

# A Multimedia Response to the Real Presence: The Jesuit Georg Scherer on Corpus Christi Processions in Early Modern Vienna\*

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The Tyrolean Georg Scherer (c. 1540-1605) was one of the most distinguished Jesuit catechists and controversialists of the Habsburg Empire in the late sixteenth century. Preacher at the Hofburgkapelle from 1577, he was active especially in Vienna and became known for his polemics concerning Protestantism.<sup>1</sup>

In a sermon given on Trinity Sunday, 1588, in preparation for the approaching feast of Corpus Christi, he aimed to explain why the Catholic Church celebrated this feast with a solemn procession. At the same time, he intended to counter the criticism of these ceremonies levelled by ‘heretics’. The sermon can be read in two printed versions, both published in 1588 with a dedication to Elisabeth of Austria (1554-92, formerly queen of France, then retired in the Viennese cloister of St. Maria, Königin der Engel): *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest und Umbgang* (Vienna: L. Nassinger) and *Ein Predig vom Fronleichnamfest und Umbgang* (Ingolstadt: D. Sartorius).<sup>2</sup>

Scherer produced ten ‘reasons’ (*Ursachen*) for the procession and its multimedia apparatus. (I use ‘multimedia’ here in a broad sense to evoke a multiform communicative

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<sup>1</sup> Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, vol. 7 (Brussels-Paris, 1896), col. 746-65 (with extensive list of works); Bernhard Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge*, vol. 1 (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1907), 798-820; Constantin Becker, ‘Scherer (Georges)’, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*, vol. 14 (Paris, 1989), col. 413-14; Rudolf Zinnhobler, ‘Scherer, Georg’, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 9 (Freiburg im Breisgau, 2000), 131. Further literature is given in Clarisse Roche, ‘Le prédicateur Georg Scherer ou la perception de l’Histoire Sainte dans l’ici et maintenant viennois (1585)’, in *Revista de historiografia* 21 (2014), 25-37. A Protestant broadside from Nuremberg (1606), preserved at the British Museum (Museum No. 1876,0510.509), places Scherer among the prominent Catholic members of the host of the Antichrist; see <[https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1876-0510-509](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1876-0510-509)> (accessed 1 June 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Quotations in the following discussion are taken from the Viennese edition, and the page numbers are those printed on the top right. A digitization of the copy Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 21.V.23 is available online at <<http://data.onb.ac.at/rep/107CE67B>> (accessed 20 January 2023). An Italian translation was published in 1590 as *Diece cagioni per lequali la cattolica chiesa ordinò la festa et processione del santissimo Corpo di N.S. Iesu Cristo* (Vienna: Niccolò Pierio, 1590). A Czech translation followed a few years later: *Kázání o slavném svátku těla božijho a processy* (Litomyšl: O. Graudens, 1594). See also Scherer’s larger *Verantwortung dess Fronleichnam Fests vnd Vmbgangs wider Jacobum Andre Schmidel* (Ingolstadt: D. Sartorius, 1589), and the Latin *Propugnatio festi Theophoriae et processionis ejusdem* (Trnava: Typis academicis, 1706).

appeal to various senses.)<sup>3</sup> Each of Scherer's 'reasons' is developed in a short section of his sermon, and they can be summarized as follows:<sup>4</sup>

1. The procession is a general and public profession of faith in the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the blessed sacrament. This profession of faith is expressed not only verbally but through ceremonies, sounds, and other forms of active participation. Its character of public testimony also takes into account the presence of 'enemies' among the bystanders.
2. The Corpus Christi procession is the fulfilment of what was prefigured in the Old Testament through the procession of the Ark of the Covenant that contained the manna.
3. It is a public act of worship and veneration to the Son of God in the blessed sacrament.
4. It is like a sermon on the exceptional nature of the blessed sacrament. Ceremonies and rites are necessary to make people reflect on this mystery.
5. It is a triumph against the enemies of the blessed sacrament.
6. It is an invitation to frequent communion, sounding through the streets and reaching out to all the people. The procession is not a spectacle ('Schawspil', i.e., 'Schauspiel'): it is strictly connected to the reception of the sacrament.
7. It is an act of praise and thanksgiving to Christ, expressed, again, not only by means of words but through a comprehensive participation 'in body and soul'.
8. It reaffirms faith in transubstantiation, against the beliefs of the heretics.
9. It is a powerful prayer to obtain God's blessing on the city for the sake of his son.
10. It is a foretaste of the eternal procession that will take place in heaven.

Some of Scherer's points partially overlap, and some are strictly connected with the contemporary doctrinal disputes concerning the Eucharist.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the procession to which Scherer refers is certainly not the 'average' procession of the early modern era: as is well known, Corpus Christi parades in Vienna, as in other European Catholic cities, involved thousands of active participants, including members of confraternities, actors, people in costume, musicians, and dancers, and were among the most elaborate ceremonies of the time.<sup>6</sup> Despite these caveats, Scherer's ten points can shed light on certain aspects of Catholic processions and on the role played in them by sonic and non-sonic elements, stimulating reflections that may apply to a broad range of multimedia events in early modern Catholicism.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See Claire Lauer, 'Contending with Terms: "Multimodal" and "Multimedia" in the Academic and Public Spheres', in *Computers and Composition* 26 (2009), 225-39.

<sup>4</sup> See Sabine Felbecker, *Die Prozession: Historische und systematische Untersuchungen zu einer liturgischen Ausdruckshandlung* (Altenberge, 1995), 208-17. Compare also Scherer's own recapitulation of the ten reasons at 16'.

<sup>5</sup> See Lee Palmer Wandel (ed.), *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation* (Leiden-Boston, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Although a 'pan-European general grammar' of Corpus Christi processions has yet to be written, several case studies illuminate local or national traditions; some of the most relevant ones will be quoted here.

<sup>7</sup> The literature on early modern processions is extensive: recent musicological contributions providing further interdisciplinary bibliography include Annick Delfosse, 'Exciter les sens pour bouleverser les cœurs: Les processions post-tridentines dans les régions de culture baroque', in *Le jardin de musique* 5/2 (2008), 25-37; Alexander J. Fisher, *Music, Piety, and Propaganda: The Soundscapes of Counter-Reformation Bavaria* (New York, 2014), chapter 5; and Christiane Wiesenfeldt, 'Musik in Bewegung: Bewegende Musik—Prozessionen als musikalisierte Rituale', in *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch* 98 (2014), 39-57. See also, more broadly, the special issue of the *Yale Journal of Music and Religion* 2/2 (2016) guest-edited by Suzel Reily and dedicated to 'The sounds of processions' (<<https://elischolar>

The apologetic character of Scherer's tract must be taken into consideration: we cannot mistake Scherer's point of view for that of any other participant or bystander, much less for that of the average 'man on the street' (not to mention members of non-Catholic communities). As Erika Honisch cautioned in her study of Corpus Christi processions in early modern Prague, '[i]nterpretations based entirely upon presumed intent [...] risk simply reiterating the claims (and aims) of procession organizers.'<sup>8</sup> Whereas it is important to consider different points of view when trying to understand a specific procession or local tradition, I am interested in the 'claims and aims of procession organizers': how Scherer wanted the average men (and women) of Vienna to understand the procession. His didactic effort—evident in the vividness of his style and the concrete, material details of his argument—was part of an ongoing process of strengthening and redefining Catholic identity, partly prompted by Protestant criticism, and it would be unwise to underestimate *a priori* the impact of these teachings on contemporary audiences.<sup>9</sup>

What follows, then, is an attempt at close-reading some of the most relevant passages in Scherer's text alongside comparable sources—notably the Corpus Christi sermons by an earlier preacher from Spain, Juan de Ávila, 1500–69.<sup>10</sup> In turn, I map them against the insights offered by several seminal studies of early modern processions.<sup>11</sup> Finally, I compare the practices described and advocated by Scherer to their real-world implementation and situate them within the sonic cultures of early modern Catholicism at large.

Before starting our discussion, it is worth noting that Scherer had significant musical training in his youth. As he wrote in a self-assessment from 1563, 'Von frühester Jugend habe ich mich auf die Studien und Musik verlegt. Von der Musik habe ich einige Jahre gelebt' ('From my earliest youth, I devoted myself to studying and to music. For a few years, I earned a living from music').<sup>12</sup> His sensitivity to sonic details is revealed in his recommendations to preachers about the use of the voice from the pulpit:

Die Prediger sollen sich auch nicht überschreien [...] denn aus übermäßigem Geschrei folget nichts anders, als daß die Prediger sich selber wehe tun und auch den Zuhörern. Es ist ein zartes Ding um das menschlich Gehör, auch ist es nicht eine kleine Kunst, die Stimme wissen in der Predigt zu moderiren und regieren. Es tauget nicht einerlei Ton

library.yale.edu/yjmr/vol. 2/iss2/>, accessed 1 June 2022). A useful short bibliography of early modern treatises on processions is at the end of the article 'Processione' in Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica*, 103 vols. (Venice, 1840–61), vol. 55 (1852): 256–68 at 268.

<sup>8</sup> Erika Supria Honisch, 'Hearing the Body of Christ in Early Modern Prague', in *Early Music History* 38 (2019), 51–105 at 93.

<sup>9</sup> As the historian Clarisse Roche writes in her study of another sermon by Scherer, 'Alors que dans les années 1580 Vienne était travaillée par le schisme religieux, Scherer sacralisait l'ici et maintenant de fidèles déchirés dans la foi pour mieux les intégrer collectivement à la temporalité transcendante de l'Église' ('When, during the 1580s, Vienna was troubled by the religious schism, Scherer sacralised the "here and now" of the faithful, who were torn in their faith, in order to better integrate them collectively into the transcendental temporality of the Church'); Roche, 'Le prédicateur Georg Scherer', 28. Roche, construing Scherer's approach as part of a sixteenth-century 'visual turn' embraced by the Jesuits, privileges the gaze as the main tool for this sacralization of the perceivable world: 'le moyen le plus efficace de reconquête: le regard' ('the most effective means of reconquest: the gaze'); Roche, 'Le prédicateur Georg Scherer', 28 and 34.

<sup>10</sup> A founder of schools and colleges across Andalucía, Juan de Ávila (or John of Ávila) was beatified in 1894, canonized in 1970, and proclaimed Doctor of the Universal Church in 2012. His Corpus Christi sermons are edited in Juan de Ávila, *Obras completas, III: Sermones*, ed. L. Sala Balust and F. Martín Hernández (Madrid, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> See especially the contributions by Muir, Kendrick, Fisher, and Honisch referenced in the footnotes.

<sup>12</sup> Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern Deutscher Zunge*, 798.

und Accent durch die ganze Predigt gebrauchen wollen, sondern man muß die Stimme höher und niedriger, schärfer und linder nach Gestalt der Materie ergehen lassen. Wenn das Geschrei lange dauert, schlafen die Zuhörer doch trotz allem Lärm wie der Hund beim Ambos.<sup>13</sup>

Preachers should also not make themselves hoarse by shouting [...] because the consequence of excessive shouting is simply that the preacher hurts himself and also the listeners. Human hearing is a delicate thing, and it is no small art to know how to control and govern the voice during a sermon. It is not suitable to employ the same tone and accent in the entire sermon; rather, one must let out the voice higher or lower, more sharply or more mildly according to the shape of the matter. If the shouting lasts long, the listeners will sleep all the same despite the noise, like the dog by the anvil.<sup>14</sup>

### Response to the Real Presence

Scherer describes the Corpus Christi ceremony as an outward-looking, public, and collective act of worship and thanksgiving and profession of faith (see especially points 1, 3, and 7 in the summary above). Central to the ceremony is the belief in the real presence of Christ in the sacramental species (after the consecration during mass), and of its permanence even outside the Eucharistic ritual and irrespective of the actual reception by the faithful. This belief is also the foundation for the adoration of Christ in the host outside of mass.<sup>15</sup> According to Catholic theology, the bodily, objective substance of the real presence is no mere symbol and provides the reason for a bodily involvement on the side of the participants too. Distinguishing himself from other preachers characterized by a more ascetic-moralistic attitude, Scherer seems to play on this theological fact in order to justify some controversial features of the procession. The multi-sensorial experience of Corpus Christi celebrations paradoxically counterbalances the 'sensuum defectu[s]' (the defect of the senses) famously mentioned in Thomas Aquinas's Eucharistic hymn *Pange lingua*:

So ist nun das Gottleichnams fest sampt der angehörigen procession nichts anders als ein öffentliche bekentnis und geschray von allem volck, jungen und alten, kleinen und grossen, reichen und armen, Geistlichen und weltlichen, Burgern und Handwerckern. Als wann deren ein jeder in sonderheit sagete: Ich glaub, ich glaub, ich glaub das da im Sacrament nicht schlecht Brodt, und nur ein blosse figur und zeichen, sondern der ware und wesentliche leib, und das ware wesentliche Blut unsers Erlösers gewißlich verhanden und zugegen sey [...] das reden die Glocken, die Bäumb, die zweig, die Blumen, die stäb, die stangen und Fahnen, die Trommeten und Posaunen, die Windtlichter und alle andere Ceremonien, ja so viel Ceremonien, so viel stimmen und zungen, dadurch unser Glaub angezeigt und bekennt wirdt.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Scherer, *Christlichen Regeln für die Prediger*, as quoted in Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern Deutscher Zunge*, 817.

<sup>14</sup> The last phrase alludes to the German proverb 'Schmieds Hund schläft beim Amboss' ('The smith's dog sleeps by the anvil').

<sup>15</sup> See the section 'Culte de la présence réelle et magistère' within the extensive article 'Eucharistie' in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, vol. 5 (Paris, 1961), col. 1637-48; Isabelle Brian, 'Catholic Liturgies of the Eucharist in the Time of Reform', in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation*, ed. Wandel, 185-203 at 190.

<sup>16</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottleichnams Fest*, 2<sup>r-v</sup>. In all quotations from Scherer's sermon, the original spelling and capitalization have been retained, but punctuation has been conformed to modern usage.

The feast of Corpus Christi with its procession is nothing other than a loud, public confession of the entire people, young and old, small and large, rich and poor, religious and lay, citizens and craftsmen. As if each of them individually said: 'I believe, I believe, I believe that there in the sacrament, not mere bread, nor a bare figure or symbol, but rather the real and substantial body and the real and substantial blood of our redeemer are veritably accessible and present' [...] this is what the bells, the trees, the branches, the flowers, the rods, the poles and the flags, the trumpets and trombones, the lanterns and all the other ceremonies say; indeed there are so many ceremonies, so many voices and tongues, through which our faith is signified and professed.

It is remarkable how keen Scherer is on listing all the concrete components of the ceremony, as if to provide his audience with plentiful references to their sensory experience in order to draw them into his argument. According to Ávila, the role of these 'ceremonias exteriores' is that of awakening the participants' love of God and inner devotion ('como motivo y despertador del amor y devoción interior'):

Y así el que cantare con la boca, cante juntamente y principalmente con el afecto del ánima; el que bailare con el cuerpo, enderécelo al amor del Señor regocijándose con su presencia; quien danza, dance al Señor, y no a contentamiento suyo ni ajeno; y los que miran a estos servicios y honra que al Señor se hacen, gócese en lo más dentro de sus entrañas<sup>17</sup>

Therefore he who sings with his mouth should sing jointly and primarily with the affect of his soul; he who dances with his body should address this action to the love of the Lord, rejoicing in his presence; he who dances should dance for the Lord and not for his own or other people's contentment;<sup>18</sup> and those who watch these services and honours offered to the Lord should rejoice in the innermost of their hearts.

In another passage Scherer insists on the importance of the 'eusserlichen Caeremonien' as an appropriate profession of faith in the real presence and mentions some concrete sonic ingredients. At the same time he points to the complex symbolic stratification underlying the early modern conception of procession:

Der ganze Act, so am Gottsleichnamstag gehalten wirdt, ist eine allgemeine öffentliche bekenntnis unsers Glaubens von der waren gegenwert des leibs und Bluts Christi im hochwirdigen Sacrament. Solchen Glauben unsers hertzens bezeugen wir Christen zu Kirchen und gassen, nicht allein mit dem munde und mit worten, sondern auch mit eusserlichen Caeremonien und geberden, mit singen und klingen, mit leuten und deuten, mit pfeiffen und Orgeln, mit trommeten und Posaunen, immassen die Apostel und andere Israeliten die presentz und gegenwert eben dieses Messie und Sohns Gottes nicht allein mit blossen worten, sondern auch mit singen so wohl auff der gassen als im Tempel zu Hierusalem, auch mit herzlicher procession des volcks, mit außbreitung der kleider, mit Palmen und grünen Olzweiglein und andern Ceremonien öffentlich bekennet haben.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ávila, *Obras completas*, III, 446.

<sup>18</sup> The Spanish original uses two different verbs for this double statement: 'el que bailare' and 'quien danza', possibly referring to two kinds of dances, both present in Spanish Corpus Christi processions: *bailar* may refer to non-choreographic popular dance, *danzar* to choreographic professional dance. I thank Juan Ruiz Jiménez for commenting on this terminological problem.

<sup>19</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest*, 1<sup>v</sup>.

The whole act that is held on the day of Corpus Christi is a general and public confession of our faith in the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the venerable sacrament. We Christians bear witness to this faith that we hold in our hearts in the churches and in the streets, not only with our mouth and with words, but also with external ceremonies and gestures, with singing and sounding, with ringing of bells and playing of horns, with pipes and organs, with trumpets and trombones, just as the apostles and other Israelites publicly acknowledged the presence of the messiah and Son of God not only with mere words but also by singing both in the streets and in the temple of Jerusalem, as well as with a heartfelt procession of the people, with cloaks spread, with palms and green olive twigs, and with other ceremonies.

Here and elsewhere, Scherer reminds his audience of the main biblical antecedents of Christian processions. The principal Old Testament reference, following the logic of typological exegesis, is to the Ark of the Covenant (discussed in point 2): the feast and procession is 'ein erfüllung dessen welches im alten Testament mit der Archen des Herrn und Manna lustig Praefigurirt, fürgebildet und entworffen worden' ('a fulfilment of what was gracefully prefigured and foreshadowed in the Old Testament by the Ark of the Lord and the manna').<sup>20</sup> According to a widespread interpretation, based especially on the Letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament (9:4), a golden vessel containing manna was preserved within the Ark, together with other unique religious relics.<sup>21</sup> Scherer, with reference to 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 15, describes the priests carrying the ark:

mit dreissig tausent Mann, mit grossem Jubel und frolocken, mit Posaunen und Trommeten, mit Harpffen und Psaltern, mit Orgeln und Pfeiffen, mit schellen und Zymbeln.<sup>22</sup>

with 30,000 men, with great jubilation and rejoicing, with trombones and trumpets, with harps and psalteries, with organs and pipes, with bells and cymbals.

While this was happening, King David played and danced without shame.<sup>23</sup>

The other main biblical archetypes for Christian processions were the New Testament scenes of Jesus walking along the streets of Palestine, as often portrayed in the Gospels, and, most importantly, his solemn entry into Jerusalem shortly before the Passion (compare Matthew 21 and the parallel narratives in the other Gospels). Scherer alludes to this episode in the excerpt from page 1<sup>v</sup> quoted above and in other passages as well.

Ávila, in turn, further suggests that Corpus Christi processions are a felicitous reversal of the cortège of Jesus's Passion, and that songs of praise make up for the false accusations hurled against the Messiah:

[E]n pago de aquellas processiones, especialmente de la que anduvo al monte Calvario, se haga en toda la cristiandad tal día como mañana una solemníssima procesión, en la qual vaya vuestro benditísimo Hijo honrado y cercado de sus vasallos, como acullá iba

<sup>20</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest*, 2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> According to other interpretations, the vessel of manna was not preserved within the ark, but close to it. Ávila, who expands on this subject in one of his sermons, tries to solve the dilemma; see Ávila, *Obras completas*, III, 429.

<sup>22</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest*, 2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest*, 3<sup>r</sup>. For more on David's dance see below.

de sus enemigos; y que, en lugar de los mentirosos pregones que entonces se dieron de Él, le canten mañana las devotas alabanzas que con mucha verdad y justicia caben en Él.<sup>24</sup>

As compensation for those processions, especially the one that climbed Mount Calvary, there should be in all Christendom, in such days as tomorrow, a most solemn procession, in which your most blessed Son should proceed honoured and surrounded by his servants, just as there he walked surrounded by his enemies; and, instead of the mendacious proclamations made then about Him, tomorrow there should be sung the devout praises that in truth and justice belong to Him.

A further, extrabiblical reference for Corpus Christi procession were of course the triumphal entries and parades of kings and other secular or religious authorities (more on ‘triumph’ below). Through his presence in the consecrated bread, Jesus walked along the streets of the early modern city. He was greeted as saviour by jubilant crowds, as in Jerusalem but without the bitter presentiments of the incumbent Passion. He was acknowledged as the real king, the real master and lord of the city: it was not by chance that his presence was signalled by the sound of trumpets and other sounding insignia of royal power. ‘Saquemos al Señor de su palacio real,’ urges Ávila, ‘y lo llevemos por nuestras calles con suaves cantares, fiestas y gran regocijo’ (‘Let us take the Lord out of his royal palace and carry him along our streets with sweet songs, feasts, and great rejoicing’).<sup>25</sup>

The Council of Trent recommended that the holy sacrament ‘in processionibus reverenter et honorifice [...] per vias et loca publica circumferretur’ (‘be borne reverently and with honour in processions through the streets and public places’).<sup>26</sup> Scherer especially underscores the concreteness of all this in his reason No. 9: the feast and procession is a powerful prayer, supported by the real presence of Christ ‘in body, blood, soul, divinity, and humanity’ (13), to obtain God the Father’s blessing

uber alle Heuser, in allen gassen und strassen, uber die Ringmawer und Pasteyen, uber die gantz Stadt, uber die Obrigkeit und Unterthanen, uber alle frucht zu feldt und Weingarten, und uber alles was wir an dem ort, da solche Procession geschicht, haben und besitzen.<sup>27</sup>

on all the houses, in all the streets and alleys, on the ring wall and the ramparts, on the whole city, on the authorities and their subjects, on all the fruits of the field and vineyard, and on everything we have and possess at the location where such a procession takes place.

The real city (its streets, its orchards, the walls that encircle and delimit it—again, notice the concreteness of Scherer’s language) and all its inhabitants are involved in the *historia sacra* of salvation. The pervasive sonic aspects of the procession, showering on the city

<sup>24</sup> Ávila, *Obras completas*, III, 494.

<sup>25</sup> Ávila, *Obras completas*, III, 490.

<sup>26</sup> Session XIII, Decree concerning the Eucharist, chapter 5; see Giuseppe Alberigo, Klaus Ganzer, and Alberto Melloni (eds.), *The Oecumenical Councils of the Roman Catholic Church: From Trent to Vatican II (1545-1965)*, Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta: Editio Critica 3 (Turnhout, 2010), 53; translation from Henry Joseph Schroeder (trans.), *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (Rockford, IL, 1978), 76. A specific canon (No. 6) anathematized those who opposed the exterior worship of Christ in the sacrament and the Eucharistic processions (Alberigo, Ganzer, and Melloni, *The Oecumenical Councils*, 56).

<sup>27</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest*, 13<sup>r-v</sup>.

like God's blessing, symbolize and embody this dynamic of involvement in a way perhaps even more striking than the visual aspects.

In his reason No. 7, Scherer, with his now-familiar penchant for accumulation, insists on the full involvement of the participants in the celebration:

Soll nicht unser hertz und fleisch sich erfrewen in disem lebendigen Gott, soll nicht unser seel und alles was in uns ist, Geist, leib, blut, sinn, verstandt, marck, adern, bein, affect, krefften, etc. Gott dancksagen und sein heyiligen Namen loben?<sup>28</sup>

Should not our heart and flesh rejoice in this living God, should not our soul and everything that is in us, spirit, body, blood, sense, intellect, marrow, veins, bones, affects, strength, etc., give thanks to God and praise his holy Name?

In Scherer's understanding, public ceremonies are not only a matter of words ('nicht allein mit dem munde und mit worten') but require a more complex form of active participation. They engage the senses and the body. This has a pedagogic value: it helps to focus attention and express participation in a perceivable way. But there is more to it than that: it corresponds to how Catholic theology understands the very nature of man and his relation with the incarnated God, as Sabine Felbecker puts it.<sup>29</sup> The outward signs correspond to inner realities in the soul.<sup>30</sup> Ávila similarly explains that the procession is an offering to the Lord of 'nuestros apetitos, nuestra voluntad, nuestra honra y hacienda y nuestra propia vida' ('our appetites, our will, our dignity and patrimony, and our own life').<sup>31</sup>

If these outer ceremonies must be public and collective, and aim to involve the totality of man, the sonic dimension clearly has a relevant role to play: as Ávila notes, the main signs of joy in the procession are 'órganos, músicas, danza y bailes' ('musical instruments, musical pieces, art dance and popular dance').<sup>32</sup> It was indeed a sonic signal that called the people together for the procession: in Granada, for example, the pealing of bells started at dawn and did not cease.<sup>33</sup> As many monographic studies have revealed, early modern processions featured a wide range of different sources of organized sound: their multi-sonic character was an acoustic necessity in an epoch of limited sound power (with no amplification available). Different groups of musicians accompanied the various segments of the cortège according to their sonic function and symbolic role.<sup>34</sup> In Corpus Christi processions from Bavaria to Catalonia (to name but two regions), different groups performed movable representations of scenes from the life of Christ or other biblical scenes, and every group was accompanied by its own musicians or singers.<sup>35</sup> The same happened with the different dancing groups in Spanish

<sup>28</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest*, 11r.

<sup>29</sup> Felbecker, *Die Prozession*, 217.

<sup>30</sup> Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this *Journal* for suggesting this.

<sup>31</sup> Ávila, *Obras completas*, III, 446.

<sup>32</sup> Ávila, *Obras completas*, III, 496.

<sup>33</sup> According to Francis George Very, *The Spanish Corpus Christi Procession: A Literary and Folkloric Study* (Valencia, 1962), 24. See also, for instance, *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis* (Milan: Heirs of P. Pontio, 1599), 782-83.

<sup>34</sup> Wiesenfeldt, 'Musik in Bewegung', 50-54.

<sup>35</sup> Kenneth Kreitner, 'Music in the Corpus Christi Procession of Fifteenth-Century Barcelona', in *Early Music History* 14 (1995), 153-204 presents a fifteenth-century example from Barcelona, with ten or twelve musical ensembles, each performing a different piece. Fisher, *Music, Piety, and Propaganda*, 259-65, describing the Corpus Christi procession in late sixteenth-century Munich, mentions eleven floats accompanied by groups of singers or musicians, with additional groups surrounding the Madonna and the holy host. Felbecker, *Die Prozession*, 285-93 describes another rich example from late-eighteenth-century Bavaria.



Corpus Christi processions.<sup>36</sup> But, *mutatis mutandis*, this was also true of processions of an entirely different character, like those organized on Good Friday and penitential processions in general.<sup>37</sup>

With regard to a Venetian procession of 1617, Iain Fenlon comments: ‘The overall effect was that of a kaleidoscopic sequence of colours, sounds, and smells, as the different elements of the spectacle passed before the onlookers.’ Fenlon also remarks that ‘the crowd responded with prayers, cries for divine assistance, and devotional gestures, adding their voices to the simple chants and intoned liturgies.’<sup>38</sup> It is worth noting that even today, some traditional processions avoid the homogenizing power of sound amplification and retain this multi-sonic character.<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, processions could be multi-sonic in a complementary fashion: various ensembles (choirs, instrumental ensembles, military fanfares) performed in different parts of the city, at successive stations, near important sites or landmarks, or from towers, loggias, and other acoustic vantage points.<sup>40</sup> Bells and artillery, another ubiquitous component of early modern processions, contributed to the sonicization of the city in the same way.

Clearly there were different approaches to the use of sound in terms of how it interacted with the procession and the surrounding spaces. The performers or other sources of sound (and noise) could be part of the cortège (sometimes on floats) and intervene either at distinct moments or at the same time (if they were distant enough from each other). Alternatively they could stand in fixed positions along the route (sometimes on triumphal arches or other ephemeral structures, or on bell towers); or they could even move back and forth, as was the case with some dancers in Spanish Corpus Christi processions.<sup>41</sup>

### A Community United in Motion

The sounding character of processions enhanced participation in another, paradoxical way. It is mainly thanks to their sounds that processions were able to reach *de facto* those who did not participate directly. As Alexander J. Fisher has observed, the ‘acoustic horizon of processional sound’ could indeed expand beyond the ‘space defined by the procession’s visual reach.’<sup>42</sup> By means of sound, the public ritual entered private houses, reaching the sick, the elderly, and those hindered by urgent duties, as well as, *malgré*

<sup>36</sup> Very, *The Spanish Corpus Christi Procession*.

<sup>37</sup> See for instance Alexander J. Fisher, *Music and Religious Identity in Counter-Reformation Augsburg, 1580-1630*, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, 2004), 244; for France, Émile Villaret, *Les congrégations mariales* (Paris, 1947), 385-86; for Italy, Lelio Fravezzi, *Diario sacro perpetuo della città e borghi di Como* (Como, 1664), 261-64, quoted in Claudio Bernardi, *La drammaturgia della settimana santa in Italia* (Milan, 1991), 303-4.

<sup>38</sup> Iain Fenlon, ‘Piazza San Marco: Theatre of the Senses, Market Place of the World’, in *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Witse de Boer and Christine Göttler (Leiden-Boston, 2013), 331-62 at 354. On civic processions in Venice involving several floats that carried musicians hired by the so-called ‘Scuole’, see Jonathan Emmanuel Glixon, *Honoring God and the City: Music at the Venetian Confraternities, 1260-1807* (Oxford-New York, 2003), 57.

<sup>39</sup> A case from Calabria (Southern Italy) is discussed in Antonello Ricci, ‘I suoni delle “Indias de por acá”’, in *La musica dei semplici: L'altra Controriforma*, ed. Stefania Nanni (Rome, 2012), 371-80 at 378.

<sup>40</sup> See for instance Fisher, *Music and Religious Identity in Counter-Reformation Augsburg*, 253-55.

<sup>41</sup> Very, *The Spanish Corpus Christi Procession*. For further examples, see Delfosse, ‘Exciter les sens pour bouleverser les cœurs’, 33-35.

<sup>42</sup> Alexander J. Fisher, ‘“Mit Singen und Klingen”: Urban Processional Culture and the Soundscapes of Post-Reformation Germany’, in *Listening to Early Modern Catholicism: Perspectives from Musicology*, ed. Daniele V. Filippi and Michael Noone, *Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture* 49 (Leiden, 2017), 187-203 at 200.

*eux*, those who did not want to participate.<sup>43</sup> This was explicitly theorized in later Jesuit literature, with reference to nocturnal processions, recalling the Gospel motto *Compelle intrare* ('Compel them to come in': Luke 14:23).<sup>44</sup> 'The auditory component thus competed with the privileged visuality of the events', commented Robert Kendrick,<sup>45</sup> complementing Edward Muir's observations on the role of the visual dimension in early modern processions. Muir's remarks on 'irradiation' are especially stimulating:

[C]ontemporary optical theories suggested that the viewers of rituals were brought under the influence of what they saw through a profusion of material or spiritual emanations or, to put it in their terms, through the radiation of species. A ritual, especially an ecclesiastical or official procession, attempted to irradiate viewers with beneficent spiritual or authoritarian influences.<sup>46</sup>

If the rays of Eucharistic monstrances embodied this conception of the 'irradiating sacred', the interaction between those processing and those spectating, according to Muir, should be read in the same vein: both must participate and 'irradiate' in an adequate manner, with their presence, gesture, attire, and so on. It is evident how a similar concept can be applied, at least metaphorically, to the sonic. As Erika Honisch commented in this regard, the bystanders of Corpus Christi processions 'were "irradiated" with sonic representations not only of the Body of Christ, but also of a society marching in harmony'.<sup>47</sup>

Another powerful component of processions needs to be mentioned in this connection: communal singing.<sup>48</sup> The crowds often participated along with the groups of specialized performers in processional singing, especially of litanies, responsorial songs in Latin and in the vernacular, and well-known hymns and psalms. Members of the clergy were especially urged to sing: a document issued in Milan under Archbishop Carlo Borromeo (1538-84) demanded of them, 'Canant omnes!'<sup>49</sup> Confraternities too were explicitly encouraged and trained to contribute to the singing, as exemplified by this Milanese *regola*: 'Anderemo tutti in Processione sotto il nostro Confalone, ogni volta che ci sarà dall'Arcivescovo comandato, & ordinato dalli nostri Officiali maggiori [...] Andando cantaremmo [*sic*] sempre alcune di quelle orationi che saranno al proposito della festa, o del caso, per la quale si farà la processione' ('Each time the archbishop commands it, and our principal officers give orders, we will all go in procession under our gonfalon [...] while marching we will always sing some prayers appropriate for the feast or the occasion for which the procession is done').<sup>50</sup> Many faithful knew the songs

<sup>43</sup> See Robert L. Kendrick, *The Sounds of Milan, 1585-1650* (New York, 2002), 145.

<sup>44</sup> Paolo Broggio, 'L"acto de contrición" entre Europe et nouveaux mondes: Diego Luis de Sanvitores et la circulation des stratégies d'évangélisation de la Compagnie de Jésus au XVIIe siècle', in *Missions religieuses modernes: Notre lieu est le monde*, ed. Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Bernard Vincent (Rome, 2007), 229-59 at 239-40.

<sup>45</sup> Kendrick, *The Sounds of Milan*, 145.

<sup>46</sup> Edward Muir, 'The Eye of the Procession: Ritual Ways of Seeing in the Renaissance', in *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Howe (Notre Dame, IN, 2007), 129-53 at 130.

<sup>47</sup> Honisch, 'Hearing the Body of Christ in Early Modern Prague', 92.

<sup>48</sup> For a broader discussion of communal singing in this period, see my forthcoming article 'Catholicus non cantat? Reframing Communal Singing in Early Modern Catholicism'.

<sup>49</sup> *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*, 156 ('De processionibus').

<sup>50</sup> *Regola della Confraternita di S. Gio. Battista del Confalone, eretta da santo Carlo cardinale Borromeo arcivescovo di Milano, nella chiesa di S. Gio. Battista di Porta Tosa* (Milan: Marco Tullio Paganello, 1615), 21. On the contribution of flagellant confraternities to the soundscape of Milanese processions, see Daniele V. Filippi, "In parole" and "in canto": The Songs and Prayers of the Disciplinati in Early Modern Milan, in *Listening to Confraternities: Spaces for Performance, Patronage and Urban Musical Experience*, ed. Tess Knighton (Leiden, forthcoming).

by heart since their time in the schools of Christian doctrine, and those who could read were sometimes provided with loose sheets or songbooks.<sup>51</sup>

The idea of procession is itself the idea of a community united in motion, featuring well-regulated individual and collective movements and inherently accompanied by singing.<sup>52</sup> Reciting and singing together while walking is in fact a basic but effective way of keeping in step, regulating the breath, and focusing the mind.<sup>53</sup> It extends the capacity of the human body to establish contact and interact with other bodies.<sup>54</sup> It helps participants channel their prayer and keeps the procession in good order.<sup>55</sup> Not by chance, processional singing was explicitly prescribed whenever there was a particular need to represent the unanimous accord of a community; for instance, when the people went to meet the bishop at his arrival for a pastoral visitation:

Gli venivano tutti incontro in processione molto divotamente, prima le donne, e poi gli huomini cantando e quelle e questi delle laudi a Dio, e de i salmi, o hinni.<sup>56</sup>

All the people very devoutly came in procession to meet him, first the women, then the men, both groups singing songs of praise [*laudi*] to God, and psalms or hymns.

Similarly, during popular missions, the host parish welcomed the incoming processions from other parishes or villages.<sup>57</sup>

Returning to Muir's image, the sounds of the procession 'irradiated' the inhabitants of the city (active participants, bystanders, and non-participants) and its physical spaces. But it was not the sacred itself that produced the sound: the host remained still in the monstrance. Rather, the sound was part of the community's response to the divine presence, a reverberation of its embodied and identity-defining participation.

### A Multimedia Sermon

For Scherer, outward-looking, bodily participation, epitomized in communal singing, is important and good in itself, but he also makes clear, especially in his points Nos. 4 and 6, that it must be conducive to reflection and interiorization. According to the Jesuit preacher, the adversaries of these ceremonies, misconstruing their logic, accuse the Catholic Church of using the holy sacrament for the sake of spectacle ('als ob sie [die Kirche] [...] das Sacrament nur zu einem Schawspil gebrauchen wollte').<sup>58</sup> The Corpus Christi procession must not work like a spectacle, but rather like a sermon. Scherer

<sup>51</sup> On France in the 1580s, see Kate van Orden, 'Children's Voices: Singing and Literacy in Sixteenth-Century France', in *Early Music History* 25 (2006), 209-56. The *Catholisch Cantual* printed in Mainz in 1605 contains, for instance, some Latin- and German-texted Corpus Christi songs (*Homo quidam fecit coenam magnam, Adoro te devote, O salutaris hostia, Ave vivens hostia*) and other processional songs: see Herbert Heine, *Die Melodien der Mainzer Gesangbücher in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Mainz, 1975).

<sup>52</sup> For a theology of processional movement, see Felbecker, *Die Prozession*, 452-511. See also the definitions of procession in Moroni, 'Processione', 256.

<sup>53</sup> See for instance Bernadette Majorana, 'Musiche voci e suoni nelle missioni rurali dei gesuiti italiani (XVI-XVIII secolo)', in *La musica dei semplici*, 125-54 at 138; Philippe Martin, *Les chemins du sacré: Paroisses, processions, pèlerinages en Lorraine du XVI<sup>ème</sup> au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle* (Metz, 1995), 135.

<sup>54</sup> See Monique Brulin, *Le verbe et la voix: La manifestation vocale dans le culte en France au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1998), 452.

<sup>55</sup> Martin, *Les chemins du sacré*, 135.

<sup>56</sup> Giovanni Battista Possevino, *Discorsi della vita, et attioni di Carlo Borromeo* (Rome: G. Tornieri, 1591), chapter XX.

<sup>57</sup> See my forthcoming study on the sonic aspects of popular missions in the early modern era.

<sup>58</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottleichnamts Fest*, 9f.

underscores its connection with liturgy and with frequent sacramental practice: the procession is meant to stimulate the appetite of the faithful for the Eucharist. Indeed, the advocacy of frequent communion was a distinctive trait of Jesuit spirituality at the time.<sup>59</sup>

Das Gottsleichnamtsfest sampt allem apparat, gepreng und gebreuchigen Ceremonien, ist ein öffentliche starcke predig und ruffende stimm in aller menschen ohren vom unterschied des leibs Christi [...] damit jederman auß dem pracht und glantze der Göttlichen Ceremonien lerne was das für ein herrliches Sacrament [...] denn das ist unlegbar das die Ceremonien sehr dazu helffen, das ein ding daran viel gelegen bey dem gemeinen Mann und jungen volck ein ansehen habe und der notturfft nach in die hertzen starck eingebildet und eingetruckt werde, ja wie die Kinder das gehen an Bencken lernen, also begreiff und erlernet die Jugendt und der gemein einfeltig mann die schweren geheimnissen unserer heiligen Religion auß den Ceremonien und Kirchgebreuchen, denn dadurch werden die leut auffmerckig und nachdenckig.<sup>60</sup>

The feast of Corpus Christi with all its apparatus, pomp, and typical ceremonies, is a powerful public sermon and a voice that calls into the ears of all people about the distinction of the Body of Christ [...] so that everyone can learn from the splendour and magnificence of the divine ceremonies what a marvellous sacrament it is [...] because it is undeniable that the ceremonies help greatly to give a reputation among common men and young people for what they honour, and to strongly impress in their hearts the need of it; just as children learn to walk by propping themselves up on benches, so youngsters and common and simple people understand and learn the mysteries of our holy religion from the ceremonies and church traditions, because through these things the people become attentive and thoughtful.

Jesus's own entry into Jerusalem would have gone unnoticed, continues Scherer, without his followers singing, holding palm and olive branches, and spreading their cloaks before him. In this connection, Scherer repeatedly quotes from Eucharistic hymns and other sung items; Aquinas's *Adoro te devote* is even printed in the booklet.<sup>61</sup>

Derwegen zeiget der Priester diß Sacrament allem volck und sagt mit lautter stimm: *Tantum ergo Sacramentum veneremur cernui* [...] So singt man auch dabey: *Homo quidam fecit coenam magnam* [...] Alle Ceremonien gehen auff die erklerung und erleutterung des worts 'Groß'; die grösse dises Abendmals wil uns die Kirch, so viel immer möglich, starck für und einbilden. [...]

*Ecce panis angelorum, factus cibus viatorum*, schreyet der Priester [...] und wahrlich wer sich durch solches schreyen und ruffen, singen und klingen, und durch so vil Predigen, stimmen und Ceremonien nicht auß dem Schloff ermundert und die augen auffthut muß ein allzu tiefen und starcken Schloff haben.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore the priest shows this sacrament to all the people and says in a loud voice: *Tantum ergo Sacramentum veneremur cernui* [...] And this is also sung then: *Homo quidam fecit coenam magnam* [...] All the ceremonies aim to explain the word 'great';

<sup>59</sup> On this subject, and in general on the early Jesuits' approach to the Eucharist and to the feast of Corpus Christi, see John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 152-57.

<sup>60</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnamts Fest*, 5<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnamts Fest*, fol. Aii<sup>v</sup>, immediately opposite the first page of the sermon.

<sup>62</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnamts Fest*, 6<sup>r-v</sup>, 9<sup>r</sup>.

the Church wants to show and teach us, as much as possible, the greatness of this evening meal. [...]

*Ecce panis angelorum, factus cibus viatorum*, cries the priest [...] and truly he who through such crying and calling, singing and playing, and through so many sermons, voices, and ceremonies does not wake up from his sleep and open his eyes, must have an all too deep and heavy sleep.

Immediately after this passage, Scherer includes another remarkable biblical reference that adds to the multi-layered symbolic background of the procession: he quotes from Proverbs 9:5-6, where the personification of Wisdom, having set her table, calls throughout the town: 'Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight.' Asked to the banquet of divine Wisdom, the participants in the procession accept her invitation and literally 'walk in the way of insight'.<sup>63</sup>

### **Triumph against the Enemies**

Describing the Corpus Christi procession as a 'triumph', Scherer insists again on all the different sensory components of the ceremony, with a special emphasis on the sonic:

Diß Fest neben der zugehörigen Procession mit den fligenden Fahnen aller Handwercker Zünfften, mit den schönen Kränzen und Püschlein, grünen bäumen, mit graß und Rosenstrewen, mit wohlschmeckenden Kreutern, mit Trummen und Heerpaucken, mit Trommeten und Posaunen, mit dem Gesang und Glockenklang, mit den freudschüssen, mit dem schall und jubel aller Völcker, mit der zierdt und schmuck der Priesterschaft und dergleichen Ceremonien, so nach eines jeden orts gelegenheit fürgenommen und gebraucht werden, ist ein öffentlicher Triumph wider die Sacrament-Stürmer und verleugner der waren gegenwert des leibs und bluts Christi.<sup>64</sup>

This feast, together with its procession, with the flying banners of all the craftsmen's guilds, with the fine wreaths and twigs, the branches, with the scattering of grass and roses, with fragrant herbs, with drums and kettledrums, with trumpets and trombones, with singing and bell-ringing, with joyous salvos of artillery, with the sound and jubilation of all peoples, with the ornament and finery of the priests, and other such ceremonies, carried out and used according to the circumstances of each place, is a public triumph against those who attack the sacrament and deny the real presence of the body and blood of Christ.

Scherer repeatedly highlights the public character of the ceremony ('zu Kirchen und gassen') and its multimedia nature. But he also stresses the fact that it is a 'brave' enterprise, because 'wir ... gehen freunden und feinden unter die augen' ('we march under the eyes of both friends and enemies').<sup>65</sup> The enemies of the sacrament are the 'heretics' of the past and, especially, of the present; Scherer was known for his outspoken and pointed anti-Protestantism. The very choice of the word 'triumph' significantly echoes Trent's decree on the Eucharist, which makes reference both to Christ's triumph

<sup>63</sup> Translation from the New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition.

<sup>64</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest*, 7<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest*, 2<sup>r</sup>.

as redeemer and to the 'triumph over falsehood and heresy' represented by the 'splendour' of Corpus Christi ceremonies.<sup>66</sup> As has repeatedly been observed, the very feast of Corpus Christi had, from its establishment, a markedly militant and anti-heretical character: according to Pope Urban IV's bull *Transiturus de mundo* (1264), the annual memorial of the sacrament was meant 'ad confundendam specialiter haereticorum perfidiam et insaniam' ('especially to confound the faithlessness and insanity of heretics').<sup>67</sup>

This point reminds us of the special significance of processions in confessionally contested cities and areas. As another Jesuit controversialist, Jakob Gretser, remarked in his own treatise on processions, 'Nihil propemodum novatoribus huius aetatis invisius est, quam festum Corporis Christi et processio hoc die frequentissimo omnium concursu, comitatu et apparatu peragi solita' ('Nothing is nearly as abhorred by the reformers of this time as the feast of Corpus Christi and the procession that is usually performed on this day, with great participation, attendance, and apparatus').<sup>68</sup> 'Repudiating the Protestant critique of the immanence of place', wrote Fisher, Catholic processions 'appropriated and redefined urban space, projecting the confessional symbolism of the Eucharist, the Virgin Mary, and the saints to audiences that ranged from the sympathetic, to the indifferent, to the outwardly hostile'.<sup>69</sup> Processional sound, thus, challenged the nominal confessional allegiance of a given urban environment, temporarily reconfiguring it.<sup>70</sup> Processions were meant to educate the Catholic flock—they were often compulsory and supported by papal indulgences—but also to question religious boundaries and help proselytizing efforts.<sup>71</sup> Fisher observed an extension of processions through cities such as Augsburg, where Catholics were an 'increasingly bold' minority during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, as well as a propagandistic revival of processions during the recatholicization of the Upper Palatinate in the 1620s.<sup>72</sup> Analogous phenomena that often went hand in hand with the expansion of confraternities have been considered in other areas.<sup>73</sup> In Lorraine, during the second half of the sixteenth century, some processions were revived and vigorously boosted in a similar perspective: the French historian Philippe Martin commented, 'A un moment où la Réforme Catholique tente de s'opposer au protestantisme, ces défilés deviennent une arme essentielle de la reconquête du monde' ('In a moment in which the Catholic reform tries to oppose Protestantism, these parades become an essential weapon for the reconquest of the world').<sup>74</sup>

<sup>66</sup> See again Session XIII, Decree concerning the Eucharist, chapter 5; for the English translation, see Schroeder, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 76.

<sup>67</sup> Full text and translation of the bull in Peter Meredith and Lynette Muir, 'The Corpus Christi Bull, 1264: Latin Text with Modern English Translation', in *Medieval English Theatre* 24 (2002), 62-78.

<sup>68</sup> *De catholicae ecclesiae sacris processionibus et supplicationibus* (Ingolstadt: Sartorius, 1606), 127. A digitization of the copy Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 Liturg. 280 is available online at <<https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/view/bsb10524616>> (accessed 1 June 2022).

<sup>69</sup> Fisher, 'Mit Singen und Klinge', 189.

<sup>70</sup> Fisher, 'Mit Singen und Klinge', 201.

<sup>71</sup> On indulgences supporting processions, see for instance Ávila, *Obras completas*, III, 434 ff.

<sup>72</sup> Fisher, 'Mit Singen und Klinge', 192, 196.

<sup>73</sup> See for instance Honisch, 'Hearing the Body of Christ in Early Modern Prague', 54-55 and passim.

<sup>74</sup> Martin, *Les chemins du sacré*, 120. On a procession of reparation in Paris during the French religious conflicts, see Gabriele Haug-Moritz, 'Von Instrumentenklängen und Gesängen: Anmerkungen zur akustischen Dimension der französischen Religionskriege—Pariser Prozessionen 1562-1563 als Beispiel', in *Musik in neuzeitlichen Konfessionskulturen (16. bis 19. Jahrhundert): Räume—Medien—Funktionen*, ed. Michael Fischer, Norbert Haag, and Gabriele Haug-Moritz (Ostfildern, 2014), 65-84. For Champagne, see Chiara Bertoglio, *Reforming Music: Music and the Religious Reformations of the Sixteenth Century* (Berlin, 2018), 535.

Furthermore, the word ‘triumph’ recalls the ancient Roman use of a solemn entry and procession through the streets of a general who had obtained an important victory, especially over foreign enemies.<sup>75</sup> As Felbecker remarks, in a procession the enemies were present but not yet conquered, therefore it was ‘not only the celebration of a victory, but also an ongoing battle.’<sup>76</sup> The aural ingredients of most processions were invaluable weapons for this battle of the *ecclesia militans*. The interconfessional battle was sometimes fought with purely sonic means, as in Olomouc, Moravia, in 1579 when the Corpus Christi procession was disturbed by the town hall bells chiming the Lutheran melody *Erhalt uns Herr bei deinem Wort*, but on other occasions one or both factions actually turned to physical violence.<sup>77</sup> The martial associations of fanfares and gunshots are also, unmistakably, part of the picture. Sung items such as the litanies, praising the Blessed Virgin and the saints, and the Eucharistic hymns obviously had a distinctly Catholic flavour and, as mentioned above, were able to reach those who did not wish to participate in the processions. As Bernard Dompnier has shown, in France psalms and *cantiques* were the weapons for a sonic war aimed at dominance of the public space: in this fight, the contribution of processions was decisive.<sup>78</sup>

Returning to Scherer, it should be noted that his indulgent attitude towards the exuberance of Catholic rituals is in many ways connected to interconfessional issues. Reading contemporary literature on this subject, one realizes that there was a whole range of different positions in the Catholic world. Criticism against the excesses of festal celebrations was frequent, but where the confrontation with the Protestants was a persistent problem, it was expedient for Catholic authorities to accept or condone certain practices for their role as identity markers.<sup>79</sup> The theme of dance is especially telling. Scherer’s text is apparently non-committal in this regard: it is not entirely clear whether the repeatedly cited model of David dancing ‘without shame’ in front of the Ark is to be followed literally or according to a figural reading of Scripture (‘bey dem Figurato’).<sup>80</sup> As Marianne Ruel has shown, however, in sixteenth-century France, where the early Huguenots unanimously opposed dance in religious festivals, Catholic authors often passionately defended these practices.<sup>81</sup> The Huguenots in turn accused city and church authorities of permitting or even encouraging the dances for the sake of propaganda (in this context, too, processions and dances were an occasion for interconfessional violence):

[L]a plus infirme populace par trois suivans dimanches, en nombre de cinq à six cents hommes, s’en alla avec leurs femmes et enfans armez de pierres et autres secrettes armes,

<sup>75</sup> For the transformation of the ancient triumph into the early modern Catholic *entrata* and its use ‘as a means for the Christian Church to be depicted as the direct inheritor of the Roman triumph tradition’, see Virginia Christy Lamothe, ‘A Tale of Two Entrate: Processions, Politics, and Patronage for the Habsburgs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Rome’, in *A Companion to Music at the Habsburg Courts in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Andrew H. Weaver (Leiden, 2021), 571–610 at 573.

<sup>76</sup> Felbecker, *Die Prozession*, 305.

<sup>77</sup> Scott Lee Edwards, ‘Repertory Migration in the Czech Crown Lands, 1570–1630’ (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2012), 65. On instances of violence see Bertoglio, *Reforming Music*, 535; Fisher, *Music and Religious Identity in Counter-Reformation Augsburg*, 240; and Fisher, ‘Mit Singen und Klingeln’, 197–200.

<sup>78</sup> Bernard Dompnier, ‘Les cantiques dans la pastorale missionnaire en France au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle’, in *La musica dei semplici*, 73–106 at 84. The interconfessional confrontations that tore early modern Europe were often accompanied and echoed by conflicting soundscapes, as demonstrated in a growing body of literature: Bertoglio, *Reforming Music*, rich in bibliographic references, is an excellent place to start on this wide topic.

<sup>79</sup> For one instance of criticism see Delfosse, ‘Exciter les sens pour bouleverser les cœurs’, 36–37.

<sup>80</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest*, 3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>81</sup> See Marianne Ruel, *Les chrétiens et la danse dans la France moderne: XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 2006), especially 131–42.

leurs enseigne déployées, tambourins batans, dansant, sautant comme les Coribantes et Manades [*sic*] du temps passé, criant ‘en despit des Huguenos nous danserons.’ A quoy nous scavons que l’Evesque et principaux de vos Magistrats les ont provoquez.<sup>82</sup>

On three consecutive Sundays, the most unsound populace, counting between five and six hundred men, with their women and children, went, armed with stones and other concealed weapons, their banners flying, beating on their drums, dancing and jumping like the corybants and maenads of the past,<sup>83</sup> and cried ‘in spite of the Huguenots we will dance.’ And we know that the bishop and the chiefs of your magistrates goaded them into doing that.

Significantly, dance was associated with the cult of relics in contemporary interconfessional polemics: both were perceived as markers of Catholic identity and signs of a conception of the sacred as a presence signified and experienced bodily.<sup>84</sup> Paradoxically, this happened in the same years as when such an influential Catholic prelate as Borromeo was implementing strict policies against dance and other forms of secular entertainment in the archdiocese of Milan. Of course, the rigorous stance of Borromeo (as adverse to dance as he was enthusiastic about relics) had in this case nothing to do with interconfessional issues. Rather, it was part of his well-known ascetic worldview, as well as of his protracted confrontation with the Spanish civil authorities in Milan, that promoted noisy carnival amusements.<sup>85</sup> It should be noted that in a later period Borromeo’s views on dance, mediated by a treatise composed by his collaborator Carlo Bascapè, had a wide reception in France: they found a resonance especially in Jansenist and philo-Jansenist circles, in opposition to the more tolerant attitude voiced by the Jesuits.<sup>86</sup>

In Spain as well, the Corpus Christi dances were a subject of polemics, although these diatribes were essentially intraconfessional.<sup>87</sup> Ávila was decidedly pro-dance: ‘bailen delante de Él los legos con devota alegría, como hizo David delante del arca’ (‘let the lay people dance before Him with devout mirth, as David did before the ark’).<sup>88</sup> And yet, in another sermon for the eve of the feast, he felt the need to mention the heretics, quoting the decrees of Trent and further enlarging the topical reference to David and the Ark:<sup>89</sup>

Y para que, como el Concilio Tridentino dice, viendo los herejes que celebramos este misterio con firme fe y con devotas alegrías, o se conviertan a nuestra verdad o queden

<sup>82</sup> *Complainte apologique des églises de France* (1561), quoted in Ruel, *Les chrétiens et la danse dans la France moderne*, 141.

<sup>83</sup> In classical antiquity, the corybants were the attendants of the goddess Cybele, noted for their wild dances, while the maenads were the women who honoured the god Dionysus with dance rituals.

<sup>84</sup> Ruel, *Les chrétiens et la danse dans la France moderne*, 142.

<sup>85</sup> See a vivid description of this sonic opposition in a contemporary account regarding the carnival of 1579, quoted in Daniele V. Filippi, ‘Carlo Borromeo e la musica, “a lui naturalmente grata”’, in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Musica Sacra (Roma, 26 maggio-1 giugno 2011)*, ed. Francesco Luisi and Antonio Addamiano, 3 vols. (Vatican City, 2013), vol. 2, 665-76 at 672.

<sup>86</sup> See Alessandro Arcangeli, ‘L’opuscolo contro la danza attribuito a Carlo Borromeo’, in *Quadrivium* n.s. 1/1 (1990), 35-76; see also idem, ‘I gesuiti e la danza’, in *Quadrivium* n.s. 1/2 (1990), 21-37; idem, *Davide o Salomè? Il dibattito europeo sulla danza nella prima età moderna* (Rome-Treviso, 2000).

<sup>87</sup> See Alfonso de Vicente, ‘Música, propaganda y reforma religiosa en los siglos XVI y XVII: Cánticos para la “gente del vulgo” (1520-1620)’, in *Studia Aurea: Revista de Literatura Española y Teoría Literaria del Renacimiento y Siglo de Oro* 1 (2007), <<http://studiaaurea.com/article/view/v1-vicente>> (accessed 1 June 2022). On the controversies about dance in processions, see also Delfosse, ‘Exciter les sens pour bouleverser les cœurs’, 31 n. 14.

<sup>88</sup> Ávila, *Obras completas*, III, 495.

<sup>89</sup> Specifically, he quoted Trent, Session XIII, chapter 5.



confundidos en las tinieblas de su error, siendo rechazados y condenados con el gran resplandor de nuestra festividad [...] Y si se quedaren en su perversa incredulidad y pertinacia, e hicieren burla de nuestras fiestas y danzas, como hizo Micol de David porque bailaba y saltaba delante del arca, responderles hemos como David a Micol: [...] que pues David bailaba con todas sus fuerzas delante del arca del Señor, que hemos de bailar nosotros y enseñar quantos regocijos pudiéremos delante del Señor de todas las cosas que aquí presente llevamos.<sup>90</sup>

And so that the heretics, as the Council of Trent says, seeing that we celebrate this mystery with unwavering faith and devout mirth, should either convert to our truth or remain confounded in the darkness of their error, repelled and condemned by the great splendour of our festivity [...] And if they persist in their perverse faithlessness and stubbornness, and make fun of our feasts and dances, as Michal did with David because he danced and leaped before the ark, we should answer them as David did to Michal: [...] that since David danced before the ark of the Lord with all his might, we too have to dance and manifest our rejoicing as much as we can before the Lord of all things, whom we carry here, present.

### Foretaste of Heaven

Scherer's final point depicts the Corpus Christi procession as a foretaste of the eternal procession that will take place in heaven. At first sight, this argument might seem secondary, decorative, or at best merely symbolic, but early modern Christian discourse on the afterworld is extraordinarily rich in spiritual and cultural significance—and, as recent research has shown, the sonic plays a far from unimportant role in it:<sup>91</sup>

Diß Fest sampt dem Umbgang ist zu allem dem vorigen ein vorspiel und vorlauff der Festlichen solennitet und Procession die im Himmel mit Christo von allen Engeln und außerselten ewiglich gehalten wirdt. Dann wie hie allerley Orden, Stände, Zunfften und Völcker mit schall und jubel, mit bildern der Heiligen, mit Schülerlein in weissen Chorröcklein, und mit schönen Kindlein, die man Engelein nennet, mit iren Cymbeln und Glöcklein, und die Priester mit ihrem Ornat von Kirchenschmuck bey der Procession sich finden, also versamen sich bey der himlischen Procession umb das Lamb Gottes ringsweis herumb alle Chör und schaaren der Engeln, der Aposteln, der Patriarchen [...].<sup>92</sup>

This feast and procession are, in addition to all previous points, a prelude and forerunner of the splendid solemnity and procession that will be held eternally in heaven, with Christ, by all the angels and chosen ones. Because as here all the orders, ranks, guilds and peoples, with sound and jubilation, with pictures of the saints, with little schoolboys in white surplices, and with the beautiful children called 'little angels', with their cymbals and little bells, and the priests with the regalia of ecclesiastical finery are found in the procession, in the heavenly procession too all the choirs and hosts of angels, apostles, and patriarchs [...] gather in circle around the Lamb of God.

<sup>90</sup> Ávila, *Obras completas*, III, 434-35.

<sup>91</sup> See Daniele V. Filippi, 'Sonic Afterworld: Mapping the Soundscape of Heaven and Hell in Early Modern Cities', in *Cultural Histories of Noise, Sound and Listening in Europe, 1300-1918*, ed. Ian D. Biddle and Kirsten Gibson (London-New York, 2017), 186-204.

<sup>92</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest*, 15<sup>r-v</sup>.

Various elements substantiate the analogy between the earthly procession and its heavenly archetype. In both cases, the Lamb of God occupies the focal position. The presence of distinct orders of laymen and clergy around the sacrament mirrors the heavenly hosts gathered around the Lamb—in keeping with the traditional idea of a well-ordered celestial multitude sublimely depicted in Dante's *Paradiso*.<sup>93</sup> On the one hand, the presence of saints is made visible in the earthly procession by means of pictures and aurally invoked with litanies; on the other, the sounds of jubilation ('mit schall und jubel') are a transparent sonic allusion to the music of heaven. The presence of children dressed up as angels with cymbals and little bells—a ubiquitous feature in early modern processions—further contributes, visually and aurally, to the association.<sup>94</sup>

In a later passage, Scherer raises his eyes and ears to the celestial procession itself. There is a cento of almost literal translations from the book of Revelation, chapters 7 and 14, which are characteristically rich in sonic references (with harps and 'new songs'). Scherer then concludes:

Was wirdt da für ein Procession sein? Wie herrlich? Wie Maiestatlich? Was wirdt da für ein singen, klingen und musicieren sein? Das frölich Halleluia wirdt man auff allen gassen des himlischen Stadt Hierusalem singen hören.<sup>95</sup>

What a procession that will be! How magnificent! How majestic! What singing, playing, and musicking that will be! The singing of the merry Hallelujah will be heard on all the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Once again, we notice the prominence of sonic features: 'singen, klingen und musicieren' are the quintessential components of a magnificent and joyous procession. The parallel could hardly be clearer: according to Scherer, the Catholic Church, in its eschatologically oriented pedagogy, proposes the Corpus Christi procession in the streets of the earthly city as a foretaste of the eternal procession, in which angels and saints will parade the streets of the celestial city, making it resound with merry Hallelujahs:

Dises himlischen frewdenfestes nun wil uns die Kirch hie auff Erden ein *praegustum* und vorgeschmack geben an dem Gottsleichnamstag, damit wir desto begiriger nach dem zukünfftigen trachten, und desto hertzlicher uns darnach sehnen sollen.<sup>96</sup>

On Corpus Christi day, the church wants to offer us a foretaste of that heavenly celebration here on earth, so that we strive more eagerly for the future [feast] and we long for it more sincerely.

\* \* \*

If the procession is a 'powerful public sermon', Scherer in turn organizes his own sermon into a well-ordered, many-coloured, and insistent procession of arguments. His ingenious rhetoric, vibrant but accessible style, and the frequent use of experiential evidence to

<sup>93</sup> According to an incisive formula coined by historian Gabriele Haug-Moritz, early modern processions both established and represented order: 'Prozessionen stellen Ordnung her und stellen Ordnung dar' (Haug-Moritz, 'Von Instrumentenklängen und Gesängen', 66). Miri Rubin, however, has cautioned against a simplistic view of the procession as 'a mirror of the city' or 'as an exercise in self-portrayal which does not necessarily reflect consensus within a community, but rather juxtaposes symbols articulating one of the many possible and competing visions of that community': see Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 2004), 265-66 and 248.

<sup>94</sup> See Gino Stefani, *Musica barocca 2. Angeli e Sirene* (Milan, 1988), 23 and passim.

<sup>95</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest*, 15<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>96</sup> Scherer, *Ein Predig vom Gottsleichnambs Fest*, 16<sup>r</sup>.

convey subtle theological ideas enable him to explain the reasons behind the Corpus Christi procession and its apparatus, justifying some of its more controversial aspects. Countering the criticism of non-Catholics and rigorists, Scherer urges the faithful to interpret the procession on the basis of a rich symbolic stratification, invoking biblical archetypes, references to the triumphal parades of secular authorities, and the macrometaphor of the heavenly Jerusalem. The processing faithful are thus encouraged to understand themselves as dancing and singing with David in front of the Ark of the Covenant, cheering the real ruler and Lord of their town, as well as marching and chanting with angels and saints in the streets of the celestial city. On a broader horizon, Scherer's treatment of the Eucharistic processions *de facto* sheds light, albeit indirectly, on a broader range of events and multimedia experiences: practices of embodied piety, aiming at the inner human being via the senses and the affections, on which the Catholic Church increasingly relied in the post-Tridentine era.

## Abstract

In a sermon given and published in Vienna in 1588, Georg Scherer, a distinguished Jesuit preacher and controversialist, aimed both to explain why the Catholic Church celebrated the feast of Corpus Christi with a solemn procession, as well as to counter the criticism levelled against that ceremony by protestants. For Scherer, the procession, with its various components, including song, dance, banners, flowers, and fragrant herbs, is an appropriate and embodied response to the real presence of Christ in the consecrated host: it is public worship, a collective profession of faith, a sort of multimedia sermon, a triumph against the 'enemies of the sacrament', and a foretaste of the eternal procession that will take place in heaven. Through a close reading of Scherer's text alongside contemporary documents, this article explores the role of sonic elements in processions. The conclusions have implications for a broad range of multimedia events on which the Catholic Church increasingly relied in the post-Tridentine era.