church). We know of two issues with three part motets (printed resp. in 1590 and 1597, the last one provides us also with a motet on a Dutch text) and two issues with five part motets (both printed in 1591). All the other compositions are madrigals (secular compositions with Italian texts). One issue with six part madrigals (1597) and two separate madrigals in anthologies (both printed in 1598), one for four voices and one for five. The first book with three part motets is now lost. Until the Second World War only the part book of the bass was left and since then also that one is missing and as far as known no photographic reproductions were ever made. Of the anthology with the four part madrigal the tenor and bass parts are missing. All other prints are complete.

The collected works by Tollius are to be published in this series in five issues:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| I. Motectorum quinque vocum, liber primus (five part motets) | <i>c.f.</i> T 911 |
| II. Motectorum quinque vocum, liber secundus (five part motets) | <i>c.f.</i> T 912 |
| III. Moduli trium vocum (three part motets) | <i>c.f.</i> T 913 |
| IV. Madrigali a sei voci (six part madrigals) | <i>c.f.</i> T 914 |
| V. Miscelenea and archivalia | <i>c.f.</i> 1598 ^{7/9} |

2. The ‘Moduli trium vocum’

a. The source.

The ‘Moduli trium vocum’ were printed in 1597 by Commelinus in Heidelberg and were dedicated to Marco Corner, bishop of Padua. At the same time Commelinus issued the six part madrigali by Tollius (volume IV in this series) and a collection of works by Lassus and other composers with French text underlayment from the Genevan Psalms. This last issue was gathered by the leader of the Amsterdam Music College, whilst the madrigals were dedicated to this ensemble. The three issues together form a triptych with all the current genres of the music in those days: Italian madrigals (secular music), Latin motets (Catholic church music) and French psalms (Protestant music).¹

The music is printed in the usual part books in quarto oblong (approximately 20 by 14 cm), each voice its own part book. For the ‘moduli’ there are three such books, titled ‘Cantus’, ‘Tenor’ and ‘Bassus’. Each part book has four quires (each with four leafs) of which the first three are numbered (A, A2, A3), whilst the fourth leaf has no quire number. The quires are marked with A-B-C-D for the Cantus, E-F-G-H for the tenor and I-K-L-M for the bassus. The pages are also numbered in the upper outer corner. The first two pages of each part book – which are not numbered – have the title page and the dedication. The music follows on pages 3-32. The text on the first two pages reads:

Title page (page 1):

MODULI TRIUM / VOCUM, E SACRIS BIBLIIS / PLERIQUE OMNES DESUMPTI. / [leaf of a lily] / *Ioanne Tollio Amorfortio auctore.* / [CANTUS / TENOR / BASSUS] / M. D. XCVII / Apud Hieronymum Commelinum.²

Dedication (page 2):

Illustrissimo / et reverendissimo / domino, d. marco cornelio / episcopo patavino digniss[imo] / l. m. q. dd. [= libens meritoque dedicat] / ioannes tollius / amorfortius.³

¹ Rudolf Rasch, *Utrechtse biografieën Het Eemland 2*, (Spou 1999), p202.

² *Translation*: Music pieces with three voices, almost all collected from the Holy Scripture, Joannes Tollius from Amersfoort is the author, 1597, by Hieronymus Commelinus.

³ *Translation*: To the very illustrious and very honourable lord, [the lord] Marco Corner, the very dignified bishop of Padua, is this willingly and with full conviction dedicated by Joannes Tollius from Amersfoort.

There are four copies left of the ‘moduli’, of which one is incomplete. The complete sets are to be found in the Royal Library of Belgium in Brussels, in the Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek of Köln and in the Herzog-August-Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel (Niedersachsen). In the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. only the part books of the cantus and the bassus are to be found.

Each composition (or complete part of it) takes in each part book exactly one page. Each page has five staves, of which mostly three and otherwise two or four are occupied by the music, the others are empty. Only in one case just one staff was used for the music, and in a few other cases all five staves were necessary for the music notation. In no cases more than one page was used for one composition or completed part of it. The first part (‘Prima pars’) of a composition gets an initial that equals three staves, the following parts (‘Secunda pars’ and eventually ‘Tertia pars’) become an initial that equals only one staff.

b. Texts

According to the title page most of the texts are taken from the bible and indeed 17 out of the 30 compositions have a biblical text, mainly taken from the New Testament. The three texts that are taken from the Old Testament are all fragments from the book of Psalms: psalm 109, 1a (no. 4), psalm 109, 4b (no. 5) and psalm 117 (with small doxology, no. 29). Six texts are taken from the gospel of St. Matthew: Mt 5, 13 (no. 19), Mt 5, 14a + 16 (no. 20), Mt 16, 18 (no. 10), Mt 16, 19 (no. 11), Mt 25, 20 (no. 21) and Mt 25, 21 (no. 22). Two texts are taken from the gospel of St. Luke: Lc 22, 19 (no. 6) and Lc 22, 20 (no. 7). Three are taken from the gospel of St. John: Io 10, 11 (no. 9), Io 20, 22-23 (no. 12) and Io 21, 17 (no. 8). Three texts are finally taken from the Acts of the Apostles: Act 8, 9 (no. 23), Act 8, 19 (no. 24) and Act 8, 20 (no. 25). The text of no. 26 is from a hymn.

The other texts are made out of a gathering of well known fragments from the bible, the liturgy or a consecration rite for a bishop. They seem to be collected by a priest/poet who liked to sing biblical admonitions during the consecration of a bishop. No. 28 ‘Benedicta sit sancta’ for instance is a variation on the introit for the feast of the holy Trinity and no. 18 ‘Episcopus imponit manus’ is the beginning of a rubric for a consecration. The fact that the collection is dedicated to Marco Corner, the bishop of Padua, explains perhaps the choice of texts. The bishop succeeded in 1595, two years before this collection came to light, the shortly before deceased Alviso Corner.⁴ Probably this collection contains some compositions that Tollius composed especially for the consecration of Marco Corner. It is furthermore not impossible that Tollius was the composer of these texts as well. A special place in the ‘Moculi trium vocum’ is taken by the last composition, the *Cantilen Belgica* (no. 30). The text is from an anonymous Dutch poet and is about Christmas. It is the only Dutch text set by Tollius that we know of and it might go back to the time he lived in Amersfoort.

c. The use of the clefs

The clefs used by Tollius are the normal clefs in those days: different c- and f-clefs and regularly also a g-clef is used. It never happens that within a completed part of a composition clefs are changed. One would expect that the same goes for two parts that together form a composition, but this is not always the case. In most instances the new clef is placed one line higher or lower than the preceding one and the part can easily be sung by the same voice. Only in one instance the clefs are two lines apart.

In the cases where a g-clef occurs in the source we are dealing with the clef combination of ‘chiavette’. For the effect of this clef combination on the execution of these compositions see below.

d. Transposition because of ‘chiavette’

With ‘chiavette’ (the Italian word for little keys, used as opposite to ‘chiave naturale’, normal keys) a special clef combination is meant that indicates that the music should be sung lower than notated. Although the scientists are not unanimous about this phenomenon, on basis of the practice we must conclude that a transposed execution often gives a far better result than a not transposed one.

⁴ Tollius dedicated his second collection of 5-part motets from 1591 (c.f. T 912) to this bishop.

The principle of ‘chiavette’ is based on the idea that the music is read as if it was notated in another clef, but of course in maintenance of the interval structure of the original clef. Each clef should be read as if placed one line lower, with the downwards transposition of a third as the result.

Whilst the g-clef is the most striking element of ‘chiavette’, the lowest clef settles the matter. When a part is notated in a bass-clef no lower clef is possible. So when a g-clef occurs in combination with a bass-clef the principle of ‘chiavette’ is excluded. This is sometimes the case in this source.

In the current transcriptions the music in ‘chiavette’ is moreover not transposed with a third down, but with a fourth. The reason is that the transposition with a third (major or minor) gives a for renaissance music unpleasant lot of accidentals. The choice for transposition with a fourth down is also suggested by lute intavolations, in which vocal models in ‘chiavette’ are almost always intavolated a fourth down. When problems occur in the execution of compositions that are transposed down because of ‘chiavette’, it is obvious to search to solution a second higher.

e. Measuring and bars

In the ‘Moduli’ for the two part meter only the sign C, without dash, is used. In these measures the minim is the beat. Note values are in these transcriptions not halved and the mensural sign is always taken over literally. The passages in three part meter – that occur in some compositions – are notated in different ways: in no. 20 it is done with a circle with the figure 3 at the upper right hand and the figure 2 at the lower right hand; in no. 23 (after the start in two part meter) by a large figure 3 in the middle of the staff in combination with black notation; in no. 25 with a C and a figure 3 in the middle of the staff and in combination with black notation as well; in no. 28 with a circle and the figure 3 in the middle of the staff (cantus), resp. with a circle and the figure 3 at the upper right hand and the figure 2 at the lower right hand (tenor and bass); and no. 30 with a C and the figure 3 in the middle of the staff, but without black notation.

f. Accidentals

Accidentals are valid for the note that they proceed and for direct repetition of notes at the same pitch, even when they belong to the beginning of a new word or even a new sentence (compare no.5 Cantus m. 10 and 13). However when a rest occurs between these notes the accidental is not valid anymore for the notes after the rest or the accidental should be notated again (as in no. 3 Tenor m. 11, where the accidental is repeated). The sharp (by means of a double x) is also used as a natural sign for flatted notes. Tollius notated a lot of accidentals, but also in his music accidentals must be added sometimes by the executioners.

3. Editorial principles

In the editions of Cantus Firmus a reliable and verifiable transcription of the original source is the main issue. All necessarily additions are therefore made recognizable. A short incipit precedes the first music line and gives the original clef and the first note (eventually preceded by rests).

Clefs

In de transcriptions the next rule is consequently applied. At ‘chiave naturale’ the soprano-clef and the mezzo-soprano-clef are transcribed in the g-clef, the alto-clef and tenor-clef in the octavating g-clef and the baritone-clef and bass-clef in the modern f-clef (exception is the mezzo-soprano-clef in no. 15, which is transcribed – because of the correspondence with the alto-clef in no. 16 – in an octavating g-clef). At ‘chiavette’ accordingly the g-clef and soprano-clef are transcribed in the g-clef, the mezzo-soprano-clef and alto-clef in the octavating g-clef, and the tenor-clef and baritone-clef in the modern f-clef.

Bar lines and measures

The compositions in the source are notated without bar lines, in the transcription the bar lines therefore are placed between the staves of a system. In compositions with a two part meter in principle bar lines are added every four minims. In cases that this seems to be more convenient a

bar line can be placed after six minims (or – rarely – after two); this is not indicated by a sign, because the bar lines are meant for nothing more than vertical orientation. Passages in three part meter are transcribed as a 6/2-measure (nos. 20, 23 en 26) or a 3/2-measure (nos. 25 en 28). The difference is only because of the legibility of the score. Sometimes the change of meter occurs half-way the measure, so with two minims in the one and three in the other meter.

When the music is going further on the next staff, in the transcription this is indicated by a small vertical dash on the top line of the staff. The change of staff is always taking place on the beat.

Accidentals

Accidentals are taken literally from the source and placed in front of the notes, even when this is not necessary in modern notation (for instance at repetition of this accidental within the same bar). Accidentals that are not notated in the source, but of which it is probable that they have been added by the executioners, are placed above the notes. In contrary to the most sixteenth century music the augmented second as a melodic interval appears more than once in the music of Tollius (see nos. 24 and 30).

The critical text version and the text underlayment

On top of each transcription the text is printed in a critical version, with accents on the accentuated syllables for each word that contains more than two syllables (words with two syllables have the accentuation always on the first). In the parts the text is always transcribed literally from the source (including inconsistencies), provided that the spelling is normalised (so ‘u’ and ‘v’ and ‘i’ and ‘j’ are used as in modern spelling). In the source ‘v’ is used at the beginning of a word and in all other cases a ‘u’ is used; the ‘j’ does not occur in the source.

Text of which the repetition is marked by signs (:/) is printed in italics. The usual abbreviations are worked out silently. The text placement is in the source very clear and is – apart from some obvious mistakes – followed in the transcriptions with accuracy. In breaking of the syllables in this Latin texts consonants are placed after the break as far as pronunciation is possible. That this was also the case in the original becomes clear from words as de-xtris (no. 4, Tenor, m. 7) and pa-stor (no. 9, all voices).

Literature:

R. Rasch: ‘Tollius, Joannes’ in: *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians* (London 2001)

R. Rasch : ‘Joannes Tollius (±1550-na 1603) componist en musicus’, in: *Utrechtse biografieën Het Eemland 2*, (Spou 1999), p.199-203.

F.R. Noske : ‘Een driestemmig Nederlands kerstlied van Joannes Tollius (1597)’, in: *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, 33 (1983), p.101-107.

F.R. Noske : ‘Joannes Tollius, ein niederländischer Meister des Frühbarock’, *Bericht über den siebenten internationalen musikwissenschaftlichen Kongress Köln 1958* (Kassel, 1959), p.203-207.

M. Seifert : ‘Jan Tollius’, *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, 7 (1901), p.4-19.

CRITICAL COMMENTARY

No.1. Audite, stirps Levitica

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

No.2. Ut curam habeatis

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

No. 3. Sacerdotes Dei

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

No. 4. Dixit Dominus

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

m.2, B: the upward stem of the ligature is missing.

No. 5. Tu es sacerdos in æternum

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

m.11-12, C: the source gives only one minim rest.

No. 6. Accipite, et manduca te

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

In the part book of the bass is wrongly written 'TENOR' above this page.

m.6, T: in the source the text underlayment has the first two crotchets still with the syllable 'man-', and 'du-ca-te' on the next two crotchets and minim.

No. 7. Hic calix novum testamentum est

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

No. 8. Petre, amas me

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

No. 9. Bonus pastor

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

m.15, B: the source gives a minim at the place of the first crotchet.

No. 12. Accipite Spiritum sanctum

m.6, C: strange place to break the system, because it is usual to do that immediately before the descending beat.

No. 13. Fidelis sermo

The clef combination with a g-clef in the cantus and a bass-clef in the bassus does not lean itself to 'chiavette', because the bass part cannot be read in a lower clef.

No. 14. Oportet autem et illum

m.6 t/m 10, T: on the second staff the flat in the Tenor is one line to high, namely between the third and fourth line.

No. 15. Honor fratres

m.1, B: the first three syllables are placed one note too far to the right.

m.11-14, C: the text for the third (and last) music line begins at the left margin, but there is no music yet, because this spot still is used for the initial. The 'æ' of the final word 'adæquari' stands exactly under the first note of this system.

No. 18. Episcopus imponit manus

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

No. 19. Vos estis sal terrae

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

m. 8, C: the source gives a crotchet rest.

m.13, B: strange place to break the system.

No. 20. Vos estis lux mundi

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

No. 21. Domine, quinque talenta

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

No. 22. Euge, serve bone et fidelis

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

In the first sentence the words 'bone et' are an addition to the Biblical text (Mt. 25, 21), where the text reads: 'Euge serve fidelis'.

No. 23. Erat autem in civitate Samariæ

m19, CTB: from the second half of the measure the music is in black notation, besides in all voices this passage is preceded by the figure 3.

No. 24. Date & mihi potestatem

According to the passage of bar 9 the augmented second was to Tollius acceptable as an interval. This is important to realise for the interpretation of other places in his music.

No. 26. Veni, sancte Spiritus

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

No. 27. Sancte Spiritus, cunctos sacerdotes

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

No. 28. Benedicta sit

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

m.36, T: the breve consists of two semibreves, the first of which is perfect (so consisting of three minims) and the second of which is imperfect (and so consisting of two minims) because of the minim rest that follows. For this reason the total length of this breve is all together five minims.

No. 29. Laudate Dominum omnes gentes

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

Canon 1. in the lower octave in contrary motion. Canon 2. is to be sung in the same pitch. The transcription of the canons is according to the part books. Remarkable rhythmic difference in the bass part m. 6 in comparison to the same spot in the cantus.

No. 30. Met vlyt aensyt / Cantilena Belgica

Transposition because of 'chiavette'.

m.14-15, C: augmented second b flat-c sharp (transposed f-g sharp).

m.26: Cantus: In the source this is a 'c' (transposed a 'g'), but according to bar 21 it is obvious that a 'c' sharp is meant (transposed 'g' sharp).

In all part books after this composition the word 'FINIS' is notated in the right hand under corner.

