

# 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 than 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:

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|---|---------------------------------|
| 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 <sup>7/9</sup> |

## **2. The ‘Madrigali a sei voci’**

### **a. The source**

The ‘Madrigali a sei voci’ is issued in 1597 by Commelinus in Heidelberg and was dedicated to the ‘Amsterdam music college’. At the same time this firm issued the second book of three part motets by Tollius (volume III 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. 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).<sup>1</sup>

The madrigals are printed in the usual part books in quarto oblong (approximately 20 by 14 cm), each voice its own book. In this case there are six such books, with the names Canto, Alto, Tenore, Basso, Quinto and Sesto. Each part book has three quires of eight pages. For the canto the quires are marked a-b-c, for the tenore d-e-f, for the alto g-h-i, for the quinto k-l-m, for the sexto n-o-p and for the basso q-r-s (instead of q2 on the second leaf of the first quire in the basso part book wrongly p2 is printed). 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 3-23 and on the last (not numbered) page we find the contents (‘TAVOLA’). The text on the first two pages reads:

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

*Title page (page 1):*

MADRIGALI A / SEI VOCI, / [lily leaf] / *Di Giovan Tollio d' Amorforte* / [CANTO / ALTO / TENORE / BASSO / QUINTO / SESTO] / M. D. XCVII / Appresso Girolamo Commelino.<sup>2</sup>

*Dedication (page 2):*

INCLITO / AMSTERDAMENSIVM / MUSICORVM COLLEGIO / OPTIME DE SE MERITO / L. M. Q. DD. [= libens meritoque dedicat] / IOANNES TOLLIVS / AMORFORTIVS.<sup>3</sup>

The part books are momentarily to be found in four libraries, but no one has a complete set. The Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel possesses a copy of which the alto part book is lacking, the Bischöfliche Zentralbibliothek at Regensburg has a copy of which the canto is missing, in the British Library in London the quinto and sesto are absent, and in the Toonkunst – Bibliotheek in Amsterdam is only the part book of the quinto to be found.

Each composition (or part of it) takes in the part books about one page. Each page has five staves. The printer tried to start each new composition on top of the page. When a composition needed more than five staves the resting notes were by preference placed at the bottom of the opposite page (both at the left or the right hand, without the necessity to turn the page). In these cases the continuation is marked by a leaf like arrow both at the end of the first page as at the beginning of the line on the other page. This way never more than one line is to be found on the other page<sup>4</sup>. If the opposite page had no space to act this way, the resting notes were placed on top of the next page and the beginning of the next composition was not on the first staff anymore (of which of course the continuation necessarily had to be moved to the next page as well).<sup>5</sup> All compositions start at the same page in all part books and have an initial for the first letter. The very first madrigal has an initial that equals three staves and all the other madrigals start with an initial that equals one staff.

## **b. Texts**

All the texts are in Italian. In some cases the text is split up in two parts, namely in the nos. 3/4, 5/6, 11/12, 13/14 en 15/16. From two texts the author could be traced: the sonnet 'Zefiro torna' (nos. 5/6) is by Petrarch and the poem 'I tuoi capelli' (nos. 11/12) is by Giacomo Sannazaro. The other texts are anonymous as far as could be traced. Some texts were also used by other composers, namely 'Ardo in un tempo' (no. 1), 'Amor potente iddio' (no. 2), 'Due capre e due caprette' (no. 7), 'Il dolce sonno' (no. 10), 'Tra le dolcezze' (nos. 15/16), and 'Che fa hoggi il mio sole' (no. 20). Other texts could have been of a local origin, for example this might be the case with the text 'Nel collar scritto', about a dog with 'I am from

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<sup>2</sup> *Translation:* Madrigals for six voices, by Joannes Tollivus from Amersfoort, 1597, printed by Girolamo Commelino.

<sup>3</sup> *Translation:* To the famous Amsterdam Music College, which is of the noblest merit, is this willingly and with full conviction dedicated by Joannes Tollivus from Amersfoort.

<sup>4</sup> This situation occurs in the canto on p. 4 (continuation on p. 5), op p. 7 (continuation on p. 6) and on p. 8 (continuation on p. 9); in the alto on p. 7 (continuation on p. 6) and on p. 8 (continuation on p. 9); in the tenore on p. 7 (continuation on p. 6), on p. 8 (continuation on p. 9) and on p. 15 (continuation on p. 14); in the quinto on p. 4 (continuation on p. 5), on p. 8 (continuation on p. 9) and on p. 17 (continuation on p. 16); and in the sesto on p. 4 (continuation on p. 5), on p. 7 (continuation on p. 6) and on p. 8 (continuation on p. 9). In the basso this situation does not occur.

<sup>5</sup> This situation occurs in the canto on p. 10 (continuation on p. 11), on p. 11 (continuation on p. 12) and on p. 15 (continuation on p. 16) until p. 18 (continuation on p. 19); in the alto on p. 10 (continuation on p. 11) until p. 18 (continuation on p. 19); in the tenore on p. 16 (continuation on p. 17) and p. 17 (continuation on p. 18); and in the sesto on p. 10 (continuation on p. 11) until p. 13 (continuation on p. 14) and on p. 15 (continuation on p. 16) until p. 18 (continuation on p. 19). In these cases the continuation on a new page is not marked by a sign. In the basso and the quinto this situation does not occur.

Isabella' on its collar. It could be possible that some of the texts have been written by Tollius himself, but nothing points to that fact.

### **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 the case in nos. 15/16. In this madrigal the alto part changes from a mezzo-soprano-clef in the first part to an alto-clef in the second part. Nevertheless this voice can be sung by the same singer in both parts and (in spite of the editorial principles) in this case both clefs are transcribed in a transposing g-clef. In the cases where a g-clef occurs in the source we are dealing with the clef combination of 'chiavette'. This occurs at nos. 1 (GGGMAT), 2 (GGGMAT), 3/4 (GGSMAT), 17 (GGSMAT), 19 (GSMATBar), 20 (GSMATBar) en 21 (GSMATBar)<sup>6</sup>. 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.

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. Although this sometimes is the case in compositions by Tollius, in this source it never happens.

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 'Madrigali' 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 in most cases notated with a C and a small figure 3 at the right hand top and a small figure 2 at the right hand bottom. The minims in these two measurements are always related as 2:3 (so three minims of the three part meter are equalling two minims of the two part meter). This occurs at no. 6 (m. 31-52), no. 7 (m. 13-23) and at no. 21 (m.6-15). Within the sections in three part meter not always the beat is on every third minim, sometimes it is every two minims (and in fact we are dealing with a 3/1-measurement instead of a 6/2-

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<sup>6</sup> G = g-clef, S = soprano-clef, M = mezzo-soprano-clef, A = alto-clef, T = tenor-clef and Bar = baritone-clef.

measurement). When this occurs it is in the source not visible and neither it is in the transcriptions: it is perfectly clear from the musical context. In no. 17 (m. 10 and 11) we find triads that are in the source in black notation and got a figure 3 as well above or under each group of three. In the transcription these have been notated as triads as well.

#### **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. 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. The sharp (by means of a double x) is also used as a natural sign for flatted notes. All the accidentals that occur in the source are literally taken over in the transcriptions and placed in front of the note in question, even when this is not necessarily in modern notation (for example by repetition within a bar). Tollius notates a lot of accidentals, but also in his music accidentals must be added sometimes by the executioners. These accidentals are placed above the notes.

### **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 bar lines are added every four minims. Passages in three part meter are transcribed as a 6/2-measure and become the bar lines every six minims. Regularly 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. Is the music going further on a new page, this is indicated by a double dash. This change of staff is always taking place on the beat.

#### **The critical text version and the text underlayment**

On top of each transcription the text is printed in a critical version. 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

followed in the transcriptions with accuracy. In some cases to the text placement of the source an alternative is given in square brackets.

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 : '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.3. Belle nimfe**

Canto, m.7: proposal for better text placement between square brackets.

## **No.4. E dir anchor**

Alto, m.20, 8<sup>th</sup> crotchet: e (transposed b) replaced by d (transposed a).

## **No.5. Zefiro torna**

Tenore, m.12, 4<sup>th</sup> minim: natural sign ignored.

## **No.6. Ma per me lasso**

Tenore, m.44, 1<sup>st</sup> note: the breve consists of two semibreves, of which the first is perfect (consisting of three minims) and the second is imperfect (consisting of two minims). So this breve has all together a length of five minims.

Alto, m.44, 6<sup>th</sup> minim: semibreve reduced to a minim. Seiffert gives in his transcription of 1901 a b flat (probably to avoid a parallel movement).

## **No.8. Nel collar scritto**

Sesto, quinto, tenore, m.22-23: proposal for a better text placement between square brackets.

Canto, sesto, tenore, m. 31-33: idem.

## **No.9. Care vermiglie labra**

The final bar line lacks in all voices. This is probably because of the fact that the parts end with a small note followed by rests (see also no. 15).

## **No.12. Basse con queste rime**

Canto, m. 6, 3<sup>rd</sup> minim: here begins in the source a new staff. At the beginning of this new staff in the source immediately after the clef a sharp is printed between the third and fourth line (at the pitch of a). This is supposedly a misprint.

## **No.13. D'acqua viva**

Alto, m.15, 5<sup>th</sup> crotchet: c against c sharp in the canto.

## **No.14. Fiorian le rive**

Alto, m.16-18: In this passage are in the source at least two mistakes shortly after each other. The reconstruction is therefore difficult. In bar 16 a crotchet rest is added after the minim rest and at the end of bar 17 the crotchet d is enlarged to a minim. Other solutions are also possible.

## **No.15. Tra le dolcezze e l'ire**

The final bar line lacks in all voices. This is probably because of the fact that the parts end with a small note followed by rests (see also no. 9).

## **No.16. E mentre il duol**

Tenore, m.19-21: proposal for a better text placement between square brackets (cf. quinto m.12-14).

## **No.17. Anchor ch'in alto mar**

Canto, m.26-31: proposal for a better text placement between square brackets.

## **No.21. Della veloce sona**

Canto, m.30, 8<sup>th</sup> crotchet: minim reduced to a crotchet.

