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JOSQUIN'S ROME

Hearing and Composing in the Sistine Chapel

Jesse Rodin

JOSQUIN'S ROME

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For Harry Davidson-Rodin (b. 14 May 2011),
who arrived in time to see the last sentences written

and

In memory of Harry Slochower (1900–1991),
who warned that "all absolutist explanations are bound to fail."

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Recordings are paired with scholarly monographs from time to time, but only rarely does one get the chance to work with first-rate performers to realize one's own musical analyses in sound. I owe an enormous debt to all the members of Cut Circle, but especially to Carolann Buff and Mary Gerbi, whose enthusiasm for and insights into the music animated our rehearsals and recording sessions. The resulting CDs, *De Orto et Josquin : Musique à la Chapelle Sixtine autour de 1490/De Orto and Josquin: Music in the Sistine Chapel around 1490*, published this year by Musique en Wallonie, were a labor of love that could not have been completed without the help of Philippe Vendrix or the financial support of the Noah Greenberg Award, the Graves Award in the Humanities, and Deans Stephen Hinton and Richard Saller at Stanford.

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Much like the *secunda pars* of Josquin's *Illibata Dei virgo nutrix*, which gives a shout-out to the composer's fellow singers, I must here shift gears to offer thanks of a more personal nature. My grandfather Harry Slochower (originally Herschel Zloczower) died before I knew who Josquin was; nonetheless I would never have found my way to scholarship without him. I am also grateful to my parents, siblings, extended family, and friends, for putting up with fractured communication as this project was nearing completion; to my mother Joyce Slochower, for reading portions of the manuscript and, for as long as I can remember, providing an exemplary model of teaching and scholarship; to my wife Daphna, who endured too many months of nonstop work, all the while offering up her expert services as editor; and to our new son, to whom this book is lovingly dedicated.

Stanford, December 2011

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ABOUT THE COMPANION RECORDINGS

Throughout the text sound examples are signaled with the symbol , followed by the relevant CD, track, and timing information. These recordings are available through Musique en Wallonie (www.musiwall.ulg.ac.be), amazon.com, and the companion website to *Josquin's Rome* (username: Music4; password: Book2497).

De Orto et Josquin : Musique à la Chapelle Sixtine autour de 1490/De Orto and Josquin: Music in the Sistine Chapel around 1490

Cut Circle, directed by Jesse Rodin

CD 1

1	*Nardi Maria pistici*	Josquin des Prez
2–3	*Missa La sol fa re mi*	Josquin
	Crucifixus	
	Agnus Dei	
4–6	*Missa Fortuna desperata*	Josquin
	Gloria	
	Sanctus, first section	
	Agnus Dei I	
7	*Dulcis amica Dei/Da pacem* (*a* 5)	Gaspar van Weerbeke
8	*Ave regina celorum*	Gaspar
9	*Missa Princesse d'amourettes*: Agnus Dei	Gaspar
10	Credo (VatS 51, fols. 187^{v}–190^{r})	anonymous
11	*Lucis creator optime*	Marbrianus de Orto
12	*Missa Ad fugam*: Gloria	de Orto
13	*Domine non secundum peccata nostra*	Bertrandus Vaqueras
14	*Domine non secundum peccata nostra*	Josquin

CD 2

1	*Il sera par vous/L'homme armé*	Du Fay or "Borton"
2	*L'homme armé*	anonymous
3–7	*Missa L'homme armé*	de Orto
8	*Ave Maria mater gratie* (*a* 5)	de Orto
9	*Factum est silentium*	St. Michael chant
10–14	*Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales*	Josquin

Musique en Wallonie, 2012

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Sound Engineer and Mastering: David Liquori

Editing: Jesse Rodin, David Liquori, and Mary Gerbi

Producers: Jesse Rodin, Pamela Dellal (CD 1 and CD 2 track 8), and Martin Near (CD 2)

Singers: Carolann Buff and Mary Gerbi, superius; Bradford Gleim, Jason McStoots, Aaron Sheehan, Matthew Anderson (CD 1 and CD 2 track 8), and Marc Molomot (CD 2), altus and tenor; Sumner Thompson and Paul Tipton, bassus; with John Proft, bassus

PITCH NOMENCLATURE

Pitches are indicated using italics:

c″	cc sol fa superacute (an octave above middle C)
c′	c sol fa ut acute (middle C)
c	C fa ut grave (an octave below middle C)
C	two octaves below middle C

Pitch classes are indicated with Roman capitals, as in: "a cadence to C."

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NOTE ON MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Whenever possible musical examples have been edited from Cappella Sistina sources. Unless specified otherwise: (1) passages in triple meter are notated under O, passages in duple meter under ₵; and (2) voices appear in the order superius–altus–tenor–bassus. Note values are unreduced. Ligature brackets have been included only in the Appendices.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AM	*Acta Musicologica*
CMM	Corpus mensurabilis musicae
EM	*Early Music*
EMH	*Early Music History*
Grove	*Grove Music Online*: http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com
JM	*Journal of Musicology*
JAMS	*Journal of the American Musicological Society*
JRMA	*Journal of the Royal Musical Association*
MD	*Musica Disciplina*
ML	*Music & Letters*
MGG[1]	*Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Friedrich Blume. Kassel and Basel: Bärenreiter, 1949 ff.
MGG[2]	*Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2d ed., ed. Ludwig Finscher. Kassel: Bärenreiter, and Stuttgart: Metzler, 1994–2007
MQ	*Musical Quarterly*
NJE	*Josquin des Prez: New Edition of the Collected Works (New Josquin Edition)*, 29 vols. (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1987–)
TVNM	*Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*
Track	Tr.

MANUSCRIPT SIGLA

BarcBC 454	Barcelona, Biblioteca Central, MS 454
BarcOC 5	Barcelona, Biblioteca de L'Orfeó Català, MS 5
BerlS 40021	Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MS Mus. 40021
BrusBR 9126	Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique/Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, MS 9126
CivMA 53	Cividale del Friuli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, MS LIII
FlorR 2794	Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 2794

HradKM 7	Hradec Králové, Krajske Muzeum, Knihovna (Regional Museum, Library), MS II A 7 ("Speciálnik Codex")
JenaU	Jena, Universitätsbibliothek
MilD	Milan, Archivio della Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo, Sezione Musicale, Librone [1–4]
ModE α.M.1.2	Modena, Biblioteca Estense e Universitaria, MS α.M.1.2
MunBS 3154	Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Musiksammlung, Musica MS 3154 ("Leopold Codex")
RomeC 2856	Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, MS 2856
SGallS 461	Sankt Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 461 ("Sicher Liederbuch")
SegC s.s.	Segovia, Archivio Capitular de la Catedral, MS s.s.
SienBC K.I.2	Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, MS K.I.2
ToleBC 9	Toledo, Biblioteca Capitular de la Catedral Metropolitana, MS B.9
VatC 234	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chigi VIII 234 ("Chigi Codex")
VatS	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Cappella Sistina
VatSP B80	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS San Pietro B 80
VerBC	Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare
VienNB	Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Handschriften-und Inkunabelsammlung

JOSQUIN'S ROME

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INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to know a piece of medieval or Renaissance music? Over the past several decades we've made extraordinary strides in transcribing and editing previously inaccessible works, analyzing them, adducing cultural contexts for their creation and performance, even discerning relationships that bind groups of pieces together. Nonetheless it seems fair to say that neither scholars nor performers possess the kind of microscopic knowledge of music before 1600 we've come to expect from Mozart and Beethoven specialists. There is still much work to be done in getting early music into readable and easily comparable editions; concert performances remain relatively scarce; and the recording catalogue, while far more robust than it was even a decade ago, has expanded at a snail's pace. The works of several composers have been heard almost not at all in modern times, and hardly any piece has been recorded in three or four sensitive performances. Seen from this vantage point our field is still very much in embryo. We have a long way to go before the kind of connoisseurship that informs many later repertories will be possible, let alone commonplace.

This study seeks to bridge that gap by engaging closely, at times microscopically, with polyphonic sacred music of the late fifteenth century. I seek to get under the skin of these pieces by thinking about what happens in them from moment to moment, phrase to phrase, and paragraph to paragraph. In doing so I identify compositional techniques that distinguish one composer from the next and, from time to time, show how one composer may have responded to what he heard in the music of a contemporary. The title words "hearing and composing" reflect my interest in imbibing, inhabiting, and taking ownership of the musical language of the late fifteenth century. "Hearing" cuts two ways: it references both how Renaissance composers engaged with one another's pieces and how we moderns can strive to approach this repertory almost (if never quite) as cultural insiders. I focus this search around a single musical institution, with Josquin des Prez (ca. 1450–1521) at the center of the inquiry. Which raises two questions: Why Josquin? And why Rome?

WHY JOSQUIN?

A recent wave of revisionist scholarship has sought to knock Josquin off his pedestal by suggesting that his current fame is merely a product of a peculiar historiography that took shape in the sixteenthth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.[1] These studies have been invaluable in shaking Josquin scholars out of a sense of complacency. They problematize the whole notion of a "Josquin generation" encompassing the years 1480–1520. They also expose a gaping hole in Josquin research: we have only begun the hard work of defining Josquin's style with respect to the *lingua franca*. But there is a difference between recognizing we still have work to do and giving up entirely—or worse, hurling the pendulum in the opposite direction as if in retribution for the absence of that hard work.

More than any other composer of his generation, Josquin captured the hearts and minds of his contemporaries and followers; 500 years later his music continues to astonish. By 1502 we have evidence, potent if not incontrovertible, that Josquin was the most celebrated composer of his age.[2] After that each passing decade saw his star rise higher, to the point where, by the mid-sixteenth century, a long-dead "Josquin" had taken on an almost mythical status, based on a set of characteristics that intersect only partially with the historical persona. Where some would seek to deny even the possibility of accessing that persona, I suggest we have plenty of evidence with which to approach the "real" Josquin des Prez, and that the real Josquin des Prez is worth knowing about, just as are the mythical "Josquin"s of the sixteenth century and every century since. To access the historical Josquin we need to begin where the evidence takes us. Recent shifts in our conception of Josquin's biography have revealed just how paltry the evidence is in the first four decades of his life. But starting in June 1489 we find a cluster of biographical, institutional, and musical evidence surrounding an ensemble he joined that month: the pope's private choir, which performed in the now famous Sistine Chapel.

WHY ROME?

We have precious little to go on when assessing Josquin's early career. As few as two securely attributed pieces can be dated with assurance to the years before he joined the papal choir, and we know next to nothing about the chapel of René of Anjou in Aix-en-Provence, the only other fifteenth-century institution to which Josquin can

1. See Wegman, "'And Josquin Laughed. . .'"; idem, "Who Was Josquin?"; Higgins, "The Apotheosis of Josquin des Prez"; and Wegman, "The Other Josquin." On Josquin's reception more generally, see Owens, "Music Historiography and the Definition of 'Renaissance'"; Schlagel, "Josquin des Prez and his Motets"; Owens, "How Josquin Became Josquin"; Kirkman, "From Humanism to Enlightenment: Reinventing Josquin"; and van Orden, "Josquin des Prez, Renaissance Historiography, and the Cultures of Print." My thanks to Professor van Orden for sharing a copy of her essay prior to publication.

2. See Rodin, "When Josquin Became Josquin."

be firmly tied for a considerable period (ca. 1475–80). Josquin's tenure in Milan, which we used to think spanned 1459–74, now comprises as little as a few months: he is documented there in June and August 1484 and January–February 1489.[3] Against this backdrop Josquin's tenure in Rome has yielded a treasure trove.[4] The chapel's pay registers (*mandati camerali*) indicate that he remained in the papal chapel from 1489 until at least March 1494.[5] We therefore know where Josquin was and when during a period of several years; we have considerable documentation about the Sistine Chapel choir, including particular liturgical conditions that gave rise to pieces of music that still survive; we possess a corpus of manuscripts into which his music was copied and from which he sang on a regular basis; and we have knowledge of Josquin's fellow composers in the chapel, as well as a fairly good idea of the music they wrote while working alongside him. For a composer whose whereabouts are known for only about 30 of his roughly 70 years, such a tight constellation of material evidence and biographical information cannot be taken lightly. That Josquin's tenure in Rome seems to coincide with the first phase of his compositional maturity makes our knowledge of those circumstances more valuable still.

Moving beyond Josquin, the surviving manuscript collection of the papal chapel is the largest we have for any fifteenth-century musical institution. That fact alone justifies devoting a monograph to its repertory. As I show in chapter 3, the Cappella Sistina performed an international repertory during this period, with nearly three dozen pieces by composers active there plus more than 150 masses, mass sections, hymn settings, Magnificats, and motets imported from the rest of Italy and the North. The choirbooks copied and housed in Rome during these years contain a significant cross-section of all known polyphonic sacred music from the years ca. 1470–1500. In view of this exceptionally bountiful institutional context, it could be objected that it would be better to construct a stylistic universe without recourse to a single composer—to compare and contrast all the music in the Vatican choirbooks with the aim of discerning its breadth and depth. This indeed would be a laudable goal, but I suggest there is value in orienting this inquiry around Josquin, both because he has loomed so large in the scholarship and because the methodological questions that arise from his music are unusually rich. This study therefore begins with Josquin before widening the lens to encompass the larger institutional and repertorial context.

Using the music by Josquin copied into Vatican sources before 1500 as a starting point, I ask: What are the distinguishing characteristics of Josquin's style? What

3. See Fallows, *Josquin*, 109–32.

4. See ibid., 139–92 and the literature cited there.

5. We can't be certain when Josquin left, as the *mandati* are lost until November 1500; perhaps his visit to Cambrai in August–September 1494 can be taken as evidence that he had departed Rome for good by that time. See the summary in Fallows, *Josquin*, 139–40, 191–92, and 361–65. Within the span 1489–94 the *mandati* are lacking from September 1491 to June 1492.

musical experiences might he have had as a singer in the papal choir? What sorts of pieces were his contemporaries writing, both papal chapel composers who sang with him in the singers' box of the Cappella Sistina and musicians active in other centers whose masses and motets were collected and copied into Vatican choirbooks? To what extent does Josquin's music intersect with that of his contemporaries? What do those intersections tell us about musical borrowing and compositional process more generally? In taking an approach that is at once Josquin-centric and sensitive to the bigger picture, I advocate a new, comparative analytical methodology.

HEARING, ANALYZING, AND THE COMPANION CDS

Stylistic discussions of fifteenth-century sacred music have tended to prioritize structure and large-scale organization in line with the long-standing impulse in musicology to privilege form and harmony above other parameters. As such it is not surprising that analysts have tended to focus their discussions around mode, cadence patterns, and, above all, cantus-firmus treatment. Such parameters are important and will have a role to play in these pages. It is clear, for instance, that a composer's manner of treating a particular pre-existing melody affects the final musical product. But such constraints are just that: decisions made in the early stages of composition that restrict the composer's options at the macro level. In terms of how the counterpoint works from breve to breve, not to mention how the music might sound in performance, these restrictions are largely superficial.[6] One need only compare the *L'homme armé* masses of Antoine Busnoys and Jacob Obrecht, which treat the borrowed melody in almost precisely the same way, to realize that the disposition of the cantus firmus has a limited impact on the character and shape of a composition. For that reason *Josquin's Rome* is concerned mainly with the analysis of contrapuntal surfaces. I evaluate how the counterpoint is constructed from moment to moment, how motivic ideas are made to fit together, and how composers use repetition to limit the variety of simultaneous musical gestures. I consider how such local compositional practices impinge on longer sections of continuous polyphony, but even here I am interested mainly in clearly audible, surface-level effects rather than so-called deep structure.

Because *Josquin's Rome* devotes considerable attention to composers whose music has not been heard in modern times, it is crucial that readers have the opportunity to listen to representative examples. Moreover my discussion of Josquin's style iden-

6. As this study is concerned with hearing and composing, it would be reasonable to expect considerable engagement with the vast repertory of plainchant performed during the daily Mass and Office services in the Cappella Sistina. And yet chant will play only a supporting role here, in part because I have chosen to deemphasize pre-existing material in my discussions of musical style.

tifies a range of techniques that most modern performances fail to bring out. For these reasons this study is paired with *De Orto et Josquin : Musique à la Chapelle Sixtine autour de 1490/De Orto and Josquin: Music in the Sistine Chapel around 1490*, a two-CD set I have recorded with the eight-voice ensemble Cut Circle that features masses, mass sections, four- and five-voice motets, hymns, and tract settings by Josquin and his "Roman" colleagues Marbrianus de Orto, Gaspar van Weerbeke, and Bertrandus Vaqueras.[7] These CDs do not amplify the text so much as the text amplifies them: almost every chapter points at, relies on, and reacts to the sound recordings by Cut Circle.

PAPAL PATRONAGE AND THE CAPPELLA SISTINA

The period under consideration here—ca. 1480 to ca. 1500—corresponds to the papacies of Sixtus IV (Francesco della Rovere, 1471–84), Innocent VIII (Giovanni Battista Cibò, 1484–92), and Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia, 1492–1503). Among these figures Sixtus was the most active as a patron of the arts, lavishing enormous sums on not just music but also painting, architecture, and so on. This was the sort of pope who shelled out 100,000 ducats for his tiara.

Sixtus took decisive steps to develop and support the College of Singers. (This group, comprising only the choir, was distinct from the much larger College of the Papal Chapel.)[8] In 1473 he issued the first of four papal bulls of privileges in favor of the singers.[9] Two years later the medieval *capella magna* was demolished and construction of the Cappella Sistina began, probably under the direction of Giovanni de' Dolci, effectively Sixtus's head architect. The new building was completed in 1481, with additional interior decorations finished by April or May 1482 (the only contemporary depiction of the chapel appears in fig. 0.1).[10] As the epicenter of papal ceremony, this was a space of tremendous significance. Its proportions (40 × 13.6 meters) are identical to the Old Testament's description of the Holy of Holies in King Solomon's temple. The fortified exterior, with its enormous and severe brick walls, follows the traditions of earlier papal chapels in both Rome and Avignon; this imposing structure was clearly visible from the piazza in front of St.

7. Musique en Wallonie, 2012. These recordings were made possible by the Noah Greenberg Award (American Musicological Society), the Graves Award in the Humanities (American Council of Learned Societies and Pomona College), and funds from the School of Humanities and Sciences at Stanford University.

8. Though in surviving documents the College of Singers is not mentioned until the early 16th century, it probably existed much earlier.

9. Roth, "Liturgical (and Paraliturgical) Music in the Papal Chapel," 125–26.

10. The *capella magna* was demolished beginning in late 1475; the construction of the Cappella Sistina began in early 1476. See Monfasani, "Description of the Sistine Chapel under Sixtus IV," and Shearman, "The Chapel of Sixtus IV." For a concise distillation of the new chapel's architectural style and pictorial decoration, see Hollingsworth, *Patronage in Renaissance Italy*, 265–70.

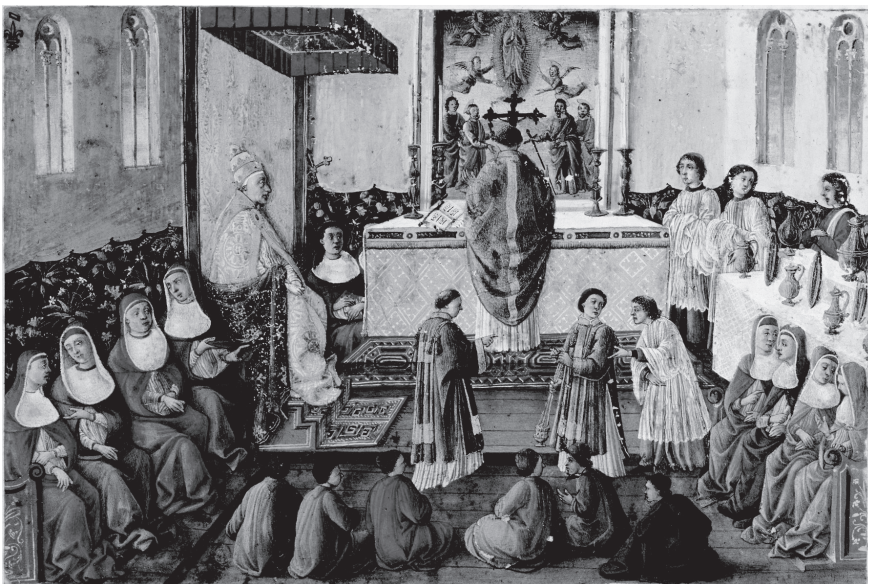

FIGURE 0.1. Pope Sixtus IV at Mass in the Sistine Chapel (15th-c. Italian manuscript housed in the Musée Condé, Chantilly, France). Photo: Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY

Peter's. To get a sense of what the interior of the chapel looked like in the 1480s and 1490s one must forget about Michelangelo (the ceiling in this period was a simple blue sky covered with gold stars) and focus instead on the inlaid marble floor, the balustrade of white marble that divided the pope and cardinals from the laity, and, above all, the wall decorations (see fig. 0.2). An elaborate cycle of narrative paintings depicting the lives of Moses and Christ by Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, Rosselli, Perugino, Signorelli, and (in all likelihood) Pinturicchio emphasizes the direct line of authority from Moses to Christ to the popes.[11] These paintings are surrounded by portraits of the first thirty popes, above, and painted gold and silver brocade hangings featuring the arms of the Della Rovere family, below. Sixtus dedicated the building to the Assumption of the Virgin, with an altarpiece by Perugino on that subject that was subsequently destroyed to make room for Michelangelo's *The Last Judgment*.[12] On the day of the dedication (the Feast of the Assumption, 15 August 1483), the pope heard Mass and Vespers in the chapel, no doubt with

11. See Salvini, *La Cappella Sistina in Vaticano*; Ettlinger, *The Sistine Chapel before Michelangelo*; and Goffen, "Friar Sixtus IV and the Sistine Chapel." Handsome reproductions appear in Cornini and Strobel, "The Fifteenth Century: Frescoes" and at www.vatican.va/various/cappelle/sistina_vr/index.html (accessed 26 Oct. 2011). See also Gilbert, "What Did the Renaissance Patron Buy?," esp. 393–98.

12. Fig 0.1 does not show Perugino's *Assumption of the Virgin*, but rather a simplified version of the same scene. (Perugino's painting survives only in a drawn copy.)

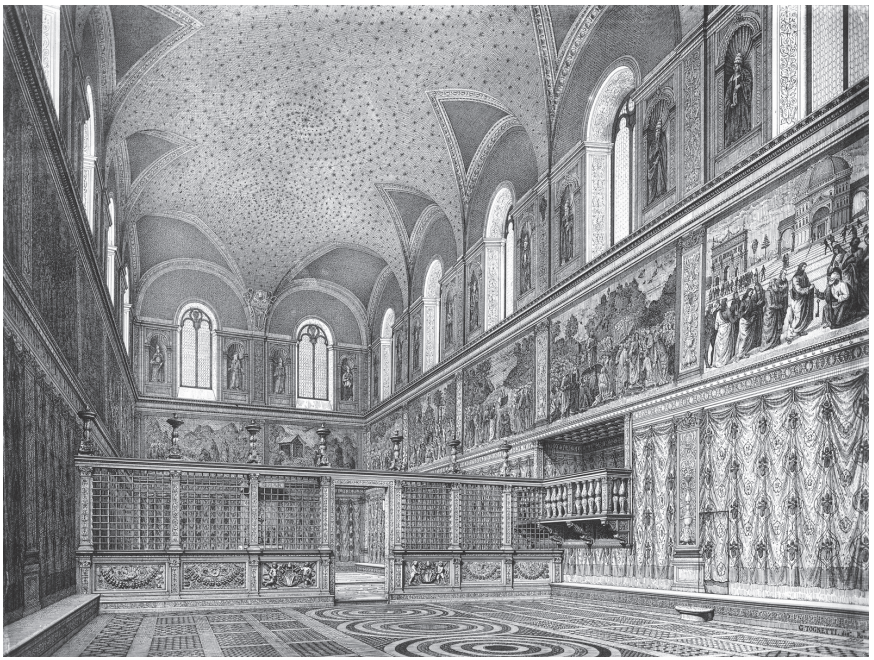

FIGURE 0.2. Lithograph of the interior of the Sistine Chapel as it existed before 1508 (G. Tognetti, 1809; Florence, Casa Buonarroti Library, B.1475.3.G.F.). Photo: Alinari/Art Resource, NY

accompanying music by the papal singers, among them the composer Gaspar van Weerbeke. At that time Sixtus granted an indulgence to all who visited the chapel, drawing a mass of people not unlike the throngs that queue up outside today.

Sixtus's musical patronage must be understood in the context of his many other cultural achievements.[13] In preparation for the jubilee year of 1475 he built the Ponte Sisto, extended the Aqueduct, cleaned St. Peter's, restored the Vatican Palace and other churches, repaved the streets, fixed walls, gates, and towers, and made dozens of other urban improvements in preparation for the hordes of pilgrims that would soon arrive. Perhaps even more significant was the expansion of Nicholas V's papal library.[14] By 1475 Sixtus had expanded the old collection to over 2,500 volumes, a number that would rise by another thousand before the end of his pontificate. His collecting centered on theological, philosophical, and Patristic writings in Latin as well as Classical Greek texts. He also invited several prominent scholars

13. See Blondin, "Power Made Visible."

14. For a listing of books see Müntz and Fabre, *La Bibliothèque du Vatican au XVe siècle*, 35–114 (Nicholas V) and 135–250 and 260–69 (Sixtus IV). See also *Rome Reborn*, ed. Grafton, esp. the essays by Leonard Eugene Boyle ("The Vatican Library," xi–xx) and Anthony Grafton ("The Vatican and its Library," 3–46).

to Rome and hired Bartolomeo Platina as head librarian, an act memorialized in a famous painting by Melozzo da Forlì. Platina also wrote a history of the popes and made an inventory of the Vatican library.

The pontificate of Innocent VIII, by all accounts a pleasure-seeking, secularist, and relatively ineffectual pope, witnessed a slight drop-off in civic boosterism, not least because of the pope's poor health and the increasingly precarious state of papal finances. Nonetheless Innocent continued to make urban improvements to streets, bridges, and towers, restored several churches, and built the Villa Belvedere (on the hill behind the Vatican) and the Villa Magliana (a summer residence), which he commissioned Mantegna and Pinturicchio to adorn. He also asked Poliziano to translate Greek texts housed in the Vatican library into Latin.

In the current popular imagination, the powerful and politically astute Alexander VI is famous for his illegitimate daughter, Lucrezia Borgia, and for the way he shamelessly flaunted his mistress (Vanozza Catanei) and heaped favor on their four children, most notably his son Cesare. In late fifteenth-century Rome he was probably better known for his building projects, which reflect an interest in asserting papal authority. He greatly expanded and strengthened the papal fortress of Castel Sant'Angelo, built a new street that ran from there to the entrance of the Vatican Palace, and commissioned ostentatious decorations to several prominent Roman churches. Alexander lavished the most attention on the Vatican Palace, building the Torre Borgia and paying extravagant sums to decorate the Borgia apartments.

These brief sketches of artistic patronage make it no surprise that the fifteenth-century Cappella Sistina was at its grandest during the pontificate of its creator. Sixtus IV inherited a choir that in 1468 had numbered 13 singers; by 1474 he had added six more.[15] That number rose over the course of his papacy and reached as high as 25 in 1484 (see fig. 0.3).[16] Innocent VIII and Alexander VI reined in these expenditures. Within the first two months of Innocent's rule the number of singers fell to 21; over the majority of his papacy the number hovered between 14 and 20. Alexander VI evidently followed suit: in March 1494, the last entry before an almost seven-year gap in the records, 18 singers were employed; when the *mandati camerali* resume 20 singers are listed. Most of these singers were northerners, though several Italians were employed, along with four Spaniards during the pontificate of Rodrigo Borgia.[17]

All these singers were adult males, and performances were unaccompanied—but we have hardly any documentation about who sang what voice part, and even

15. See Haberl, "Die römische 'Schola cantorum' und die päpstlichen Kapellsänger bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts," 229–51; repr. as idem, *Bausteine für Musikgeschichte*, 3:1–108; Sherr, "The Papal Chapel ca. 1492–1513 and its Polyphonic Sources," 20–79, esp. 78–79; and Starr, "Towards the Cappella Sistina."

16. Fig. 0.3 is based on Sherr, "The Papal Chapel," 25–36.

17. See Sherr, "The 'Spanish Nation' in the Papal Chapel, 1492–1521." Johannes Burkhard describes Spanish musical practices that were introduced during this period (ibid., 602).

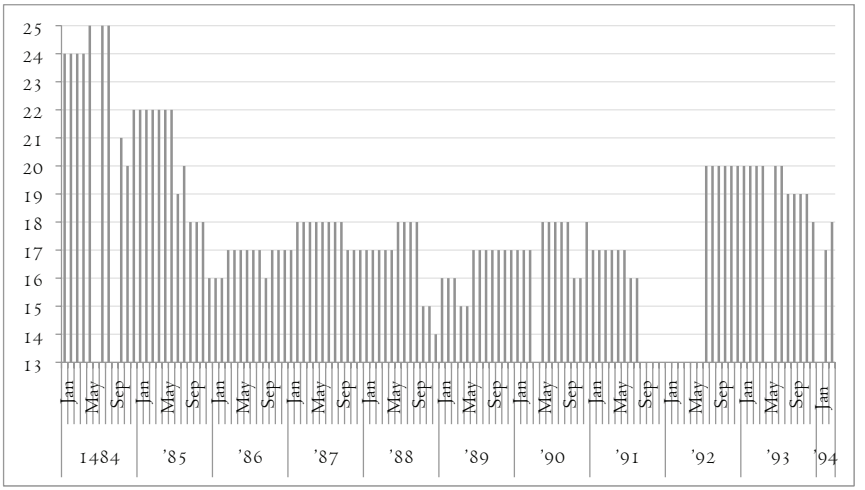

FIGURE 0.3. Number of singers in the Cappella Sistina, 1484–94
Gaps reflect months for which records are lacking.

less about how many singers were used for performances of polyphony.[18] (It seems clear that all the singers did not perform all the time; still, for all we know a polyphonic mass could have been sung by four singers one Sunday and 20 the next.)[19] Part of the reason we're in the dark is that the performance of polyphony was liturgically irrelevant; all that really mattered was that the priest say the right words at the right time. As such the papal masters of ceremonies, who we might otherwise expect to provide copious documentation of polyphonic performances, are all but silent on the subject. Indeed Johannes Burkhard, master of ceremonies from 1483 to 1506, is of relatively little help; one must look to the early sixteenth century for substantive information.

Through an evaluation of writings by Paride de Grassis, master of ceremonies beginning in 1504, Richard Sherr has uncovered evidence of practices that may well date back a decade or more.[20] From the *Ordo Romanus* and *Ceremoniale* we learn that the entire chapel met 50 times per year, including 35 Masses and 10 Vespers services. All but eight of these meetings took place in the Sistine Chapel; on Christmas, All Saints, Corpus Christi, and a handful of other feasts the chapel met in

18. On the musical institution, see principally Sherr, "The Papal Chapel," "The Singers of the Papal Chapel and Liturgical Ceremonies," and "Music and the Renaissance Papacy."

19. The dimensions of the *cantoria*, with the lectern in the center of a wide but relatively shallow space, would seem to imply that performances of polyphony from the large choirbooks involved one or at most two singers to a part. See Sherr, "Performance Practice in the Papal Chapel during the 16th Century," 452 and 456–61. See also Lionnet, "Performance Practice in the Papal Chapel during the 17th Century."

20. Sherr, "The Papal Chapel," 85–104. See also Dean, "Listening to Sacred Polyphony c. 1500," 614.

St. Peter's.[21] The surviving musical sources—in particular, the Vespers hymns and Compline antiphons to the Virgin in VatS 15—suggest that daily Mass and offices were celebrated regardless of whether the entire chapel was present. Indeed the singers were required to attend all daily offices, most of which took place in the Cappella Sancti Nicolai (this chapel was later destroyed to make room for the Cappella Paolina). The clearest evidence we have of polyphonic performance is de Grassis's statements, in a chapter in the *Ceremoniale* on "Choruses in the Papal Chapel," that the singers "stand or sit or do anything else according to what pleases or is suitable for them"; that the master of ceremonies must be on the lookout to see if they take a breath; and that if they do, they will sing in symphony (*simphonia*), which "consists of harmony (*concentu*) and of many voices."[22]

De Grassis's only mention of a motet suggests that such pieces were often sung to bridge silences (in 1509 he mentions a motet that was sung before the Preface). Beyond this he provides only smatterings of information. On two occasions de Grassis describes what sounds respectively like *alternatim* and *falsobordone* performance of psalms; we know that the singers performed the Passion with a few specific words sung in polyphony, though no polyphonic music for that occasion has survived from the fifteenth century; and various comments suggest that the singers at times had to accommodate their performances to liturgical constraints by speeding up, slowing down, or repeating music. Still another report suggests that whenever a cardinal died, the singers earned 10 ducats for singing at the funeral; the singers were often paid in meals rather than cash. Sherr further concludes that isolated mass movements were sung on occasion, and that at certain times of the year polyphony was banned entirely.[23] Remarkably, this is the bulk of what can be established with certainty. The only remaining traces of the singers' presence in the chapel are the choirbooks from which they sang and the graffiti they inscribed on the wall of the singers' box—the fifteenth-century equivalent of "Josquin was here."[24]

ROME AS THE CENTER OF THE FINANCIAL AND SPIRITUAL UNIVERSE

Musicians, painters, sculptors, and other artists attached to the Vatican knew there were more financial gains to be had there than whatever salary or commission had

21. A slightly different listing of services attended by the entire chapel appears in the Ceremonial of Agostino Patrizi, master of ceremonies before Burkhard. For Patrizi's list see Dean, "Listening to Sacred Polyphony," 618–19. On the rich musical establishment at St. Peter's, see Reynolds, *Papal Patronage and the Music of St. Peter's, 1380–1513*.

22. Sherr, "The Papal Chapel," 100.

23. Significantly more documentation survives from the middle of the 16th century, on which see Sherr, "The Papal Chapel," 105–9, and idem, "Competence and Incompetence in the Papal Choir in the Age of Palestrina."

24. For the latter see Pietschmann, "Ein Graffito von Josquin Desprez auf der Cantoria der Sixtinischen Kapelle," and idem, "Die Graffiti auf der Sängerkanzel der Cappella Sistina," 246.

been agreed upon.[25] Rome was the epicenter of the beneficial system, a complex bureaucracy wherein the pope conferred rewards upon those lucky and astute enough to procure them. As Pamela Starr has described, ecclesiastical benefices provided many musicians with considerable supplementary income. The beneficial system also allowed churches "to convert the revenues of canonical prebends or parish churches into funds for the support of an enhanced choir able to perform polyphony." And the pope "granted dispensations and absolution to musicians guilty of canonical lapses or more serious crimes."[26] Musicians did not need to be physically present for an expectative (a promised benefice) to come to fruition, but they did need to hire a local agent or procurator to grease the necessary wheels and prepare the mountains of paperwork.[27] Several papal singers were remarkably active in procuring benefices; Marbrianus de Orto seems to have submitted petitions on no fewer than sixteen occasions. By that standard Josquin's beneficial career was relatively modest; indeed the benefices we know he pursued apparently did not come to fruition.[28] Nonetheless we know that while in Rome, Josquin was given permission to hold incompatible benefices in the dioceses of Liège, Cambrai, Tournai, and Thérouanne (18 August 1489); was granted a canonry and prebend at St-Omer (9 September 1489, backdated to 1486); reserved a benefice in the Abbey of St-Ghislain, Ockeghem's birthplace (same date); apparently got involved in a lawsuit during the course of which he and de Orto tried to oust one Stephanus le Fevre from two parish churches in the diocese of Cambrai (29 September 1493); and made an accusation of simony against the holder of a benefice in Bas-Ittre, also in the diocese of Cambrai (8 November 1493). When he wasn't singing or composing Josquin evidently had his hands full—and unlike some singers he didn't even need to petition to conceal his illegitimacy or nullify an order of excommunication.[29]

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The surviving records provide hardly a hint as to the impact of contemporary political events on the lives and musical productions of the papal singers. Nonetheless they must surely have been aware of and at least to some degree affected by all that was going on around them.

25. The title of this section is in emulation of Starr, "Rome as the Centre of the Universe"; see also eadem, "Music and Music Patronage at the Papal Court, 1447–1464."

26. Starr, "Rome as the Centre of the Universe," 224. See also the literature cited at 225, n. 5.

27. On the inner workings of the papal bureaucracy, see Starr, "Rome as the Centre of the Universe."

28. Details conveniently summarized in Fallows, *Josquin*, 171–73 and 361–65.

29. For examples of those who did, see Planchart, "Guillaume Du Fay's Benefices," 118–19; and Starr, "Rome as the Centre of the Universe," 247–51.

The Sistine Chapel was built amidst political tumult.[30] Pope Sixtus IV's nepotistic support of his nephew Girolamo Riario led to strife between Florence and Rome, with Riario and the powerful Pazzi family conspiring in 1478 to assassinate Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici. The unsuccessful Pazzi conspiracy (Giuliano was killed but Lorenzo only lightly wounded) led Sixtus to excommunicate Lorenzo, which in turn sparked the so-called Tuscan war (1478–79), with Naples and Siena joining the side of the pope and Lorenzo allying with Venice, Milan, and King Louis XI of France. Meanwhile Louis XI had been making noises since 1476 about convening a council to depose the pope (this never came to pass, but it sparked considerable anxiety). In 1478 Sixtus authorized the Spanish Inquisition, which grew ever more violent as the century wore on. And in May 1482 Rome and Venice went to war with Ferrara and Naples; this War of Ferrara lasted two years, with some of the fighting taking place within the walls of Rome.[31]

As if this were not enough, in the 1470s and 1480s the Turkish threat was growing. Sixtus held a Council of War in 1472, which resulted in attacks on the Turkish cities of Satalia and Smyrna (only the latter was successful). At this point the tide turned, with the Genoese colony of Caffa falling to the Turks in 1475. Far more significant from a Roman perspective were the events of 1480–81, when Sultan Mehmed II attacked and captured Otranto, at the southeastern tip of Apulia. The Turks sacked the city, murdered its archbishop, clergy, and most of the inhabitants, and ravaged the region as far north as Brindisi. Along with a siege of Rhodes that took place around the same time, the fall of Otranto stoked fear throughout the Italian peninsula. It also led to renewed calls for a Crusade, which for a change resulted in genuine action. In 1480 Sixtus and his cardinals committed 150,000 ducats to the war effort (the money would equip 25 galleys and buttress the defenses of Matthias Corvinus of Hungary). Mehmed died in May 1481; this opened the way for a joint Italian force to retake Apulia in September.

The pontificate of Innocent VIII was somewhat less eventful, in part because the pope was so often ill. Nonetheless he faced one major political crisis: a war with the Kingdom of Naples that engulfed much of the Italian peninsula from 1485 to 1487 and brought fighting to the gates of Rome.[32] (Bad blood between Naples and Rome persisted until 1493.) Early in his pontificate Innocent tried to garner support for a defensive fleet that would guard the Italian coast against the Turks, but his pleas for financial contributions from the other Italian city-states fell on deaf ears. In 1489 the pope gained custody of Prince Jem, the sultan's brother and pretender to the Ottoman throne. Jem was seen as a sort of insurance policy against Turkish attack, since it was thought that unleashing him against his brother

30. For this section see principally Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste* or *The History of the Popes* and Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*. See also Chastel, "Rome in the Renaissance: 1480–1540," and Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* and the literature cited there.

31. Plague broke out briefly in Rome as well.

32. In addition Rome was again hit by the plague in July 1485.

Bayezid II would wreak havoc on Turkish politics. Indeed Jem had agreed to withdraw the Turks from Europe and even cede Constantinople. On 13 March Jem entered Rome amidst a gawking crowd; he remained a (very well treated) prisoner in the Vatican Palace until the French invasion of 1494–95. With the possession of Jem as a backdrop, Innocent used the Treaty of Frankfurt in July 1489 as an opportunity to rally northern powers around the idea of a crusade. A congress was held the following June–July, during which all parties agreed to launch a multilateral attack against the Turks—only the various political envoys claimed they needed authorization from their respective governments before committing to anything. A second congress was planned for the following year, but that never came to pass, not least because of the fighting that grew up in the aftermath of Matthias Corvinus's death that April. In November Bayezid II sent an ambassador to the Vatican who promised not to attack Christian lands—with the exception of Hungary, a sticking point—so long as Jem remained in Rome. No formal agreement was reached, but Bayezid sent envoys again in May 1492, this time to deliver what they claimed was the Holy Lance along with a gift of 40,000 ducats, again as a means of encouraging the pope to keep Jem in custody. Another win for the papacy in January 1492: Ferdinand captured Granada from the Moors, thus unifying Spain under Christian rule for the first time in centuries. In Rome and elsewhere this was seen as recompense for the fall of Constantinople.

Upon Innocent's death in July 1492 the papal conclave fell prey to unprecedented simoniacal jockeying. The Spaniard Rodrigo Borgia at first seemed a long shot, but was assured the job once the powerful Ascanio Sforza (in whose service Josquin can be documented in 1484–85) threw his weight behind him. Once elected, Alexander VI faced opposition from Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, who, as Sixtus's nephew and Innocent's chief advisor, was furious that he had not been chosen; to protect himself against della Rovere and his partners (King Ferrante of Naples and the powerful Orsini family), Alexander entered into an alliance with Venice, Milan, Siena, Ferrara, and Mantua.[33] As happened more often than not in late fifteenth-century Italy, this alliance did not last long. Following Ferrante's death in January 1494, Alexander established good relations with his successor, Alfonso II, going so far as to have him crowned in Naples that April. This enraged King Charles VIII of France, who announced the withdrawal of his obedience and threatened a Council and deposition; by March Charles was making plans to invade Italy, with Giuliano della Rovere now at his side. In May Charles's envoys arrived in Rome to assert their right to Naples, and the pope's own Cardinal Ascanio Sforza was secretly in cahoots with the rival Colonna family. Alexander even appealed to Bayezid for help in defending Italy, warning him that Charles would install Jem as the ruler of Constantinople.

33. Not one year later allegiances flipped: while Giuliano della Rovere had come into favor, Ascanio Sforza was forced to leave Rome. By September they had flipped back yet again (Alexander had appointed several new cardinals, to the great displeasure of Della Rovere).

These efforts were in vain. By September 1494 Charles's army (more than 40,000 men, including several thousand Swiss and German mercenaries) reached Turin—a confirmation of the dire prophecies of the powerful Florentine preacher Savonarola. With the Colonna and rebellious Roman barons making trouble for Alexander and Alfonso locally, Charles continued his march toward Naples, reaching Florence in November, where a rebellion inspired by Savonarola had led to the exile of the Medici. In a tense game of political brinkmanship, Alexander offered to travel north to discuss plans for a crusade; Charles replied that he would prefer to pay homage to the pope in his own palace. Needless to say neither of these statements was entirely transparent. Finding no ally to protect Rome from this French "pilgrim," the pope had the city gates secured with chains. Meanwhile food supplies were dwindling, thanks to a blockade from land and sea by the Colonna.

It is a testament to the profound instability of Italian politics that even through all of this there seemed hope of a reversal. Alexander held two meetings with Ascanio Sforza, the second of which nearly resulted in an agreement. But with the friendly Duke of Calabria, the Orsini, and King Alfonso about to enter Rome, Alexander threw caution to the wind and on 9 December had both Ascanio and Cardinal Prospero Colonna arrested. A week later the pope was feeling less confident: Johannes Burkhard reports on the 18th that the whole Vatican had been packed up for flight. But it was too late, since a day earlier the Orsini had defected and Charles had captured nearby Civitavecchia. On New Year's Eve the French army entered Rome with Charles on horseback, flanked by della Rovere and the now freed Ascanio Sforza. Charles stopped short of deposing Alexander (this would have been politically stupid), but he got most of what he wanted: on 15 January 1495 the pope handed over Jem, agreed to have his son Cesare accompany Charles to Naples, and gave the French free passage through his territory. Charles entered Naples uncontested on 22 February. The pleasures of Naples distracted him from his stated plan of launching a crusade against the Turks; Jem's untimely death the same week nixed the idea entirely.

It took little time for the Italian states to grow alarmed by Charles's territorial gains. On 31 March Emperor Maximilian I entered into a 25-year Holy League with Venice, Rome, and Milan. Charles decided to return to France—but Alexander was once again fearful of French retribution, so much so that he fled to Orvieto on 27 May.[34] In the event Charles spent just two days in Rome. The French were routed on their retreat north, in Fornovo; by the following summer they had been all but pushed out of Italy.

However traumatic, the French invasion was far from the only upheaval of the 1490s. In the aftermath of the war, Alexander sought retribution against the Orsini, in part with the aim of taking their territory for his son Cesare. From 1495 Savonarola's preaching grew increasingly hostile toward the papacy, so much so

34. The pope returned to Rome on 27 June.