

**Conductus  
The Forgotten Song  
of the Middle Ages**

**Three Medieval Tenors  
John Potter, Christopher O’Gorman,  
Rogers Covey-Crump**

**Texts & English translations**

**6 July 2015**

**10:30 Workshop  
Université libre de Bruxelles**

**21:00 Concert  
Notre-Dame de la Cambre  
Abbaye de la Cambre 11**

**Conductus  
the forgotten song of the Middle Ages**  
Texts & English translations  
*(all anonymous)*

## Homo natus ad laborem.

[Narrator:]

Homo, natus ad laborem  
Tui status, tue morem  
Sortis considera  
Propensius;  
Me parcius  
Querelis aspera.  
Questus ergo reprime;  
Nec anime,  
Quod misere commiseris,  
Quod pateris,  
Miser, impropera.

[The Soul]

Me dum fecit Deus mundam  
Vas, infecit fex immundam,  
Corrupit lutea.  
Desipio,  
Nec sapio  
Meum Promethea.  
Nil in carnis carcere  
Fit libere;  
Parit enim contagium  
Et vitium  
Moles corporea.

[The Body:]

In abyssum culpe ducis,  
Que commissum opus ducis  
Procuras temere;  
Me perimis,  
Cum opprimis  
Peccati pondere.

[The Soul:]

In abusum rationis  
Vertis usum teque bonis  
Privas gratuitis,  
Dum sensibus

[Narrator:]

*O man born to the labour of your state,  
Consider the nature of your lot  
More readily;  
Grate on me more sparingly  
With your complaints.  
Repress, therefore,  
Your lamentation,  
Reproach not your soul  
Because you have wretchedly sinned,  
Because you suffer,  
O wretched man!*

[The Soul:]

*When God made me a clean vessel,  
The dregs have made me unclean,  
For the body has corrupted me.  
I am foolish,  
And I know not  
My Prometheus.  
In the prison of the flesh  
Nothing is done freely;  
For the body brings forth  
Contagion  
And sin.*

[The Body:]

*You lead into sin's abyss,  
You who rashly carry out  
The work commissioned by your leader.  
You ruin me  
When you oppress me  
With the weight of sin.*

[The Soul:]

*Into abuse of reason  
You turn its use, and of goods  
Freely given you deprive yourself  
When you favour*

<p>Assensibus Faves illicitis.</p> <p><i>[The Body:]</i></p> <p>Tibi nomen anime Iam adime, Quia recte non animas, Cum perimas Me mortis opere.</p> <p><i>[The Soul:]</i></p> <p>Tibi cogor obsequi Et exsequi, Opus rectum si iudices, Vel claudices <i>A recti semitis.</i></p>	<p><i>The senses With illicit approbations</i></p> <p><i>[The Body:]</i></p> <p><i>Now take away Your name of 'anima' [=spirit], For you do not rightly animate When you press hard down On me with the work of death.</i></p> <p><i>[The Soul:]</i></p> <p><i>I am forced to obey you And follow, Whether you decide on a good work Or stumble From the paths of righteousness.</i></p>
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## Quod promisit ab eterno

Quod promisit ab eterno,  
Die solvit hodierno,  
Verbum mittens de superno  
Pater in Idumeam,

*That which the Father promised from eternity  
He has fulfilled today  
Sending His word from above  
To Edom.*

Levis nubes et vitalis,  
Munda caro virginalis,  
Nobis pluens spiritalis  
Roris plenitudinem.

*A light and life-giving cloud,  
The pure flesh of the virgin,  
Raining the fullness  
Of spiritual dew on us.*

Olim fuit argumentum  
Verbi signans indumentum  
Nubes ferens adiumentum  
Lucis adumbraculi.

*Once the cloud was the proof  
Signalling the clothing of the Word,  
The cloud bringing the aid  
Of the sheltering light.*

## Fas et nefas

Fas et nefas ambulant  
Fere passu pari;  
Prodigus non redimit  
Vitium avari;

*Right and Wrong walk  
With an almost equal pace;  
The prodigal does not make good  
The vice of the miser;*

Virtus temperantia  
Quodam singulari  
Debet medium  
Ad utrumque vitium  
Caute contemplari.

Si legisse memoras  
Ethicam Catonis,  
In qua scriptum legitur:  
“Ambula cum bonis”,  
Cum ad dandi gloriam  
Animum disponis,  
Supra cetera  
Primum hoc considera:  
Quis sit dignus donis.

Vultu licet hilari,  
Verbo licet blando,  
Sis equalis omnibus,  
Unum tamen mando:  
Si vis recte gloriam  
Promereri dando,  
Primum videas  
Granum inter paleas,  
Cui des et quando.

Dare non ut convenit,  
Non est a virtute,  
Bonum est secundum quid,  
Sed non absolute;  
Digne dare poteris  
Et mereri tute  
Famam muneris,  
Si me prius noveris  
Intus et in cute.

Si prudenter triticum  
Paleis emundas,  
Famam emis munere;  
Sed caveto, cum das,  
Largitatis oleum  
Male ne effundas  
In te glorior,  
Quia Codro codrior,  
Omnibus abundas.

*Virtue in a singular temperance  
Needs to cautiously  
Contemplate  
The middle ground  
Between each vice.*

*If you remember having read  
The Ethics of Cato,  
In which it is written:  
“Walk with good men”,  
When you direct your mind  
To the glory of giving,  
Before all else,  
First consider this:  
Who is worthy of gifts?*

*Although you are equal to all  
In your cheerful face,  
And soft speech,  
Yet I enjoin one thing:  
If you want to rightly win glory  
By giving,  
First you must see  
The grain amidst the chaff,  
To whom you give and when.*

*To give where it is not appropriate  
Does not belong to virtue,  
It is good relatively speaking,  
But not absolutely;  
You may give worthily  
And safely merit  
The glory of your gift,  
If first you know me  
Inwardly and out.*

*If you prudently  
Cleans the wheat from the chaff,  
You buy glory with your gift;  
But beware, when you give.  
That you do not wastefully shed  
The oil of bountiful giving.  
I glory in you,  
Since, being poorer than [the poor poet]  
Codrus,  
You abound with all things.*

## Genitus divinitus

<p>Genitus divinitus Idem, quod ingenuus, Egitus humanus Hac in valle gemitus: Mira prolis unitas, Germinat natiuitas.</p> <p>Hec a desiderio Defraudata sobrio Recreatur basio Vili tecta pallio, Cum sacra coniunctio, Quam sine diuortio Casta generatio Prodit in connubio.</p> <p>Ad epithalamium Excitat tripudium Salomonis studium, Mitigator gentium; David fert in medium Lyras et psalterium Premiaque talia, Tot et tam propitia, Gratia propria Dantis laus et gloria.</p>	<p><i>Born in diuine fashion, He Who was unbegotten, Issued forth in human fashion Into this valley of tears: Wondrous unity of progeny, The nativity sprouts forth.</i></p> <p><i>This is defrauded Of its desire, But is restored by a chaste kiss, Covered by a vile cloak When the holy union takes place, Which the chaste begetting Without separation Brings forth in marriage.</i></p> <p><i>The zeal of Solomon The mediator of the nations Calls forth A dance for the wedding; David brings out The lyre and the psalter And such rewards So many and so gracious, Glory and praise of the giver, Through His own grace!</i></p>
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## Quid ultra tibi facere

<p>Quid ultra tibi facere, Vinea mea, potui? Quid potes mihi reddere, Qui pro te cedi, conspui, Et crucifigi volui? Et tu pro tanto munere, Baptismi fracto federe, Presumis vice mutui Me rursum crucifigere Et habere ostentui.</p> <p>Quid, quod ipsa religio Crucem fert in angaria Et, cum datur occasio,</p>	<p><i>What more for thee, o my vineyard, Could I have done? What will you be able to give back to me, Who have died for you, and was willing To be reviled and crucified? And in return for such a gift you have broken The covenant of baptism, And you presume once again To crucify me And to hold me up as a spectacle.</i></p> <p><i>Why is it that religion itself, because It bears the Cross in its service, Whenever the chance is given Runs back with joy</i></p>
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<p>Recurrit cum letitia Ad pepones et allia? Simulato negotio, A plangentis officio Redit ad secularia Qui, derelicto pallio Fugerat ab Egyptia.</p> <p>At vos qui gloriamini In opibus illicitis, Qui vobis crucem Domini Prodesse non permittitis, Qui Lazari et Divitis Exemplo non terremini, Cum ipso puniemini. Quicquid tamen egeritis, Dum licet convertimini Ad me, et salvi eritis.</p>	<p><i>To melons and garlic? In a pretence of lawful duty, He who once threw off his cloak And fled from the Egyptian woman Returns to the profane From the office of lamentation.</i></p> <p><i>But you who glory In forbidden riches, You who do not allow The Cross of the Lord to do good, Who fear not the example Of Dives and Lazarus, With him will be punished. However, whatever you have done, As long as you turn to me, You will be saved.</i></p>
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### **Transgressus legem domini**

<p>Transgressus legem Domini, Quam dedit Deus homini, Homo dignus exitio Relegatur exilio, Sed fons misericordie Huic mediante filio Finem dedit miserie.</p> <p>Veritati stat obvia Mitis misericordia, Pro transgressore supplicans, Immitem Deum iudicans Si prorsus ita destruit Creaturam, quam fecerat, Si perituram noverat Quam facere non debuit.</p> <p>Ergo Verbum incarnari Vult pater, ut reformari Possit hominis status, Et Christus humanatus, Carnem sumens de virgine Ab omni munda crimine, Non fuit mori veritus, Ut homo morti deditus Viveret liberatus.</p>	<p><i>Having broken the Lord's command, Which God gave to man, Man worthy of death Was turned away into exile; But the fount of mercy, With the Son coming to man's aid, Put an end to his wretchedness.</i></p> <p><i>Soft Mercy Meets Truth, Interceding for the sinner And judging God unbending, If thus he utterly destroys That which he should Not have created If he knew it would perish.</i></p> <p><i>Therefore, the Father wills that The Word be made flesh, That man's estate May be reformed, And Christ become humanm Taking flesh from the Virgin Who is free of all sin; He feared not to die, So that man given over to death Might live free.</i></p>
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## Ave Maria salus hominum

Ave Maria Salus hominum Cella regia Qua lux luminum Se clausit pia Numen numinum; Viri nescia Christum Dominum Tu que genuisti Virgoque mansisti Decus virginum Plebi confer isti Sui mater Christi Luctus terminum.	<i>Hail Mary, Salvation of men, Holy royal chamber, In which the Light of lights, The Power of powers, Enclosed himself; Not knowing man, Thou who didst bear The Lord Christ And remain virgin Splendour of virgins, Bring to this people, O mother of their Christ, An end to their grief.</i>
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## Eclipsim passus totiens

Eclipsim passus totiens Mundus dolores iteret; Preclare lucis patiens Occasum luctum reseret; Radiabat Parisius Fulgens Cantoris radius, Quem mors videt et invidet, Dum toti mundo providet, Dum verbum vite seminat, Dum lucet non sub modio; Sublatus sol de medio Felicem vitam terminat.	<i>Having suffered eclipse so often, Let the world renew its sorrows; Suffering the setting of a bright light, Let it unlock sorrow; The bright light of the Cantor Shone in Paris, Whom Death saw and envied, While he cares for the whole world, While he sows the word of life, While his light shines not under the bushel; The sun, taken from our midst, Ends a happy life.</i>
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## Ave, virga decoris incliti

Ave, virga decoris incliti, Officina almi Paracliti, Flore vernans incomparabili, Ave, mater regis magnifici, Cuius sumus cruore diluti Ac de iugo Sathane eruti, Tu, aurora regis perpetui, Fac ut muro inexpugnabili Nos circumdet virtus altissimi.	<i>Hail, stem of marvellous splendour Store-house of the gentle Holy Spirit, Budding with incomparable flower, Hail, mother of the mighty king, In whose blood we are cleansed And rescued from the yoke of Satan, Thou, the dawning of the everlasting king, Grant that the virtue of the Most High Protect us by an unassailable wall.</i>
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## Veste Nuptiali

Veste nuptiali, Splendore figurali, Non tam corporali Quam habitu mentali Nuptias introeas; Sic fulgeas Ut sedeas In sede speciali Caveas Ut habeas In habitu te tali, Quod non exeas De domo pulsus regali.	<i>In wedding garment Of figurative splendour Not so much in bodily As in spiritual apparel, May you enter the wedding feast; May you shine In such a way that you sit In a special seat, And beware That you behave Yourself in such a manner That you are not Driven out from the royal home</i>
Virgo clamat foris In tenebris meroris Vana vox clamoris Non est mentis sed oris Ei clausa ianua Nam fatua Cum vacua Stat lampade splendoris Non sua Sat mutua, Prudens plena timoris, Ne residua Non sufficiens licoris.	<i>The virgin clamours out of doors In the darkness of sorrow; Her vain voice of clamouring Is not of the soul but of the mouth; To her the door is shut, For foolish, With her own lamp Empty of light, she stands, With enough for herself But not to share, The prudent one is fearful That what remains of the oil Will not be sufficient.</i>
Germen sine flore, Famis sine dulcore, Vas sine liquore, Vox est sine stentore; Sed que cum lampadibus Ardentibus in manibus In operum candore, Foribus Patentibus Intrant absque clamore, Cibus talibus Refici mente non ore.	<i>A twig without flower, Hunger without sweetness, A vessel without liquid Is a voice without a sound; But those virgins who with lamps Burning, in their hands, In the brightness of works, Through Open doors, Enter without clamour, And the food given to such Is refreshment to the soul, not the mouth.</i>

## Ave tuos benedic

Ave tuos benedic, Virgo singularis, Mater in deliciis, Salve stella maris Pulchrior quam radius Lune vel solaris, Iram nati mitiga, Mater salutaris.	<i>Hail! Bless thy servants O singular virgin, Mother among delights. Hail, star of the sea, More beautiful than the ray Of moon or sun. Soften the wrath of thy son, O mother of salvation.</i>
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## Dic Christi veritas

Dic, Christi veritas, Dic, cara raritas, Dic, rara caritas, Ubi nunc habitas? Aut in valle visionis, Aut in throno pharaonis, Aut in alto cum Nerone, Aut in antro cum Theone? Vel in fiscella scirpea Cum Moyse plorante? Vel in domo Romulea Cum bulla fulminante?	<i>Speak, o Truth of Christ. Speak, o dear Rarity. Speak, o rare Charity, Where do you dwell now? In the Valley of Vision? Or on Pharaoh's throne? Or on high with Nero? Or in the cave with Theon? Or in the bulrush basket With the weeping Moses? Or in Rome With the thundering bull?</i>
Respondit caritas: 'Homo, quid dubitas, Quid me sollicitas? Non sum, quo mussitas, Nec in Euro, nec in Austro, Nec in foro, nec in claustro, Nec in bysso vel cuculla, Nec in bello, nec in bulla, De Iericho sum veniens Ploro cum sauciato, Quem duplex Levi transiens Non astitit grabato.'	<i>Charity replied: 'Man, why do you doubt? Why do you vex me? I am not in the place where you grumble; Not in the East, nor in the South, Not in court, nor in the cloistered cell, Not in fine linen, nor in monk's cowl, Not in war, nor in papal bull; But I am coming from Jericho, I weep with the wounded man, Whom the hypocritical Levite, passing by, Refused to assist with a litter.'</i>
O vox prophetica, O Nathan, predica; Culpa Davidica Patet non modica. Dicit Nathan: 'Non clamabo Neque David planctum dabo, Cum sit Christi rupta vestis; Contra Christum Christus testis. Ve, ve vobis, hypocrite, Qui culicem colatis, Que Cesaris sunt, reddite, Ut Christo serviatis.'	<i>O prophetic voice, O Nathan, preach; David's great guilt, Lies open; Nathan said: 'I shall not clamour, Nor shall I raise a lament to David, Since Christ's robe is rent; Against Christ, Christ is his own witness. Woe, woe unto you, hypocrites, Who strain out a gnat, What is Caesar's, render, That you might serve Christ.'</i>