Hodie nobis caelorum rex

Edited by Jason Smart

Anon. (*c*.1400)

2 clerks of the second form   *Chorus*

Ho - di - e no - bis cae - lo - rum rex de vir - gi - ne na - sci di - gna - tus est; ut ho - mi - nem per - di - tum ad re - gna cae - le - sti - a re - vo - ca - ret. Gau - det ex - er - ci - tus an - ge - lo - rum qui - a sa - lus ae - ter - na hu - ma - no ge - ne - ri ap - pa - ru - it.

[2 soloists]

I Glo - ri - a
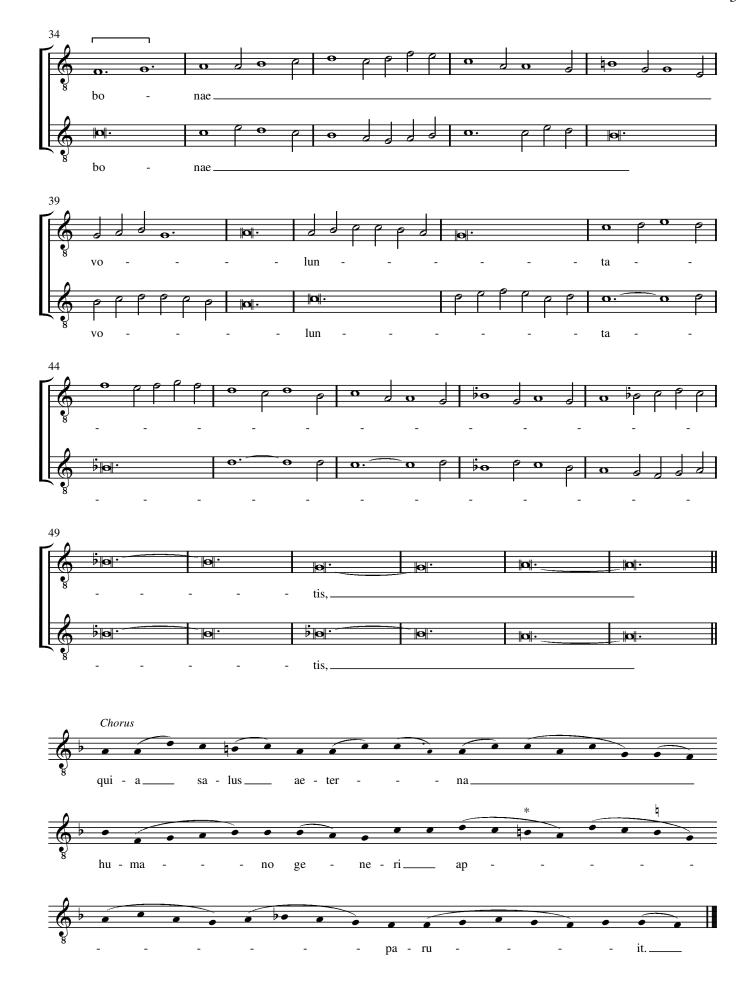
II Glo - ri - a

* The B naturals on *apparuit* are unusual. In all other manuscripts examined these notes are B flats, which may be substituted if preferred.

in ex - - - -
in ex - - - -

- cel - - - - sis De - - - -
- cel - - - - - sis De - - - -

- - - - - - - - - o,
- - - - - - - - - o,

et in ter - - ra pax
et in ter - - ra pax

ho - mi - - - - ni - - bus
ho - mi - - - - ni - - bus

34

bo - nae ___

bo - nae ___

39

vo - - - - lun - - - - ta - -

vo - - - - lun - - - - ta - -

44

- - - - - - - - - -

- - - - - - - - - - - -

49

- - - - - tis, ___

- - - - - tis, ___

Chorus

qui - a ___ sa - lus ___ ae - ter - - na ___

hu - ma - - - no ge - ne - ri ___ ap - - - - -

- - - - - - pa - ru - - - it. ___

Translation

Today for us the King of Heaven deigned to be born of a virgin, that he might call back lost mankind to the heavenly kingdom. The army of angels rejoices because eternal salvation has appeared in human form.

℣ Glory to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men,

because eternal salvation has appeared in human form.

The Music

The polyphony survives, without any plainsong, amongst a collection of songs towards the end of a manuscript of non-musical, miscellaneous items dateable to *c*.1400. It is a setting of the verse of *Hodie nobis caelorum rex*, the first respond at Matins of Christmas Day in the Use of Salisbury. The proper plainsong can be traced throughout in voice II, albeit in a highly 'broken' form. There is every possibility that this setting had a liturgical origin and this edition restores its putative original form. But the verse may also be performed alone, without the plainsong, which was doubtless the scribe's intention. No composer is named, but the manuscript appears to have been copied at Winchester College. Presumably the respond was acquired from a local church, perhaps even from the college's own choir, notwithstanding the number of copying errors in this and several of the other musical items.

The service books of Sarum Use stipulated that *Hodie nobis caelorum rex* be begun by two clerks of the second form, but that the verse *Gloria in excelsis Deo* be sung from a prominent place above the high altar by five boys wearing surplices, their heads covered with amices, holding lighted candles. The rubrics explained the ceremonial at Salisbury Cathedral, but other churches had to adapt these instructions to fit their individual circumstances. The present setting will not have been sung by boys, who did not begin to be instructed in polyphonic notation until the second half of the 1400s. Until then, even the best endowed institutions contented themselves with only three or four expert, adult singers of polyphony. Most probably it was performed by just two men.

Editorial Conventions

The original clef, and first note of each part are shown on the prefatory staves.
Editorial accidentals are placed above the notes concerned. Accidentals not present individually in the source but implied by the original staff signatures are placed before the note and have a superscript dot.
Ligatures are denoted by the sign ⌐‾‾‾‾‾⌐ , coloration by the sign ⌐ ⌐ .
Spelling of the text has been modernised.

Sources

Notes on the Readings of the Sources

The underlay of the source, which even on its own terms needs some adjustment, has been ignored and the text redistributed to match more closely the underlay of the plainsong. The original underlay can be viewed via the digital images of the source available at www.diamm.ac.uk. There are some clear errors and a suspicious number of bare fourths that may also be errors. At the risk of interfering with what may simply have been poor counterpoint, a number of these fourths have been amended.

The order within each reference below is: 1) bar number; 2) voice; 3) reading of the source. Pitches are in capital letters, preceded by a number where necessary, e.g. ¹B = first note B in the bar.

1–end	I II	all rests are perfect semibreves
5	I	perfect semibreve rest after C
8	II	¹B is perfect semibreve
8	I II	one perfect semibreve rest for the two minim rests
6	I	C is semibreve
10	I	A is perfect breve
17	I	²C is B
21	I	D is minim, ²B is minim
27	I	GFAG are AGB♭A
30	II	A is minim
31	I	CB are BA
39	I	¹GAB are FGA
35	I	B is minim
44	I	²F is E
44	II	new line in source begins with B, staff signature ♭ for B, A²G are GF
47	I	new line in source begins with B, staff signature ♭ for B