

J. Ravisius Textor (c. 1492-1522) source of a Leonhard Lechner motet (1581) ?

In 1581, the Tyrolean composer Leonhard Lechner (1553-1606) published in Nuremberg his second collection of motets under the title of *Sacrarum cantionum quinque et sex vocum Liber secundus*.¹ Among these compositions, the text of motet XXIII is declared by most critics who have taken an interest in it to be by « einem unbekanntem Autor », ² some even risking, not without reserve, to attribute it to Lechner himself, seeing it as a « Beispiel Lechnerischen Humors ». ³

In fact, this text is originally an *epitaphion*, very probably written around 1520 by the humanist and *Regens* at the Parisian College of Navarre Joannes Ravisius Textor (c. 1492-1522)⁴. It was published in the posthumous collection of his *Dialogi* and *Epigrammata* which appeared in 1530, some twenty-three years before Lechner's birth.

Furthermore, it is not a *Prosa* as Konrad Ameln and others have identified it, but eight dactylic hexameters:⁵

Risi, ploro; fui, non sum; studui, requiesco;

Lusi, non ludo; cecini, nunc muteo;⁶ pavi⁷

Corpus, alo vermes; vigilavi, dormio; dixi

¹ Cf. K. Ameln, ed., *Leonhard Lechner Werke*, Bd. 6: *Sacrarum cantionum quinque et sex vocum Liber secundus 1581* (Kassel-Basel-London: Bärenreiter, 1982). The score of the motet XXIII is located on pages 131-6 (see our ill. reprod. by kind permission of Bärenreiter-Verlag Karl Vötterle GmbH & Co. KG, Kassel). See also K. Ameln, "Risi, ploro, fui, non sum. Zu einer Motette von Leonhard Lechner 1581," *Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie* 26 (1982): 151-6. On Lechner and his music, see M. Schreiber, *Die Kirchenmusik des Kapellmeisters Leonhard Lechner Athesinus (1553-1606)* (Regensburg, 1935); H. Weber, "Die Beziehungen zwischen Musik und Text in den lateinischen Motetten Leonhard Lechners" (Diss., Hamburg Univ., 1961). Most recent works of Marlis Zeus: *Leonhard Lechner, ein Musiker der Renaissance in seiner Zeit* (Berlin: Köster, 1999); *Leonhard Lechner, sein Leben, sein Werk* (Karlsruhe: Helmesverlag, 2006).

² Cf. K. Ameln, *Risi, ploro, ..., l.c.*, 151.

³ Cf. H. Weber, *o.c.*, 173-4.

⁴ On this Nivernian humanist, see our article « Joannes Ravisius Textor: mise au point biographique, » *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 69/3 (2007): 691-703. A very slight doubt remains, nevertheless, for the award of this piece to Textor, because, even if this posthumous collection is due to a longtime friend of Textor (Louis Fabry) who was supposed to have known his literary output, show, however, in this same issue, albeit with reference to the addressee, the epitaph of Adam of Saint Victor, definitely foreign to Textor (see, for example, L. Gautier, *Œuvres poétiques d'Adam de Saint-Victor*, I (Paris, 1858), xci-xciv). Philippe Labbé (*Thesaurus epitaphiorum veterum ac recentium selectorum ex antiquis inscriptionibus, omnique scriptorum genere* (Paris: D. Horthemels, 1686), 368) seems to have felt the same hesitation, since he declares this motet anonymous, while indicating his membership in the Textorian collection cited above and by referring to Nathan Chytraeus (*Variorum in Europa itinerum deliciae*, ed. sec. [1st ed.: 1594] (Herborn: Chr. Corvin, 1599), 641) who, without any argument or reference, states that this epitaph is that of a king of France, information that we could not check given the current state of our documentation. For the complete editorial history of these hexameters, see our forthcoming translated and annotated edition of the *Dialogi* and *Epigrammata* from Textor.

⁵ Cf. K. Ameln, *Risi, ploro, ..., l.c.*, 151. We include, as reference, editions P (Paris: R. Chaudière, 1530, f. 167 r^o) and R (Rotterdam: A. Leers, 1651, 377-8). The variants of the second verse are not due to Lechner himself, who has used the text of an another Parisian edition.

⁶ *nunc muteo* Lechner, R : *mutesco* P.

⁷ *pavi* Lechner, R : *nutrivi* P.

- Salve, dico vale; rapui, rapior; superavi,*
5 *Vincor; certavi, pace utor; iure ego vixi,*
Iure igitur morior; non obsto, obstare nequirem.
Terra fui quondam, rursus sum terra; nihil sum.
Terra caduca vale, vermes salvete; recumbo.
- I laughed, I cry; I lived, I am no longer; I was active, I rest;
I played, I play no longer; I sang, now I am silent; I kept up
My body, I feed the worms; I awoke, I sleep; I said
'Hello !', I say 'farewell !'; I took, I am taken; I dominated
5 I am beaten; I fought, I enjoy peace; rightly I lived,
Rightly, therefore, I die; I do not object, I could not.
I once was earth, I am earth again; I am nothing.
Farewell, frail earth ! Worms, I salute you ! I lie at rest.⁸

In his *Flowers of epigrammes* (1577), Timothy Kendall had given this translation (rather an adaptation...):⁹

- An Epitaphe
- I laught, I wepe; I was, but now
I nothyng am become;
I plaied, but now I ceasse to plaie;
I sang, but now am domme.
5 I wakt, I slepe; I studied once,
But loe I now am still;
My fleshe I fedde and pampred once,
But now the wormes I fill;
I welcomde all sometyme, but now
10 To all I bidde adue;
I caught, but now am caught my self;
Now slaine, whiche sometyme slue.
Once faught I, now I peace enjoye;

⁸ Here is also our translation in French:

J'ai ri, je pleure; j'ai été, je ne suis plus; j'ai été actif, je me repose;
J'ai joué, je ne joue plus; j'ai chanté, maintenant je me tais; j'ai entretenu
Mon corps, je nourris les vers; j'ai veillé, je dors; j'ai dit
'Bonjour !', je dis 'adieu !'; j'ai arraché, je suis arraché; j'ai dominé,
5 Je suis vaincu; j'ai livré bataille, je jouis de la paix; à bon droit j'ai vécu,
À bon droit donc je meurs; je ne m'y oppose pas, je ne le pourrais.
Terre j'ai été jadis, terre je redeviens; je ne suis rien.
Adieu, terre éphémère ! Vers, je vous salue ! Je m'allonge.

⁹ T. Kendall, *Flowers of epigrammes, out of sundries the moste singular authours selected, as well auncient as late writers. Pleasant and profitable to the expert readers of quicke capacitie* (London: J. Shepperd, 1577), f. 41 v°-42 r° (without Latin text, but with Textor mentioned as source).

I life enjoyed all right,
 15 Of right againe I must therefore
 Yelde unto Mors his might;
 I yelde, and yelde I must of force;
 Yearth was I once certaine,
 Yearth, duste, and now at laste I am
 20 Yearth, duste, become againe.
 Yearth, duste, now naught at all; wherefore
 Worlde vaine adue to thee;
 And sith I needes must hence awaie,
 Wormes welcome you to me.

The second and last translation known to us is an old Flemish rhyming one, due to the theologian Willem Baudaert from Deinze, in 1605:¹⁰

Nu schrey ick, ick hebbe ghelacchen; 'k ben gheweest, 'k en ben nu niet;
 'K hebbe ghestudeert, ick ruste nu; 'k heb ghespeelt, 'k en speel nu niet.
 'K heb ghesonghen, nu swijch ick stil; 'k heb mijn lichame gevoet,
 Nu spijs ik de wormen; 'k hebbe langh ghewaeckt, nu slaep ick soet;
 5 'K hebb' gesproken ghy zijt willekom, nu seg' ic vaert wel, vrient weert.
 'K hebbe gherooft, nu rooftmen my weer; 'k hebbe verwonnen, 'k ben verheert;
 'K hebb' ghestreden, 'k ben in vrede; 'k hebbe tot leven recht gehadt,
 'K ben met recht ghestorven; 'k wil noch kan niet tegen dat.
 Eertijds was ick aerd', ic ben weer aerd', en leg hier in 's Grafs dal¹¹.
 10 Adieu aerd' aer'verganckelijck, adieu, weest ghegroet ghy wormen al.

As to the absolute silence of Lechner about Textor, it was surely deliberate, as the composer, at that time, could not read this *epitaphion* anywhere else than in the *epigrammata* collections of this humanist.

It appears, therefore, that the *Epigrammata* (at least some of them and this particular piece) of the teacher and poet Textor, half-century after their posthumous edition, accounted for a source of inspiration for a composer of motets such as Lechner¹².

¹⁰ For the first edition (Deventer) of his *Apophthegmata Christiana*, consulted in the second edition (Arnhem: J. Jansz, 1616), 2nd part, 204: 'Eenes Franschen Coninghs Graf-schrift', declared anonymous). Small textual and orthographical variants in the later editions, for example in the eighth (Amsterdam, 1649), Part II, 189-90.

¹¹ For *nihil sum*: only departure from the Latin text.

¹² Previous editions to the posthumous edition Paris 1530 (P), if they indeed existed, should already be unavailable from Lechner's time (justification for P).

Curious fate for this epitaph which became *sacra cantio*, knowing it is likely to have been originally designed by the Parisian professor as a mere rhetorical exercise based on antithesis. The composer had probably seen the present piece principally as a variation on the melancholy theme of *vanitas vanitatum*.

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