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INTRODUCTION

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Like so many musicians of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the composer Jean Japart is something of an enigma. Though he was undoubtedly a respected composer in his day—his substantial representation in the epoch-making prints of Petrucci would certainly seem to attest to this—he has left behind only the faintest of paper trails by which to trace his career.¹ Indeed, we can be certain of his whereabouts for a total of no more than the four years and nine months from 15 April 1476 to 8 February 1481, during which he served successively at two of the great courts of northern Italy: Milan and Ferrara.

Milan. The earliest precisely dated notice of Japart's activity is a document of 15 April 1476 from the Milanese court of Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza. There his name, given as “Ianes Iapart,” appears on a wardrobe list that names 31 singers for whom the court was providing black velvet for suits and Turkish linen for vests.² And, given this documented presence in Milan in mid-April, perhaps we may identify Japart with the singer cited only as “Janes cantadore” who, according to a letter dated 30 March 1476,³ had arrived at the Milanese court two weeks earlier. In any event, since Japart's name is not included on a roster of court singers dated 4 December 1475,⁴ we may place his arrival at Milan between mid-December 1475 and 15 April 1476.

A second Milanese reference to Japart dates from 4 July 1476 and indicates that he had been promised (“promissa d. Janni Japart”) some benefices currently or formerly held by one Philippus de Raymundis.⁵

¹ Until now, the most extended discussion of Japart's life has been Ralph W. Buxton, “Johannes Japart: A Fifteenth-Century Chanson Composer,” *Current Musicology* 31 (1981): 7–38; see also Allan W. Atlas, “Busnoys and Japart: Teacher and Student?” in *Antoine Busnoys: Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music*, ed. Paula Higgins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 447–64; Atlas, “Petrucci's Songbooks and Japart's Biography,” in *Venezia 1501: Petrucci e la stampa musicale / Venice 1501: Petrucci, Print and Publishing. Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Venezia-Palazzo Giustinian Lolin, 10–13 ottobre 2001*, ed. Giulio Cattin and Patrizia Dalla Vecchia (Venice: Edizioni Fondazione Levi, 2005), pp. 645–57; and Atlas and Jane Alden, “Japart, Johannes,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001; hereafter, *New Grove* 2), XII, 89–91.

² Milan, Archivio di Stato, Archivio civico, Biblioteca Trivulziana, Arch. cod. B73, fol. 25^r, cited by Lora Matthews and Paul A. Merkley, “Josquin Desprez and his Milanese Patrons,” *Journal of Musicology* 12 (1994): 451.

³ Milan, Archivio di Stato, Carteggio diplomatico, cited by Emilio Motta, “Musici alla corte degli Sforza: Ricerche e documenti milanesi,” *Archivio storico lombardo*, ser. II, XIV (1887): 338; reprinted as *Musici alla Corte degli Sforza: Ricerche e documenti milanesi* (Geneva: Minkoff, 1977). Motta identifies the Janes cited in the letter with another singer, Janes of Liège; this Janes, however, is not explicitly named in the notice of 15 April. On the other hand, the letter could just as conceivably refer to the well-known composer Jehan Fresneau, who was also active at the court in 1476.

⁴ The roster is transcribed in Motta, “Musici alla corte degli Sforza,” pp. 323–24, and Claudio Sartori, “Josquin des Prés, cantore del Duomo di Milano,” *Annales musicologiques* 4 (1957): 65, n. 1, both of whom rely upon Giulio Porro, “Lettere di Galeazzo Maria Sforza,” *Archivio storico lombardo*, ser. I, V (1878): 255–56 (who offers no precise documentation).

⁵ Milan, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sforzesco 932, cited by Edward E. Lowinsky, “Ascanio Sforza's Life: A Key to Josquin's Biography and an Aid to the Chronology of his Works,” in *Josquin des Prez: Proceedings of the International Josquin Festival-Conference*, ed. Edward E. Lowinsky and Bonnie J. Blackburn (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 41, n. 30. Although the document specifies only the day and month, Lowinsky assigns it confidently to 1476. That Japart was eligible to receive benefices and was therefore a cleric is significant for a conjectural identification that I shall offer presently.

1. Cela sans plus ne souffri pas

Music: OdhA, fols. 26v–27r

Text: Fl 176, fols. [0]v–1r

Altus Cela sans plus non sufi pas

Tenor Cela sans plus non sufi pas

Bassus Cela sans plus non sufi pas

Cela sans plus

Cela sans plus non sufi pas

Ce-

Cela sans plus

4

Ce- la sans plus

la sans plus ne

8

ne souf- fi

souf- fi pas, ne souf- fi