

1. A Musical Experiment in Den Bosch, 1531

Des anderen daechs daer nae, te veten, des
saterdaechs ad iiiij. nouember, naeder
sielmissie in onsen choer gedaen siinde, nae
older geuoente gegeuen

onsen deken van onsen choer, vant hij die
Mijssse gesongen heft, ij stuver¹,
den seluen voer hen presentie², j st.

noch den seluen want hij dat doot boeck
gelesen heft, ij st.,

den diaken, subdiaken elck voer hen
presentie, j st.

ende vant sij metten deken dat doot boeck
hadden helpen lesen, elck ij st.,

den priesteren, elc j st.

Nota. Ende want de sengers begerde de
mijs te syngen in musijck, om te besien
hoe ons die manier van doen aen stont,
also gegeuen

den sengers voer den haluen st.
eenen helen st., ende den coralen voer
dat ortken³ j st.

Nota. Mer ten stont den sommeghen nijet
vael aen. Sij presen die olde manier, ende
soe den ic oeck, vant dat is bequamer⁴
manier voer de dooden. (Also niet mer.)

Given, after old custom, on the day after
that, that is, on Saturday 4 November,
the Mass of the Souls in our choir having
been done,

5 to our **dean** of our choir, because he has
sung Mass, 2 st.¹,

to the same, for his presence², 1 st.;

also to the same, because he has read out the
necrology, 2 st.

10 to the **deacon** and **subdeacon**, each for their
presence, 1 st.,

and because they helped reading out the
necrology together with the dean, each 2 st.

to each of the **priests**, 1 st.

15 *Nota:* And since the singers desired to
sing the Mass in polyphony, to see how
we liked that manner of doing, therefore
given

to the **singers**, 1 whole st. instead of a half,
and to the **choristers**, 1 st. instead of one
oortken.³

Nota: However, some did not like it at all.
They praised the old manner. And I think
so, too. For that manner is more appro-
priate⁴ for the dead. (Therefore not again.)

For the original, see the next page. The document was partially published in Albert Smijers, “De Illustrre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap te ’s-Hertogenbosch: VII. Rekeningen van Sint Jan 1525 tot Sint Jan 1535,” *Tijdschrift voor Noord-Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, 16 (1940): 63–106, at 88.

¹ The currency is the Brabant *stuver* (st.).

² Ducange: *praesentia*, fee granted to ecclesiastics for their presence in some office (*salarium quod pro praesentia alicui officio ecclesiasticis conceditur*).

³ The *oortken* was a coin that had the value of a half stiver.

⁴ The Middle-Dutch adjective *bequaem*, today *bekwaam*, is, like the German *bequem*, etymologically related to the English adjective *becoming*. Its meanings included: (1) pleasing, pleasant, agreeable, cherished, or beloved; and (2) fitting, appropriate, salubrious. When Mary of Burgundy made her formal entry into Bruges, in April 1477, she was treated to a polyphonic motet by the choirboys of the beguinage, which according to an report written the next year was quite pleasing to her: “zo zonghen de scollieren van den voorscreven hove een ghenoughelic motet in discante, dat haer zeere *bequame* was.” Rykaart Dewitte, “Bezoek van Maria van Bourgondië in het begijnhof van Brugge,” *Annales de la Société d’émulation de Bruges*, 59 (1909): 88–91, at 90.

Dat anderan durch dat nae te maken
 dat paardichec. oec my monder. Warden sicke.
 In onss choer daryn staet. Mar oec gemaect
 geyngt ons deken aens opps choer. want hy
 die Missie gesongt heeft. ij st., den seluen voer
 sin presentie j st. Noch den seluen want
 hij dat doot boeck gelesen heft ij st., den
 diaken, subdiaken elck voer hen presentie j st. ende
 vant sij metten deken dat doot boeck hadden helpen
 lesen, elck ij st., den priesteren elc j st. Nota.
 Ende want de sengers begerde de mijis te syngen
 in musiick, om te bes ien hoe ons die manier
 van doen aen stont, also gegeuen den sengers voer
 den haluen st. eenen helen st. Ende den coralen voer
 dat ortken j st. Nota. Mer ten stont den sommeghen
 niet vael aen. Sij presen die olde manier.
 Ende soe den ic oeck, vant dat is bequamer
 manier voer de dooden. (Also niet mer.)

Des anderen daechs daer nae, te veten,
 des saterdaechs ad iiiij. Nouember, nae der sielmissie
 in onsen choer gedaen stinde, nae older geoente
 gegeuen onsen deken van onsen choer, vant hij
 die Missie gesongen heft, ij st., den seluen voer
 sin presentie j st. Noch den seluen want
 hij dat doot boeck gelesen heft ij st., den
 diaken, subdiaken elck voer hen presentie j st. ende
 vant sij metten deken dat doot boeck hadden helpen
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 niet vael aen. Sij presen die olde manier.
 Ende soe den ic oeck, vant dat is bequamer
 manier voer de dooden. (Also niet mer.)

2. Requiem Services in Polyphony

Against:

1. Statutes of the Sainte Chapelle at Bourges, drawn up in 1407:

Ordinamus quod personae prefatae... Divina Officia Canonicalia, et Beatae Mariae, videlicet Matutinas, Primam, Tertiam, Processiones, Missas, Meridiem, Nonam, Vespertas et Completorium cum cantu et discantu, secundum quod in Sacra Capella Parisiis solitum est fieri; nec non *Commendationes, Obitus...* *sine discantus*, ad usum Parisiensem perpetuis temporibus celebrare et dicere teneantur.

Abbé Lebeuf, *Traité historique et pratique sur le chant ecclésiastique* (Paris: J. B. and Jean Th. Hérissant, 1741).

We ordain that the aforesaid persons... are perpetually to celebrate and say, following the Use of Paris, (1) the canonical Divine Offices for the Blessed Mary, namely, Matins, Terce, Processions, Masses, Mid-Day, None, Vespers, and Compline with chant and discant, according to how it is customarily done in the Sainte-Chapelle at Paris; and *Commendations, Obits...* *without discant*

2. Ferrara Cathedral, a testator arranges for the singing of Requiem Masses, 1425:

... videlicet unumquodque per infrascriptum modum: quod in die cuiuslibet anniversarii sumissa voce faciendo *punctum cum pausa* et *non nugando*. Et si quis contrafecerit, nichil percipiat et pars contrafacentis applicetur sacristie.

Enrico Peverada, *Vita musicale nella chiesa ferrarese del quattrocento* (Ferrara: Capitolo Cattedrale, 1991), 106.

... that is, each in the manner described below, singing *note against silence*, with quiet voice, and *no trifling*, on the day of any anniversary. And if someone shall do it in contrary fashion, he will receive nothing, and his portion will be consigned to the sacristy.

3. Philip the Good, 1431, foundation of, and statutes for, the Order of the Golden Fleece, and Sainte Chapelle at Dijon

Fondons et établissons du gré et consentement desdits doyen et chapitre en icelle notre chapelle et collège dudit ordre une messe quotidienne et perpétuelle, pour chaque jour dès lors en avant être chantée solennellement à haute voix, *à chant et deschant, excepté celle de Requiem*.

Abbé Lebeuf, *Traité historique et pratique sur le chant ecclésiastique* (Paris: J. B. and Jean Th. Hérissant, 1741), 86–87.

We found and establish, with the agreement and consent of the said Dean and Chapter, that from this day forward a daily and perpetual Mass be sung solemnly, with voice aloud, *in chant and discant, excepting that of Requiem*, in the our same chapel and college of the said Order.

In Favor:

4. Jean Regnier, bailiff of Auxerre, imprisoned at Beauvais in 1432, testament in French verse:

Il me suffira d'une messe
De Requiem haulte chantée,
Au cuer me feroit grant lyesse
Se estre povoit deschantée.

I am content with one Mass
Of Requiem, sung aloud.
It would bring great joy to my heart
If it could be sung in discant.

Jean Regnier, *Les fortunes et adversitez de feu noble homme Jehan Regnier*, ed. M. Paul Lacroix (Geneva: J. Gays et fils, 1867), 122.

5. Jean de St Gille, singer and composer at Rouen, testament in rhymed verse, 1 Sept. 1501:

Tout cela fait et acomply
aux chantres de Rouen supply,
Cosme, Vatel, Graindor, Aquart,
Cardin, Lorin, Raulin, Bouchard
Cauvet, et des enfans assez,
de chanter pour les trespassés
la messe que j'ay compozée,
Si leur voix est bien dispozée,
Et en ce faisant je leur donne
Pour boyre vng escu d'or couronne
Et pour accomplir et parfaire
Et subuenir audit affaire,
cent livres du moins je retiens,
sus tant que puy auoir de biens.

Having done and completed all of that,
I beg the singers of Rouen,
Cosme, Vatel, Graindor, Aquart,
Cardin, Lorin, Raulin, Bouchard,
Cauvet, and the boy, too,
to sing for the Dead
the Mass which I have composed,
if their voices are well disposed,
and while I'm doing this, I give them
an écu d'or à la couronne.
And for completing, finishing,
and supporting in the said affair,
I retain at least one hundred pounds
for as so long as I have goods.

Rob C. Wegman, "The Testament of Jean de St Gille (†1501)," *Revue de musicologie*, 95 (2009): 7–36, at 28.

6. Guild of the Presentation of Our Lady, Oudenaarde, last clause of the foundation charter, dated 1519 or slightly earlier:

Item tsanderdaeghs, tsmaendaeghs vander Assumptions dach, zal men noch doen zinghen, ten autare van *Pax vobis*, eene schoone solemne ghesonghen messe van requiem, in discante, over de zielen van den guldebroeders ende guldezusters, die overleden zijn, ende voor de fondateurs ende weldoeners vander zelven gulden . . .

Item, shortly thereafter, on the Monday after the feast of the Assumption, one shall have sung, at the altar of *Pax vobis* [of the local Chamber of Rhetoric], a beautiful, solemn, sung Mass of Requiem, in discant, for the souls of the deceased brethren and sisters of the guild, and for the founders and benefactors of the same guild . . .

D. J. Vander Meersch, "Kronyk der Rederykkamers van Audenaerde, XVI^e eeuw," *Belgisch museum voor de nederduitsche taal- en letterkunde en de geschiedenis des vaderlands*, 7 (1843): 15–72, at 27.

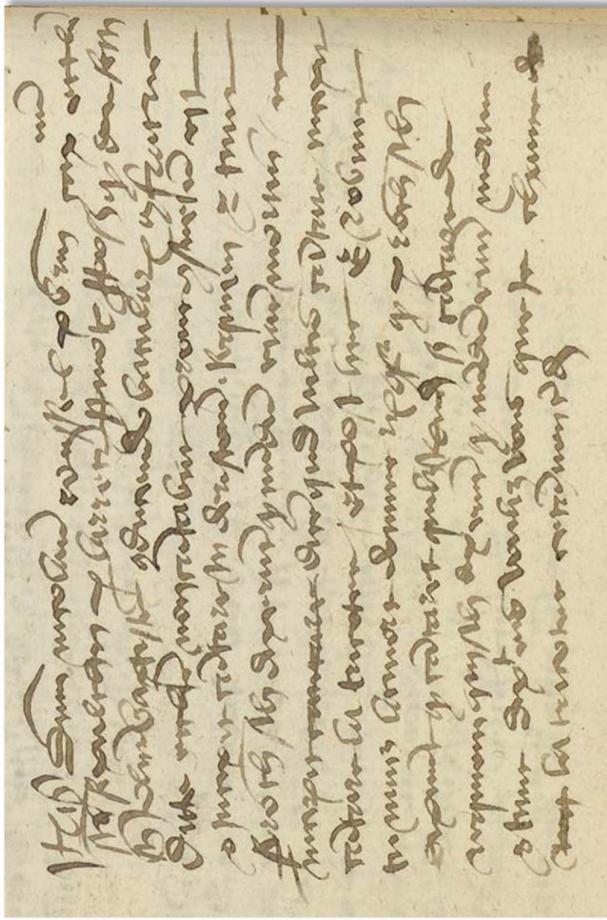
7. City of Den Bosch, Accounts for 1567–1568, on the occasion of the recent death of Don Carlos, crown prince of Spain (as narrated by Verdi in. The magistrates order services and processions of mourning for Don Carlos, crown prince of Spain, who had recently died—as narrated by Verdi in *Don Carlo*.

Item, achtervolgende die brieven vander excellentie vanden Hartoge van Alva, gouverneur van deze Nederlanden, aan dezer stadt gescreven, om des conincx soone, Karolus genoempt, Prince van Spaengien, die welcke den 14 July gestorven was, een erlycke vutfaert nae te doene... mr. Jan the Singer, mette sangers, vander *misse van requiem in discant te singen*, 24 st.

Item, following the letters from the excellence of the Duke of Alva, governor of these Netherlands, written to this city concerning the king's son, named Carlos, Prince of Spain, who had died on 14 [*recte* 24] July, to do a honorific funerary service for him... to Master Jan the Singer, with the singers, *to sing the Mass of Requiem in discant*, 24 st.

R. A. van Zuijlen, ed., *Inventaris der archieven van de stad 's-Hertogenbosch*, vol. 2 (Den Bosch: W. C. van Heusden, 1866), 824–825.

3. What's Wrong With That Guy?



Item, contra dominum Nicolaum Roussel, presbyterum capellani ecclesie Sancti Sepulchri, per Larrelier promotorem. Proposuit quod die festi Sancti Johannis Baptiste, conducendo bacularium confratrie dictae ecclesie, non cantabat prout consuetum est et incepit cantare in derisionem *Requiem*. Et tunc parochiani sibi dixerunt quod nundum erant mortui. Et incepit cantare dicere quid vultis cantare? Incepit cantare *La tricotée*, et post hec *E Robinet, tu m'as la mort donnée* etc., qualiter quod parochiani sibi dixerunt quod cantaret quilibet reverenda, sed cantare de *Requiem* qui sibi dixerunt quod nundum erant mortui. Et tunc dixit eis: «Voulez vous que je chante de *La tricotée?*» Et ceterum non tradidit.

Troyes, Archives départementales de l'Aube, Officialité, G4179, fol. 115v (29 July 1464); tinyurl.com/Troyes-Officialite-G4170-G4184. These are registers of cases that were tried before the ecclesiastical judge, in this case, the Bishop of Troyes or his deputy. Further entries referring to this case: fol. 121v (7 Aug.), 183v (24 Nov.), 197r (18 Dec.; crossed out), 207v (8 Jan. 1465). The case ended on the last date, when Roussel paid a fine of 20 sous tournois. By then he had become chaplain in another minor parish closer to Troyes: Saint-Benoît sur Seine.

Translation:

Also, against Messire Nicolas Roussel, priest and chaplain of the Church of St Sépulchre, by the prosecutor [Jean] Larrecier. He stated that on the feastday of St John the Baptist, while going before the staff-bearer of the confraternity of the said church, [Roussel] did not sing as accustomed, but began to sing *Requiem* in jest. The parishioners said amongst themselves that they were not dead yet. Then he said to them: "What do you want to sing?" And he began to sing "The *tricotée*." And after that "Hey Robinet, you've been the death of me," and so on, in such a way that the parishioners said to themselves that one could sing reverend things, but not *Requiem*. For they said among themselves that they were not dead yet. And then he said to them: "Do you want me to sing *La tricotée*?" And [the prosecutor] did not report more.

4. Famous Last Songs

Audit an fut pendu ung appellé maistre Jennin, le raicouvaiteur, qui estoit riche et bon ouvrier; mais sa richesse n'estoit bien acquise, en tant qu'il l'avoit acquis de lairancins, et estoit vieulx. Car il cogneust à la justice de Mets qu'il avoit desrobé vingt deux calices, sans les aultres choses.

Et fut accusé pour deux calices qui furent prins à St Simplice, le temps durant que on juoit le jeu de la passion; car il se encloyt au moustier de Sainct Simplice nuictamment et les print en les armoires sans y faire nulle corruption, dont on en fut moult esbahy.

Car il fut mescreu à plusieurs gens d'eglise, et en fut sire Symon de Bassencourt, prestre, mené en l'hostel du doyen, mais il en fut trouvé net. Et fut mescreu à ung aultre homme d'eglise, prestre, appellé sire Hartewich, qui estoit bon amy au maistre de la monnoye; mais il n'y avoit coulpe.

Et par cela fut accusé le fait que ledit maistre Jennin portoit du billon à la monnoie, qui tenoit aulcunement or, dont ledit maistre monnoyer le retint et le fist assavoir à justice.

Parquoy il fut prins et cognust son cais, et condamné à estre pendu et estranglé: et fut mené à la justice en ung tumerel¹ et chantoit à haulte halaine une chanson qui commence ainsy:

“Hé, Robinet, tu m'as la mort donnée,
car tu t'en vais, et je suis demeurée.”

Et chantoit celle chanson ainsi comme il fut tout désespéré.

In the said year, a man called Maistre Jennin le Racouvateur [or: the Roofer] was hanged at the [place of] justice. He was rich, and a good worker. Yet his riches were acquired not in a good way at all, inasmuch as he had acquired them by larceny, and he was an old man. [Jennin] admitted to the Judiciary at Metz that he had stolen twenty-two chalices, not counting other things.

He was accused [at first] of taking two chalices from Saint Simplice, at the time when the Play of the Passion was staged. For he had locked himself in the Church of Saint Simplice at night. And he took [the chalices] from the armored chests without causing any damage—something at which people were astonished.

Several churchmen disbelieved him, of whom one, the priest Sire Symon de Bassencourt, was taken to the House of the Dean. Yet he was found clean. And [Jennin] was disbelieved also by another churchman, a priest called Sire Hartewich, who was a good friend of the Master of the Mint. But he was not guilty either.

And it is by this [the Mint] that he came to be accused on this count, that he had carried bullion to the Mint, which did not keep gold at all. The Master of the Mint detained him for that reason, and reported him to Justice.

[Jennin] was apprehended, and he admitted to his crime. And he was condemned to be hanged and strangled. They took him to [the place of] Justice in a tumbrel,¹ and *he sang with loud exhalation* a song that begins like so:

“Hey Robinet, you've been the death of me,
For you take off, and I am left behind.”

And he sang that song like this because he was in total despair.

¹ Cart for leading the condemned to the place of execution.

5. St Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*

Musica movet affectus, provocat in diversum habitum sensus.

In proeliis quoque tubae concentus pugnantes accendit, et quanto vehementior fuerit clangor, tanto fit ad certamen animus fortior.

Siquidem et remiges cantus hortatur, ad tolerandos quoque labores.

Musica animum mulcat, et singulorum operum fatigationem modulatio vocis solatur.

Excitos quoque animos musica sedat, sicut de David legitur, qui ab spiritu inmundo Saulem arte modulationis eripuit.

Ipsas quoque bestias, necnon et serpentes, volucres atque delphinus ad auditum suae modulationis musica provocat.

Music moves the emotions, provokes [humans] into different states of being.

In battle the sounds of trumpets fires on the fighters. The more vehement the noise, the stronger is the mind for combat.

Indeed even oarsmen are exhorted by song, to tolerate the labors also.

Music soothes the mind, and a vocal melody eases the exhaustion from single works.

Music also calms theminds, like we read about David, who rescued Saul from an unclean spirit through the art of melody.

Music also provokes also beasts and serpents, birds and dophins, to listen to its melodies.

5. St Augustine, *Confessions*, X. 33

¹ Voluptates aurium tenacius me implicaverant et subiugaverant, sed resolvisti et liberasti me.

² Nunc in sonis quos animant eloquia tua cum suavi et artificiosa voce cantantur, fateor, aliquantulum adquiesco. ³ Non quidem ut haeream, sed ut surgam cum volo.

⁴ Attamen cum ipsis sententiis quibus vivunt, ut admittantur ad me, quaerunt in corde meo nonnullius dignitatis locum, et vix eis praebeo congruentem.

⁵ Aliquando enim plus mihi videor honoris eis tribuere quam decet, dum ipsis sanctis dictis religiosius et ardentius sentio moveri animos nostros in flammam pietatis cum ita cantantur, quam si non ita cantarentur.

⁶ Et omnes affectus spiritus nostri pro sui diversitate habere proprios modos in voce atque cantu, quorum nescio qua occulta familiaritate excitentur.

¹ The pleasures of the ears had more tenaciously implicated me and subjugated me; but you [God] have loosened me and liberated me.

² Now I confess that I do find a little repose in sounds that are brought alive by your words, if they are sung with a suave and artful voice. ³ Not indeed that I cling, but that I get up when I want.

⁴ And yet, when [those sounds], along with the thoughts that endow them with life, are granted admission into me, they seek in my heart a place of some dignity, and I scarcely offer them an appropriate one.

⁵ For sometimes it seems that I ascribe more honor to them than is seemly, when I sense that our minds are more religiously and more ardently moved to a flame of piety by those holy words, when [these] are thus sung, than if they were not thus sung.

⁶ And all the affective states of our spirit, in their diversity, have their proper modes in voice and song, by which they are aroused by I know not what hidden familial connection.

⁷ Sed delectatio carnis meae, cui mentem enervandam non oportet dari, saepe me fallit, dum rationi sensus non ita comitatur ut patienter sit posterior, sed tantum, quia propter illam meruit admitti, etiam praecurrere ac ducere conatur.⁸ Ita in his pecco non sentiens et postea sentio.

⁹ Aliquando autem hanc ipsam fallaciam immoderatus cavens erro nimia severitate, sed valde interdum, ut melos omne cantilenarum suavum quibus daviticum psalterium frequen-tatur ab auribus meis removeri velim.

¹⁰ Atque ipsius ecclesiae, tutiusque mihi videtur quod de Alexandrino episcopo Athanasio saepe mihi dictum commemini, qui tam modico flexu vocis faciebat sonare lectorem psalmi ut pronuntianti vicinior esset quam canenti.

¹¹ Verum tamen cum reminiscor lacrimas meas quas fudi ad cantus ecclesiae in primordiis recuperatae fidei meae, et nunc ipsum cum moveor non cantu sed rebus quae cantantur, cum liquida voce et convenientissima modulatione cantantur, magnam instituti huius utilitatem rursus agnosco.

¹² Ita fluctuo inter periculum voluptatis et experimentum salubritatis magisque adducor, non quidem inretractabilem sententiam proferens, cantandi consuetudinem approbare in ecclesia, ut per oblectamenta aurium infirmior animus in affectum pietatis adsurgat.

¹³ Tamen cum mihi accidit ut me amplius cantus quam res quae canitur moveat, poenaliter me peccare confiteor et tunc mallem non audire cantantem.
¹⁴ Ecce ubi sum. ¹⁵ Flete mecum et pro me flete qui aliquid boni vobiscum intus agitis, unde facta procedunt.¹⁶ Nam qui non agitis, non vos haec movent.

⁷ Yet the delight of my flesh, to which the mind must not be left to be weakened, often deceives me, when the sense does not accompany reason in such a way that it walks patiently behind, but only since it merited admission because of [reason], it attempts to walk before it, or to lead.⁸ Thus I sin in these things unawares, and am aware of it afterwards.

⁹ But sometimes, when I am more immoderately wary of that deception, I sin by too great severity, particularly when I want all the melodiousness of the suave songs that are repeated in the Davidian Psalter to be removed from my ears.

¹⁰ What seems to me safer for this church, is what I remember was often said to me about Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, who made the psalm-reciter sound with such moderate inflection of the voice, that [the latter] was closer to a person who speaks than one who sings.

¹¹ In truth, however, when I remember my tears, shed at the songs of the church at the beginning of my recovered faith, and when now I am moved not by the song, but rather by the things that are sung, when they are sung with a clear voice and a most fitting melody, I recognize once again the great usefulness of this institution.

¹² Thus am I drifting between the danger of pleasure, on the one hand, and the experience of salubrity, on the other. And I am led all the more to approve (though not as a pronouncement that cannot be retracted) the custom of singing in church, in order that the weaker mind will rise to a feeling of piety by the pleasures of the ears.

¹³ However, when it happens to me that the song moves me more than the thing which is sung, I confess that I am sinning punishably, and them I would rather not hear the one singing.¹⁴ See where I am!¹⁵ Weep with me, and weep for me, you who do something good for your inner selves, from which deeds proceed.¹⁶ For those of you who do not, these things do not move you.

¹⁷Tu autem, domine deus meus,
exaudi: respice et vide et miserere et
sana me, in cuius oculis mihi quaestio
factus sum, et ipse est languor meus.

¹⁷But you, Lord my God, listen: look and
see, have mercy and heal me, in whose eyes I
have made myself the investigation. And that is
my weakness.

Latin text taken from James J. O'Donnell, ed., *The Confessions of Augustine: A Text and Commentary*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3: 138–139. See also <https://tinyurl.com/August-Confess-X-ODonnell>. Sentence numbering mine.

Glossary to the text of St Augustine

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|----|--|--|
| 1. | what's on the outside? | caro, sensus, aures, audire |
| 2. | what is perceived on the outside? | vox, sonus, melos, cantus, cantilena, modulatio |
| 3. | what is their effect on the outside? | voluptas, delectatio, oblectamentum |
| 4. | what's inside? | cor, animus, spiritus, mens, ratio |
| 5. | what are the “things” that are sung? | eloquia, res, sententiae, sancta dicta |
| 6. | what do they do in song?? | animare, be the [res] quibus vivunt [soni] |
| 7. | why does music have power over humans? | nescio qua occulta familiaritate |
| 8. | what is the experience inside? | affectus, moveri, acquiescere, excitari, lacrimae |
| 9. | what is the goal? | flamma pietatis, affectus pietatis, affectus
spiritus, adsurgere, moveri ardens, religiosus |