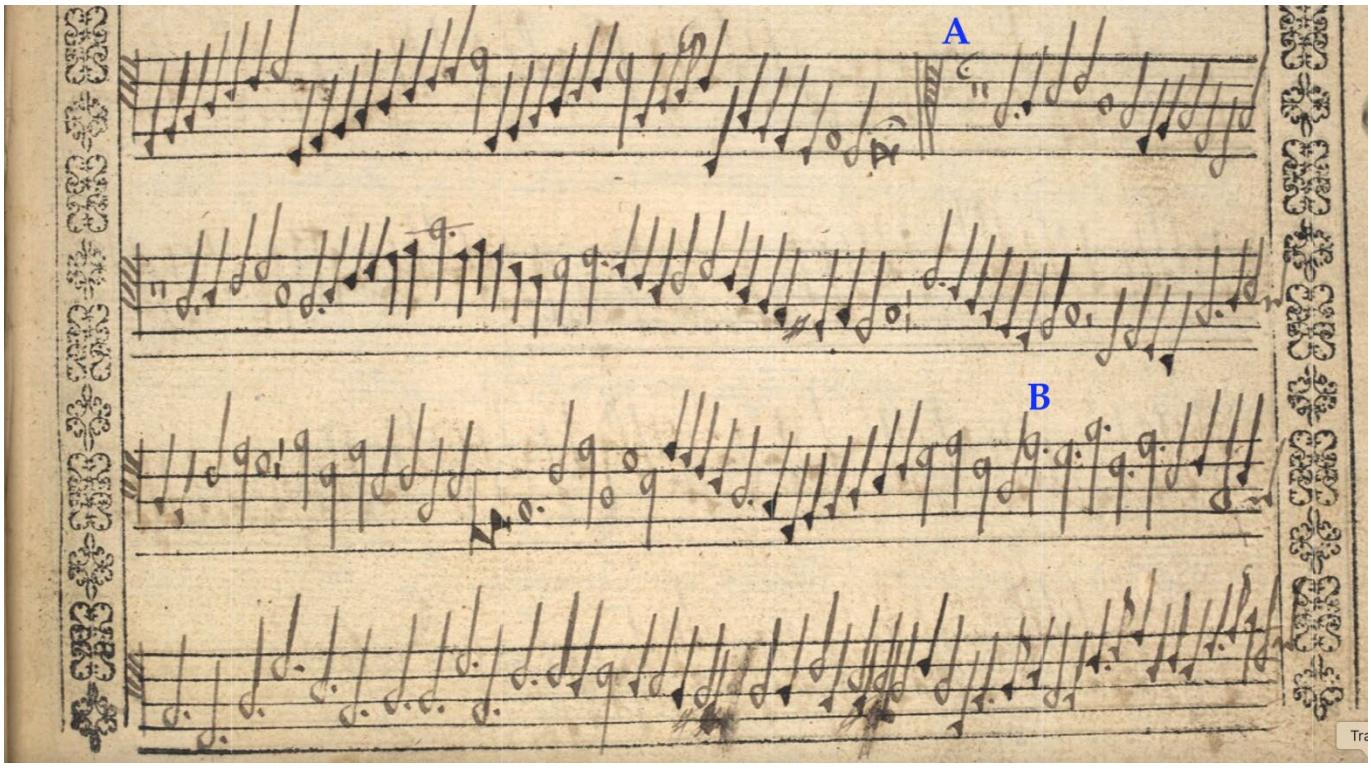
A JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR MUSIC THEORY

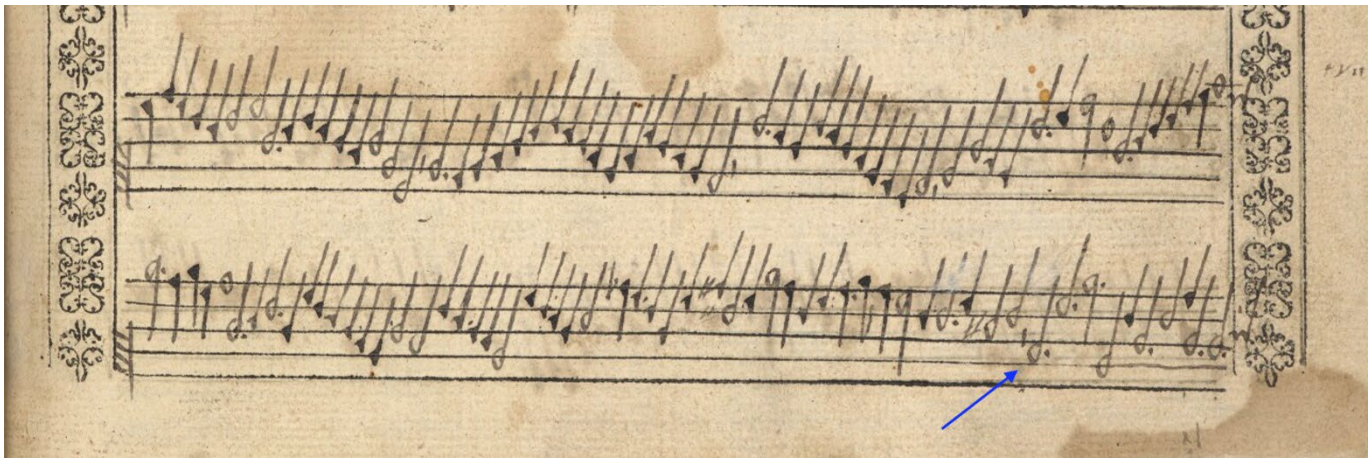
MTO 31.4 Examples: Weiss, Dispersed Meter in Elizabethan Polyphony

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)
https://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.25.31.4/mto.25.31.4.weiss.html

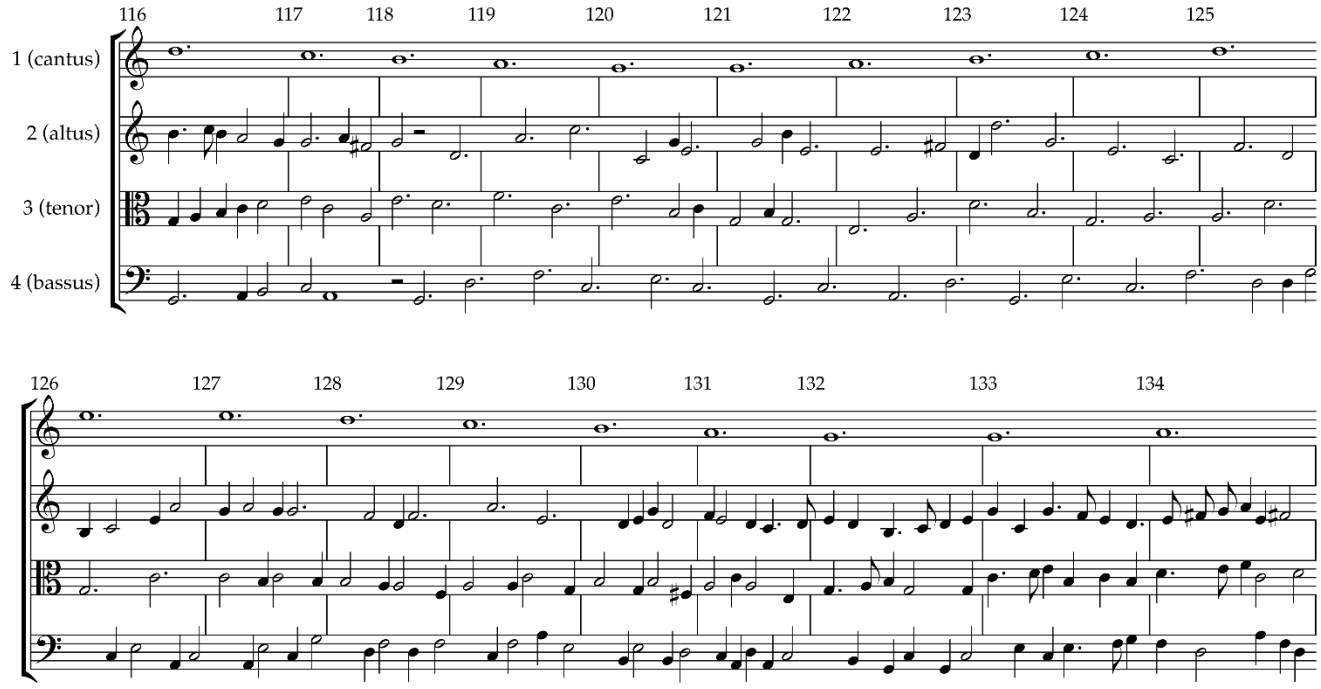
Example 1. Robert Parsons *Ut re mi fa*. Hamond Partbooks (tenor): GB-Lbl Add. MS 30482, f. 60r. Letter "A" indicates the beginning of the second section of the piece, where a new mensuration indicates groups of three minims (half-notes). At letter "B" the grouping changes to dotted minims.



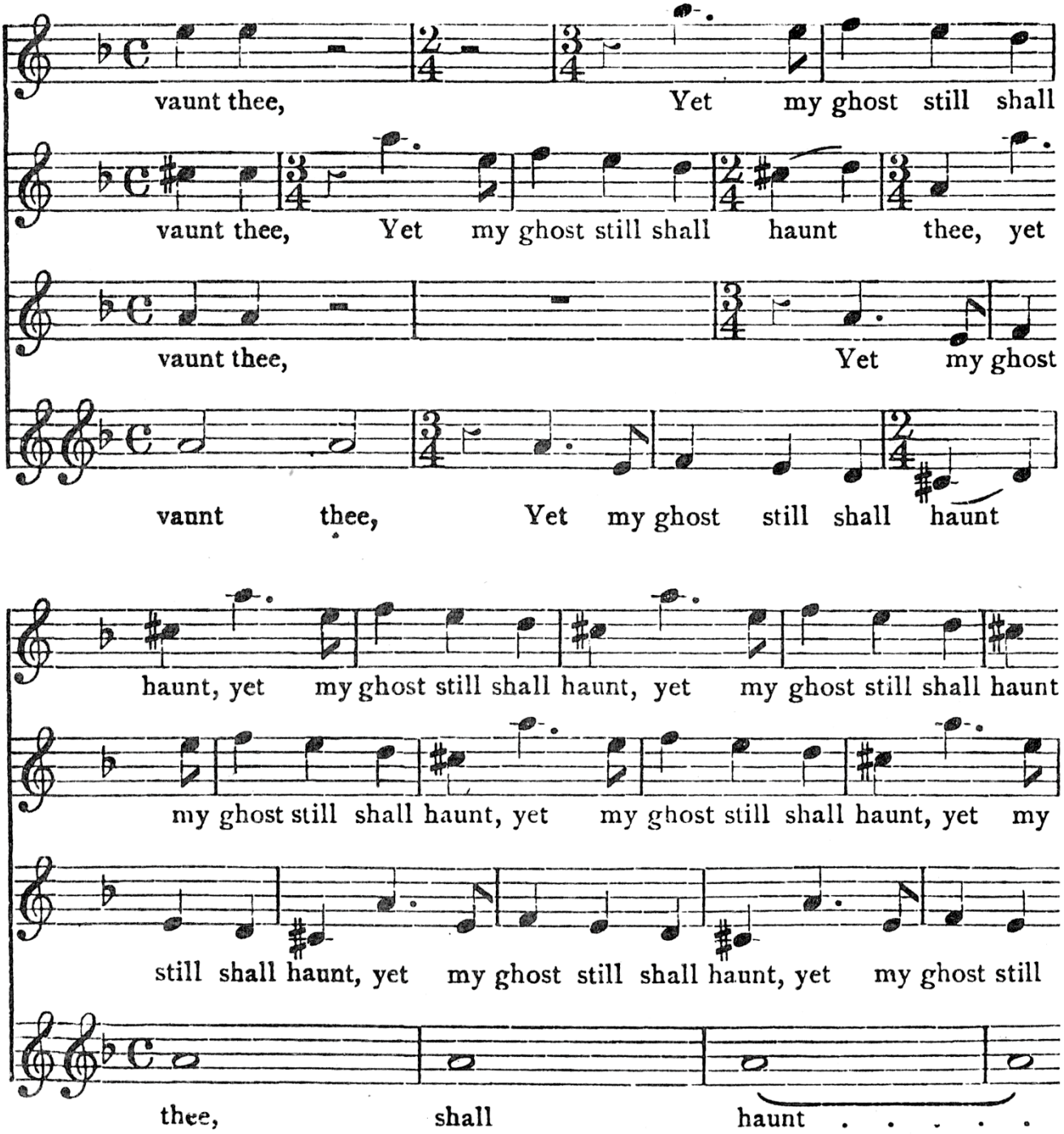
Example 2. Robert Parsons *Ut re mi fa*. Hamond Partbooks (altus): GB-Lbl Add. MS 30481, f. 64r. The arrow indicates where the altus part changes to dotted minim groupings.



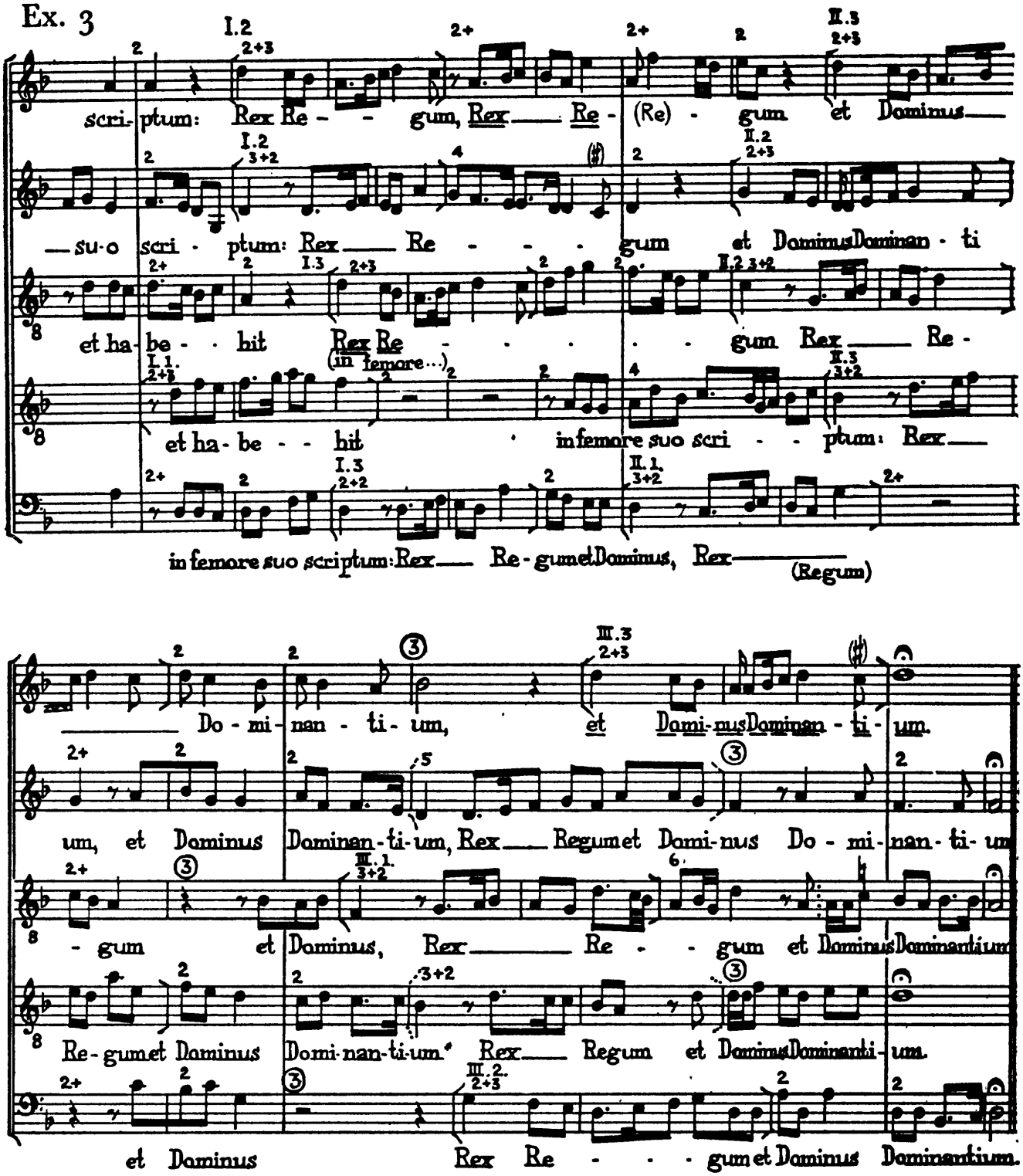
Example 3. Robert Parsons *Ut re mi fa*, score of mm. 116–34 (Audio: Phantasm 2014).



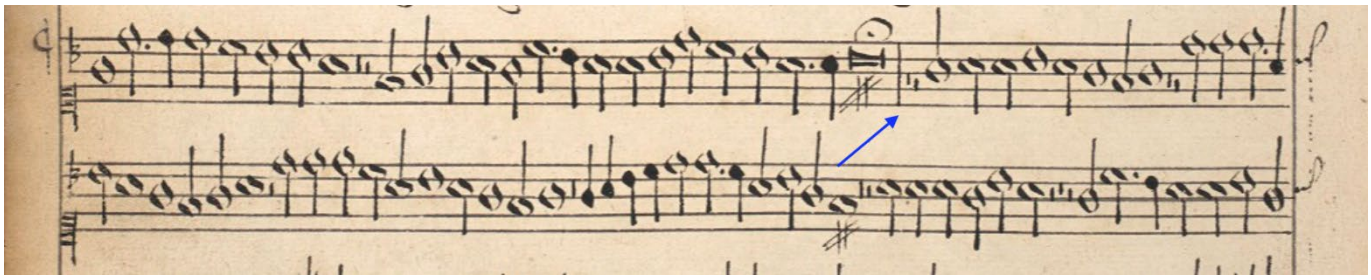
Example 4. Edmund Fellowes (1948, 130). Example from Thomas Morley's madrigal *In dew of roses* (note values original)



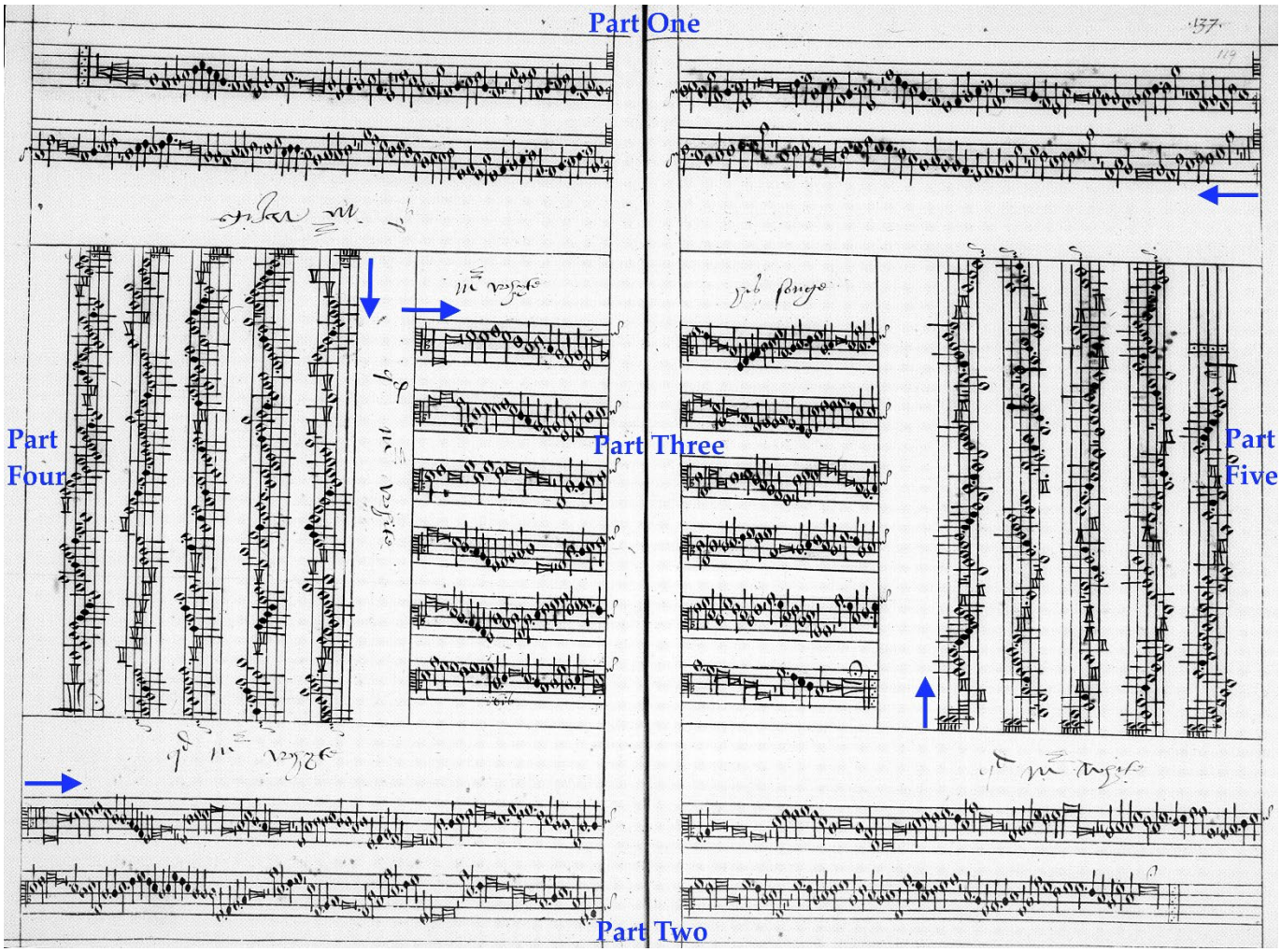
Example 5. Otto Gombosi (1952, 166). Example from Jacobus Vaet's motet *Ecce apparebit Dominus* (note values here are one quarter the length of the original ones)



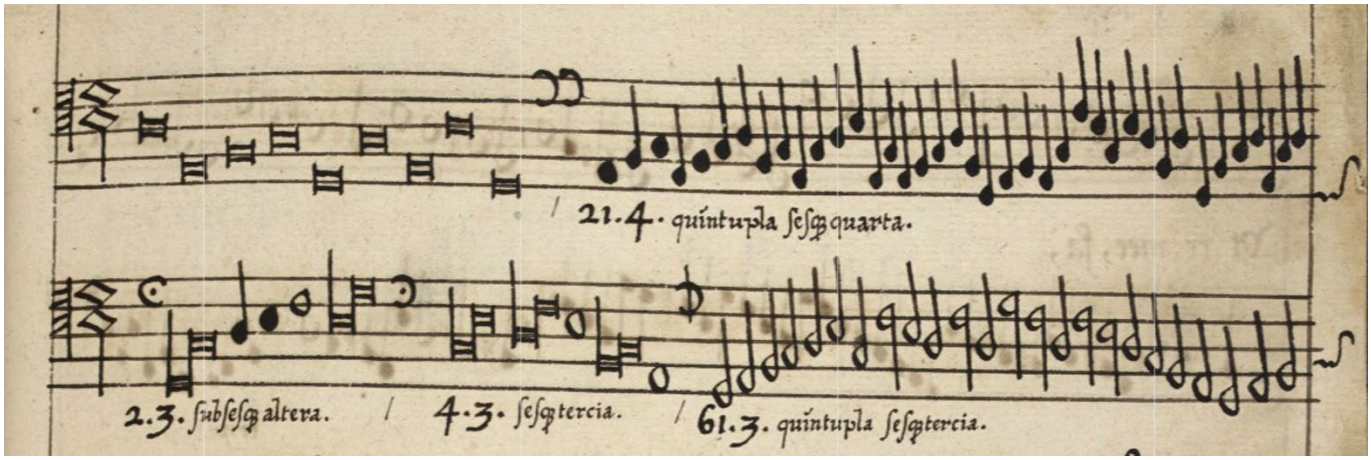
Example 6. Mallorie, *Yf Man in Care*, Add. MS 31390 f.22r (part 1). The arrow indicates the beginning of the new section where the minim groupings are no longer transcribable into 42.



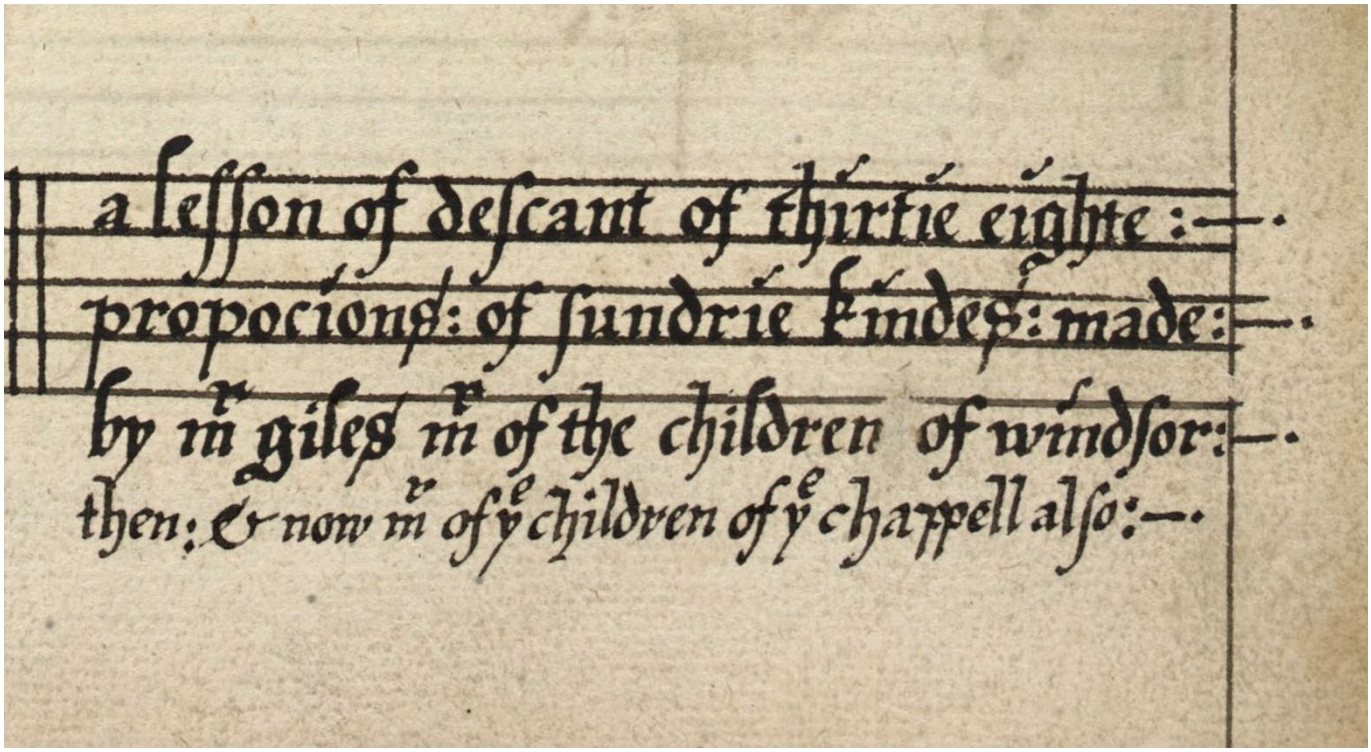
Example 7. The table book GB-Lbl Add. MS 31390, ff. 30v–31r. This piece is in five parts oriented to the four cardinal directions, plus the center. In the annotations, part numbers reflect the usual score order, with 1 as the highest part and 5 the lowest. Arrows indicate the direction of reading for each part. Note that adjacent outer parts (1 and 2, 4 and 5) are placed opposite each other. Part 3 can be physically situated between parts 2 and 4 or between parts 2 and 5 to read their part.



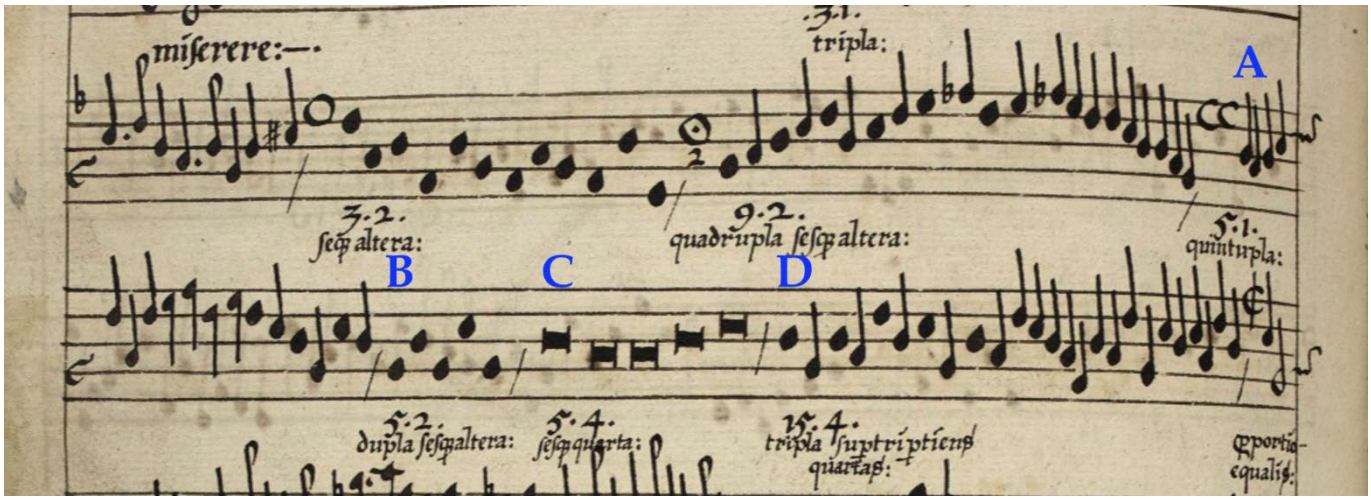
Example 8. GB-Lbl R.M.24.d.2, f.101r. It is not clear in this example that the 61:3 proportion is playable in an exact way. It has not been set up through a series of transformations (nor could it be, as 61 is a prime number).



Example 9. GB-Lbl R.M.24.d.2, f.103r. The last line of text here was added later when Giles was appointed Master of the Children for the Chapel Royal.

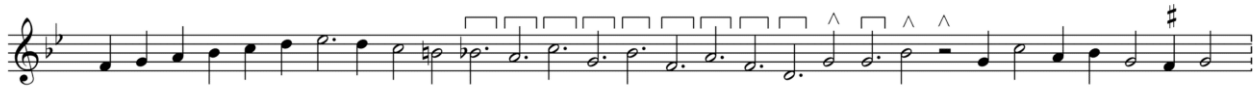


Example 10. GB-Lbl R.M.24.d.2, f.102v. A sequence of proportional transformations based on groups of five begins at letter "A."

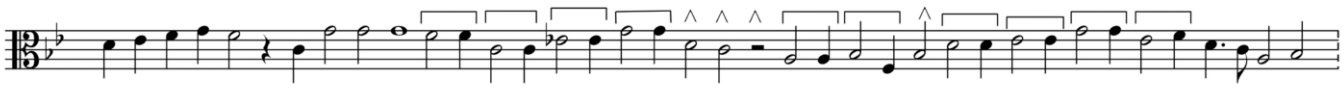


Example 11. Brewster In Nomine a4 mm. 35–44 in four parts

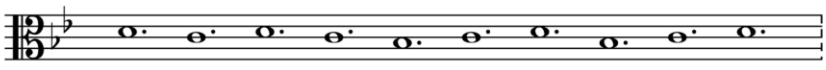
Part One:



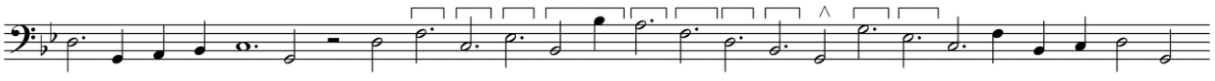
Part Two:



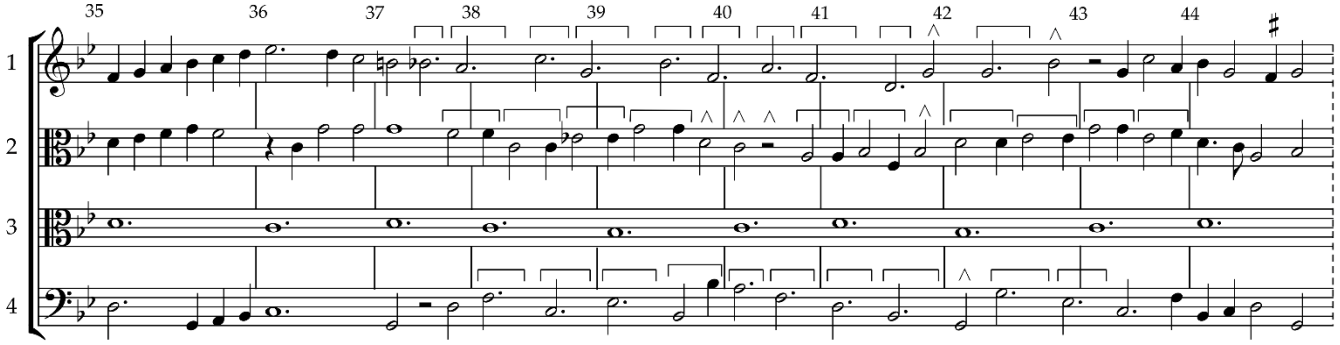
Part Three:



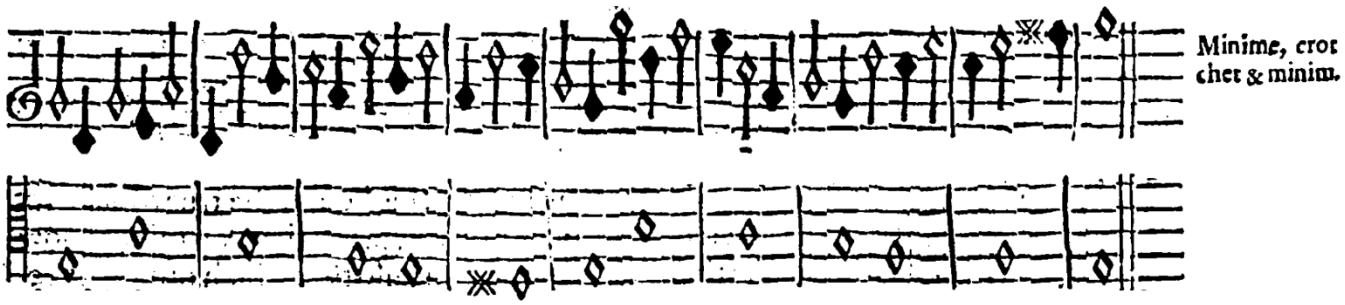
Part Four:



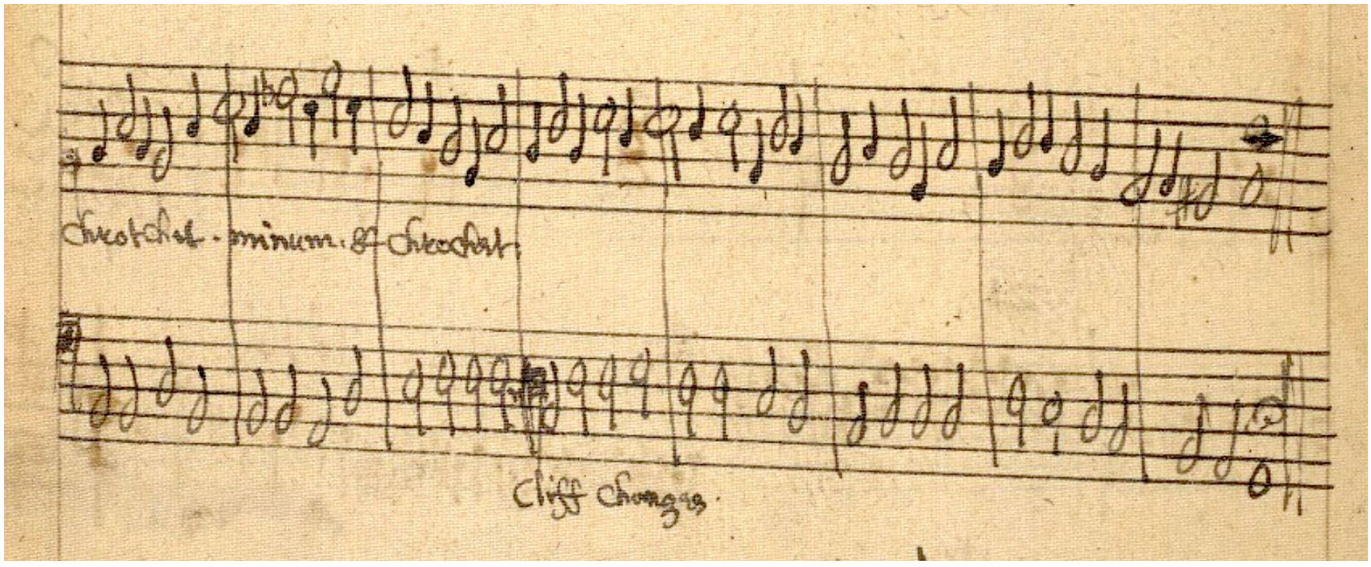
Example 12. Brewster In Nomine a4 mm. 35–44 in score (Audio: LeStrange Viols 2018)



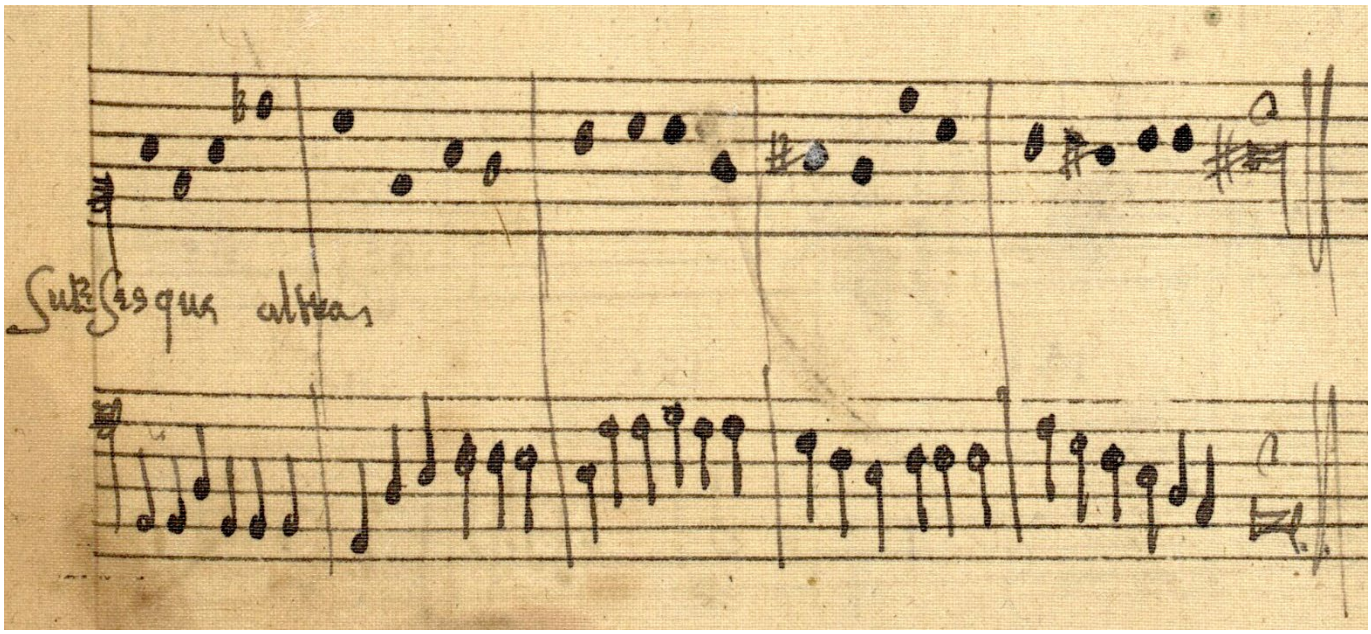
Example 13. Thomas Morley *A Plaine and Easie Introduction* (1597), pg. 89. Note that Morley has used irregular barring (alternating bars of two and one semibreve lengths) to avoid adding ties to the top line and because the groupings coincide every three semibreves.



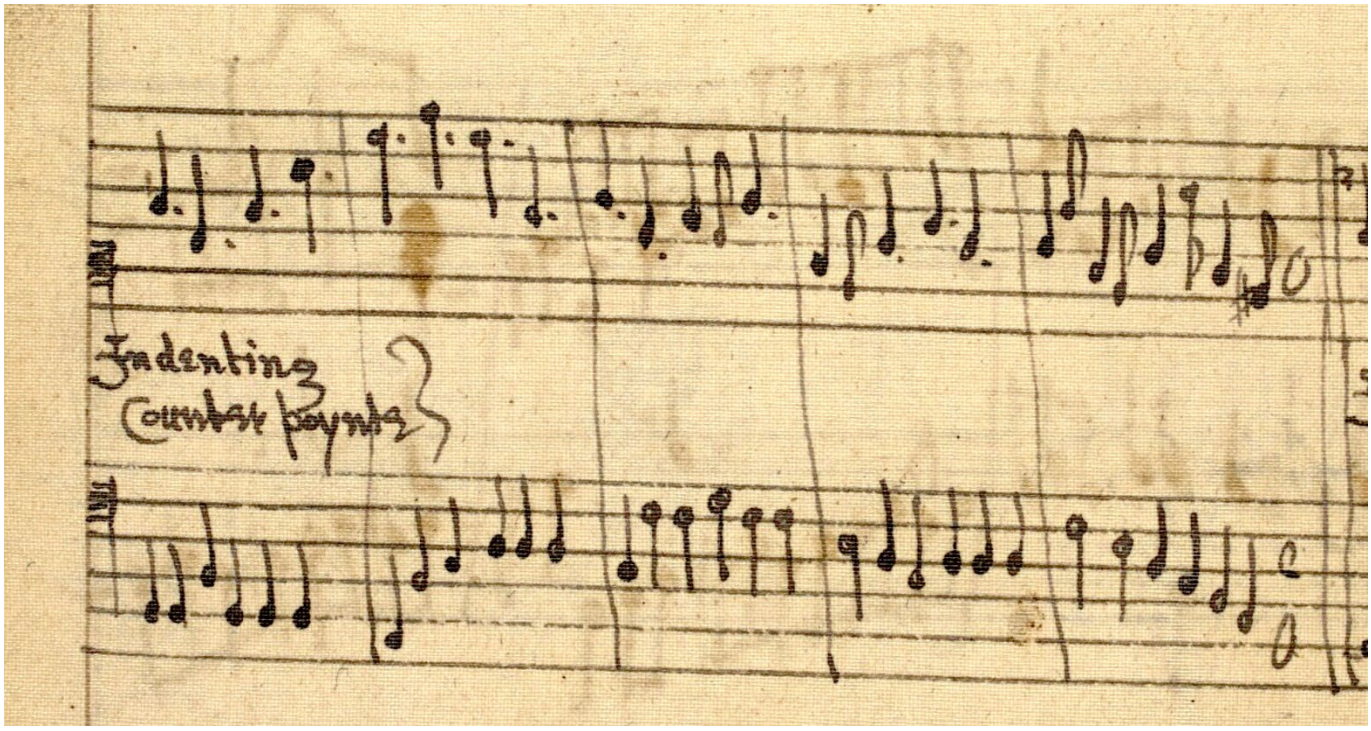
Example 14. Pretty Wayes. GB-Lbl Add. MS 29996 f.195v



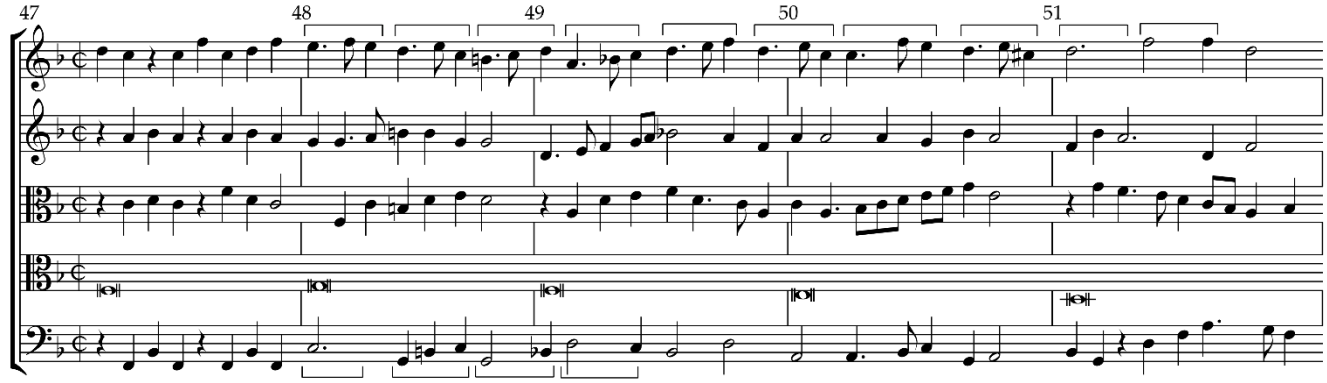
Example 15. Pretty Wayes. GB-Lbl Add. MS 29996 ff.196r. This example is labeled *subsesqui altras* to describe the 4:6 proportion found here.



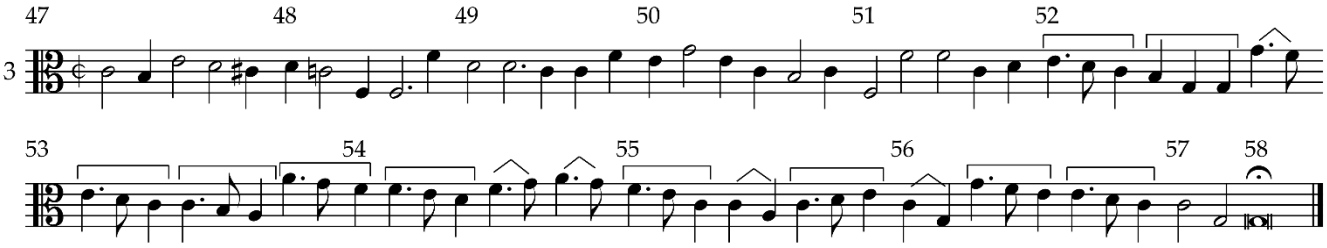
Example 16. Pretty Wayes. GB-Lbl Add. MS 29996 ff.192v. This example creates the same 4:6 proportion as Example 15 but does so with note lengths. It is mysteriously labeled "indenting counter poynte." The term "indenting" does not appear to refer to the regrouping or the proportional relationship between the parts, as the subsequent example, also labeled indenting, does not contain either of these features.



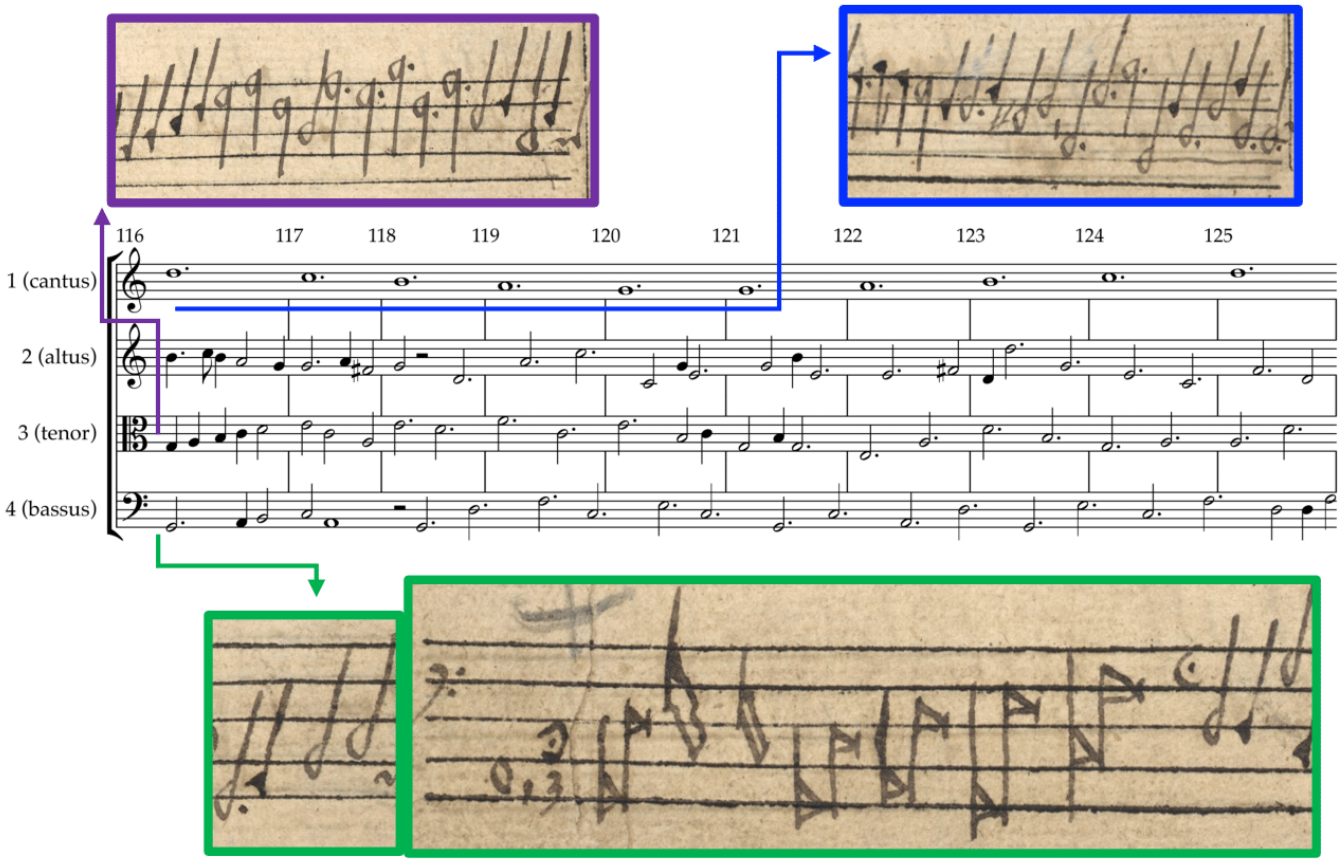
Example 17. William Mundy In Nomine a5 no. 1, mm. 47–51



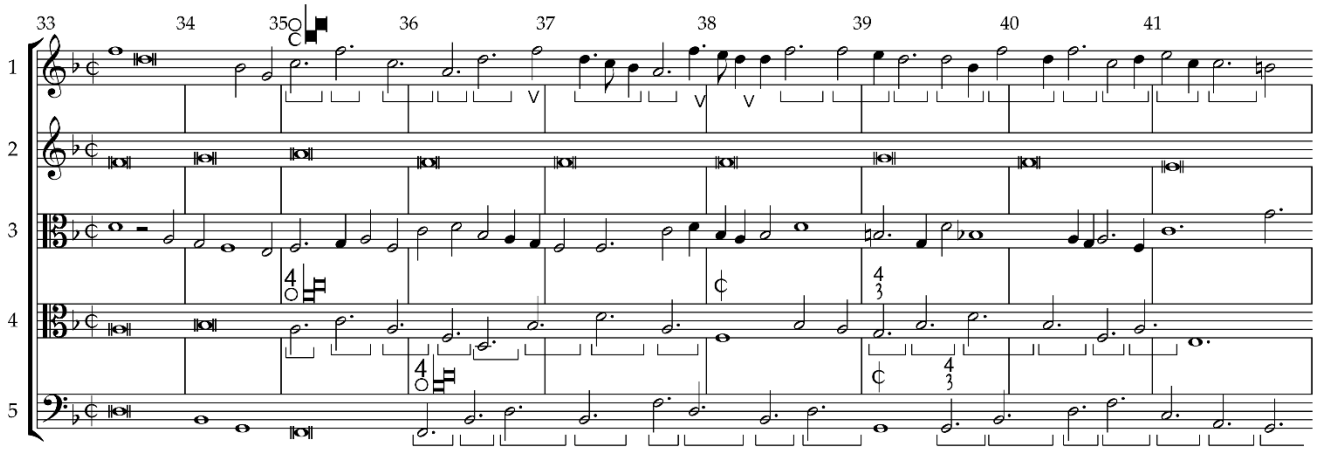
Example 18. Christopher Tye *O lux beata Trinitas* mm. 47–58, part three



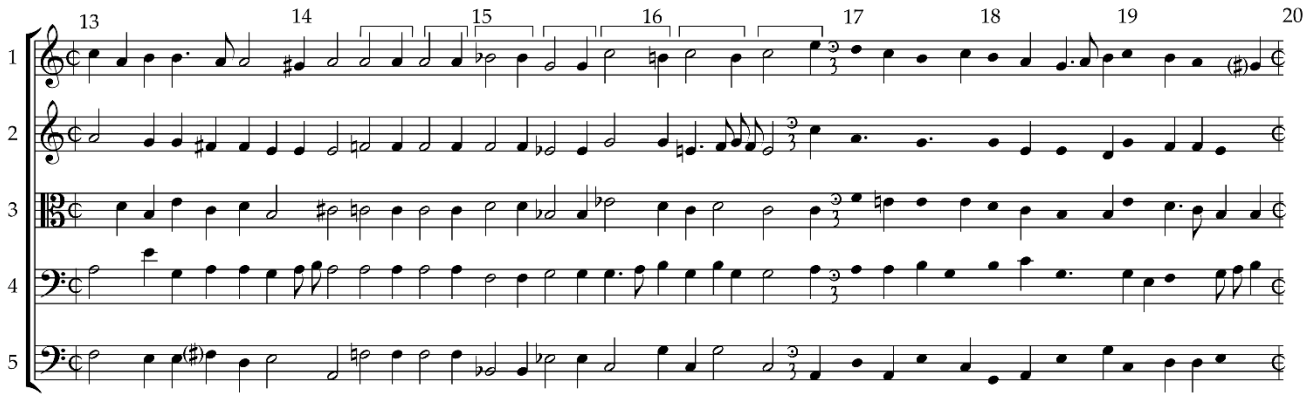
Example 19. Robert Parsons *Ut re mi fa*, mm. 116–125 with images from GB-Lbl Add. MS 30481, GB-Lbl Add. MS 30482, and GB-Lbl Add. MS 30483. Note that the bassus part uses two different proportional mensural symbols to notate the grouping changes, while the altus and tenor parts use only note values to communicate identical grouping changes.



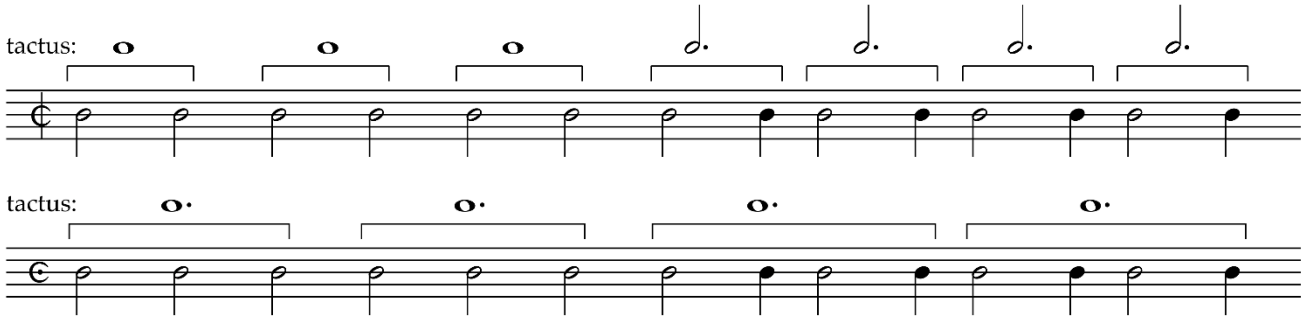
Example 20. Christopher Tye In Nomine a5 *Seldom Sene*, mm. 33–41 (Audio: The Spirit of Gambo 2014)



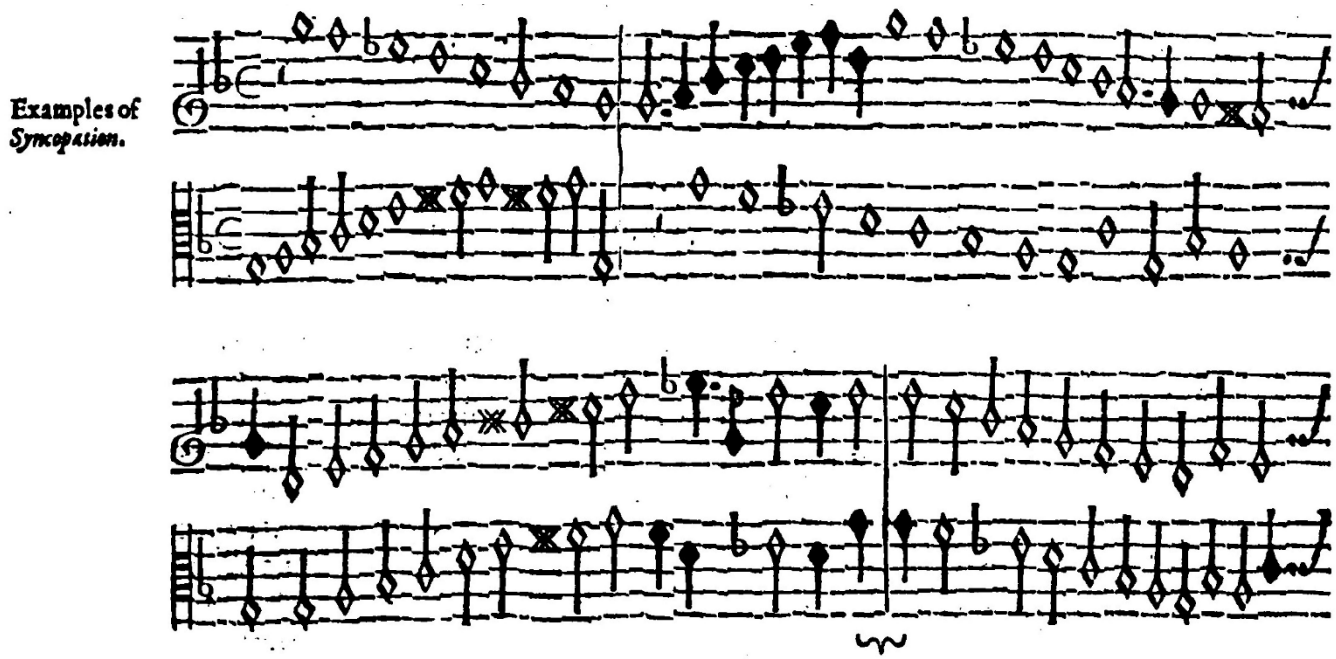
Example 21. Blankes *A Phancy*, mm. 13–19 (LeStrange Viols 2018)



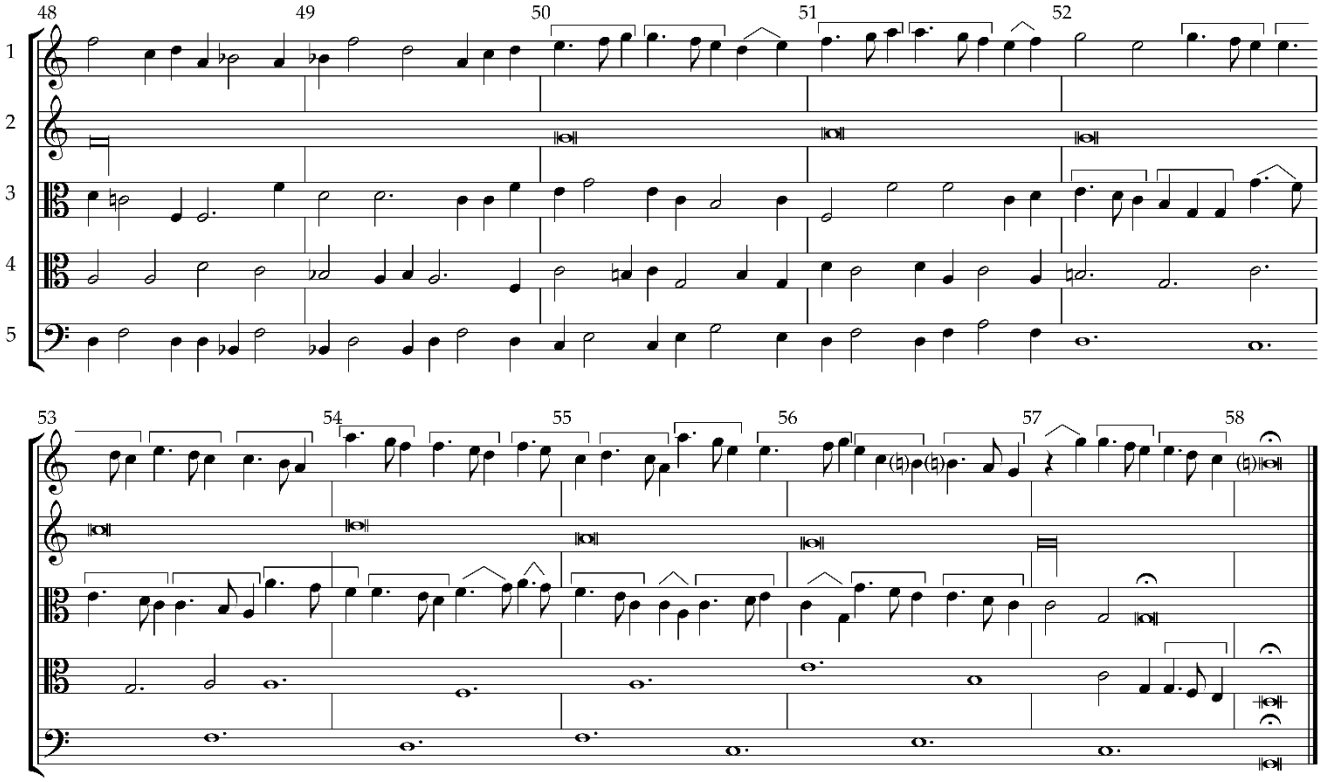
Example 22. Typical regroupings found in ¢ and ¢



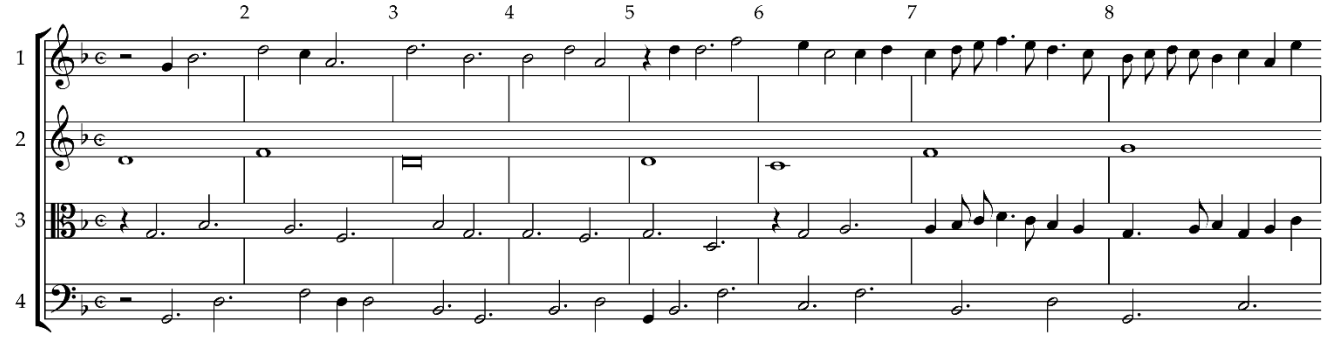
Example 23. Thomas Morley *A Plaine and Easie Introduction* (1597), p. 152



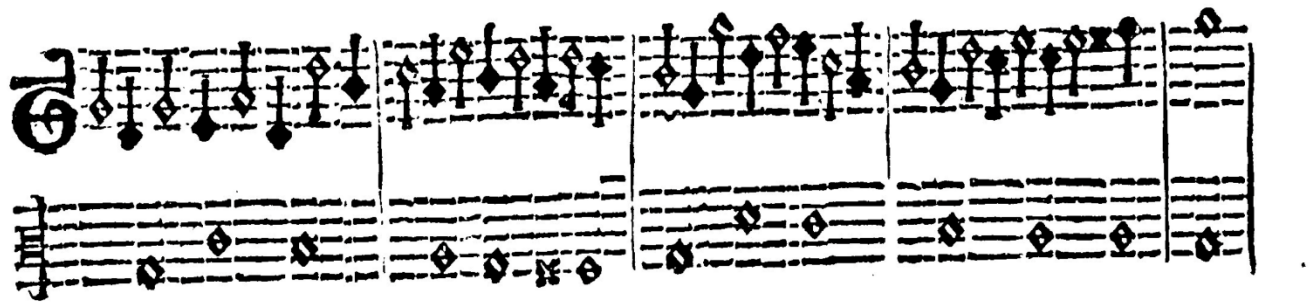
Example 24. Christopher Tye *O lux beata Trinitas*, mm. 48–end (Audio: LeStrange Viols 2018)



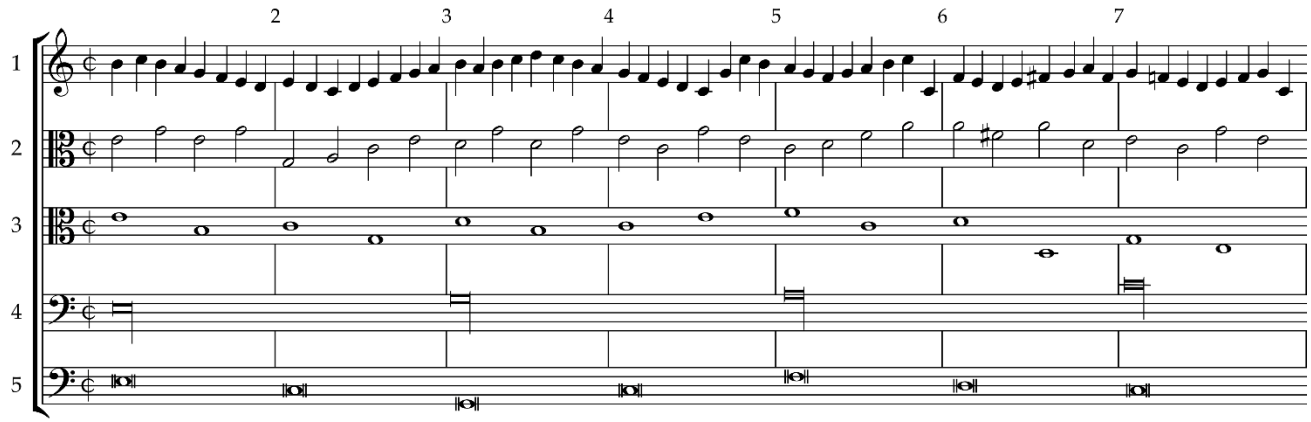
Example 25. John Baldwin In Nomine a4, mm. 1–8 (Audio: Fretwork 2019). The mensuration sign here (𝅜) designates perfect semibreves (i.e., an undotted semibreve contains three minims rather than two) as can be seen in the cantus firmus in voice two. It also implies a metrical organization of the semibreve tactus being subdivided into three minims. This is, in fact, the metrical organization of the majority of this piece, though not the opening.



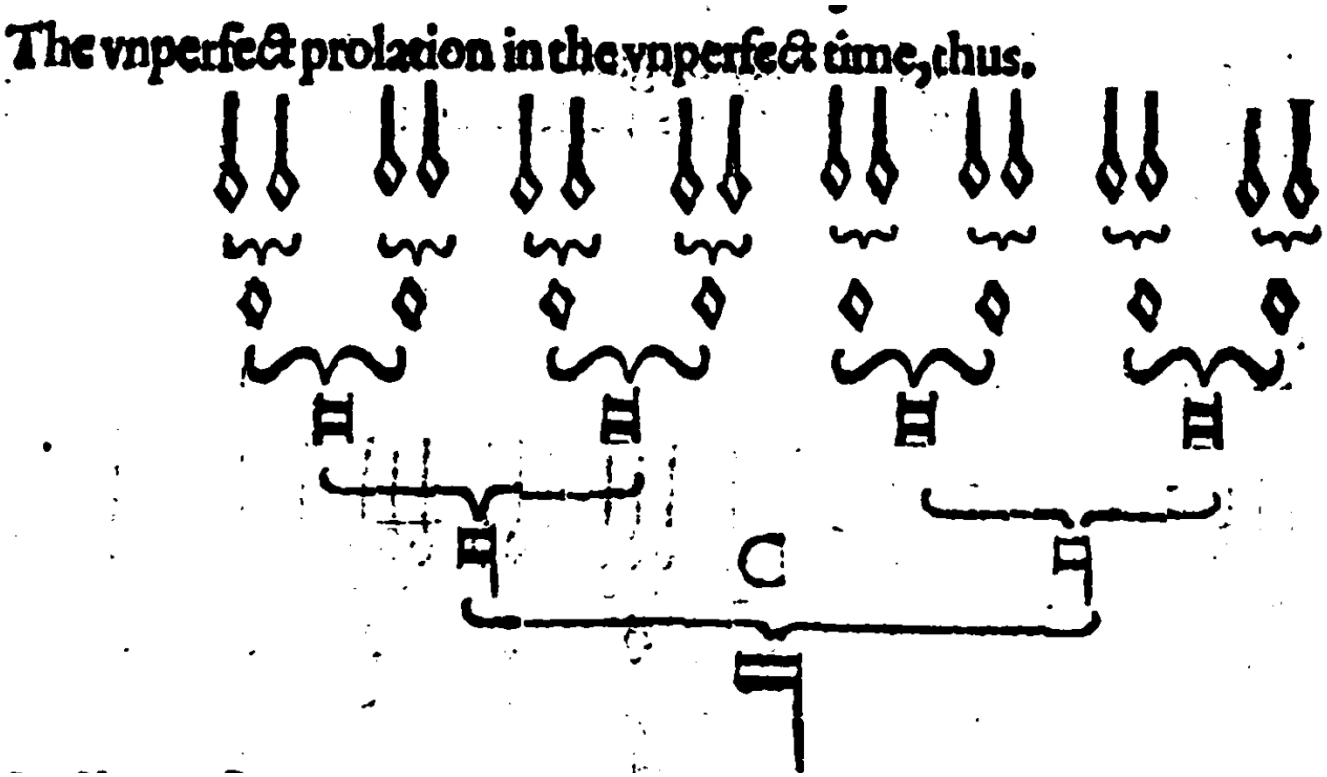
Example 26. Charles Butler *The Principles of Musik*, pg. 69. The notes here are identical to Morley's example (Example 12), but Butler uses regular barlines every three semibreves so the coordination between the two parts is visually clearer.



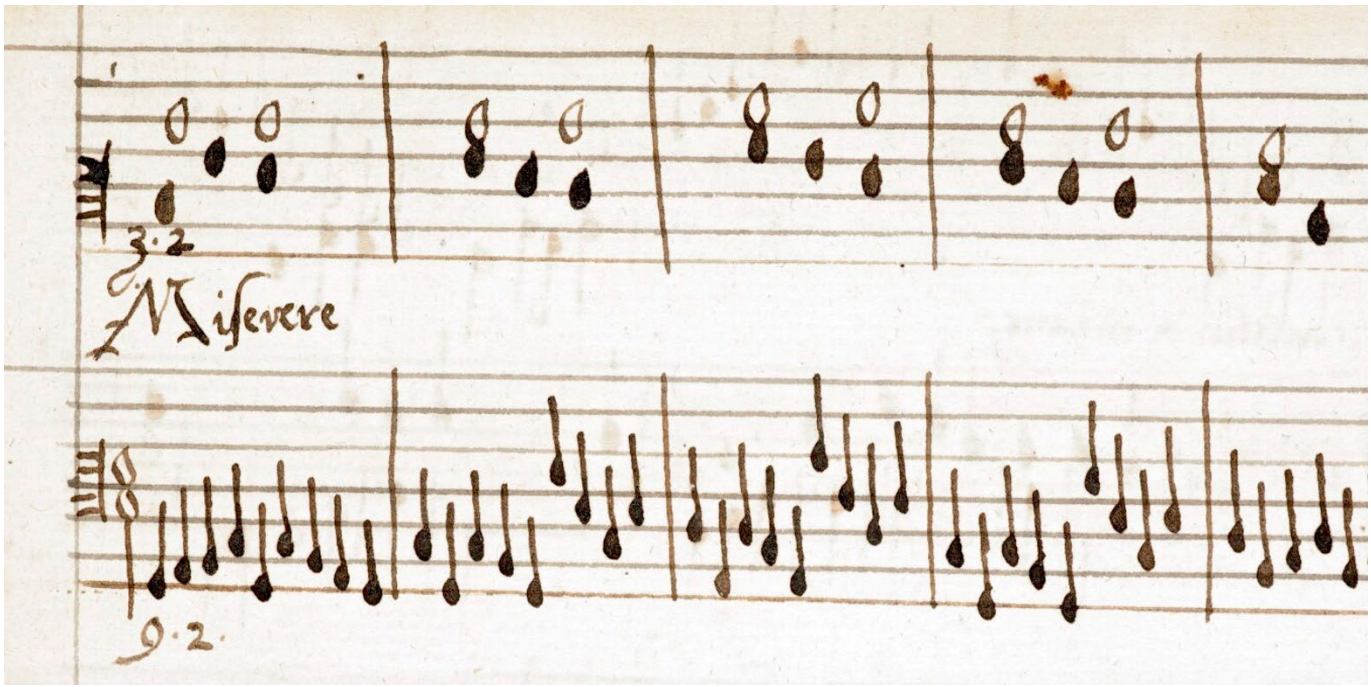
Example 27. Fernando de las Infantas *Plura Modulationum* (1579), mm. 1–7., a work that demonstrates over a hundred different ways of setting the nine-note plainsong "Laudate Dominum omnes gentes" in a variety of styles and textures. Number ninety-two uses the serialized rhythm technique in fully binary subdivisions: longs, breves, semibreves, minims, and semiminims.



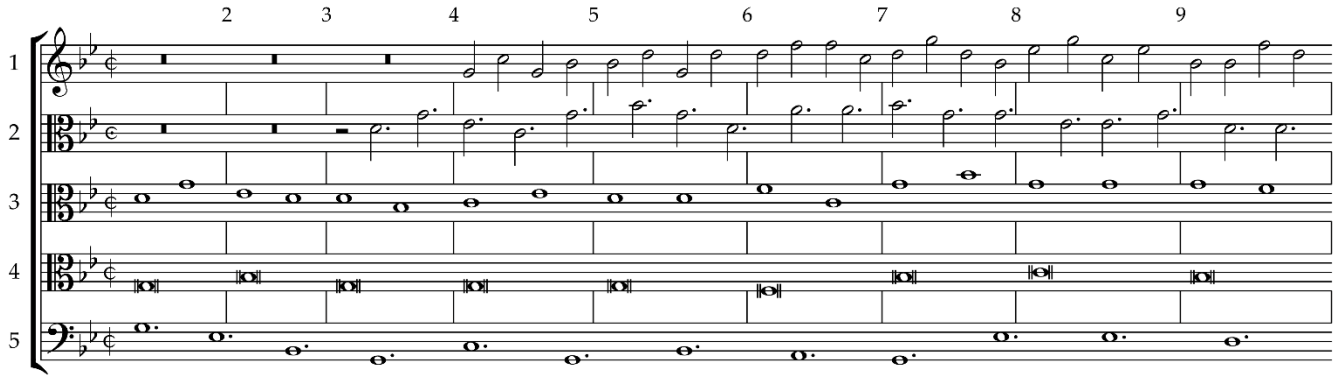
Example 28. Thomas Morley *A Plaine and Easie Introduction* (1597), pg. 16. Illustration of C mensuration which is imperfect in both *tempus* and *prolatio* and thus has only binary subdivisions.



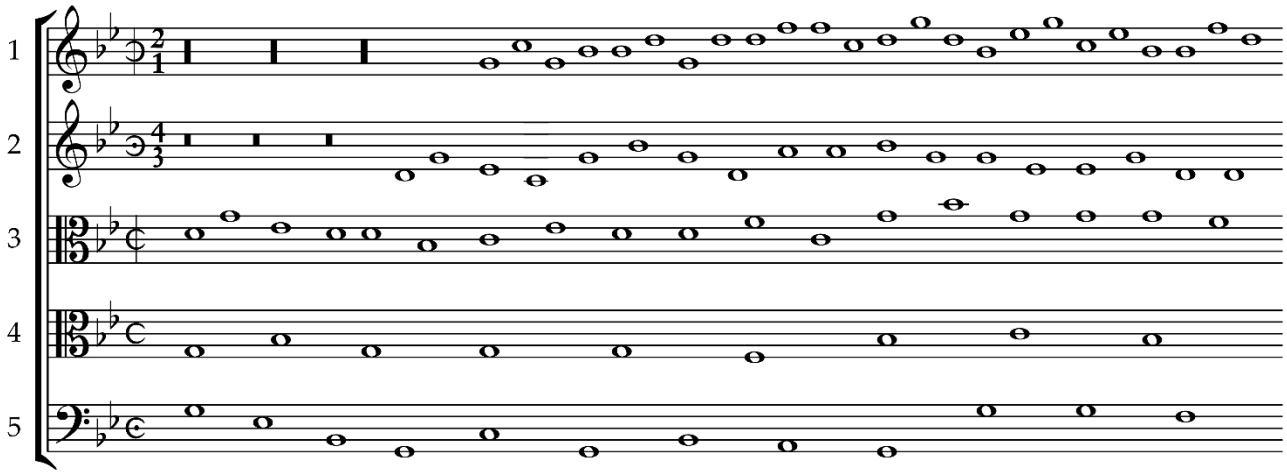
Example 29. Shelbye *Miserere*, GB-Lbl Add. MS 30513, f.47v



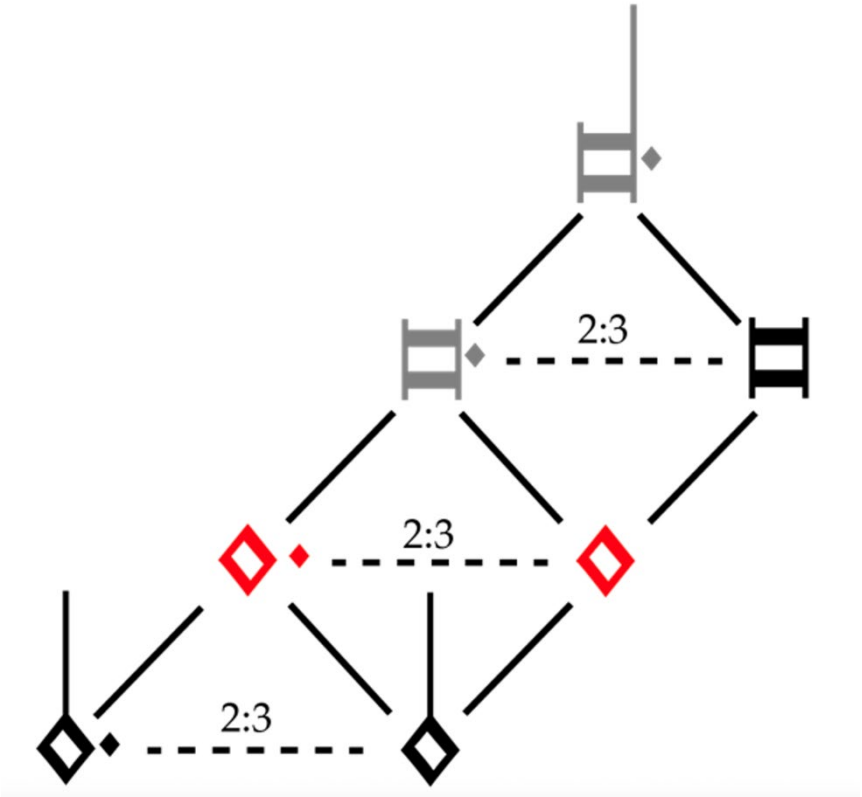
Example 30. Picforth In Nomine, mm. 1–9 (Audio: LeStrange Viols 2018)



Example 31. Picforth In Nomine notated with proportions, mm. 1–9. Part 3 is notated in the "standard" ¢ mensuration. Part 4 moves twice as slow in C. Part 1 moves twice as fast in Ø (redundantly marked 2:1 as Baldwin usually does though placed vertically on the staff as Morley places his proportions). Part 5 is notated in ʘ which indicates perfect (ternary) semibreves. Part 2 I've notated in ʘ as a diminution of part 5 as well as adding the redundant 4:3. Baldwin uses at least eight different notational conventions to indicate *sesquitertia* proportions in the proportion pieces of his commonplace book of which ʘ is one of the more common.



Example 32. Ski Hill Graph of Picforth In Nomine. Note values not represented in the piece are colored grey. Note values that could be felt as the tactus are colored red.



Example 33. Osbert Parsley *Spes Nostra*, mm. 71–80 (Audio: LeStrange Viols 2018) Whether the notated minims in the cantus firmus line are intended to be rearticulated or tied together with the preceding breve is an open question. The manuscript Add. MS 31390 does not contain ties, though it also does not contain bar lines so ties are generally unnecessary except in an instance like this where the length of the note cannot be written with a single notehead. Just twenty years later, Morley's *Plaine and Easie Introduction* contains both bar lines and notated ties. In our preparations for recording and performing this piece, LeStrange Viols experimented with both options but found that restriking the final minim was too disruptive to the texture and decided to treat it as a single cantus firmus pitch five minims long.