



SCRUPULOSA QUORUNDAM SENTENTIA

Sequence for the Mass of St Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins (October 21)
according to the medieval Use of York
Edited by Lisa Colton

Richard Scrope spent just seven years as Archbishop of York before his execution in 1405, a punishment for his role in the city's rebellion against Henry IV. It seems plausible that the sequence *Scrupulosa* was written by one of Scrope's staff, between the establishment of the feast in the York calendar on 12 September 1401 and the feast's first occurrence the same year. The composer used a pre-existent melody, but created for it a new poetic text. The lyrics focus on the martyrdom of the virgins, remarking upon the contrast between the constancy of these women and the fickleness with which women were usually associated at the time. Richard Scrope emphasised the need for clerical chastity throughout his career, and the opening of the poetic text, containing an unmistakable pun on Scrope's name, invites an association to be made between the Archbishop and the purity of the virgin martyrs. The author of the *Chronica Pontificum Ecclesiae Eboracensis* named Scrope as the composer of *Scrupulosa*. This attribution, while almost certainly fanciful, reflected the Archbishop's ongoing reputation as a scholar, liturgical innovator and local 'saint', despite the fact that he was never formally canonised. The 11,000 Virgins were the companions of St Ursula, reputedly a British saint, whose pilgrimage ended in their martyrdom at Cologne. The cult was most prominent in Germany, but enjoyed modest popularity in England, where a number of institutions held relics pertaining to it. The ongoing employment of *Scrupulosa* in the services of churches that followed the York Use would have gained a new resonance after the martyrdom of Scrope himself.

Editorial Note: •• indicates the *bivirga* ■■ ; ♪ indicates the *podatus* ■

The pre-existent melody was notably associated with *Rex omnipotens*, the Sequence for Ascension Day in the Sarum Use.

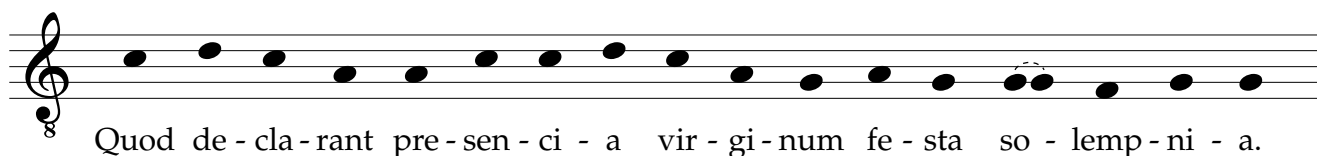
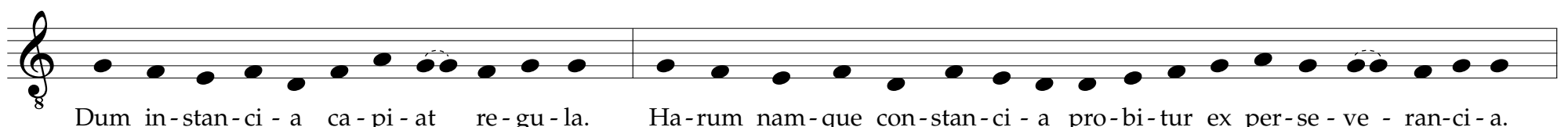
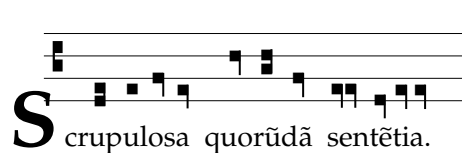
Sources:

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat.Lit.b.5, fols.115r-115v. 15th-century York Gradual with musical notation
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam, MS 34. 15th-century Missal
Oxford, University College, 78b, fol.138r. 15th-century York Missal
Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College, MS 33, (olim Δ 2.II), fol.247. York Missal, c. 1470s or early 1480s
London, Sion College, MS A. 34. 3f. 16th-century York Hymnal and Sequentiary
Printed York Missals: [1509], 1516, 1517, 1530, 1533

Translation

Some men's scrupulous opinion is that women's vows [or 'wishes'] are sudden. The rule is rightly rendered null till it is furnished with examples. For these women's constancy is proved by their perseverance; this is asserted by the present solemn feast of virgins. On this most holy day a very great multitude was martyred in Cologne. Like ancient ivory, these saintly women's bodies are [lit. 'stand forth'] red for the life to come that they await. Not like bastard slips, but like a tall cedar, England is raised by them. In these there was one faith; so neither were their rewards delayed in their [heavenly] homeland. Let virgins rejoice considering such things. Let the Church Universal rejoice too. In the frail sex, eleven thousand virgins have conquered. Against them rage the pagan commands, utterly cruel. The band of virgins is slaughtered; to them is given a halo because they follow the Lamb without a stain where it goes in the [heavenly] homeland. Let their shining examples undo the shackles of sin, and lead us to heaven from the misery of this valley. Let all say Amen.

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Hac i - ta - que di - e sa - cra - tis - si - ma mul - ti - tu - do per ma - xi - ma pas - sa est in co - lo - ni - a.

Vel - ut e - bor an - ti - quum ru - bra ex - stant san - cta - rum cor - po - ra pro fu - tu - ra quam ex - pe - ctant vi - ta. (1)

Non ut spu - ri - a vi - tu - la - mi - na sed vel - ut ced - rus al - ta per e - as e - le - va - tur an - gli - a. (2)

In his ve - ro ex - ti - tit fi - des u - na, sic nec di - la - ta sunt e - a - rum pre - mi - a in pa - tri - a.

Gau - de - ant vir - gi - nes per - pen - den - tes ta - li - a. Gau - de - at et u - ni - ver - sa - lis ec - cle - si - a.

In se - xu fra - gi - li mi - li - a vi - ce - runt vir - gi - num un - de - na. In - sa - ni - unt in has pa - ga - ni - ca pre - ce - pta per im - ma - ni - a. (3)

Tru - ci - da - tur co - hors vir - gi - ni - a qui - bus da - tur au - re - o - la.

Qui - a se - quun - tur quo it in pa - tri - a ag - num si - ne ma - cu - la. (4)

Ha - rum ex - em - pla per - lu - ci - da sol - vant pec - ca - ta vin - cu - la.

Et du - cant ad ce - le - sti - a ex hu - ius val - lis mi - se - ri - a. A - men di - cant om - ni - a.

(1) The note C at 'san-' replaces an erroneous B in the source.

(2) '*spuria vitulamina*': lit. 'false shoots'; given as 'bastard slips' in the Rheims-Douai (1609) translation from the Vulgate, The Book of Wisdom 4:3, and in the Apocrypha of the King James Bible. Often used as an insult of illegitimacy, the phrase may be present here as a sly dig at Henry IV, against whom Scrope finally rebelled. Later, Edward IV's sons (the Princes in the Tower) were thus stigmatized by the preacher Shaw in 1483.

(3) The music source has '*hac*'; the text-only books have, more correctly, '*has*'.

(4) The York Gradual gives '*it in*'; the text-only books give '*itur*', except that the Missal [1509] gives '*iter*' in error.