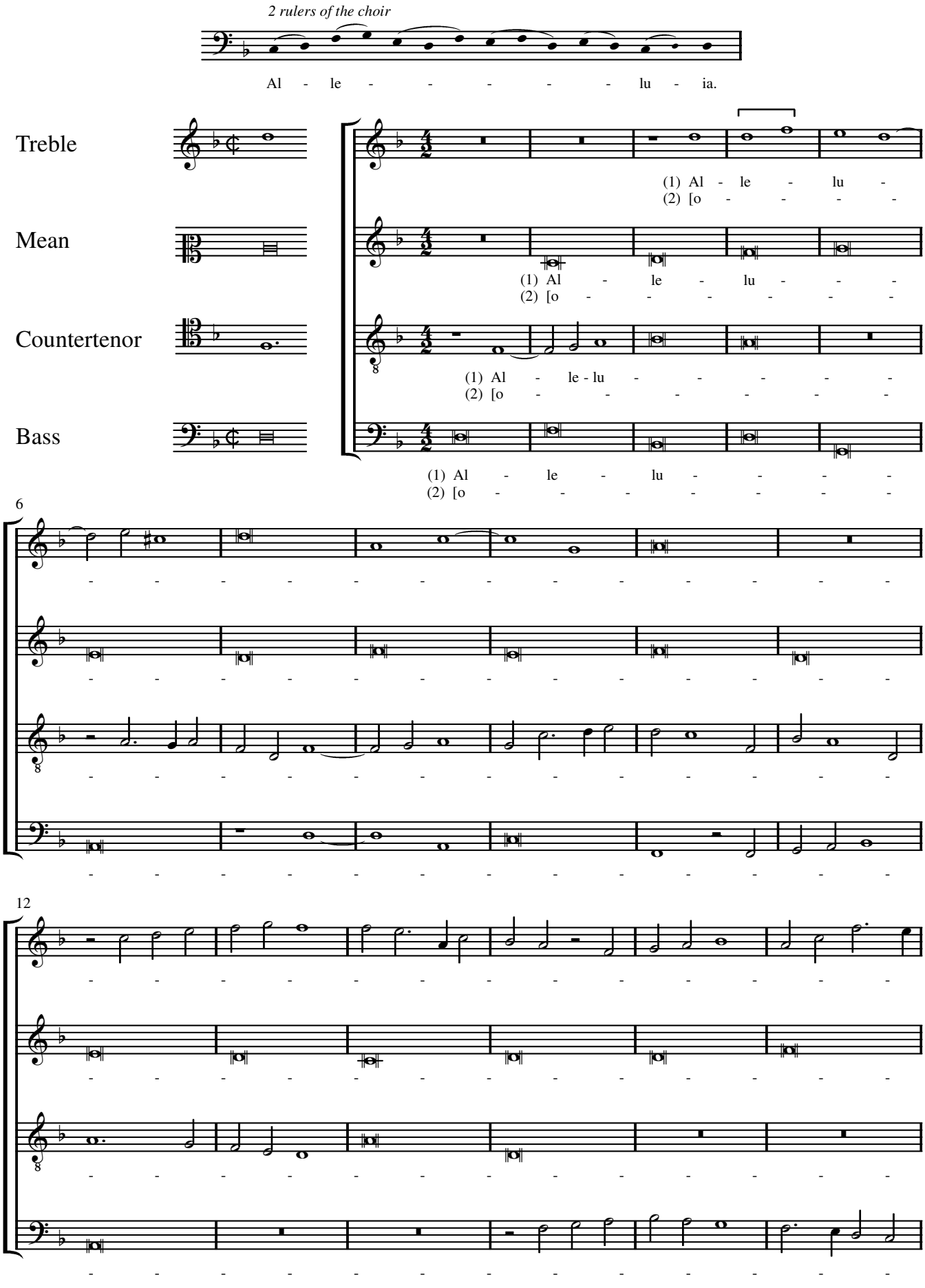
Alleluia. Ora pro nobis

Edited by Jason Smart

Thomas Tallis (*c.*1505-1585)



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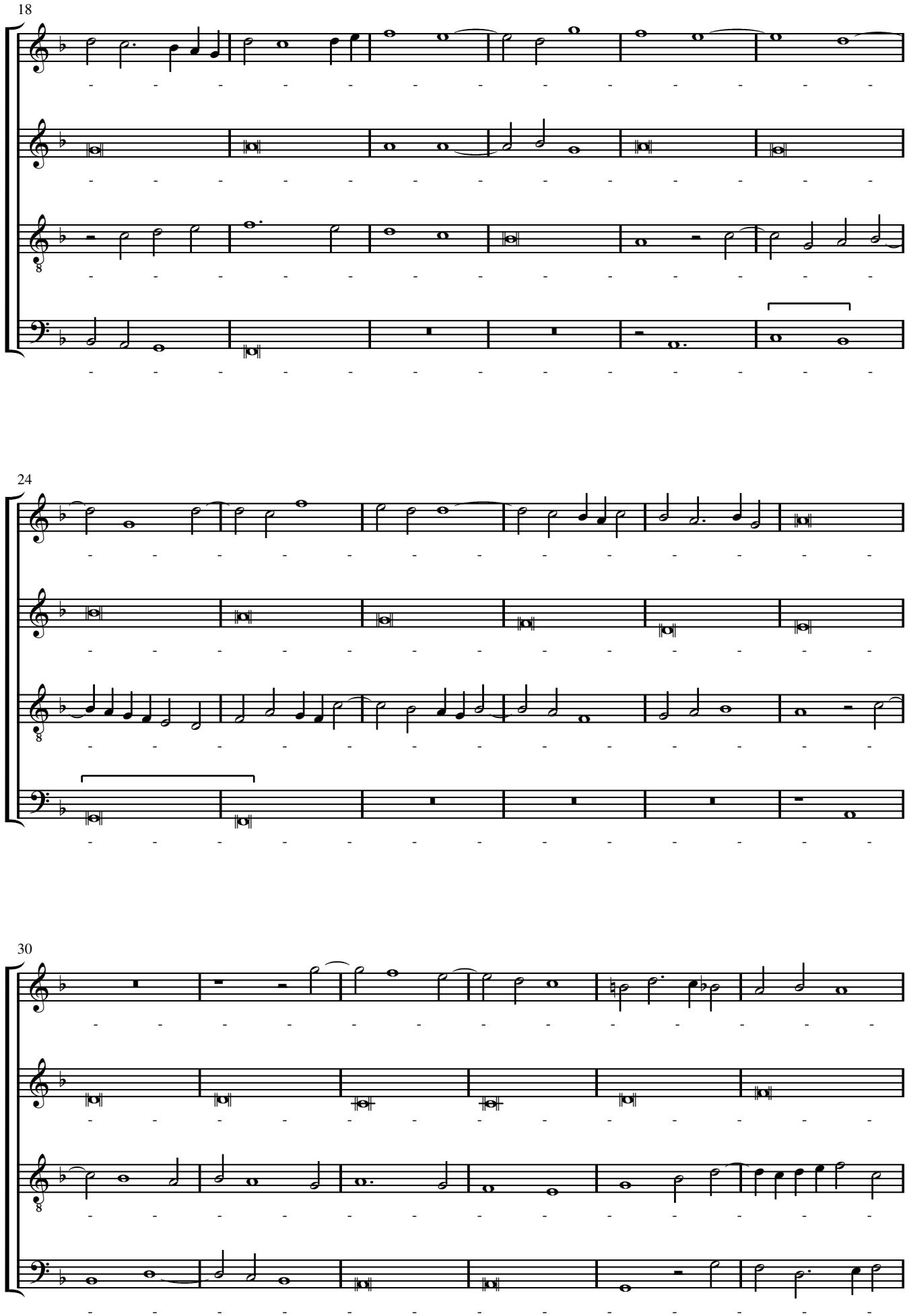
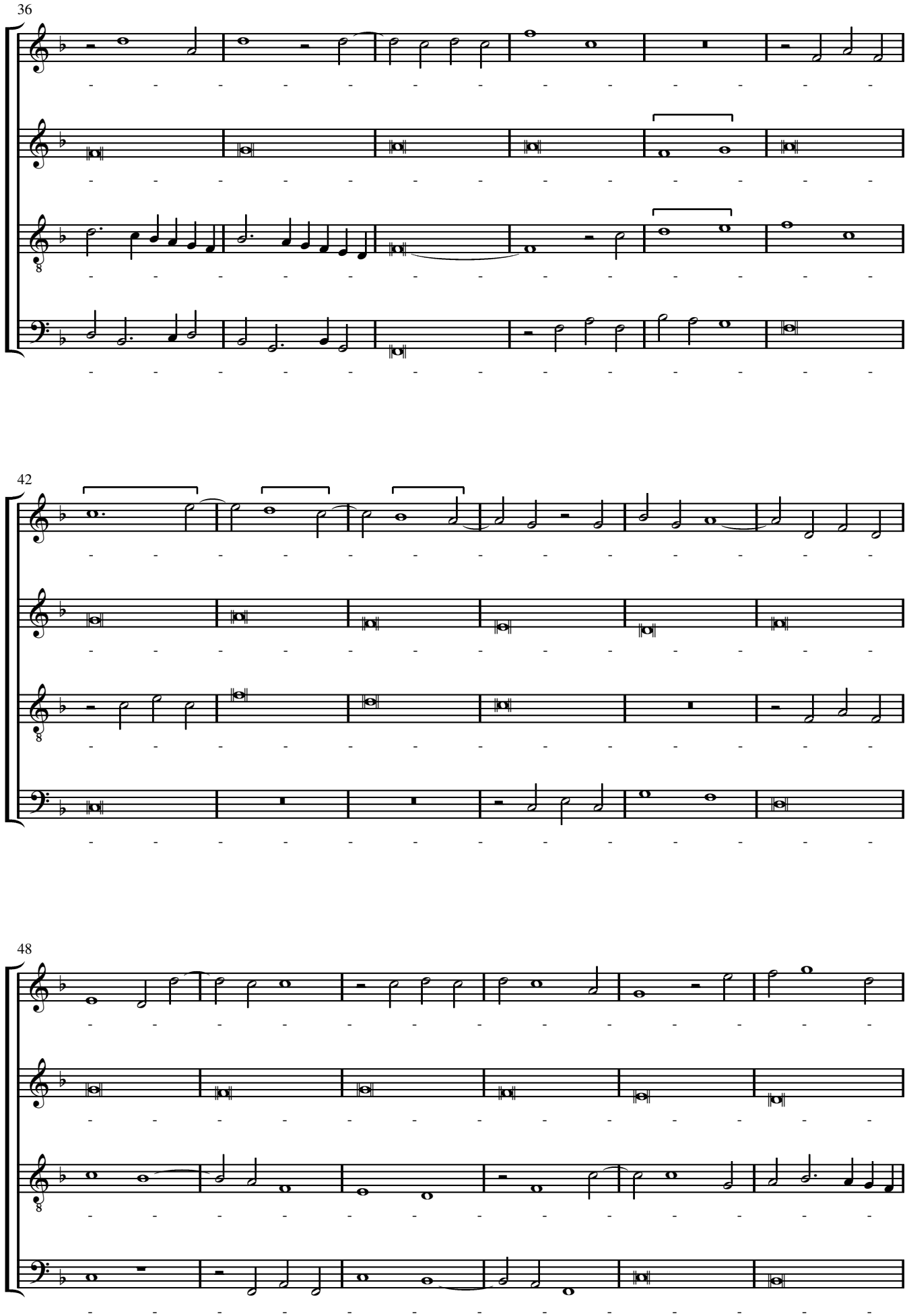
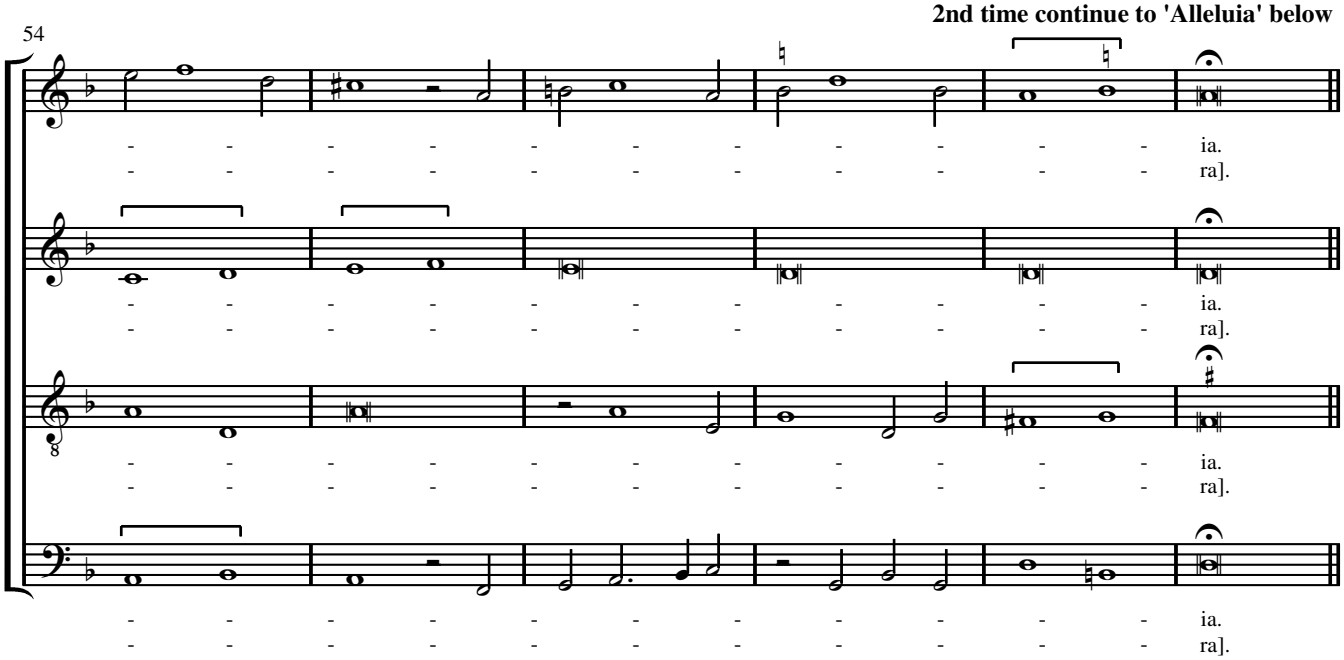
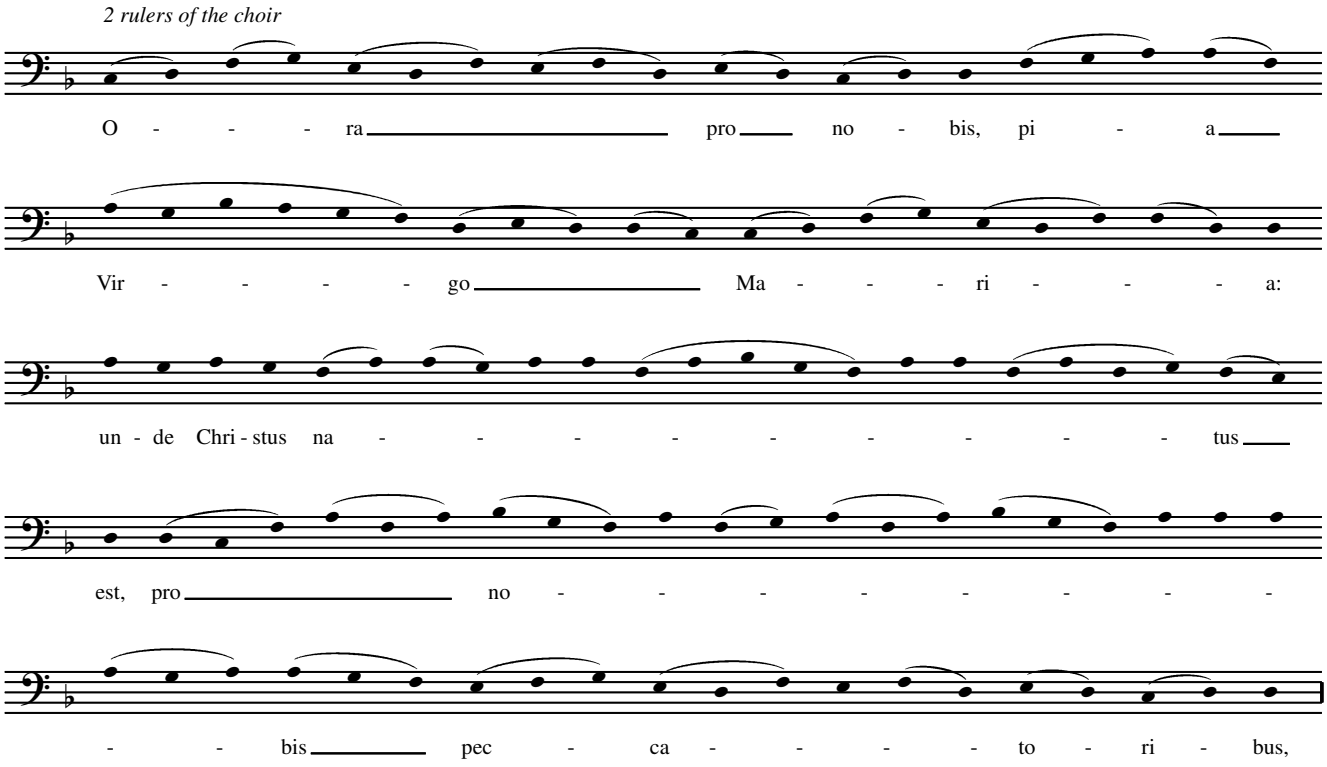

18
24
30

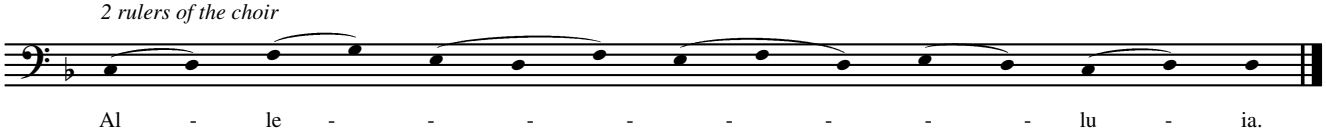

36
42
48

1st time continue to verse 'Ora pro nobis'
2nd time continue to 'Alleluia' below





Repeat the polyphony to the word 'ora', then sing the following 'Alleluia'



Translation

Alleluia. Alleluia.
℣ Pray for us, O gentle Virgin Mary: you of whom Christ was born, for us sinners, pray.
Alleluia.

Liturgical Function

Alleluia for the Lady Mass *Salve sancta parens* on Tuesdays from the Feast of the Purification (2 February) to the day before Septuagesima and from Easter Day to the day before Advent.

Editorial Conventions

The nomenclature of the voice parts follows the Tudor convention.

The original clef, staff signature, mensuration symbol and first note of each part are shown on the prefatory staves at the start of the score.

Editorial accidentals are placed above the notes concerned and remain operative throughout the bar.

Ligatures are denoted by the sign ⌜‾‾‾⌝.

Sources

Polyphony: London, British Library Add. MSS 17802–5 (*c*.1572–*c*.1578).

17802	(M)	f.23	at beginning:	m^{r} talles
17803	(Tr)	f.21	at beginning:	master Talles
17804	(Ct)	f.21	at beginning:	master Talles
17805	(B)	f.21	at beginning:	master Talles

Plainsong: London, British Library, Add. MS 17001, f.123^{v} (late 14th cent.).

Notes on the Readings of the Sources

This Alleluia does not sound typical of Tallis and it is tempting to wonder whether the scribe's attribution is correct. The melodic phrases peter out aimlessly and the work lacks the carefully shaped expressiveness familiar from the music that Tallis published in 1575. Nor would the mature Tallis have tolerated the unresolved seventh in the Countertenor at bar 11 (where a G was no doubt rejected because it would create consecutive fifths with the Mean), or the unprepared sevenths in bars 23 and 53. Yet the melodic phrases are not without shape and the chain of suspensions in bars 30–33 reveal a composer with at least some awareness of the expressive capabilities of harmony. Moreover, unprepared dissonances similar to those cited can be found in his four-part Latin Magnificat. On balance the attribution is probably correct. Although recent work on Tallis has shown how flawed a criterion style can be in dating his work, it nevertheless seems likely that this Alleluia and the four-part Magnificat are very early works, perhaps the earliest pieces by him to survive.

The source does not underlay the word *ora* to the polyphony, but the practice of repeating the polyphony to the word or words with which the chorus ended the verse was certainly known. As common in responsorial Alleluias, the plainsong of the two choral sections of the chant – the repeat of the Alleluia and the conclusion of the verse – use identical melodies. In Ludford's seven Lady Masses all seven Alleluias underlay both the word 'Alleluia' and the end of the verse to the same musical staves, as do other Alleluias elsewhere. Further examples of text substitution survive, notably for the processional prose *Salve festa dies*, and there is no reason to doubt that Tudor choirs were familiar with the practice.

The underlay preserved in the source contains several repeat signs, but these are not applied consistently. In the early Tudor idiom in which this piece is written, text repeats were not usual and it is probable those here are later additions. They have been rejected in the edition, but are noted below.

The references below are separated by oblique strokes. The order within each entry is: 1) bar number; 2) voice; 3) reading of the source, with any subsequent bar number in brackets. Pitches are in capital letters. The symbol 𝄎 denotes an underlay repeat sign.

Accidentals

16 B ♭ for B / 21 M no ♭ for B / 24 M no ♭ for B /

Underlay and Ligatures

6 B *-ia* below A, (7) 𝄎 below D / 10 Tr *-ia* below A, (12) 𝄎 below C / 15 Tr *-ia* 𝄎 below AF; B 𝄎 below F / 18 Ct 𝄎 below C / 24–25 B superfluous number '2' below each note of ligature / 31 Tr 𝄎 below G / 39 Ct 𝄎 below C / 52 Tr 𝄎 below E /