

Guillaume Du Fay

Opera Omnia 01/21

Lamentatio Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae

Edited by Alejandro Enrique Planchart



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Cantus

O tres pi - teulx de tour e - spoir fon - tai - - ne,

Contratenor

O tres piteulx de tour espoir fontaine

Tenor

Bassus

7

Pe - re du filz dont suis me - re e - splo - - re - - - -

13

e, Plain - dre me _____ viens a ta court sou - ve - - rai - -

Om - - nes a - mi - ci e - - ius

Plaindre me viens

19

ne, De ta puis - san - ce et de na - tu - re _____

spre - ve - - runt e - am.

25

hu - - mai - ne, Qui ont souf - fert tel - le dur - té vil - lai - -
Non est qui con - - so - le - tur e -

31

ne Fai - re a mon filz, qui tant m'a hou - nou -
am ex om - - ni - bus ce - - -

37

re - - - e.
ris e - - - ius.

43

♩ [recte C]
Dont suis de bien et de joye es - ga - - re - - -
♩ [recte]
Dont suis de bien
♩ [recte]
Dont suis de bien
♩ [recte]
Dont suis de bien

51

Score for measures 51-58. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "e Sans qui vi - vant veul - le en - - ten - - -". The music is in a minor key with a common time signature. The vocal line is in the soprano register, and the piano accompaniment consists of a right-hand part in the treble clef and a left-hand part in the bass clef. The piano part features a prominent bass line with a melodic contour that supports the vocal line.

59

Score for measures 59-66. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "dre nes plains." The musical notation shows a continuation of the melodic and harmonic material from the previous system, with the vocal line moving through a series of notes that lead to the final word "plains."

67

Score for measures 67-74. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "A toy, sel dieu, du for - - fait me". The piano accompaniment continues with a steady bass line. The lyrics "Om - - nes a - - mi - - ci - - e - - ius" appear in the vocal line in the following system.

75

Score for measures 75-82. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "com - - - - plains. Du gref tour - ment et dou -". The piano accompaniment continues. The lyrics "spre - - ve - - runt e - - am." appear in the vocal line in the following system. A performance instruction "MSS: C" is written below the piano part in the second system of this block.

83

leu - - reux oul - tra - - ge, Que voy souf - frir au

Non est qui

93

plus bel des hu - mains Sans nul con - fort de

con - so - le - - tur e - - - am ex om -

103

tout hu - - main li - - - gna - ge, de

- - ni - bus ca - - - ris e - -

113

tout hu - main li - - - gna - ge. ius.

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Sources

MC, pp. 378-79 (no. 102), some text in the cantus, more complete text in the tenor. "Duffay."

Ricc, fols. 34v-36r (no. 30), headed "Lamentacio sancte matris ecclesie Constaninopolitane." Text in the cantus and the tenor.

Clefs and mensurations

		1	43
Cantus	c1	○, MC, Ricc	♢, MC, Ricc
Contratenor	c4	○, MC, Ricc	♢, MC, Ricc
Tenor	c3	○, MC, Ricc	♢, MC, Ricc
Bassus	F4	○, MC, Ricc	♢, MC, Ricc

Text

Cantus		
1	O tres piteulx de tout espoir fontaine, Pere du filz don't suis mere esplree, Plaindre me viens a ta court souveraine De ta puissance et de nature humaine, Qui on souffert telle durté villaine Faire a mon filz, qui tant m'a honouree.	O most merciful one, fountain of all hope, Father of the son of whom I am the tearful mother, I come to lay my complaint at your sovereign court That your power and human nature Have allowed such villainous harm To be done to my son, who has honored me so much.
2	Don't suis de bien et de joye esgaree, Sans que vivant veulle entendre mes plains. A toy, seul Dieu, du forfeit me complains, Du gref tourment et dolooureux oultrage, Que voy souffrir au plus bel des humains Sans nul confort de tout humain lignage.	Thus I am bereft of goodness and joy, Without anyone living willing to hear my complaints. To you, only God, I complain of the crime, Of the grave torment and painful outrage, That I see the most noble of men suffer Without any comfort from the whole human lineage.
Tenor	Omnes amici eius spreverunt eam. Non est qui consoletur eam ex omnibus caris eius.	All her friends have dealt treacherously with her. Among all her lovers she has none to comfort her.

This cannot be the lament of the Holy Church at the Feast of the Pheasant in Lille on 17 February 1454, since the Burgundian chroniclers give the complete text of that lamentation, which is entirely different, and furthermore they do not indicate that it was sung.¹ But this is surely one of the four laments for the fall of Constantinople mentioned in Du Fay's letter to the Medici dated 22 February [1456], as having texts supplied from Naples and having been composed the previous year. Therefore the piece was written during Du Fay's sojourn at the court of Savoy.²

Virtually all the literature on this piece misunderstands the *persona* of the speaker or the court referred to in the text,³ because the title makes use of a rare double genitive. It should be translated as "Lamentation of the mother of the Constantinopolitan church." The speaker is then the Virgin Mary, and her complaint is directly addressed to God the Father. Du Fay's use of a tenor from the Lamentation of Jeremiah, 1:2, as sung during Holy Week (cf. LU, 631), but with the two phrases reversed, should be read as a direct rebuke to all European powers, who failed to help

¹ David Fallows, *Dufay*, rev. ed. (London: Dent, 1987), 71.

² Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo avanti il Principato, MS VI 765. Cf. Frank D'Accone, "The Singers of San Giovanni in Florence During the 15th Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 14 (1961), 318-19. See also <http://www.archiviodistato.firenze.it/nuovosito>.

³ Cf. David Fallows, *The Songs of Guillaume Dufay. Critical Commentary to the Revisions of Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, Ser I, vol. VI*, Musicological Studies and Documents 47 (Stuttgart: American Institute of Musicology, Hänssler, 1995), 55.

the Byzantine empire. In this respect this is Du Fay's most overtly "political" work, telling the European princes (including his patrons): "where were you when she needed your help?"

The piece follows the formal pattern of a number of English works that Du Fay probably came to know well in the 1440s and 1450s, with a first section in perfect time and a second in imperfect time. Both sources use the mensurations \circ and C for perfect and imperfect time respectively. I have let the second sign stand, but it probably represents an editorial translation of Du Fay's original sign which was most likely English C , where three semibreves in \circ equal four in C . Italian scribes usually used C to indicate this same tempo relationship and changed Du Fay's signs accordingly. The tempos of the piece are in some ways determined by its status as a formal motet rather than a song. I would suggest MM 90 for the semibreve (half-note) in \circ and MM 120 in C .

The musical text largely follows MC, which has fewer errors than Ricc, but neither source is very good, and a number of conflated readings have been included. On measure 78 I propose a tentative emendation of the contratenor. It is possible that Du Fay wrote the C to force the performers *not* to use any *musica ficta* in the other voices, but the C is the kind of contrapuntal solecism that is largely absent from Du Fay's music otherwise.