

# The Tixall circle and the musical life of St Monica's, Louvain

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This article explores the possibility that poems preserved in the recusant coterie collection, *Tixall Poetry* may include verses written both by and for the Augustinian canonesses of St Monica's, Louvain, and provide evidence for the cultural life of the convent. It then turns to a consideration of evidence for the cultivation of music, and argues for the practical importance of music to the lives of the canonesses. It explores the intense significance which the canonesses attached to the clothing ceremony, and suggests that one of the Tixall poems, 'The Royal Nun', an adaptation of two lyrics from Nathanael Lee's play *Theodosius* (1680), perhaps by Herbert Aston, might have been used as the libretto for the music which, when possible, covered the hiatus in the clothing ceremony when the nun took off her bridal garments and assumed her habit.

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## *The Tixall Circle and St Monica's*

The collection of seventeenth-century recusant verse known as *Tixall Poetry*, from a recusant coterie centred on Tixall in Staffordshire, includes a poem of forty-four lines which has not hitherto attracted attention, titled 'The Royal Nun' (see appendix).<sup>1</sup> I would like to suggest that it prompts consideration of the inclusion of residents of St Monica's, Louvain as part of the Tixall coterie. The verses of 'The Royal Nun' are assigned to two speakers, Pulcheria and Marina, and to a 'Chorus of Virgins': it is in fact a reworking of two separate verse passages in Act I, and Act III, scene 2, respectively, of Nathaniel Lee's play *Theodosius or the Force of Love*, published in 1680.<sup>2</sup>

The plot is ultimately prompted by a historical event: the vow of virginity taken by the three granddaughters of the Emperor Theodosius the Great, Pulcheria, Marina and Arcadia, in 414 AD. Pulcheria, the oldest, was thirteen at the time; and the political context for this unusual manoeuvre was their father Arcadius's untimely death. In order to safeguard the succession of their only brother, the

<sup>1</sup> *Tixall Poetry*, ed. Arthur Clifford (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne & Co. for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1813), 166–8.

<sup>2</sup> *Theodosius, or, The force of love: a tragedy* (London: Printed for R. Bentley and M. Magnes, 1680), 9–10, 25–6.

eleven-year-old Theodosius II, Pulcheria persuaded her sisters to join her in consecrating themselves as virgins, to forestall any opportunistic usurpation of the imperial throne via marriage to one of the three. The ultimate source is chapters one and three of book IX of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Sozomen, which was printed in Greek as early as 1544. A Latin translation by Beatus Rhenanus was first issued in 1523,<sup>3</sup> and though it was not printed in English until 1720, there were several French versions by the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup>

Lee, who preferred to set his plays in the past, may have encountered the story in Thomas Massinger's *The Emperour of the East*, published in 1632, which is itself based on the account of Pulcheria and her siblings in the Jesuit Nicolas Caussin's *The Holy Court*, translated by Sir Thomas Hawkins, and published in St Omers in 1626.<sup>5</sup> Caussin's version is based on Sozomen, and is roughly historical. However, the plot and characterisations of Lee's *Theodosius* is largely derived from incidents in le Calprenède's long romance, *Pharamond*.<sup>6</sup> The revised version of the verses which is titled 'The Royal Nun' features Pulcheria, which the original verses do not: this suggests that the reviser was familiar with the original story, perhaps via *The Holy Court* (popular and widely read in recusant circles), or via Massinger's play.

It is not uncommon for seventeenth-century coterie poets to take pre-existing verses and rework them. It is also not unusual to find reworkings which are more serious in intention than their original.<sup>7</sup> The Tixall circle had a particular connection with St Monica's, Louvain, a house of Augustinian canonesses; and I would like to suggest that the revision of 'The Royal Nun' was undertaken as a result of the close connections between the Tixall poets and the canonesses of St Monica's.

<sup>3</sup> *Autores historiae eccl[esi]asticae: Eusebij Pamphili Caesariensis libri IX. Ruffino [interprete]. Ruff[in]i Presbyteri Aquileiensis, libri duo. Recogniti ad antiqua exemplaria Latina per Beat. Rhenanum. Item ex Theodorito episcopo Cyrensi, Sozomeno, & Socrate Constantinopolitano libri XII. uersi ab Epiphano Scholastico, adbreuiati per Cassiodorum Senatorem, unde illis Tripartitae historiae uocabulum [Basileae: apud Io. Frobenium, 1523].*

<sup>4</sup> *L'Histoire ecclésiastique nommée tripartite, divisée en douze livres... Rédigée par Sozomène, Socrate le Scholastique et Théodore, traduite du grec par Épiphane le Scholastique, et arrangée par Cassiodore. Nouvellement traduite de latin en français par Scho Cianeus (Paris: G. Gorbin, 1568)* seems to be the earliest.

<sup>5</sup> *The Emperour of the East, a tragae-comoedy*, licensed 11 March 1631 (London: John Waterson, 1632) Nicolas Caussin, *The Holy Court*, 5 vols (Paris [i.e. Saint-Omer: By the English College Press], 1626), V: 492–3. See J. E. Gray, 'The Source of *The Emperour of the East*,' *Review of English Studies* 1 (1950): 126–35.

<sup>6</sup> Gaultier de Coste, seigneur de La Calprenède, *Pharamond, or, The history of France a fam'd romance* trans. J. Phillips, Gent., 12 vols (London: Printed for T. Bassett, T. Dring, and W. Cademan ..., 1677), principally 1:1, 10, the character of Varanes, and 7:1, 207–19, the story and characterization of Martian, and the claustration of Marina and Flacilla.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Beth Wynne Fiskin, 'The Art of Sacred Parody in Mary Sidney's Psalms', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 8 (1989): 233–239. The Scot Elizabeth Melville was author of several entirely serious sacred versions of secular poems: see Sarah Ross, *Women, Poetry, and Politics in Seventeenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 47–8.

Arthur Clifford, a descendant of the Aston family, published *Tixall Poetry* in 1813, from manuscripts now lost, and *Tixall Letters* in 1815, for which the manuscript selection he made survives, and is now in the British Library.<sup>8</sup> The circle which is revealed by these poems and letters consisted of five interrelated recusant families and their friends in the mid-seventeenth century: Fowler of St Thomas, Aston of Tixall, Aston of Bellamore, Persall of Canwell, all in Staffordshire, and Thimelby of Irnham in Lincolnshire. The principal authors appear to have been the first Lord Aston of Forfar, who lived principally at Tixall, and his children: Herbert Aston of Bellamore, Gertrude Aston, and Edward Aston. Another daughter of Lord Aston, Constantia (later Fowler), was an enthusiastic collector of verse from family and friends.<sup>9</sup> Other members of the circle who are identifiable as writers and recipients of occasional verse (usually from poem-titles) include Edward Thimelby, Lady Dorothy Shirley and Sir William Pershall. Clifford, in his introduction, explained that his edition of the Tixall poems was based on material from three manuscript books, and 'a large quantity of loose scraps of paper', all of which have since disappeared. The verses titled 'The Royal Nun' were in the third of these books, poems collected by Catherine Gage, second wife of Walter Aston, the third Lord Aston of Forfar.<sup>10</sup>

The connection between St Monica's and the Tixall circle begins with the Thimelbys. Mary Thimelby professed at St Monica's in 1635, taking the name Winefrid, and was joined by her sister Frances, who was clothed in 1642 and died two years later, taking her final vows on her deathbed. Another sister, Katherine Thimelby, married Herbert Aston, in 1638, and reciprocally, his sister Gertrude Aston married one of the Thimelby brothers, Henry. When both Henry and their only child died young, in or shortly after 1655, Gertrude Thimelby, née Aston, went to St Monica's, where her sister-in-law Winefrid had been for twenty years. She became a canoness, and remained at St Monica's for at least ten years, dying in 1668. Gertrude Aston was one of the most notable poets of the Tixall circle. Herbert, in a lengthy celebration of his sister's gifts, wrote to her as if she were another Horace:

How blest were one to dye if on his herse  
As others dropp a teare, you sticke a verse;  
For nothings you can write, But will survive  
when the world's ashes, it will be alive.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The manuscript material for *Tixall Letters* is now London, British Library Add. 36452. The cataloguer comments that 'the arrangement agrees with that of the printed work'. The letters alluded to by Clifford but not included in his edition seem all to have been lost.

<sup>9</sup> Her manuscript collection, Huntington MS HM 904, is ed. Deborah Aldrich-Watson, *The Verse Miscellany of Constance Aston Fowler* (Tempe: Renaissance English Text Society, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> *Tixall Poetry*, x–xi.

<sup>11</sup> Aldrich-Watson, *Verse Miscellany*, 128–33, 'To my Honor'd Sister G A', lines 105–8. Horace's *Odes* 3:30 famously claims that his poems will be 'more lasting than bronze' (*exegi monumentum aere perennius*).

Katherine Aston, née Thimelby, died in 1658, after twenty years of marriage. She had had ten children, two of whom, Catherine and Gertrude, were partly brought up at St Monica's after their mother's death. They were perhaps the youngest of the four daughters. Catherine, known as Keat, who was physically frail and had problems with her sight, decided to become a nun, and was professed on 19 August, 1668, the year in which her aunt Winefrid Thimelby became Prioress.<sup>12</sup> The younger Gertrude, known in the family as Gatt, eventually returned to her father at Bellamore, though she may not have married: certainly, she was still being addressed as 'Gertrude Aston' in 1690, by which time she was at least thirty-two.<sup>13</sup> Before looking at reasons for thinking why 'The Royal Nun' might have been known in Louvain, the extent of the connection between St Monica's and Tixall must be addressed. *Tixall Letters* reveals an extensive, regular and affectionate correspondence between Winefrid Thimelby and her widowed brother-in-law Herbert Aston. Her letters make reference to communication between inhabitants of Bellamore and of St Monica's, and to correspondence with other relatives such as Elizabeth Cottington, who was in touch with both Winifred and Herbert. Arthur Clifford claimed to have seen sixty to seventy letters from Winefrid Thimelby, and printed only a selection in *Tixall Letters*.<sup>14</sup> According to Richard White, alias Johnson, confessor to St Monica's, in a document for 1668 written for Winefrid Thimelby, nuns were permitted to write one letter home a year, while the prioress could write twice.<sup>15</sup> However, Winefrid Thimelby had to report to Herbert Aston on the health, welfare, and intentions of his daughters: in practice, the distinction between private correspondence and the convent's business could not easily be maintained.<sup>16</sup> The extent of the correspondence between Louvain and the Tixall circle therefore allows for the inclusion of St Monica's in the circulation of poetry. Winefrid Thimelby's letters, as Jenna Lay and Victoria Van Hynning have both pointed out, share the Tixall circle's cultural reference points: her style is

<sup>12</sup> Information from 'Who were the nuns?' (<https://wwtn.history.qmul.ac.uk>). Physically disadvantaged women sometimes decided for, or were encouraged into, the cloister. Claire Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe: English Convents in France and the Low Countries* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 33.

<sup>13</sup> She may have stayed in England by choice, but it is also the case that Herbert Aston, who was apparently not unwilling to part with a second daughter, tried to skimp on her dowry: Reverend Mother Thimelby had to write a letter which combines her characteristic protestations of devoted familial affection with telling him firmly that she is not in a position to bargain: her nuns vote on admitting a postulant, and if the girl's portion is insufficient, they will not admit her. BL Add. 36452, f. 89. Arthur Clifford has seen fit to suppress this embarrassing revelation in his edition, *Tixall Letters* 2:69–70.

<sup>14</sup> *Tixall Poetry*, xxv.

<sup>15</sup> Walker, *Gendered Politics*, 58.

<sup>16</sup> Claire Walker, 'Doe not suppose me a well mortified Nun dead to the world': Letter writing in early modern English convents', *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450–1700*, in James Daybell, ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 159–76. The English Benedictine nuns at Brussels were also prolific correspondents: Paul Arblaster, 'The Monastery of Our Lady of the Assumption in Brussels (1599–1794)', *EBC History Symposium* (1999), 54–77, at 58.

highly literary and richly metaphorical.<sup>17</sup> She also appears to have read some of the Tixall verses. She refers to Catherine as 'this little mesinger of love', as she returned for a time to her father's family at Bellamore; recalling a poem, perhaps by Herbert Aston, 'On the death of Mr P—'s little daughter' which is preserved in *Tixall Poetry*, and refers to the dead child as 'your pretty messenger of love'.<sup>18</sup> Mr P—is probably Sir William Pershall, husband successively of another of Herbert Aston's sisters and another of Winefrid Thimelby's. Gertrude Aston wrote two poems to the Pershalls on the deaths of a son and a daughter.<sup>19</sup> A daughter who lived (born to Frances Aston) was born in 1637, so given that Winefrid Thimelby was professed in 1635, she may well have been already in Louvain when the poem was written.

A sophisticated poem in the Tixall collection also hints that verse might have been either written at Tixall and sent to St Monica's, or written at St Monica's and sent back to the family in Staffordshire. It is called 'A Sigh to St Monica's Tears'. While any recusant might choose to write about St Monica and celebrate her role in the conversion of St Augustine, the last of the three verses indicates that it was either written by an Augustinian canoness, or in the persona of one:

Then earthly parents all adieu,  
Now onely Heaven must be of kin to me;  
I'le be conceavd and borne anew,  
And onely teares shall be my pedigree,  
Thrice happy generation! To be stiled,  
Of Austin's mother perles the adopted child.<sup>20</sup>

The speaking voice is of one who has bidden farewell to her family, and been reborn as the 'adopted child' of St Monica, or rather, of the persuasive tears which softened the heart of her as yet unconverted son (the tears which are pearls also suggest that the writer was familiar with Richard Crashaw's *The Weeper*, on Mary Magdalen).<sup>21</sup> Winefrid Thimelby uses the same metaphor when she writes of Gertrude Aston, à propos of her bereavements and consequent decision to become a canoness, 'who can repine att so hapy a flood, which has rayed her to the contemplation of heaven, wher such pearlls as her teares contribute with other jewells to the ritches of that ocean of delight'; this sentence might suggest that 'A Sigh' was known to her.<sup>22</sup> The poem shows a knowledge of Augustine's life-story

<sup>17</sup> Jenna Lay, *Beyond the Cloister: Catholic Englishwomen and Early Modern Literary Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 137, Victoria Van Hynning, ed., 'Thimelby-Aston literary exchanges: "itt imports not wher, but how wee live"', in Nicky Hallett, ed. *English Convents in Exile, 1600–1800, III Life Writing 1* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), 1–34

<sup>18</sup> *Tixall Poetry*, 6–7, *Tixall Letters* 2:87.

<sup>19</sup> *Tixall Poetry*, 99–100 (on 'Franke') and 103–4 (on 'Mall')

<sup>20</sup> *Tixall Poetry*, 52–3.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Crashaw, *Steps to the Temple* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1646), 1–5.

<sup>22</sup> *Tixall Letters* 2:25.

and his mother's role in it, as revealed in his *Confessions*. If it is not by a canoness, it is certainly by someone for whom the state of being a canoness is imaginatively present. But Gertrude Aston, an accomplished poet and for the last ten years of her life, an Augustinian canoness, would be a very possible author for it.

Byzantium was of some interest to English recusants: Pulcheria is principally noticed by recusant writers for her correspondence with Leo the Great and her role in the Council of Chalcedon (for Protestants, she is principally a model of a virtuous and successful woman ruler). One way of investigating whether her story was known in any of the English convents in exile is by looking at the names of the speakers in *The Royal Nun*, Marina and Pulcheria. The former is known but not common in seventeenth-century England, the latter is very unusual indeed. It is therefore worth examining Englishwomen's names in religion, since it is reasonable to suppose that if a woman took a new name on becoming a nun, she chose that of a saint for whom she felt some special attachment. Mary Thimelby thus took the name Winefrid—that of a Cambro-British virgin martyr who was important to English recusants.<sup>23</sup> A St Marina of Alexandria is named in the Roman martyrology as a virgin (June 18): she is one of the several Byzantine women saints who disguised their gender and lived as a monk, and her story is found in the *Golden Legend*. The name Marina was occasionally used in the English recusant community as a baptismal name, and additionally, four English Benedictines took Marina as a name in religion.<sup>24</sup> However, I know of no seventeenth-century Englishwoman christened Pulcheria, either Catholic or Protestant, and the only Pulcheria ever to be canonised is the Theodosian princess who features in 'The Royal Nun', who is named in the English version of the Roman martyrology.<sup>25</sup> It may therefore strengthen the case for thinking that 'The Royal Nun' was known in St Monica's that two English Augustinian canonesses chose this name. One was a canoness of St Monica's, Anne Tunstall, Pulcheria in religion, who professed in 1696, and the other a canoness of the Augustinian house in Paris, Elizabeth Throckmorton, who took the name Elizabeth Teresa Pulcheria when she professed in 1714.<sup>26</sup>

'The Royal Nun' is based on excerpts from a play with music, and like its original, assigns verses to voices (though not the same voices as in the play): a 'Chorus of Virgins', and two individuals, Pulcheria and Marina,

<sup>23</sup> Alison Shell, 'St Winifred's Well in British Catholic Literary Culture', in Peter Davidson and Jill Bepler, eds. *Triumphs of the Defeated: Early Modern Festivals and Messages of Legitimacy* (Bonn: Harrassowitz, 2007), 271–80.

<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth Draycott, professed in 1627, Mary Appleton, professed in 1646, Katharin Beaumont, professed in 1636, and Marilla Morgan, professed in 1666. Marina Hunlock was born with the name and kept it when she professed in 1666. Information from 'Who were the nuns?'

<sup>25</sup> *The Roman Martyrology* (St Omer: English College Press, 1627), 10 September, 'S. Pulcheria Empress renowned for Religion and Piety', 299.

<sup>26</sup> Information from 'Who were the nuns?'

while Eudisia is also named (the third sister, Arcadia, is evidently intended). In Lee's *Theodosius*, we are informed near the beginning of Act One that Theodosius II and his two younger sisters, Marina and Flavilla, all intend to take vows of religion, leaving the oldest sister, Pulcheria, as empress. Towards the end of the act, Theodosia, Marina and Flavilla appear, dressed in white. The two sisters are addressed by Atticus, 'the chief Priest' (i.e. Patriarch of Constantinople, in succession to the great saint, John Chrysostom, who is named in the verse) and two other priests. They confirm their commitment to religious life, and immediately vanish into strict enclosure (Le Calprenède was evidently unable or unwilling to imagine a society in which vowed virgins remained actively at large in the secular world, which Pulcheria most certainly was). Theodosius is distracted from making his intended vows by, among other events, the appearance of a beautiful pagan, Athenais. She agrees to convert to Christianity in the course of Act Two, and takes the Christian name Eudisia. The first three stanzas of 'The Royal Nun' thus belong to a different musical moment, in Act Three, scene 2, when the newly-baptised Eudisia reappears, on her way to her confirmation. The speaking/singing voices at this point are Atticus, a chorus, and two 'Votaries', apparently female. Though she is merely becoming a Christian and not a nun, she is rather inexplicably addressed as if she is entering a life of seclusion and penitence.

'The Royal Nun' in fact makes a great deal more sense than Lee's original lyrics, though the fact that the name Eudisia is used for the third sister in the Tixall version instead of the historically-correct Arcadia, or Lee's name for her, Flavilla, suggests that 'The Royal Nun' is dependent on *Theodosius* and not the other way round. The modifications which have been made to the original text have a striking effect on its tone, in particular, the shift from plural to singular. In 'The Royal Nun', Eudisia is praised, then Pulcheria enters into dialogue with her sister Marina. Each woman has her own perspective and experience, whereas in *Theodosius*, a succession of male voices addresses the sisters jointly, with depersonalising effect. In the play-text, the possibility of an earthly lover is raised (though only to be rejected); 'The Royal Nun' excises these verses, producing the effect of a rather more mature decision.

If we then ask who might actually have been responsible for creating 'The Royal Nun', perhaps the most likely answer is Herbert Aston, who died in 1688/9. His own early manuscript miscellany (1634), now Beinecke MS Osborn b.4, reveals him as a reader of more secular verse than his sisters. Helen Hackett writes,<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Helen Hackett, 'Women and Catholic Manuscript Networks in Seventeenth-Century England: New Research on Constance Aston Fowler's Miscellany of Sacred and Secular Verse,' *Renaissance Quarterly*, 65.4 (Winter 2012): 1094–1124, at 1096–7.

Some seventy per cent of the verses included by him occur in other manuscript and print sources—far more than is the case for Constance’s miscellany—and he includes more overtly erotic and bawdy verses. Some of these are songs from plays, and Herbert’s miscellany generally presents the image of a fashionable young man about town, very much in line with other young men’s miscellanies of the period.

He could easily have acquired Lee’s playtext after 1680, when it was printed. The Astons were interested in plays: Frances Boothby, author of the first play by a woman produced on the professional London stage, was an Aston connection. Herbert’s niece by marriage, Elizabeth Cottington, wrote to him at Bellamore about this forthcoming production, and about other London theatre-going in 1669, so the interest stayed with him into adult life.<sup>28</sup> He was himself a poet, and also, a man who maintained unusually affectionate and intimate relationships with several of his female relatives. In the 1680s, St Monica’s had many fond associations for him. It had sheltered his beloved sister Gertrude and his daughter Keat during their lives, and it was still the home of his devoted correspondent, Winefrid. He is therefore a highly possible author for a text profoundly sympathetic and sensitive towards the perspectives of enclosed women.

#### *Music and the English convents in the Low Countries*

Another question I would like to raise is whether, like its original, ‘The Royal Nun’ might have been performed. The verse is simple octosyllabic rhymed couplets, a metre often used for hymns,<sup>29</sup> and it is worth addressing the possibility that the text was created to be sung rather than merely read. For many Catholic girls, it was important to be able to sing confidently. For those who became quire nuns, training in music was absolutely necessary, and additionally, for upper-class girls who returned to the world (almost all recusant nuns were gentlewomen), singing was an elegant accomplishment. The family of Mary Wiseman, the first prioress of St Monica’s, were to some extent patrons of John Bolt, former Master of Music at the Chapel Royal, who had been music master and instructor to the Queen herself. Subsequent to his conversion, he was resident in mostly recusant families, teaching children to sing and play.<sup>30</sup> When he was arrested on

<sup>28</sup> BL Add. 36452, f. 83.

<sup>29</sup> Compare the verses in a recusant miscellany manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng Poet B.5, notably the poem on pp. 50–51, which is printed in Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson, eds. *Early Modern Women Poets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 400. As Helen Hackett has shown, this collection is linked with the Tixall milieu since it was written by the same person who is the ‘Hand B’ of Constance Aston’s manuscript verse collection, probably an English Jesuit called William Southerne. ‘Unlocking the mysteries of Constance Aston Fowler’s verse miscellany (Huntington Library MS HM 904): the Hand B scribe identified’, in Joshua Eckhardt and Daniel Starza Smith, eds. *Manuscript Miscellanies in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 91–112

<sup>30</sup> David C. Price, *Patrons and Musicians of the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 87.



15 March, 1594, on his way to a house where the authorities hoped to find the Jesuit John Gerard, he had just spent a week at the Wiseman home, Braddocks.<sup>31</sup> Bolt went abroad after his release and spent some time at St Omer's. Later he went to the English Benedictine convent at Brussels, 'to help their music, which hath been so famous'.<sup>32</sup>

At St Monica's, the music was initially in the hands of its organist, Sister Mary Skidmore, and the convent's first confessor, Father John Fenn. According to the Chronicle, 'he was also a skilful musician in song but not in instruments, and did teach our sisters both at St Ursula's and here before Mr Johnson came'.<sup>33</sup> He died in 1613. 'Mr Johnson' may be an alias or a slip of the pen for John Bolt, since in 1613, Reverend Mother Wiseman induced Bolt to accept the position of organist and chaplain to St Monica's, which he retained until his death in 1640, having served the convent for twenty-eight years.<sup>34</sup> Bolt would obviously have been capable of composing music, and there is evidence that he considered it appropriate to encourage excellence in the convent's musical life, as he had previously done at Brussels: the Chronicle states, '[he] did here set up all our music to the honour of God, teaching our sisters to sing and play on the organ'.<sup>35</sup> The account of his death ends,

He left after his death our Sisters so expert in music by his teaching, as they were able to keep up the same without any other master or help for many years. Sister Anne Evans was then our organist, who, having learnt in the world to play upon the virginals, was since become so skilful upon the organ by his teaching, she was able to keep up the music as before. And Sister Lioba Morgan was also very skilful in prick-song [polyphonic music], so as with the help also of others, they kept up the music to the honour of God and the devotion of strangers who came to our church and heard them.<sup>36</sup>

As Victoria Van Hyning has shown, our evidence for the inner lives of convents is limited and partial. She identifies the first chronicler of St Monica's as Mary Copley: certainly, this writer has an evident interest in links with St Thomas More, and in learned women.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>31</sup> London, Public Record Office, SP 12/248, ff. 108r–109v.

<sup>32</sup> In contemporary Italy, nuns' music was often highly serious. See Craig A. Monson, *Disembodied Voices: Music and Culture in an Early Modern Italian Convent* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1995), Robert L. Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and their Music in Early Modern Milan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), Colleen Reardon, *Holy Concord Within Sacred Walls: Nuns and Music in Siena, 1575–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), and also Craig Monson, ed. *The Crannied Wall: Women, Religion and the Arts in Early Modern Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

<sup>33</sup> *Chronicle* 1:152.

<sup>34</sup> Father Richard White, alias Johnson, came to the convent in 1652, and remained there until his death in 1687. If this sentence is read literally, the implication is that between 1613 and 1652, the nuns managed their music for themselves: this was evidently not the case.

<sup>35</sup> H.J. Pollen, biographical notes on John Bolt, *Publications of the Catholic Record Society, Miscellanea III* (London: Privately printed, 1906), 31. *Chronicle* 1:150.

<sup>36</sup> *Chronicle* 2: 184–5.

<sup>37</sup> Victoria Van Hyning, 'Naming Names: Chroniclers, Scribes and Editors of St Monica's Convent, Louvain, 1630–1906', in Caroline Bowden and James Kelly, eds. *English Convents in Exile, 1600–1800: Communities, Culture and Identity*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), 87–108.

She shows no sign of particular interest in music, but that does not mean that it was not important in the life of the house. St Monica's had a pipe organ and a nun who could play it from its foundation in 1609, and St Ursula's allowed them to take two large missals, and 'old song books, as also some antiphonaries and versicle books' for the new foundation.<sup>38</sup> However, the *Chronicle* is silent about its musical life thereafter. Further, there is no information in Louvain records about music purchases for the convent, or about Mary Skidmore's musical training; and Andrew Cichy, in his study of English convent music, states that the only surviving seventeenth century musical sources from St Monica's are handwritten books of plainsong, for liturgical use.<sup>39</sup>

Cichy has observed that women brought up in seventeenth-century England could have had little experience of attending sung mass. He concluded that their musical practice was a mixture of plainsong, learned from interaction with Low Countries nuns (in the case of Louvain, from the early years at St Ursula's), the basic mode in which the liturgy was performed, together with polyphonic motets.<sup>40</sup> English nuns were familiar with religiously themed polyphonic motets sung at the offering, the elevation, and after the Mass. A number of English recusant composers were prolific writers of motets, notably William Byrd and Thomas Tallis. Richard Dering also wrote them.<sup>41</sup> Cichy notes, 'having become accustomed to using polyphonic music in a devotional manner rather than to supply the necessary text of the liturgy, the nuns gave polyphony a similar place in their convents to that which it had been allocated in recusant households ... domestic music could have provided the building blocks of a recusant musical language for liturgical contexts'.<sup>42</sup> Another type of devotional music with which they were familiar was hymnody. For example, the *Chronicle* mentions that

in the year 1612', Margaret Clement, then of advanced age, 'desired of our Superior [prioress Jane Wiseman] sitting at Table, that she would give her leave now to sing like a swan before her death, which she freely gave her licence to do, & then the worthy Old Mother from the exceeding Joy & Jubilation of her hart sang a devout song of Jesus which made one of the elders to weep that sat neere her'.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Chronicle*, 1:66.

<sup>39</sup> Andrew Cichy, 'Parlour, Court and Cloister: Musical culture in English Convents during the Seventeenth Century', *English Convents in Exile*, 175–90, at 184.

<sup>40</sup> Cichy, 'Parlour, Court and Cloister', 179, 188. See further Anthony M Cummings, 'Toward an Interpretation of the Sixteenth-Century Motet', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 34.1, (Spring, 1981): 43–59, John Brobeck 'Some "Liturgical Motets" for the Royal Court: A Reconsideration of Genre in the Sixteenth-Century French Motet', *Musica disciplina*, 47 (1993): 123–57.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Dering, *Motets for One, Two or Three Voices and Basso Continuo*, ed. Jonathan P. Wainwright, *Musica Britannica*, 87 (London: Stainer and Bell, 2008). Cichy suggests that some of these may have been written when he was in Brussels.

<sup>42</sup> Cichy, 'Parlour, Court and Cloister', 179.

<sup>43</sup> *Chronicle*, 1:122.

Some Louvain nuns emerged from demonstrably musically-literate families: apart from Mary Skidmore, who had learned to play the organ in England, Anne Evans had learned how to play the virginals. Father John Fenn, before the arrival of John Bolt, had apparently been able to teach *a capella* polyphonic singing. There is evidence in several English convents for the cultivation of polyphony alongside plainchant. The Brussels Benedictines, whose music was much admired, distinguished between 'cantum', which is plainchant, and 'musick'.<sup>44</sup> When the Sepulchrines of Liège were in their workroom, they were allowed the entertainment of hearing someone read from a pious book or telling them about a profitable example, or they could sing 'a devout motetto'.<sup>45</sup> Outsiders could not interact directly with enclosed nuns, but they could often listen to them. There were two houses of English nuns in the later seventeenth century where there is clear evidence that music was extensively cultivated. One was the Franciscan house in Bruges, where two visitors reported hearing sophisticated performances. John Walker wrote in 1671, 'we heard a most harmonious consort of viols and violins with the organ. Then a ravishing voice of a nun singing in Italian a treble part alone, with the rest now and then keeping the chorus'. James, Earl of Perth, similarly heard 'a hymn and a motette (although it was not a time of prayer) with the organ, viols and violins, and voices', in 1694, so the tradition was maintained.<sup>46</sup> Even more pertinently, the Augustinian canonesses of Paris rescued their convent from financial ruin in the 1650s, when revenue from England vanished due to the English revolution, through the excellence of their music, because their singing attracted charitable donations from the French nobility. The principal evidence is in Thomas Carre, *Pietas Parisiensis*, who explains that Cardinal Richelieu was induced to attend evensong in the convent:

After which he had the singular goodnesse, of his owne accorde, to call for the superior, and rather graciously to offerre his charitable assistance ... the next newes we heard, brought vs one thousand liures from my Lord Chancelours bountie.

The Cardinal's patronage attracted the interest of others, and Carre estimated that by the time of writing, 1666, the convent's income was about ten thousand livres.<sup>47</sup> The citizenry of Louvain would not have been as wealthy as the Parisian nobility, but wherever the layout of the convent church permitted a lay audience to listen to the nuns, music was

<sup>44</sup> Cichy, 'Parlour, Court and Cloister', 177.

<sup>45</sup> Caroline Bowden, 'Building libraries in exile: The English convents and their book collections in the seventeenth century', *British Catholic History* 32 (2015): 343–392, at 349.

<sup>46</sup> C.D. van Strien, 'Recusant Houses in the Southern Netherlands as seen by British Tourists, c. 1650–1720', *Recusant History* 20 (1991): 495–511, at 504. *Letters from James, Earl of Perth* (London: for the Camden Society, 1845), 44.

<sup>47</sup> *Pietas parisiensis, or, A short description of the pietie and charitie commonly exercised in Paris: which represents in short the pious practises of the whole Catholike Church* (Paris: Vincent du Moutier, 1666), 144–150.

potentially an income stream for them, as the willingness of the Bruges Franciscans to entertain visitors suggests. St Monica's was by no means entirely withdrawn from the world. It was a burial-place for English catholic exiles, and even prepared to take male boarders (lodging with the priest) during the English Civil War.<sup>48</sup> The convent evidently maintained links with the world outside the cloister, and the note on Bolt's teaching quoted above confirms that laypeople came to hear the nuns sing.<sup>49</sup>

Motets, which were normally based on Biblical texts, are repeatedly mentioned in the sources for English nuns' music, such as they are. But one form which was rapidly gaining ground through the seventeenth century is the oratorio, or sacred dialogue. The form can be briefly defined as a musical setting of a sacred text which is presented unstaged and is either dramatic, unfolding entirely through dialogue, or narrative-dramatic, with a narrator. The text is normally verse, and in the vernacular, and the form originated in Italy.<sup>50</sup> Pietro della Valle wrote a brief, unstaged sacred dialogue in 1640, with a duration of about twelve minutes, which he called an oratorio.<sup>51</sup> The witness of John Walker quoted above indicates that the Bruges Franciscans had acquired Italian music for voice and chorus by 1671, so there is a possibility of influence from Italian trends in Low Countries convents.

With this in mind, let us return to 'The Royal Nun', as possibly the libretto for a sung sacred dialogue, or to be sung to a hymn tune with soloists and a chorus. The topic of this miniature drama is the renunciation of the world in favour of a life of chastity and seclusion. What is offered to Eudisia and Marina by Pulcheria and the nuns in this exchange is a life of enclosure, regular observance (the 'rights [i.e., rites] devine'), simple clothes and basic accommodation, the only recreation mentioned being the use of a garden. This, of course, represents the life of a seventeenth-century enclosed nun rather than that of a fifth-century Byzantine princess.<sup>52</sup> In particular, the verses emphasise the vertiginous contrast between the clothing of a princess and that of a nun:

O Chrisostome! Look down, and see  
 An offering worthy heaven and thee:  
 Soe rich the victime, bright and faire,  
 That she on earth appears a star. ...

<sup>48</sup> Walker, *Gendered Politics*, 94.

<sup>49</sup> *Chronicle* 2:53–4. A laywoman, Lady Mary Weston, daughter of the Earl of Portland, was a permanent resident, in a suite of rooms built on to the Church, *Chronicle* 2:150.

<sup>50</sup> Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio*, 4 vols (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 1:3–4.

<sup>51</sup> Smither, *History*, 1:5.

<sup>52</sup> Following the death of her brother, who had given her the imperial title of Augusta during his lifetime and left no direct heir, Pulcheria was invited to assume the throne and choose a co-ruler, legitimising this through a formal marriage. She agreed to this provided that her vow of chastity was respected. Her style of dress is revealed by objects which represent her, notably an ivory panel now in the Trier Cathedral Treasury, on which she appears in the full magnificence of early Byzantine imperial regalia.

... Canst thou thy costly robes forbear,  
 To live with us in poor attire?  
 Canst thou from courts to cells repair,  
 To sing att midnight in the quire?

This emphasis is in accordance with nuns' own perspectives. The actual ceremony of clothing was an unique moment of high drama in the life of a nun, and as spectacular as resources permitted. The aristocratic Ursula Howard was clothed at St Monica's, as follows:

Upon the fourth of September 1663, was clothed for a nun Mrs Ursula Howard, daughter to the Viscount Stafford, whose father, mother, and eldest brother, and one of her sisters were present at it, with a train of ten servants. She had a rich cloth of silver gown and petticoat. The church was hung round, and all things accordingly, in great state, befitting her quality. The Archpriest performed the Office, and the ghostly Father preached.<sup>53</sup>

An unique portrait nun-portrait, of Margaret Wake, daughter of a Catholic convert resident in Antwerp, who was clothed as a nun in the Antwerp Carmel in 1633, survives, in which she is wearing her clothing robes as Bride of Christ rather than the nun's habit she subsequently assumed. She is wearing sumptuous cloth of silver and a great collar edged with silver lace, and has three rows of pearls round her neck, and pearl earrings.<sup>54</sup> When the poet Gertrude Thimelby, née Aston, was clothed at St Monica's in 1658, Reverend Mother Thimelby wrote an account of it to her brother-in-law:

Oh had you seen the solemnity, I am confident yr hart wod not have contained all the ioy, but shed som att yr eyes. Keat [her niece, his daughter] was the bearer of her crowne; was itt not fit she shuld, who means to duple itt, in the last, and lasting nuptial feast? ... all things wear so completely acted, both by bride, and bridmayde, that my brother Ned and I wear not a little goodly.<sup>55</sup>

The clothing the widow Gertrude Thimelby wore for her clothing, the gift of Lord and Lady Aston, is described in the *Chronicle*:

She had a clothing gown of cloth of silver, which cost £40, and she gave £20 more to make it into church stuff. She gave also another vestment, and an antependium of cloth of gold, and a petticoat of cloth of silver, which she gave her niece, Sister Catherine Aston.<sup>56</sup>

Catherine, known as 'Keat', presumably kept this sumptuous garment for her own clothing, which took place ten years later. These accounts and the Wake portrait, which is now at Douai Abbey, suggest the theatricality with which English nuns marked the formal transition from secular to convent life, the importance they attached to it, and

<sup>53</sup> *Chronicle* 2:x.

<sup>54</sup> Geoffrey Scott, 'Cloistered Images: the Representation of English Nuns, 1600–1800', in Caroline Bowden and James Kelly, eds. *English Convents in Exile, 1600–1800: Communities, Culture and Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), 191–208, plate 12.

<sup>55</sup> BL Add. 36452, f. 72, *Tixall Letters* 2:31.

<sup>56</sup> *Chronicle*, 2:151. 'Ned' is Edward Thimelby, another of her brothers, and a contributor to the Tixall poems. He was provost of the collegiate church of St Gery in Cambrai; hence his availability on this occasion (*Tixall Poems*, xxvi).

also, the intimate, familial nature of this ceremony, which, where possible, involved both the future community and the birth family of the future nun, making it, like a wedding, the conjunction of two families rather than two individuals. There was necessarily an interlude while the future nun retired to be clothed in her habit: removing the elaborate garments described in these accounts would take some time. In ‘The manner of inuesting of Nouesis’ which survives for the St Monica’s daughter house of Nazareth in Bruges, after the Mass, during which the ‘bride’ communicates in her secular clothes, the hymn ‘Veni Creator Spiritus’ and three psalms were sung.<sup>57</sup> After further litanies, antiphons and responses, ‘[th]e brid is vnclouted & [th]e habit put one. In meane time, they singe musicke if ther be any.’<sup>58</sup> ‘Musicke’ seems to mean something other than plainchant, so this is a possible context for ‘The Royal Nun’, if it was a performance piece. A clothing was an occasion which would bring the maximum number of actual and potential well-wishers to the church. The topic is wholly suitable, and vocal music on a relevant theme is an obvious way of filling the inevitable hiatus, while intensifying the solemn emotion of the occasion.

Other late-seventeenth-century English Augustinian canonesses bear witness to the importance the clothing ceremony held for them. A manuscript of miscellaneous religious meditations in prose which, on internal evidence, was created by an English Augustinian canoness, was bought by Sir Thomas Phillips in Brussels, and from Phillips by the Irish bibliophile William O’Brien, and sold at Sotheby’s on 7 June 2017. It begins with a meditation on clothing. The Sotheby’s online auction results include an image of the first page, which reads as follows:

The habitte, and first of the smocke.

The smocke is [th]e first garment I must put on, it is deliuered me to put on myself, and I put it on priuately. This garment signifieth prayer, which is [th]e first vertue by which I must seeke to inuest my selfe, for as I can doe nothing of my selfe without [th]e ^helpe & ^ grace of god: so is prayer [th]e most effectuall meanes to obtayne this grace, prayer asketh, and prayer obtayneth; I must aske and I shall haue, this garment I must put on my selfe, & so must I this vertue of prayer for it is not gotten but by my labours, if I will haue it I must put it on myself.

The rest of this text is not currently accessible, but it is evidently a detailed meditation on the moment of clothing and its significance for inner life of the canoness herself.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> ‘Veni, Creator Spiritus’, attributed to Hrabanus Maurus, was often sung on occasions of dedication, including clothings. The Sepulchrines of Liège and the Carmelites of Hoogstraten both sang it at clothing ceremonies. Laurence Lux-Sterritt, ed. *English Convents in Exile, 1600–1800, II: Spirituality* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), 492.

<sup>58</sup> My thanks to Victoria van Hyning. See also Cichy, ‘Parlour, Court and Cloister’, 186.

<sup>59</sup> Sotheby’s, *The Library of William O’Brien: Property of the Milltown Park Charitable Trust* (London: Sotheby’s, 2017), <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2017/library-william-obrien-milltown-park-charitable-trust-117409/lot.290.html>. See also *Catalogus librorum*

Further, the emotional content of 'The Royal Nun' is very close to that of a group of poems more certainly by an Augustinian canoness: they are in the hand of Anne Throckmorton, a canoness in Paris, and probably by her. They are 'On the yearly day of a Profession' (an indication that nuns celebrated this anniversary), 'For the profession of a friend', and 'Upon the clothing of a friend'. All three attest to the profound emotion which nuns invested in the clothing ceremony. The third, 'Upon the clothing', opens,

Adieu vain world, your follies I forsake  
That I with Jesus may a friendship make  
Whom I have seen, believ'd, lov'd and delight  
To be agreeable in his blest sight.<sup>60</sup>

The positivity of the choice is stressed, as it is in *The Royal Nun*:

O happy she that ear and heart inclin'd  
When he of this attempt put her in mind  
O gracious call! And highly favour'd they  
Who such a call do faithfully obey  
Who in the odour of their spouse do run  
And Heliotropiumlike turn with that Sun.

Similarly, in 'On the yearly day', she writes

Oh happy flight from vain and empty bubbles  
Whose flattering promises conclude in troubles.<sup>61</sup>

The vanity, folly and uncertainty of the secular world, the intimate pleasures of devotion and the convent as a safe haven and way-station towards ultimate bliss; all these are the central themes of 'The Royal Nun'.

Though the name of Chrysostom is evoked, appropriate to the historical setting, the spirit which presides over 'The Royal Nun' is that of Augustine, founder of the order to which the St Monica's canonesses belonged. Marina says, or sings,

The gate to blisse doth open stand,  
And all my penance is in view;  
The world, upon the other hand,  
Cries out, Oh, doe not bid adue.

This neatly summarises the climax of Augustine's *Confessions*, the moment of his surrender to God, as translated by Tobie Matthew:

The very toys of toys, and the vanities of vanities, which were my ancient faourits deteyned me; and they shooke this garment of my soule, which is made of flesh and bloud, & spake softly to me in this sort: *Is it possible that thou canst thus dismisse us? and from this instant shall we neuer more be with thee?* ...In the

*manuscriptorum in bibliotheca D. Thomae Phillipps, Bart.*, 4 vols (Middle Hill: s.n., 1837–1871), I: 57.

<sup>60</sup> *English Convents in Exile*, 2: 455–6, from the Archives of the Archdiocese of Westminster, c.22 in box AC.11.

<sup>61</sup> *English Convents in Exile*, 2: 451–3.

meane tyme, they stayed me who delayed to free my selfe, by shaking them of; & to hasten forwards, whither I was called. Whilst the violent custome of sinne, did againe insinuate it selfe to this effect, *Thinkest thou, that thou art able to live without these and these delights?* But by this tyme they spake euen this little, most faintly. For that way whither the face of my soule looked (& whither yet I was trembling, & fearing to go on), the chaste dignity of *Continency* discovered her selfe. Cheerfull she was, and not dissolutely enticing, but sweetly inducing me, to come on, and feare nothing. Extending towards the receaing and imbracing of me, those deere hands of hers.<sup>62</sup>

There is another feature of ‘The Royal Nun’ which makes it relevant to the inner life of St Monica’s. Like the other English convents, it was full of interrelated women. The descendants and connections of St Thomas More were the most famous of its lineages, but Frances and Winefrid Thimelby went to Louvain together, where they found their aunt Elizabeth Clifford; and many years later, Winefrid welcomed her sister-in-law, and subsequently, her nieces Keat and Gatt there. Lady Mary Weston, who settled at St Monica’s as a laywoman, was another connection through the Astons, since she was an unmarried half-sister of the Lady Mary Weston who married the second Lord Aston.<sup>63</sup> Reverend Mother Thimelby’s family feeling was strong. She once wrote to her brother-in-law, ‘Doe not suppose me a well mortified nun dead to the world; for alas tis not so; I am alive, and as nearly concern’d for thos I love, as if I had never left them, and must shar in all their fortunes whither good or bad’.<sup>64</sup> Anne Throckmorton’s verses include a poem to a friend on the death of her sister, acknowledging that such grief is hard to bear, and one to her own sister, Betty.<sup>65</sup> While the survival of some of Winefrid Thimelby’s letters at Tixall mean that her attachment to her family is unusually well attested, other recusant nuns similarly built networks of relatives, principally by means of correspondence, coaxing female relatives to join them, and discreetly harassing male relatives for financial support. No wonder that they circumvented the regulations on letter-writing, since it was thus that women who were out of sight on the Continent made sure that they were not out of mind. ‘The Royal Nun’ picks up on this aspect of conventual life, since its subject is not so much a single ‘royal nun’, but a trio of sisters, the oldest of whom successfully persuades both her two younger siblings to join her in her vocation. Winefrid Thimelby’s letters to her niece Gatt deploy her considerable rhetorical talent in trying to coax the girl back to St Monica’s, and similarly, another of Anne Throckmorton’s poems, ‘When my sister Betty went to England’, breathes sisterly affection and care, but also takes occasion to warn Betty that in returning to the world, she is taking

<sup>62</sup> *Confessions*, 8. 11: 26–7; *The confessions of S. Augustine Bishope of Hippon and D. of the Church. Translated into English by S.T.M.* (Paris: [For widow Blageart], 1638), 297–8.

<sup>63</sup> *Chronicle* 2:150.

<sup>64</sup> BL Add. 36452, f. 93, *Tixall Letters* 2:44–5.

<sup>65</sup> *English Convents in Exile* 2: 456–7, 459–60.



a riskier, and ultimately less satisfactory, path.<sup>66</sup> The drama of 'The Royal Nun' was played out dozens of times in early modern English convents.

### Appendix

#### 'The Royal Nun'

Chorus of Virgins O Chrisostome! Look down, and see  
An offering worthy heaven and thee:  
Soe rich the victime, bright and faire,  
That she on earth appears a star.  
Eudisia is the Virgin's name,  
And after-times shall sing her fame.

Lead the Voterice, lead her in,  
Her holy birth-day now begin:  
In humble weeds, but cleane array,  
Thy houres shall sweetly pass away:

And when the rights devine are past,  
To pleasant gardins we will hast.

Pulcheria Canst thou, Marina, leave the world,  
The world that is devotions bane,  
Wher crownes are tost, and scepters hurl'd,  
Where lust, and proud ambitions raigne?

Canst thou thy costly robes forbear,  
To live with us in poor attire?  
Canst thou from courts to cells repaire,  
To sing att midnight in the quire?

Canst thou forget the golden bed,  
Where thou mightst sleep beyond the morne,  
On matts to lay thy royall head,  
And have thy beauteous tresses shorne?

Canst thou resolve to fast all day,  
And weepe and groane to be forgiven?  
Canst thou in broken slumbers pray,  
And by afflictions merit heaven?

<sup>66</sup> *English Convents in Exile 2*: 459–60.

- Chorus                    Say, Voterisse, can this be done?  
                               Whilst we the grace divine implore –  
                               The world shall lose the battles won  
                               And sin shall never chaine the more.
- Marina                    The gate to blisse doth open stand,  
                               And all my penance is in view;  
                               The world, upon the other hand,  
                               Cries out, Oh, doe not bid adue.
- Chorus                    What, what, can pompe and glory doe?  
                               Or what can human powers perswade?  
                               That mind that hath a heaven in view,  
                               How can it be by earth betraid?
- Marina                    Hast then, Oh, hast to take me in,  
                               For ever lock Religions dore;  
                               Secure me from the charmes of sin,  
                               And let me see the world noe more.

*Theodosius, or The Force of Love*  
 end of Act I

Atticus [‘chief priest’ i.e. Patriarch]

- Canst thou, *Marina*, leave the World,  
 The World that is Devotion’s bane,  
 Where Crowns are tost, and Scepters hurld,  
 Where Lust and proud Ambition Reign?
- 2 Priest                    Can you thy costly Robes forbear,  
                               To live with us in poor Attire?  
                               Can you from Courts to Cells repair,  
                               To sing at midnight in our Quire?
- 3 Priest                    Can you forget your golden Beds,  
                               Where you might sleep beyond the morne,  
                               On Mats to lay your Royal Heads,  
                               And have your beauteous Tresses shorn?
- Atticus                    Can you resolve to fast all Day,  
                               And weep and groan to be forgiv’n?  
                               Can you in broken slumbers pray,  
                               And by afflictions merit Heau’n?

- Chorus            Say, Votaries, can this be done?  
                       Whilst we the Grace Divine implore;  
                       The World has lost, the Battel's won;  
                       And sin shall never charm ye more?
- Marina *sings*    The gate to Bliss does open stand,  
                       And all my penance is in view;  
                       The World, upon the other hand,  
                       Crys out, O do not bid adieu!
- Yet, Sacred Sirs, in these extreams,  
                       Where Pomp and Pride their Glories tell;  
                       Where Youth and Beauty are the Themes,  
                       And plead their mouing Cause so well.
- If ought that's vain my thoughts possess,  
                       Or any passions gouern here,  
                       But what Divinity may bless;  
                       O may I neuer enter there!
- Flavilla *sings*    What! what can Pomp or Glory do;  
                       Or what can humane Charms perswade,  
                       That Mind that hath a Heav'n in view,  
                       How can it be by Earth betray'd!  
                       No Monarch full of Youth and Fame  
                       The Joy of Eyes, and Nature's Pride,  
                       Should once my thoughts from Heau'n Reclaim!  
                       Though now he woo's me for his Bride.
- Hast then, Oh, haste! And take us in,  
                       For euer lock Religion's door,  
                       Secure us from the charms of sin,  
                       And let us see the World no mor

## Act II, sc. 2

*Pulcheria, Atticus, Leontine, Votaries,*  
 leading *Athenais* in procession after her  
 Baptism, to be confirm'd

O *Chrysostom!* look down, and see  
 An offering worthy Heau'n and Thee:  
 Soe rich the Victime, bright and fair,  
 That she on earth appears a Star.

Chorus

Eudisia is the Virgin's name,  
And after-times shall sing her fame.

*Atticus sings*

Lead her, Votaries, lead her in,  
Her holy Birth dost now begin:

1 Votary

In humble Weeds, but cleane Array,  
Your houres shall sweetly pass away;  
And, when the Rights Divine are past;  
To pleasant Gardins you shall haste.

2 Votary

Were many a flowry Bed we haue  
This Emblem still to each a Grave  
And when within the Stream we look,  
With Tears we use to swell the Brook:  
But oh, when in the Liquid Glass,  
Our Heau'n appears, we sigh to pass!

Chorus

For Heau'n alone we are design'd  
And all things bring our Heau'n to mind.