

# Honor, virtus et potestas

Edited by Jason Smart

Thomas Tallis (c.1505–1585)

*3 from the higher stalls*

Ho - nor, \_\_\_\_\_

Mean

Countertenor 1

Countertenor 2

Tenor

Bass

vir - - - - tus, ho -

vir - - - - tus, ho -

vir - - - - tus,

vir - - - - tus,

4

- nor, vir - - - - tus, ho - nor, vir - - - - tus,

- nor, vir - - - - tus, ho - nor, vir - - - - tus

- - - - tus, ho - nor, vir - - - - tus, ho - nor, vir -

vir - - - - tus

ho - nor, vir - - - - tus et

- - tus et po - te - - - - -

et po - te - stas, et po - te - stas, et po - te -

- - - - - tus et po - te - stas, et po - te -

et po - te - stas, et po - te - stas, et po - te -

po - te - stas, et po - te - stas, et po - te - stas, et po - te -

- stas et im - pe - ri - um, et im -

- stas et im - pe - - - - - ri - um,

- stas et im - pe - - - - - ri - um, et im - pe - ri -

- stas et im - pe - - - - - - stas et im - pe - - - - -

- stas et im - pe - ri - um, et im - pe - - - - - ri -

- pe - - - - ri - um, et im - pe - ri -

et im - pe - ri - um, et im - pe - - - - -

- um, et im - pe - - - - - ri - um, et im - pe - - - - -

- - - - - ri - um sit - - - - -

- um, et im - pe - - - - - ri - um

24

- um sit Tri - ni - ta - - - ti in U - ni -  
 ri - um sit Tri - ni - ta - ti, sit Tri - ni - ta - ti  
 ri - um sit Tri - ni - ta - - - ti in  
 Tri - ni - - - ta - ti in U -  
 sit Tri - ni - ta - - - -

29

- ta - te, in U - ni - ta - - te,  
 in U - ni - ta - te, in U - ni - ta - te,  
 U - ni - ta - te, in U - ni - ta - te, U - ni - ta -  
 - ni - - ta - - - te, U - ni - - - ta -  
 - ti in U - ni - ta - te, U - ni - ta - ti in Tri -

34

U - ni - ta - - ti in Tri - ni - ta - - - te,  
 U - ni - ta - ti in Tri - ni - ta - te, U - ni - ta - ti in Tri - ni - ta -  
 - - ti in Tri - ni - ta - - - te, U - ni - ta -  
 - - - ti in Tri - ni -  
 - ni - ta - te, in Tri - ni - ta - te, U - ni - ta -

in Tri - ni - ta - te, in pe - - -  
 - te, in Tri - ni - ta - te, in -  
 - ti in Tri - ni - ta - te, in pe - ren - - -  
 - ta - - - te, in pe - ren - - -  
 - ti in Tri - ni - ta - te, in pe - ren - - -

ren - - - ni, in  
 - - - pe - ren - - - ni, [in pe - ren -  
 - ni, in pe - ren - - - ni, in pe -  
 - - - ni, in pe - ren - - - ni, in pe - ren -  
 - - - ni, in pe - ren - - - ni, in pe - ren -

pe - ren - - - ni sae - cu - - -  
 - - - ni] sae - cu - - - lo - - -  
 - ren - - - ni sae - cu - - - lo - - -  
 - - - ni sae - cu - - - lo - - -  
 - - - ni sae - cu - - - lo - - - rum,

55

lo - rum tem - rum, sae - cu - lo - rum tem - ni sae - cu - lo - rum, sae - cu - lo - rum, sae - cu - lo - rum, sae - cu - lo - rum, sae - cu - lo - rum

60

po - re. po - re, tem - po - re. sae - cu - lo - rum tem - po - re. tem - po - re. rum tem - po - re, tem - po - re.

**END**

1st TIME

*3 from the higher stalls*

Tri - ni - ta - ti lux pe - ren - nis,  
U - ni - ta - ti sit de - cus per - pe - tim

**REPEAT FROM [A] TO END**

2nd TIME

*3 from the higher stalls*

Glo - ri - a Pa - tri et Fi - li o  
et Spi - ri - tu - i San - cto

**REPEAT FROM [A] TO END**

### Translation

Honour, power, might and dominion be to the Trinity in Unity, to the Unity in Trinity, throughout everlasting ages.

ψ To the Trinity be endless light, to the Unity be unceasing glory  
throughout everlasting ages.

ψ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost  
throughout everlasting ages.

### Commentary

In the pre-Reformation Use of Sarum, *Honor, virtus, et potestas* was the respond at First Vespers, the sixth respond at Matins and, without the *Gloria Patri*, the respond *in introitu chori* during the procession before Mass on Trinity Sunday. It was also sung on the three following days at First Vespers and Matins when no other feast took precedence. Tallis almost certainly wrote his setting for use at First Vespers of Trinity Sunday.

By the time Tallis and Byrd published their *Cantiones Sacrae* of 1575, the English church had officially abandoned Catholicism and its liturgy. Amongst Tallis's contributions to the *Cantiones* are three of the *cantus firmus* respond settings that he had written for the Latin services. John Milsom has suggested that, in all three, Tallis has retexted the opening to incorporate the words of the plainsong incipits, in order to allow the polyphony to be sung as simple motets without any chanted plainsong.<sup>1</sup> That Elizabethan singers would have sung liturgically obsolete Latin polyphony in this way is indisputable, but the evidence for retexting is inconclusive. For Tallis's *Dum transisset*, there is some questionable support in one or two manuscripts preserving earlier versions of the work, but for the other two responds no pre-publication versions survive for comparison. If Tallis did retext the openings, why did he not do so from the very beginning, as happened with Taverner's *Dum transisset* I? This would have been very easy to do with *Honor, virtus*, and the opening point of *Dum transisset* positively invites such underlay. Nor would it have been impossible with *Candidi facti sunt*, although the introduction of a new point for the word *candidi* may indicate that Tallis wrote the work that way. Moreover Tallis followed a similar pattern in the underlay of his *Videte miraculum*, a respond with an overtly Marian text that could never have been a candidate for publication in the deliberately circumspect 1575 collection. Perhaps his normal practice, when setting a respond for chorus, was to include the text of the incipit if the opening phrase of text was repeated. For these reasons, this edition retains the underlay of the source.

### Editorial Conventions

The original clef, staff signature, mensuration symbol and first note of each part are shown on the prefatory staves at the start of the piece.

Ligatures are denoted by the sign  $\square$ .

The superscript accidental in bar 59 is an editorial addition; it is confirmed by plainsong sources.

Repeat signs in the underlay are indicated by text in italics.

### Sources

Polyphony: Thomas Tallis and William Byrd, *Cantiones quae ab argumento sacrae vocantur* (London: Thomas Vautrollier, 1575). Copy used: London, Royal College of Music G28/1–6 (*olim* I.E.9).

Superius	(M)	no.15*	at top of page:	V. Voc.	T. Tallis.
Discantus	(Ct1)	no.15	at top of page:	V. Voc.	T. Tallis.
Contra Tenor	(Ct2)	no.15	at top of page:	V. Voc.	T. Tallis.
Tenor	(T)	no.15	at top of page:	V. Voc.	T. Tallis.
Bassus	(B)	no.15	at top of page:	V. Voc.	T. Tallis.
Sexta Pars	—	—			

\*Erroneously printed as 18.

Plainsong: *Antiphonarij ad usum Sarum volumen secundum vulgo pars Estivalis nuncupata* (Paris: Wolfgang Hopyl for Franz Birckman, 1520), f.5 of the Temporale.

### Notes on the Readings of the Source

38	Ct1	# for second D
41	all parts	repeat marked with a <i>signum congruentiae</i>
49	Ct1	underlay repeat sign omitted ?
62	M	-re below G

<sup>1</sup> Milsom, John (ed.), *Thomas Tallis & William Byrd: Cantiones Sacrae 1575*, Early English Church Music 56 (London: Stainer & Bell, 2014), p.xiv, 222, 242, 321 and the relevant scores.