Vidi aquam egredientem de templo

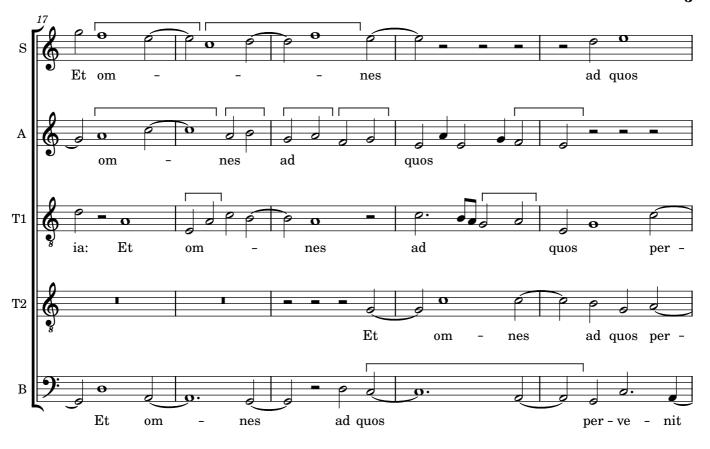
Transcribed and edited by Bert Schreuder. Not values halved. Original pitch. Original clefs: G2, C2, C4, C4, F4. Further notes at the end (pdf only).

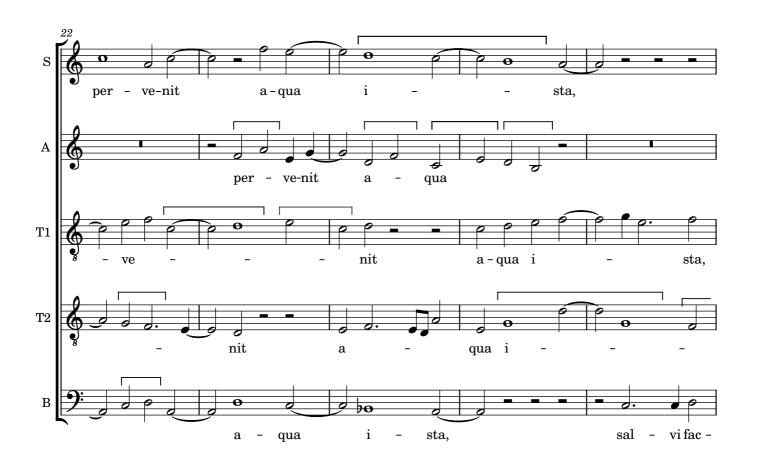
Lambeth Choirbook Anon

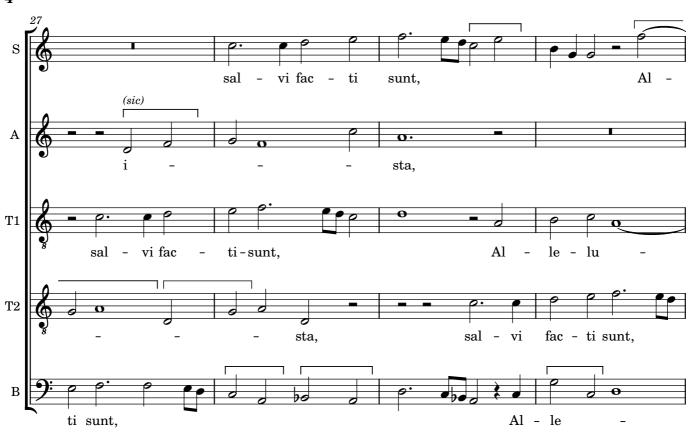










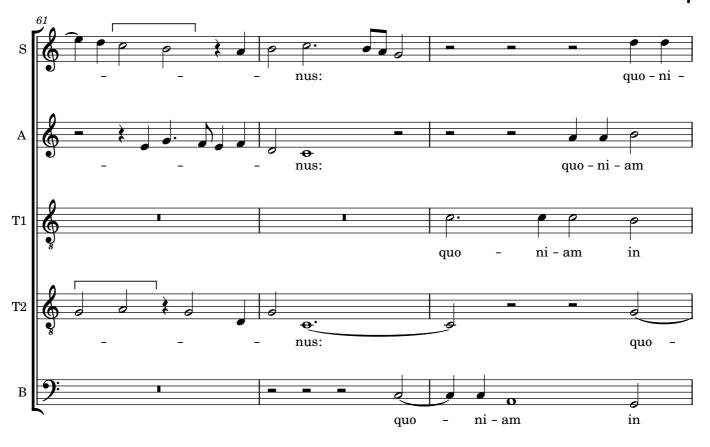


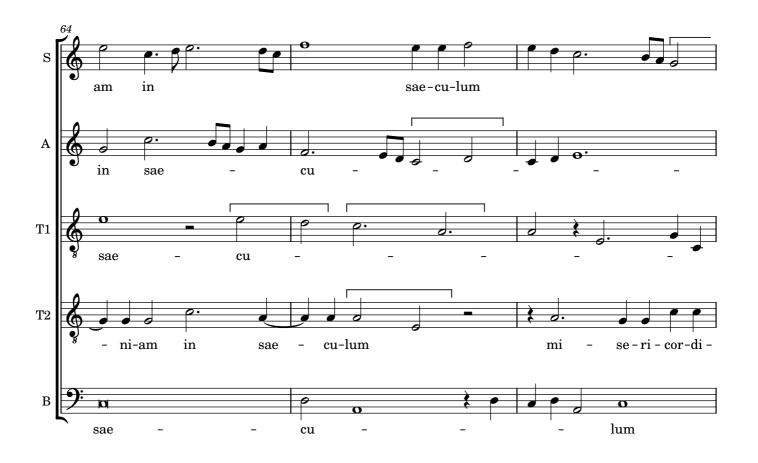








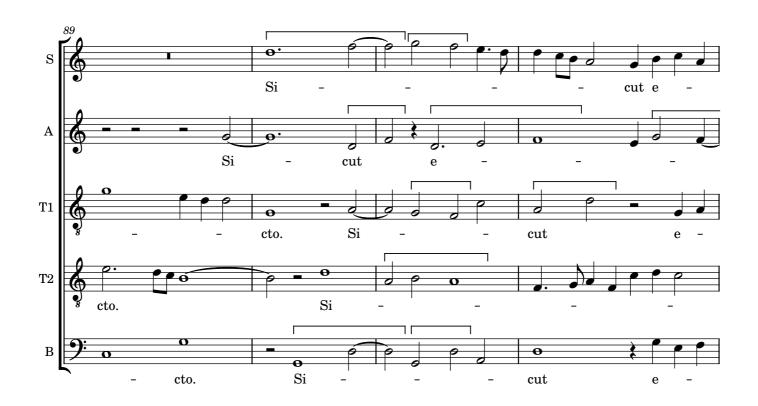


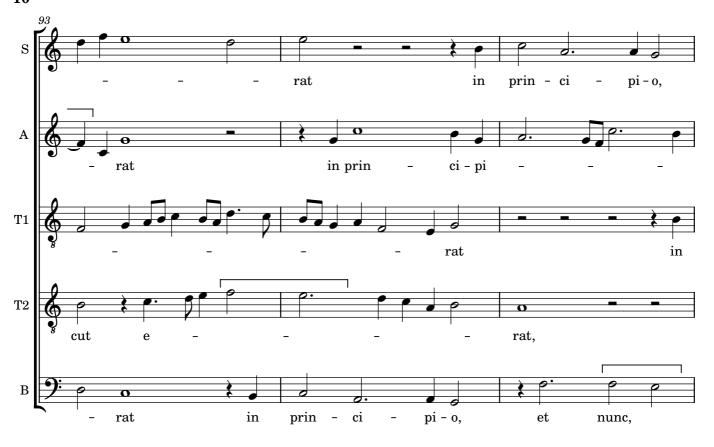


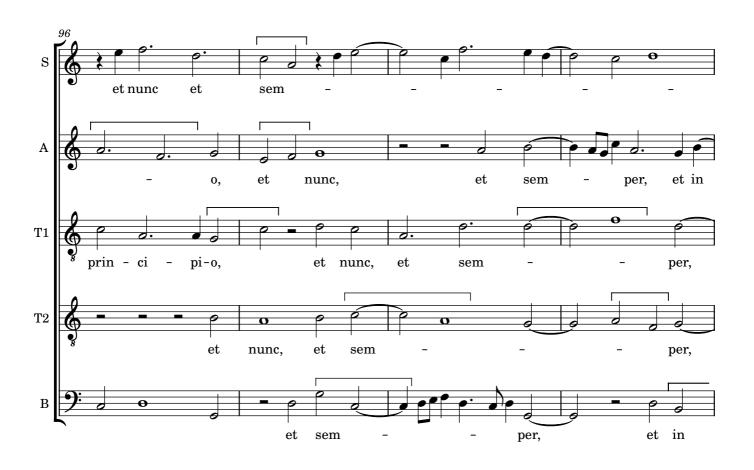


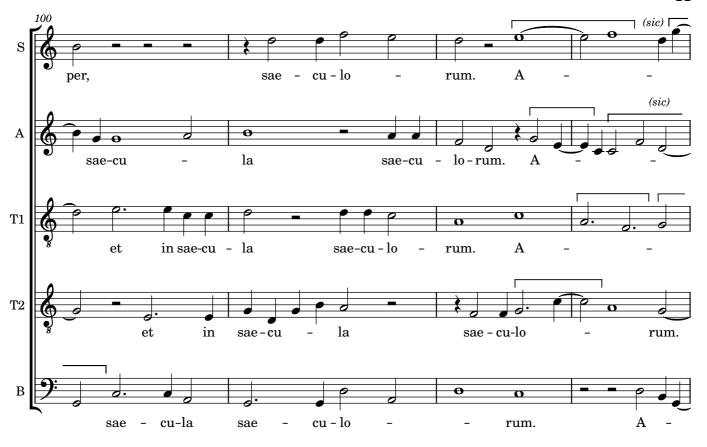


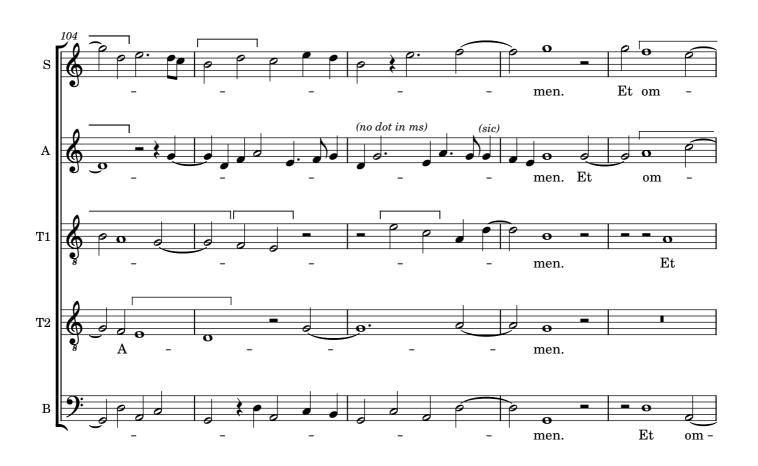


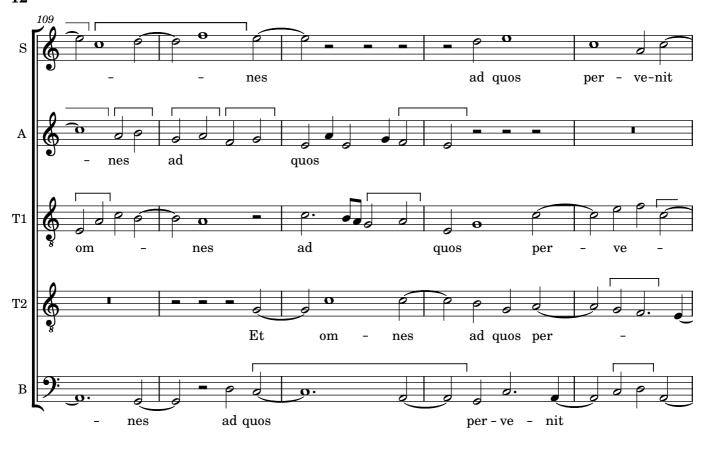


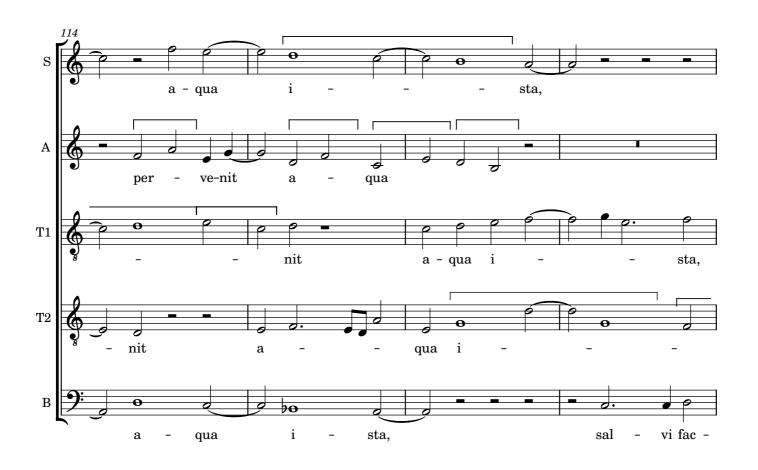


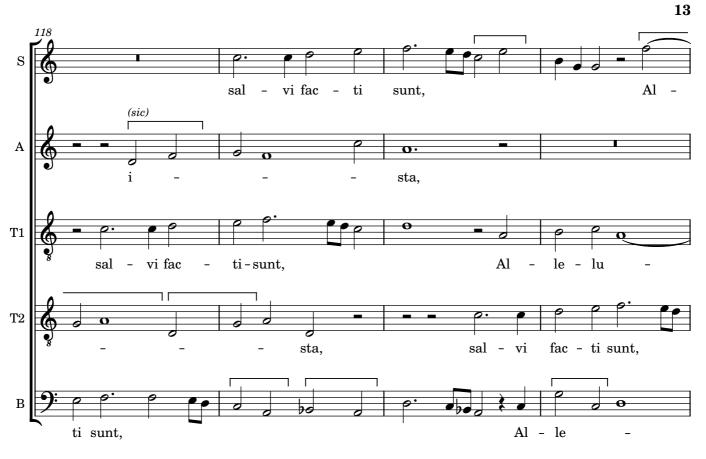




















This antiphon from the Lambeth Choirbook (1520's) can be found at https://imslp.org/wiki/Lambeth Choirbook (Various) in part 5, on pages 12 and 13. More information about the liturgical role of 'Vidi aquam' can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vidi_aquam.

Text underlay follows the manuscript closely; ligatures are indicated with brackets above the notes. Note values halved. Two or three beats rest in the same bar are notated separately, as the equivalent of the semibreves rest in the source.

What strikes me most about the anonymous pieces from the Lambeth Choirbook I have transcribed sofar, is the bold (rude?) use of dissonance, and this Vidi aquam is no exception. Right in the beginning, in bar 4, the a in the alto collides with the top g in the soprano and the b in T2. Briefly, but very audibly. It can be easily corrected by delaying the alto entry half a beat, but the composer didn't, nor the scribe. It seems very unlikely that they didn't notice, especially so early in the piece, so they must have considered it acceptable, or perhaps even enjoyably spicy.



There are more instances like this. In most cases I put (sic) above the 'offending' note(s).

However, one instance had to be corrected, namely the alto-part at the end of the Amen of the doxology: as written, it ends off-beat on the breve g above 'men'. That's impossible.



If the ending on 'men' in all the parts would produce stylistically sound counterpoint, you could think it doesn't matter: after this the repeat begins, so there's a fresh start, so to speak. But transcribed as written the polyphony would look like this:



Even by Anonymous' bold standards this seems unacceptable. The least intrusive intervention seems to be to dot the g in the alto-part, still producing some questionable voice-leading between soprano and alto at the end, although it doesn't sound totally unacceptible to me:



Alternatively you could change the e in the final bar of the alto-part into a d, lasting one full beat, and leave the penultimate bar unchanged. In both cases the alto-g at the end of the penultimate bar is accepted as stylistically permissible. But there's more going on: the a in the bass collides with the g in T2. Shortening this g by one beat, and lengthening the following a would solve that, but I thought that went too far. The resulting dissonance can be found in more music from the Eton and Lambeth Choirbooks.

At the end of the piece there is a repeat of the second verse, the beginning of which is notated, followed by 'ut supra'. Liturgically it should actually start from 'Vidi aquam'. However, the lack of a fermata on the 'men' seems to suggest that there is no chant intended before the repeat of the second verse.

Apart from the occasionally bold dissonances, and the odd parallel octave (bar 104 between soprano and alto), I do think it is an attractive piece, with the characteristic English full choir sound, and some playful melodic material sticking out of the texture, as this line in T1 in bars 35-36:



Some attractive imitative writing (bars 79-82):



There is also some imitation in the full choir sections, as in bars 66-70, with each part singing 'misericordia', and in bars 26-32 the same goes for "salvi facti sunt".

Bert Schreuder