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Facts about *Contrafacta*. Netherlandish-Italian Music in Saxo-Silesian Sources from the Late Fifteenth Century

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The scope and mechanisms of the reception of foreign repertory in fifteenth century Central Europe are still not well known. In contrast, during the second half of the sixteenth century and in the seventeenth century numerous Central European manuscripts (mostly tablatures) and collections of printed editions testify to the great popularity of Italian, French, and Netherlandish music. Furthermore, active reception of foreign repertory was revealed in many *contrafacta*, paraphrases, and parodies, sometimes unidentified for a long time and perceived as originals. Examples of this practice in Poland are *Aleć nade mną Wenus*, “the first Polish madrigal”, which is actually a *contrafactum* of a vilotta by Francesco Patavino, or *Date siceram moerentibus*, “the best Polish motet”, which is a *contrafactum* of a chanson by Josquin Desprez, and finally, the alleged Bakwark song *Albo już dalej trwać nie moze*, which is an intabulated chanson by Pierre Sandrin¹. In the German-speaking realm, strong predilection towards creating *contrafacta* is confirmed by German versions of Italian madrigals, prepared by Valentin Hausmann (Nuremberg 1600, 1606, 1610), and later by Wrocław’s organist Ambrosius Profius (Leipzig 1627–1649). Throughout the entire seventeenth century, creating *contrafacta*, parodies and other transformations of foreign works, mostly Italian, became almost a routine procedure of composers in Central Europe.

However, this issue is almost unknown in the fifteenth century. There are some traces of reception of foreign patterns, predominantly in sources con-

nected with Central European universities (Vienna, Leipzig, Cracow). Analysis of three manuscripts from the very end of the fifteenth century, namely Saxon codices Berlin 40021², Leipzig 1494 (the so called “Apel Codex”)³ and Silesian Codex Warszawa 5892 (the so called “Wrocław Codex”)⁴ might provide information on the transfer of foreign repertory to Central Europe. These manuscripts, close chronologically, territorially, and displaying strong repertory and filiation links, illustrate how native Italian and Franco-Netherlandish music created in Italy influenced Central European music traditions. Although the topic of this study concerns central European contrafacta, it is worth starting with a short review of foreign repertory in Saxo-Silesian codices (I). After examining the general characteristics of Central European contrafactum procedure (II), we focus our attention on French-language chansons (III), and later on Latin motets and Mass movements (IV). In conclusion, several hypotheses on *unica* are proposed (V).

I

In the repertory identified thus far, two generations of Franco-Netherlandish composers are widely represented. The dominant generation is that of Josquin Desprez (Agricola, Compère, Ghiselin, Isaac, Obrecht, Weerbeke). Authors of the majority of works were most active in the last two or three decades of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century, and two of these authors — Agricola and Obrecht — lived only to 1505-1506. Among all Franco-Netherlandish composers, one can point to scarcely three who in all certainty died before the end of the fifteenth century: Busnois, Barbiereau, and Martini; to this group also belong presumably Caron/Dusart and Congiet/Japart (in both cases we have to deal with conflicting attributions). It is noteworthy that the greatest composer of the pre-Josquin generation - Johannes Ockeghem is not represented by any composition, and two other important musicians of the same generation, Busnois and Martini, merely by one or two secular works (Table 1).

Table 1: List of Franco-Netherlandish composers in Saxo-Silesian sources represented: a) several times, b) once (numbers in brackets refer to doubtful or conflicting attributions)

(a)

Author	Leipzig 1494	Berlin 40021	Warszawa 5892	Total
Agricola	0 (2)	7 (11)	4 (6)	9 (14)
Busnois	(1)	1	-	1 (2)
Compère	1	2	2	3
Ghiselin	1	2	2	4
Isaac	9	10 (12)	6 (7)	16 (19)
Josquin	3	5	2 (3)	6 (7)
Martini	-	1	1	2
Obrecht	2	3 (5)	-	5 (7)
Roelkin	1	-	1	2
Weerbeke	2	1	3	4

(b)

Author	Leipzig 1494	Berlin 40021	Warszawa 5892	Total
Barbireau	-	1	-	1
Brumel	-	(1)	-	(1)
Caron/Dusart /Philippon	1	-	-	1
Congiet/Japart	-	1	-	1
Paulus de Rhoda	1	-	-	1
Rener	-	1	-	1

Together, Franco-Nethelandish composers are authors of 57–80 (including dubious attributions) identified works: 10–20 written by Isaac and Agricola, 3–7 by Compère, Ghiselin, Josquin, Obrecht, and Weerbeke. Characteristically, the majority of these composers had similar fates: they all spent part of their artistic lives in famous Italian musical centres, such as Milan’s cathedral and Sforza court (Agricola, Compère, Martini, Weerbeke, later also Josquin), the Este court in Ferrara (Agricola, Ghiselin, Josquin, Martini, Obrecht), Florence’s Medici court, cathedral or baptiserium (Argricola, Ghiselin, Isaac), Rome’s Papal chapel, (Josquin, Martini, Weerbeke), and Aragon court in Naples (Agricola, Ghiselin). Many had personal contacts with each other. Agricola, Martini, Compère and Weerbeke worked in Milan at the

same time; similarly, Agricola, Ghiselin and Isaac worked in Florence, while Josquin and Weerbeke in Rome; and Obrecht, Martini and Josquin met in Ferrara. Works of all these composers in Saxo-Silesian codices constitute characteristic Netherlandish-Italian repertory, created in the prominent musical centers of northern and central Italy during the last three decades of the fifteenth century.

II

Central European sources display abundant contrafacta. Already in the case of Minnesang, original French words of troubadours and trouvères songs were frequently replaced with German text, and Oswald von Wolkenstein (ca. 1444) applied it also to polyphonic music. The process intensified during the next decades of the fifteenth century. This hypothesis is supported by the most important Central European sources, such as the south German manuscript Strasbourg 222 (burnt in 1870), the codex from the St. Emmeran convent in Regensburg (München 14274), the Trent Codices (Trento 87-93), the “Leopold Codex” (München 3154), the Czech Codex “Speciálník” (Hradec Králové 7), and finally, especially interesting here, the Berlin 40021, Leipzig 1494 and Warszawa 5892 manuscripts.

Analysing Central European contrafacta, one has to study three different categories of repertory: 1) contrafacta of chansons, 2) contrafacta of motets and laude, and 3) contrafacta of Mass sections. These correspond to the general classification of fifteenth century polyphony described by Johannes Tinctoris: “cantus parvus”, “cantus mediocris” and “cantus magnus”⁵. Even a perfunctory overview of the fifteenth century repertory suggests that contrafacta of motets and Mass sections are less numerous than contrafacta of chansons, laude and compositions without text. Therefore, using a quantitative criterion, contrafacta of chansons will be discussed first.

Generally admired, small sized perennials were typical of Central European collections, most often however, without text or only with its incipit. One can distinguish the following forms of transmission:

- (i) chansons without a text or title

- (ii) chansons with incipit of original text (usually distorted)
- (iii) chansons with general Latin name (e.g., *Carmen, Gallicum*), solmization key (e.g., *Fa mi fa sol fa*) or indication of the number of voices (e.g., *Trium, Quatuor*)
- (iv) chansons to which a new text is provided or its incipit (usually Latin sacred text).

The majority of forms mentioned here appear in sources discussed above and also in typical collections of secular repertory, e.g., “Glogauer Liederbuch” (Berlin/Kraków 400 98) or the collection of cantor Wolfgang Küffer, dated 1557–1559 (Regensburg 940/41), containing not only textless Mass sections, but also textless chansons and their German *contrafacta*⁶.

What were the reasons for making *contrafacta* of chansons using Latin sacred texts? This widely popular practice in Central Europe resulted chiefly — not exclusively — from a poor command of French⁷. Although a “linguistic landscape” of this area has never been studied, there is a strong indication that in the fifteenth century and at the beginning of the sixteenth century lack of knowledge of French was quite common. Even first collections printed in Germany containing chansons, as anthologies of Arnt von Aich (RISM 1519⁵) or Christian Egenolff (RISM c. 1535²⁴), transmit them without a text. Only with the vast collection of Sigmund Salming and Melchior Kriesstein (RISM 1540⁷), French and gradually also Italian texts appear in German publications. Handwritten versions, however, still remain mostly textless, even in the case of copies from printed editions, e.g. the Küffer collection. If French titles or incipits were adapted (mainly in tablatures), it led to characteristic “latinization”, possible to pronounce for people who did not know French. Therefore, Latin *contrafactum* offered a solution to the dilemma of musicians and scriptors of how to acquire copies of admired chansons without the necessity of pronouncing and understanding vernacular texts.

Another reason for creating *contrafacta* with Latin texts was the historical tradition of the church, with a predilection for emphasis on local and individual factors, as well as the deeply ingrained piety of the rural population. Also, at the time of the Reformation, the church needed a new repertory. Latin text helped to adapt compositions to another audience or to a specific occasion,

or by contrast, a composition written for a specific purpose could be transformed into one with general appeal. Furthermore, this practice presumably resulted from strong links between compilers of individual collections (e.g. St. Emmeram Codex, late Trent Codices, Saxon Codices Leipzig 1494 and Berlin 40021) — with the academic environment or church school circles. It did not have to tie directly with the necessity of “sacralisation” of secular repertory. Only in rare instances were chansons or Italian works provided with German texts (the earliest example of the latter is a reworking of Francesco Landini’s *Quenta fanciulla* by Oswald von Wolkenstein⁸). This procedure became common during the first half of the seventeenth century (Hausmann, Profius and others).

Lack of command of French was not the only reason for preparation of contrafacta. There are Latin versions of German compositions, e.g., the song *Wär ich ein Falck* by Heinrich Finck in Berlin 40021 with a new text *Invicto regi júbilo*, and the very popular *Ach Jupiter* by Adam from Fulda, replaced in the same source with the Marian poem *O diva sollers virgo* (both texts unknown from other sources)⁹. It is also not true that textless compositions always conceal below the surface French songs or instrumental works. In the sources discussed here, several liturgical compositions are transmitted without a text, such as hymns or Magnificats. Also textless are arrangements of German songs, both sacral (*Ich stund an einem Morgen* in Berlin 40021¹⁰) and secular (*Min Herziges Hertz* in Warszawa 5892 and Leipzig 1494¹¹).

Sometimes a contrafactum becomes so very different from the original, that its transformation foreshadows a future procedure of “parody.” An intriguing example from Polish sources is *Alleluja* added to *Gloria* by Mikolaj Radomski in MS Warszawa 8054¹². It is actually a paraphrase of the beginning of Guillaume Dufay’s chanson *Bon jour, bon mois*, as demonstrated a few years ago by Marcin Majchrowski¹³. However, perhaps this alteration was not made on the original chanson, but rather on its Latin contrafactum, because in this form it survived in the St. Emmeram Codex (München 14274) with the text *Jesu iudex veritatis* (eleventh strophe of Jacopone da Todi’s poem *Ave regis angelorum*) and the original title. This manuscript (copied between 1436 and 1459) transmitted most of the repertory cultivated at the Habsburg court

and circles linked to Vienna university, and which may have been performed during the Basel Council (1431–1449). In contrast to two Italian sources (presumably from Venice) of the chanson in question with the original French text (Oxford 213, Paris 4379, both from 1420–1436), the München 14274 copy does not have contratenor. Furthermore, the contratenor in *Alleluja* was replaced by a new one. Perhaps its author knew only the two-voice version of the Dufay composition, although not the one in München 14274, where new Latin text forced several interferences in the rhythmic shape of the original phrases. This reworking was probably made (according to attribution in Warszawa 8054) by Radomski himself, who possibly somehow accessed the München 14274 repertory through direct contacts at the Hapsburg court or met musicians during the Basel Council. The above example well illustrates the complex process of transmission of fifteenth century songs and elucidates interpretation of French repertory preserved in Saxo-Silesian codices.

III

In this study, several repertory examples from Saxo-Silesian codices given below will serve to present the various forms of contrafacturing, involving French chansons as well as Italian frottola or compositions without text¹⁴. For instance, chanson *Des beins d'amours* by Johannes Martini was provided in Berlin 40021 with the Marian text *Ave amator casti consilii*¹⁵, unknown from other sources. Because the new text contained fewer syllables than the original, it required interference with the rhythmic shape of the original phrases (mainly combining shorter rhythmic values into longer ones). However, this procedure did not eliminate all the problems with underlaying new text to notes. Another example is the chanson *Rose playsant* by Caron or Dusart, transmitted in Leipzig 1494 with a text *Ave rex regum ditissime*¹⁶. The author of the contrafactum did not know or ignored the original form of the French poem, with its structure of phrases and ten-syllable versification format, because distorted here are both rules of Latin prosody (e.g., faulty accentuation “Ave verum” resulting from the rhythm of declamatory pattern of the original text — “Prenez regart”) as well as characteristics of melismatic

expansion so typical of chansons of that time, which here receive additional syllables.

Two subsequent pieces exemplify other problems. Berlin 40021 contains the oldest copy of the chanson *Adieu filette* by Heinrich Isaac¹⁷. Although this copy, similarly to three other German versions, is devoid of any text, one can assume that the composition by Isaac functioned as a contrafactum. Perhaps its Latin incipit/title *Non diva parens* in Fridolin Sicher tablature (Sankt Gallen 530) constitutes a trace of this procedure. Furthermore, the Berlin copy exhibits several rhythmic variants in comparison to Italian copies (longer rhythmic values divided into shorter ones) which also suggests that the scriptor already used the contrafactum version. Also textless is chanson *Dictes moy toutes* by Alexander Agricola in Warszawa 5892. This copy of the composition, the only one north of the Alps, is known also from seven Italian sources, two of which contain the sacred contrafactum *Amice ad quid venisti*. Warszawa version differs from Italian copies not only by characteristic ornamentation (known also from *La Matinella* by Johannes Martini in the same manuscript) of the structural tones of individual phrases of superius and tenor, but mainly by real rhythmic variants distorting declamatory patterns of the original. This suggests that the composition reached the compiler as a contrafactum.

Finally, another example is the famous *La morra* by Heinrich Isaac, transmitted in all Italian sources without any text. Entered twice in the Leipzig 1494, once textless and then again as contrafactum *Reple tuorum corda fidelium*¹⁸, it represents one of the most interesting secular composition of that time. Characterized by texture with sequential patterns, it has been considered in the past to be an instrumental composition or even a dance. In spite of lack of any text, this opinion does not seem correct. It is, rather, a Renaissance “song without words”¹⁹. Interestingly, a copyist of the Kottter tablature (Basel F.IX.22) defined *La morra* as a “Mutet”, which indicates vocal origins or at least vocal performances. Also, the author of the second Leipzig version (no. 164) did not recognise the piece as an instrumental composition, underlying the words of antiphon *Veni sancte spiritus* for two voices. The fact that the composition starts only with the words *Reple tuorum corda*

fideliūm, therefore without the intonation characteristic of this antiphon, suggests its performance within the liturgical framework. On the other hand, the manner of underlaying of the text causes its rather vague or even conflicting relation to the music. This is especially visible in the last fragment with many sequences, for which the antiphonal text was not sufficient and required the repeated word “alleluja”.

Also the three-voice *Illuxit dies* from the Berlin 40021²⁰, known from two Italian codices Firenze P27 and Cape Town 3.b.12 seems to be a contrafactum. The first of these transmits this piece as a textless composition; the second one has (probably not the original) words *Uidi impiūm superexaltatum*. The Berlin contrafactum is very successful. Syntactic structure of the new text, underlaying all the voices, corresponds exactly to the subsequent sections of the music. Each precise connection of four-syllable words or phrases with four-note sequential motifs results in undisturbed prosody of the text.

An interesting example of contrafactum is the frottola *Alla battaglia* by Heinrich Isaac preserved in Saxo-Silesian codices with two different Marian texts: *O praeclarissima* in Leipzig 1494²¹ and *Ave santissima* in Warszawa 5892. The only complete Italian (Florence) copy of this frottola is without text, which appears solely in a fragmentary copy (just a bass partbook) of the same provenance. In Central Europe the composition had no text or was prepared as a contrafactum. The latter possibility is indicated not only by the two Saxo-Silesian copies, but also by intabulation with a title/incipit *O dulcendo virginalis* in Fridolin Sicher tablature (Sankt Gallen 530). New texts adhere differently to the music. The Leipzig contrafactum *O praeclarissima* on the one hand displays clear insufficiency of syllables in relation to the notes, and on the other hand destroys the integrity of some words by dividing them with pauses. The author of this adaptation took care only of declamation in the highest voice, treating the lower voices marginally. The Wrocław contrafactum also exhibits small interferences in the rhythmic shape of the original phrases (breaking pointed semibreves to minims, etc.) allowing for better coordination of new text with the music. However, in the context of other Central European contrafacta both Saxo-Silesian adaptations could be considered successful. They testify clearly to the great popularity of secular

Italian music in Central Europe. Moreover, for local authors, the genesis of the composition did not constitute any obstacle in its adaptation for religious purposes.

Two contrafacta of chansons by Alexander Agricola preserved in Berlin 40021 illustrate some ambiguity in performance practice of that time. Both constitute tenor part arrangements from the very popular chanson *Comme femme desconfortée* by Gilles Binchois. The first one, the three-voice *Virgo sub aetheriis*²², has a text using fragments of a metric poem by Aeneas Silvius or Conrad Celtis. Since both poets lived in Nuremberg in Germany, presumably this contrafactum was created there. New text underlays only the slowly moving middle voice (tenor), but the insufficient number of syllables in relation to notes causes significant difficulties in their coordination with the music, especially when repeated sounds require separate syllables. However, both very mobile external voices are devoid of any text and appear as parts designed instrumentally. They did not have to be performed this way, though. This is revealed by the contrafactum of the second, four-voice arrangement: *Ave quae sublimaris*²³. New text underlays only the very condensed rhythmically lowest voice, and its coordination with notes is difficult and demands arbitrary editorial decisions. Therefore, the Berlin version demonstrates that even very complex voice lines could be utilised vocally. Similarly, in performance *Virgo sub aetheriis*, textless mobile external voices did not have to belong to instruments. All parts could be performed with a text, which is no longer present for a variety of reasons.

IV

Although contrafacta of motets are less numerous than contrafacta of chansons, they merit close attention, especially as in the case of works by Josquin, Isaac and Ghiselin, Saxo-Silesian codices transmit both original versions and corresponding contrafacta. Each of the eight cases is different and requires separate commentary (Table 2).

Table 2: Contrafacta of motets in Saxo-Silesian sources.

Contrafactum, Source B= Berlin 40021, L= Leipzig 1494, W= Warszawa 5892	Author, Text in other sources
<i>Verbum incarnatum</i> (B: no. 8)	Josquin: <i>Ave Maria...virgo serena</i>
<i>Regali quan decet</i> (B: no. 17, L: no. 124)	Agricola: <i>Ave ancilla trinitatis</i>
<i>Ecce dilectus meus</i> (L: no. 142)	Isaac: <i>Ecce sacerdos magnus</i>
<i>O regina nobilissima</i> (L: no. 167)	Isaac: <i>Angeli, Archangeli</i>
<i>Miserator Dominus</i> (B: no. 66)	Finck: <i>Miserator et misericors dominus</i>
<i>Inviolata intermetataque virginitatis</i> (B: no. 82)	Ghiselin: <i>Inviolata, integra est casta</i>
<i>O sacrum mysterium</i> (B: no. 20, W: no. 93)	Ghiselin: <i>O gloriosa domina</i>
<i>Vulnerasti com meum</i> (B: no. 101)	Anon: <i>Religioni agitatae</i>

Verbum incarnatum constitutes a contrafactum of the motet *Ave Maria...virgo serena* by Josquin Desprez, the most famous work of the Netherlandish master and one of the most popular compositions of those times (25 sources). Josquin's motet was also well known in Central Europe. All three Saxo-Silesian codices transmit this motet, but only one, Warszawa 5892, in a complete form with the original text. Berlin 40021 transmits it as the contrafactum mentioned above, and Leipzig 1494 preserves only fragments of two voices without text. Two other Central European sources preserve the original version of the composition: "Leopold Codex" (München 3154) and Czech "Speciálník" (Hradec Králové 7) but only Saxo-Silesian copies go back to a common source, and the Berlin copy (1488–1490) is the oldest one.

The Berlin version²⁴ has educational value, because it exhibits how carefully local authors studied Franco-Netherlandish masterpieces and shows their ingenuity in adaptations to particular needs. The Berlin contrafactum changed the liturgical purpose of the motet: the new text is not devoted, as expected, to the Virgin Mary, but to Jesus Christ, which contrasts with other Central European contrafacta. A comparison of both versions shows some irregularities in the relation of the new text to the music, although its structure is fully consistent with the main caesuras of the composition and with the changes in texture. The choice of the new text appears to be formally correct because it encompasses the same number of verses, although its subordination to individual musical phrases is different and requires repeats. While the original poem consists of five strophes of four verses (eight syllable for-

mat) and regular adjacent rhymes, in *Verbum incarnatum* both the size of individual verses and the scheme of rhymes are changed — adjacent rhymes start only in the middle. The function of framing distichs is also different. In contrast to the original, distichs are not grammatically distinguished from the whole poem. Homorhythmic sections best demonstrate adherence of the new text to the music: arrangement of the text is correct and sometimes even justified verbally as in a “dance-like” *proportio tripla* starting with the words “*Cordis nostri tripudium*”. However, antiphonal duets demonstrate the difficulties of text adaptation, which sometimes reveal the helplessness of an author of contrafactum due to syllable insufficiency in relation to notes, forcing him to divide some words by pauses. Evidently, then author was not eager to interfere drastically with the rhythmic shape of an arranged original. In spite of these faults, the Berlin contrafactum testifies to the competency of local musicians, demonstrating also their fascination with the Netherlandish masterpiece.

Many common features connect the motet by Josquin with the anonymous *Vulnerasti cor menu* from Berlin 40021²⁵, preserved also in “Speciálnik” (Hradec Králové 7) with the text *Religioni agitate*. Both poems belong to the Marian cult but neither adheres to the music perfectly, and it is difficult to conclude which, if any, constitutes the original text. In the Berlin version, the text is only loosely tied to the music. Sporadically, even a conflict with music occurs, e.g., in the sole interpolation of triple meter or in short sections with syllabic declamation. Since numerous sections exhibit an excess of notes in relation to syllables or, on the contrary, a shortage of notes where pauses break the integrity of words, the Berlin version should be regarded as a contrafactum. The next work to be considered preserved in Leipzig 1494 *O regina nobilissima*²⁶ is a contrafactum of the monumental, six-voice motet *Angeli, Archangeli* by Heinrich Isaac, in which the tenor part was taken from the rondeau *Comme femme desconfortée* by Gilles Binchois. It is a very important copy, because it demonstrates familiarity with Isaac’s composition — preserved in only one Flemish and two Italian sources — also in Central Europe. The dating of the oldest copy, Roma Chigi 234 (c. 1498–1503) suggests that the composition reached Saxony quite quickly, since the Leipzig Codex

was bound in 1504. The relationship of the new text *O regina nobilissima*, unknown from other sources, to the original one is unclear. Even from the point of view of the form itself, the text differs vastly from the original. Proportions are changed between both parts: *secunda pars* of the *contrafactum* contains more text than the motet's original version, and the *superius* contains the initial words of the subsequent text: *Ut mater piissima*. Also, a line of *cantus firmus* changes slightly in comparison to the original melodic material of *Comme femme desconfortée* (breaking longer values to shorter ones). One cannot exclude the possibility that the change took place as a result of adapting this part to a new text which by now has been lost.

In the process of preparing the *contrafactum*, the purpose of Isaac's motet underwent total change: while in *Angeli*, *Archangeli* the apostles and the prophets were praised as "doctors of holy law, and "martyrs in Christ", who "in one voice profess Holy Trinity", the new text became a Marian hymn, praising "the noblest Queen" and "the most affectionate Mother," "chosen ages ago" and "announced by prophets," who will "brighten the world," "destroy hell" and "save sinners from the devil's mouth". In contrast, one can find a connection between the texts of the *contrafactum* and the amorous *chanson* by Binchois, which is quoted as *cantus firmus*. The text of this song, written from the perspective of a despairing girl, whose joy is interrupted by the sudden death of her beloved, probably was not sung here. It was, however, known well enough to be a poignant, although silent, commentary to the religious text. Consistently with the symbolism of the late Middle Ages, one can find here (as in *Stabat mater* by Josquin, which is based on the same melody) the reinterpretation of a woman's despair ("femme desconfortée") in the religious spirit: the text of the *chanson* undergoes sacralisation, creating counterpoint to the Virgin Mary immersed in sadness.

The melodic material from the *chanson Comme femme desconfortée* was also used in a four-voice motet *Inviolata, integra est casta* by Johannes Ghiselin, preserved in Berlin 40021 as *contrafactum Inviolata, intermetataque virginitas*²⁷. This composition is known only from the edition of Ottaviano Petrucci in 1505. Therefore, the Berlin copy dated 1485–1490 is not only the sole copy of this composition in the area north of the Alps, but also the oldest

one. Several mistakes might indicate that this copy originates from another textual tradition than that of Petrucci. The text is a rhymed Marian poem and constitutes an extension of the original prose text from the above edition, which subsequently becomes a trope to the responsorium *Gaude Maria virgo*. In the Berlin contrafactum the text underlays only two, very different rhythmically, upper voices. The chant-like, majestically stepping highest voice declaims the text almost perfectly. In contrast, in the alto line, at times more mobile and nervous, adjusting words to individual phrases was troublesome and forced the author to break several words through pauses.

Another motet by Ghiselin was preserved in Saxo-Silesian codices with two different texts: *O gloriosa domina* and *O sacrum mysterium*. As the latter does not occur in the only known Italian source (Petrucci 1505) and the coordination of its syllables with notes is difficult, it could be a contrafactum. In this form, the composition is found in Berlin 40021²⁸, while Warszawa 5892 contains both versions, although incomplete and inscribed in two different layers. The contrafactum *O sacrum mysterium* cannot be defined as successful. Although the syntax of the new text adheres well to the music, in many instances the distribution of syllables is not clear and its excess in relation to the notes often forces a fragmentation of notes or a break-up through pauses.

Interesting examples of the contrafactum procedure provided by the two copies of a motet by Heinrich Finck with the text *Miserator Dominus* in Berlin 40021²⁹ and with the text *Miserator et misericors dominus* in “Speciálnik” (Hradec Králové 7). This time, the Berlin Codex contains undoubtedly an original version, while the Czech manuscript contains a contrafactum. Both copies are completely independent. Differences are so pronounced that Czech version, longer by two measures (faithful repetition of the preceding fragment) has to be viewed as another redaction of Finck’s motet. This mechanical extension of the composition was probably forced by the longer contrafactum text. Perhaps the author’s behaviour was not very noble, nevertheless it allows us nowadays to evaluate the contrafactum procedure and also to investigate the reception of Finck’s motets.

An opposite phenomenon to that found in Finck’s piece can be encountered in *Jam miseras rex* in Leipzig 1494³⁰. It constitutes a hitherto unnoticed

contrafactum of the last section of Credo (from “*Et resurrexit*”) of the *Missa L’ami Baudichon* by Josquin Desprez, extended this time by repetition of the three-measure section³¹. Josquin’s Mass was well known in central Europe. It was preserved in “Speciálnik”, partially in “Lwow fragments” (Poznań 7022) and in both Saxon codices. These last two manuscripts transmit only a short “Amen”, closing the Credo section, and in both cases were somewhat altered. In Leipzig 1494³² the differences are slight, therefore this version can be assessed as a concordance, but in Berlin 40021³³ the transformation is so profound, that concordance is virtually nonexistent. This composition differs not only by the constellation of voices but by a whole bass part, limited here only to alternating jumps from the first to fifth step of the scale.

This brings us to the third group of issues, namely the contrafacta of Mass sections. Both Central European and north Italian sources predominantly contain sections with a reduced number of voices and without cantus firmus as in the *Christe*, *Pleni*, *Benedictus* or *Agnus Dei II*. These sections, isolated from the wider context, often saturated with sequential patterns, do not differ from secular works in its textural layer. They can be encountered in theoretical treatises of the sixteenth century as instructive exempla and in various musical sources as textless pieces (“songs without words”). Strongly melismatic and not closely linked with verbal texts, they were especially useful for preparing contrafacta. There are, however, exceptions to this rule, e.g., *Flos virginum* in Trento 91, constituting a contrafactum of *Gloria* from *Missa Coda di pavon* by Johannes Martini, or as mentioned above *Jam miserans rex* from *Missa L’ami Baudichon* by Josquin. The same manuscript transmits also *Respice virgo pura*³⁴ constituting a contrafactum of the section *Et incarnatus* from the *Missa O Venus bant* by Gaspar van Weerbeke, preserved as a whole in the two remaining Saxo-Silesian Codices. This small (62 measures) three-voice piece does not differ at all from secular works and if not for the indication in the source itself (“*Et incarnatus est O venus bant*”) certainly would not have been quickly identified. In the future, one can expect more discoveries of contrafacta of Mass sections, especially in the numerous collections of *tricina* published in Germany.

V

Finally, it is worthwhile to ponder several Saxo-Silesian unica. For a variety of reasons, these also seem to be *contrafacta*, although due to their unique character, assessment could obviously be only hypothetical. It is especially difficult to define the provenance of these compositions. On the one hand, their texts are in general absent from anthologies of Middle Ages poetry and on the other hand, most of them are linked to the Marian cult, vibrant in fifteenth century Europe. On the basis of stylistic analysis one can distinguish here three layers of repertory (1) laude, (2) chansons, and (3) textless compositions modelled on them.

To the first group undoubtedly belongs *Ave Christi caro* from Berlin 40021³⁵ with the text of a well known prayer (published in 1513), also the basis for a motet by Josquin Desprez. Stylistically, this composition exhibits all the characteristics of polyphonic lauda. However, the connection of the text with the music is significantly distorted, and the insufficient number of syllables in relation to notes repeated in the superius (fourth verse) suggests a purely mechanical adaptation of this poem to an already existing composition. There is also a possibility of *contrafactum* in *Naturae genitor*³⁶ from the same codex: an unidentified text evidently conflicts with the music, and the subordination of syllables to repeated notes of the superius appears difficult. Similar comments are applicable to the unique *Ave decus virginum* in Leipzig 1494, signed “Ranlequin de Mol”³⁷. This name, unknown from other sources, does not seem to be of German derivation. As the composition displays the characteristics of lauda, presumably its author came from northern Italy. However, the Marian text is only vaguely connected to the music and sometimes even conflicts with it (e.g. the bass part, the word “De/i”) which makes for a not very successful *contrafactum*.

It seems that two adjacent three-voice anonymous compositions from Warszawa 5892 may be counted among secular *contrafacta*. As was established recently, the first one, *Santissima, virgum reginum*³⁸, has a textless concordance in manuscript Trento 1947/4³⁹, which allows one to place the composition in the context of Netherlandish-Italian tradition. It is worth indicating exactly where it was entered in the manuscript. It constitutes one of four

textless compositions, two of which are actually French chansons. The first one is *Accueillly m'a la belle* by Caron, an extremely popular song in the second half of the fifteenth century and surviving today — also as sacred contrafacta — in nine copies. The second piece, *J'ay pris amours*, also belongs to the same genre; and it is known today in five copies (differing mainly by the contratenor part), including sacred contrafacta. There are many indications that *Santissima virginum reginum* is also a secular composition by a Franco-Netherlandish master. This is suggested not only by the context of transmission, but by the main formal and textural characteristics: rondeau form, distinct stratification of all three voices, short and compact phrases, fluent and careful counterpoint, strict sequential patterning and especially the technique of through-imitation. All these features point to the last decade of the fifteenth century as the date of the composition. The question, when the composition acquired the sacred text, will probably remain forever unanswered. The text is not identified so far, and one can only state that its character is close to the typical Marian poems, widely popular in the fifteenth century. However, with the underlaying of two upper voices, it is loosely tied to the music, especially in the last sequential section with the characteristic insufficiency of notes in relation to the syllables of the final word “Maria”.

The unique composition *Ave praeclamm lumen* shows many similarities to the adjacent *Santissima virginum reginum*⁴⁰. The composition also has a rondeau form. However, while the first section, with imitations between all the voices, fits into pattern of the fifteenth century chanson, the second section, almost completely devoid of imitations, mechanically ranking ostinato motifs and with an additional internal caesura appears to be designed as a textless composition. An unidentified Marian poem underlays the two upper voices and, similar to *Santissima virginum reginum*, remains loosely connected with the music. Both compositions exhibit many related stylistic features, formal and textural, strongly suggesting the same authorship.

Finally, the three-voice *Exalta est sancta dei genitrix* is unique in Berlin 40021⁴¹. Characteristic for this small-sized composition are two alternative texts, carefully underlaid to all the voices, which enabled to use the composition to be used for two different occasions. The first one is the popular

Marian antiphon *Exalta est sancta dei genitrix*; the second one, written below by another copyist is a hymn in honour of St. Barbara *Hymnizemus parvuli*. It seems unlikely that the composition was based on some liturgical melody, especially since the tenor part has abundant sequential and ostinato figures. Therefore, the work was described by many scholars as a contrafactum of an instrumental composition (“carmen”). However, this classification appears questionable. The composition belongs rather to the category of chanson, due to melodious and flexibly shaped phrases, elaborate clausulae of the superius, sporadic imitations and complementary hoquetus-like two-note motifs in the upper voices. None of these texts completely adheres to the music. It is especially evident in the arrangement of two-note motifs, which break individual words through pauses, and in clausulae of phrases with an excess of repeated notes in relation to syllables. Therefore, perhaps also here, we are dealing with a contrafactum of chanson.

* * *

The contrafactum permeates time and space. It provides undeniable proof that cultural links exist, demonstration of which by other means can merely produce more or less viable hypotheses. The contrafactum procedure in Central Europe was more widespread than estimated previously. Testifying to this are not only concordances, but some unica and even, paradoxically, textless compositions. The content of Saxo-Silesian codices clearly indicates that their compilers were generally interested in relatively new repertory, created in northern and central Italy and scarcely known in the area north of the Alps. Authors of individual adaptations coped rather well with the synchronization of textual and musical phrases, but were quite indifferent towards prosodically proper declamation. This indifference, however has a good outcome: the composition becomes “suspect” and looking for the original can, with a little bit of luck, bring success. Although the criterion of coordination of words with music is certainly not very strong at the end of the fifteenth century, the combination of regular musical structure with a text shaped differently from it, always arouses suspicion and may lead to the discovery of contrafacta.

The reasons for the popularity of chansons as the main vehicle of new

texts were probably rooted in social factors and the general dissemination of Franco-Flemish culture. Things considered fashionable and trendy at the courts of France and Italy found vivid resonance in Central Europe. Also, growing interest in the artistic qualities of chansons, their clarity of form and structure encouraged copying and imitation. These qualities ensured that Mass sections did not undergo preparation of *contrafacta* to the same extent as chansons. Complex and asymmetrically shaped voice lines or elaborate imitation structures were certainly less suitable for this type of adaptation. Furthermore, in the case of motets, the religious text was usually acceptable in its totality or required only small modifications for adjustment to new purposes. The process of creating *contrafacta* resulted not only in seizing foreign repertory, attractive locally, but also led to the assimilation of new workshop solutions or texture characteristics. Musical material was still quite neutral, did not express a text, but served as a tool by which words acquired sensory perception. Therefore, chansons could function as religious compositions after the addition of new Latin texts. This constitutes interesting evidence of utilizing the same repertory for various purposes and confirms the full stylistic homogeneity of figural music in those times.

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- 14 In the rest of this article, detailed bibliography of compositions and examples of music are omitted. Full documentation and some examples can be found in the book by Ryszard J. Wieczorek "*Musica figurata*"... op. cit.
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