A VOICE OF SUPPLICATION: A STUDY OF THREE GENEVAN PSALM TUNES SET BY
JAN PIETERSZOON SWEELINCK FOR TWO MEDIUMS: KEYBOARD AND CHORUS

By

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ABSTRACT

This lecture-recital document presents a study of several of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck's settings of Genevan psalm tunes. The authenticated psalms for keyboard, Psalms 36, 116, and 140, are analyzed alongside their parallel settings for chorus. Sweelinck's unusual position as a civic organist gave him freedom to compose using material from a variety of religious traditions. His psalm-based works, often overshadowed within his output, show his mastery of Franco-Flemish polyphony. This research discusses the transmission and use of the psalm settings, Sweelinck's treatment of the psalm tunes, and stylistic features within the settings, such as form, harmonic language, modality, and text-painting. A substantial portion of the document is dedicated to the use of figuration within the psalm settings, showing four primary ways in which the figuration is derived from the psalm tune. These psalm settings are a monument within Sweelinck's output: the keyboard settings establish a basis for the future of idiomatic keyboard works, while the choral settings are a crowning achievement of the Franco-Flemish polyphonic tradition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

The Genevan psalm tunes set by J. P. Sweelinck comprise a sizeable portion of his output. Not only did Sweelinck set the entire *Genevan Psalter* for chorus, but he also composed variations on several Genevan tunes for keyboard. His four books of *Pseaumes de David*, ranging from four to eight voices, include individual works that may represent his greatest achievements as a composer. The purpose of this lecture-recital is to study and perform organ and vocal settings by Sweelinck of Psalm 36, Psalm 116, and Psalm 140. These are the only parallel settings of psalms for organ and voice that can be absolutely authenticated as part of Sweelinck's output. As a result of my efforts, I hope that organists, singers, and conductors will consider adding this under-performed music to their repertoire.

I. Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: Biography

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621) was born in Deventer and lived for the majority of his life in Amsterdam. He was probably employed as organist at the Oude Kerk in 1577, at barely fifteen years of age.[1] His father, Peter Swybbertszoon, was also an organist; in fact, his family held the post of organist at the Oude Kerk from c. 1564-1652, almost without interruption.[2] Sweelinck's earliest musical training probably came from his father, who died when Sweelinck was only eleven. His only other teacher was Jan Willemszoon Lossy of Haarlem, who may have taught him composition.[3] In addition, Jan Pieterszoon may have studied

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[1] Pieter Dirksen and Harald Vogel, introduction to the *Complete Keyboard Works, Vol. 3: Variations on Chorales and Psalms*, ed. Pieter Dirksen and Harald Vogel (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2006), 9.

[2] Randall H. Tollefsen and Pieter Dirksen, "Sweelinck, Jan Pieterszoon," *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/27206 (accessed October 25, 2013).

[3] Tollefsen and Dirksen, "Sweelinck," in *Grove Music Online* (accessed October 25, 2013).

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with the famous organist of St. Bavo in Haarlem, Floris van Adrichem.[4]

The "Alteration" of 1578—the imposition of Calvinism— took place shortly after Sweelinck was appointed organist at the Oude Kerk, drastically changing the nature of his position. Fortunately for Sweelinck, the municipal authorities owned the churches and their organs. Cities had spent significant funds for these instruments, thus they were reluctant to destroy them when Calvinism swept through Holland.[5] One result of municipal ownership of the organs was that Sweelinck was employed as a civil servant from 1587 onwards.[6] In addition to organizing and performing in public concerts, Sweelinck played preludes and postludes before and after the Calvinist services to familiarize the congregants with the new psalm tunes.[7] Amsterdam's prominence as a commercial center gave rise to a tradition of presenting daily organ recitals in conjunction with events such as the opening of the stock market.[8] In his capacity as a civil servant, Sweelinck represented the growing middle class. Since his primary role at the Oude Kerk was presenting concerts, he can be seen as a major figure in the development of the modern concert tradition, a tradition based on the middle class gaining access to the finest music of a culture.[9] Whether Sweelinck remained a devoted Catholic or converted to Calvinism remains in question.[10] In any case, he accepted and cultivated Genevan tunes. His exceptional improvisations led city authorities to call him the "Orpheus of Amsterdam."[11]   In addition to his duties at the Oude Kerk, teaching, and composing, he inspected a number of

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[4] Dirksen and Vogel, introduction to the *Complete Keyboard Works*, 9.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] John Butt, "Germany and the Netherlands," in *Keyboard Music Before 1700*, 2nd edition, ed. Alexander Silbiger (New York: Routledge, 2004), 167.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Dirksen and Vogel, introduction to the *Complete Keyboard Works*, 9.
[11] Tollefsen and Dirksen, "Sweelinck," in *Grove Music Online* (accessed October 25, 2013).

organs in surrounding towns—Haarlem, Middelburg, Nijmegen, and Dortrecht.[12] Sweelinck

absorbed the Franco-Flemish vocal tradition of the sixteenth-century and also helped to establish

a new idiomatic keyboard style that he bequeathed to later generations through his teaching and

performance.[13] A sought-after teacher, his influence upon future generations of organists was

remarkable.   Pupils from Germany, sponsored by their city councils, included Samuel and

Gottfried Scheidt, Heinrich Scheidemann, and Jacob and Johann Praetorius. Johann Mattheson,

a seventeenth-century music journalist, described Sweelinck as 'hamburgischen

Organistenmacher' (the Hamburg organist-maker).[14] These organists founded the famed 17th-

century North German organ school.

II. Psalm-Based Works in the Netherlands

Sweelinck's psalm-based compositions contribute to a rich history of keyboard

compositions on psalm tunes in the Netherlands. Settings of psalm melodies form a major part

of early extant keyboard sources from the Netherlands.[15] In addition to Sweelinck's

compositions, psalm settings form almost half of the anonymous *Susanne van Stoldt manuscript*

(c. 1570), and they comprise most of Henderick Speuy's twenty-four keyboard bicina (*Psalmen*

Davids, Dordrecht, 1610).[16] The *Lübbenau tablature* (Lynar B7) includes a recently discovered

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[12] Tollefsen and Dirksen, "Sweelinck," in *Grove Music Online* (accessed October 25, 2013).

[13] John Butt, "Germany and the Netherlands," 166.

[14] Tollefsen and Dirksen, "Sweelinck," in *Grove Music Online* (accessed October 25, 2013).

[15] Pieter Dirksen, introduction to *Psalm Variations from Lynar B7,* ed. Pieter Dirksen, *Exempla Musica Neerlandica* XVIII, ed. Paul van Reijen (Utrecht: Koninklijke Vereniging Voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1996), v. For a detailed survey of seventeenth-century Dutch psalm-based keyboard compositions, see Pieter Dirksen, "The Dutch 17th-Century Tradition of Psalm Variations," in *GoArt Research Reports*, Vol. 2, ed. Sverker Jullander (Göteborg University, Sweden: Göteborg Organ Art Center, 2000).

[16] John Caldwell, "Sources of Keyboard Music to 1660," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/26298 (accessed November 12, 2013).

collection of psalm variations, dating from approximately 1620-1640.[17] Anthoni van Noordt's

Tabulatuur-boeck van psalmen en fantasyen, published in 1659, contains ten extensive and

highly sophisticated psalm settings.   Psalm-based pieces also appear in two seventeenth-century

Dutch domestic keyboard books, the *Camphuysen manuscript* and the *Broekhuyzen*

manuscript.[18]

Clearly, some of the psalm tunes were more popular than others. For instance, the

various keyboard settings of the Genevan Psalm 116—included in the *Lynar B7* manuscript, and

set by Heinrich Speuy, Sweelinck, and Van Noordt—establish that it was one of the most

beloved of the Genevan psalm tunes. This body of psalm-based keyboard literature is a

testament to the widespread cultivation of psalm tunes in 17th-century Holland.

The corpus of psalms for keyboard can also be viewed as a response to the decree by a

Dordrecht instruction of 1598: "the last psalm of the service had to be varied five or six times

after the service, which was to be followed by 'grave,' edifying pieces."[19] The organist's task

was to perform psalm-based organ variations to help educate the Dutch Reformed congregations

who were likely challenged by the 125 melodies in the Psalter.[20] In addition to psalm-based

compositions, organists most likely used psalms as the basis for improvisation during these

concerts. Whether through composition or improvisation, organists faced a didactic challenge as

they attempted to teach this new repertoire outside the worship service.

Sweelinck was not alone in composing polyphonic settings of the Psalter. Towards the

end of the fifteenth century, polyphonic psalms began to appear in the Netherlands, following the

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[17] Ibid.
[18] Pieter Dirksen, introduction to *Psalm Variations from Lynar B7,* 5.
[19] Pieter Dirksen, *The Keyboard Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: Its Style, Significance, and Influence*, Vol. 15
of *Muziekhistorische Monografieën*, ed. Arend Jan Gierveld (Utrecht: Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse
Muziekgeschiedenis, 1997), 146-147.
[20] Ibid, 146.

example of Josquin's masterful psalm motets.[21] Three sixteenth-century Dutch polyphonic

settings of the Psalter are extant. Jacobus Clemens non Papa (c. 1510-15-1555/6), an important

forerunner to Sweelinck, based his polyphonic settings on the *Souterliedekens*, the earliest

collection of metricized Dutch psalms.[22] Gherardus Mes and Cornelis Boscoop, who also based

their settings on the *Souterliedekens*, published collections in 1561 and 1568, respectively.[23] A

few individual settings of Marot's French psalms exist in chanson books, and the publication,

Pseaumes cinquante by Jean Louys (1555), exclusively contains Marot's psalms.[24]

III. Sweelinck's Genevan Psalm Settings: Composition, Transmission, and Use

Variation cycles form a sizeable portion of Sweelinck's output; twenty-eight variations

stand alongside the thirty-four authenticated toccatas and fantasias.[25] As prime features of

Sweelinck's keyboard art, the variations are almost exclusively multi-movement works.[26] In

fact, the only surviving mention of Sweelinck at the keyboard is a description of him improvising

variations:

> As I recall, some good friends and I were at the house of my good friend master Jan
> Pietersz. Sweelinck, with more good friends, in the month of May; and he, having begun
> to play the harpsichord, continued until about midnight, playing among other things the
> tune 'Den lustelicken Mey is nu in zijnen tijdt,' which he, if I remember correctly, played
> in twenty-five different ways, first this way, then that.[27]

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[21] William Elders, *Composers of the Low Countries*, transl. by Graham Dixon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 25.
[22] Willem Elders, et al., "Clemens non Papa, Jacobus," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford
University Press, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/05930
(accessed December 9, 2013).
[23] Frits Noske, *Sweelinck*, Vol. 22 of *Oxford Studies of Composers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 49.
[24] Noske, *Sweelinck*, 49.
[25] Dirksen, *The Keyboard Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck,* 123.
[26] Ibid, and 160-161. Only one of the variation sets, Sweelinck's *O Gott du unser Vater bist,* forms a *single* setting
which displays the *cantus firmus* in long notes followed by an ornamented version in one movement.
[27] Ibid., transl. in Randall Tollefsen, "Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: a Bio-Bibliography, 1604-1842," *Tijdschrift van
de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 22 (1971): 117-118.

The variation technique that Sweelinck cultivated was influenced by not only the earlier tradition of variation writing from the Netherlands, but also by keyboard works from Spain and especially England.[28] Alan Curtis suggests that English music was easily accessible and widely appreciated in the Netherlands around the turn of the seventeenth century. He notes the stylistic similarities between the keyboard works of Sweelinck and John Bull (1562/3-1628).[29]

Sweelinck's sacred variations are especially diverse. They include variations on Lutheran chorales, Genevan psalm tunes, and chant melodies. Sweelinck's unusual position as a civic organist allowed him freedom to compose using material from a variety of traditions. Of the five Genevan psalm variation sets often attributed to Sweelinck, three are considered authentic: Psalms 36, 116, and 140.[30] Pieter Dirksen and Harald Vogel's recent scholarly work concerning the sources and transmission of the composer's keyboard works has confirmed their attribution. Due to the stylistic similarities between the works of Sweelinck and other members of his school, earlier editions included several spurious works.

The psalm variations were most likely performed during Sweelinck's daily recitals at the Oude Kerk. They would have functioned as preludes or postludes before or after the Calvinist services. Sweelinck also could have used them as compositional examples for his students, or employed them in domestic settings.

No autographs of Sweelinck's keyboard works survive; however, the most important manuscript, titled *Lynar A1*, was probably compiled by one of Sweelinck's pupils, Andreas

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[28] Dirksen, *The Keyboard Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck*, 125.

[29] Curtis, *Sweelinck's Keyboard Music,* 26.

[30] Psalms 36, 116, and 140 bear Sweelinck's name in the manuscripts, but Psalms 23 and 60 are anonymous. Dirksen has included these psalms in Sweelinck's œuvre, because they show stylistic similarity to the other variations, and because they are contained in the same manuscript*, Lynar B7,* as other pieces by Sweelinck. See Pieter Dirksen, *The Keyboard Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: Its Style, Significance, and Influence*, Vol. 15 of *Muziekhistorische Monografieën*, ed. Arend Jan Gierveld (Utrecht: Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1997), 64.

Düben.[31] Düben, who was the son of the organist of St. Thomas in Leipzig, is thought to have

been Sweelinck's assistant during his later years.[32] A second major source for the keyboard

works is the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book (FM)*.[33] These manuscripts preserve works in two forms:

staff notation and letter tablature. The majority of the keyboard works survive in staff notation,

most common to Dutch and English composers. Letter tablature, seen in the *Lübbeneau "B"*

tablatures, was the preferred means of transmission by German organists.[34] Psalm 140 is

preserved in staff notation in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, and also preserved in tablature

notation in the source *Lynar B2*.[35] The variations on *Die 10 Gebott Gottes* are probably an early

version of the variations on Psalm 140; they share the same tune in the Dutch psalter of

Sweelinck's time.[36] Psalm 116 is preserved in tablature notation in *Lynar B2,* while Psalm 36 is

found in *Torino G5*; they are both notated in letter tablature.[37] Psalm 36 lacks a title in the

Torino manuscript; it is simply labeled *Versus* and bears Sweelinck's initials, *J. P. S.*[38]

Sweelinck's *Pseaumes de David,* a setting of the entire *Genevan Psalter* in four volumes,

was a crowning achievement in his own œuvre, and a continuation of the polyphonic choral

tradition of the Renaissance. Like his esteemed predecessors Ockeghem, Lassus, and Josquin,

Sweelinck was a master of Franco-Flemish polyphony. In addition to his setting of the *Genevan*

Psalter, he composed chansons, madrigals, canons, and motets. Publication dates of the four

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[31] The Lübbenau manuscript *Lynar A1* is currently housed in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz. It contains twenty-seven pieces by Sweelinck in Anglo-Dutch notation, and is considered the most authoritative source for his music. From Pieter van Dijk, "Aspects of Fingering and Hand Division in Lynar A1," in *Sweelinck Studies: Proceedings of the International Sweelinck Symposium, Utrecht, 1999*, ed. Pieter Dirksen (Utrecht: STIMU, 2002): 127.
[32] Dirksen and Vogel, introduction to the *Complete Keyboard Works*, 11.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid, 20.
[36] Ibid., 21.
[37] Ibid., 20.
[38] Ibid.

volumes of *Pseaumes de David* – 1604, 1613, 1614, and 1621—show that Sweelinck was occupied with this project for most of his career.[39] The first three books appeared in Amsterdam, while the fourth book was produced in Haarlem.[40] Each begins with four-part settings and gradually increases to five-part and six-part settings, and concludes with seven- or eight-part compositions. Sweelinck's vocal output comprises 153 psalms. Three are set twice: Psalms 3, 27, and 134.

Sweelinck's vocal works were probably composed for the *Collegium Musicum,* an ensemble active in Amsterdam in the 1590s.[41] Professional musicians and talented amateurs joined together to form this excellent ensemble. Their ability to perform difficult repertoire allowed Sweelinck to have heightened freedom of expression.[42] His use of French texts, the language of the upper-class, also points to the intended audience for his *magnum opus*.[43] Psalms 3 and 10 were published anonymously in an anthology along with works by Orlando di Lasso.[44] The dedication page notably states, "To the honourable company of enthusiasts, students, musicians and amateurs of delicate and holy music," most likely referencing the *Collegium Musicum*.[45] Likewise, the *Livre second des Pseaumes de David* is dedicated to eight individuals

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[39] Rudolf Rasch, "Sweelinck's Place in the Musical History of the Dutch Republic," in *Sweelinck Studies: Proceedings of the International Sweelinck Symposium, Utrecht, 1999*, ed. Pieter Dirksen (Utrecht: STIMU, 2002): 5.

[40] Rudolf Rasch, "Modality in Sweelinck's Psalm Compositions," in *Sweelinck Studies: Proceedings of the International Sweelinck Symposium: Utrecht, 1999*, ed. Pieter Dirksen (Utrecht: Foundation for Historical Performance Practice, 2002), 159.

[41] Noske, *Sweelinck,* 5.

[42] Harry van der Kamp, liner notes to *Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: The Complete Psalms,* transl. Lindsay Chalmers-Gerbracht, Gesualdo Consort, Amsterdam, dir. Harry van der Kamp, Glossa Records, GCD922407, CD, 35.

[43] Ibid., 36.

[44] The anthology which contained Psalms 3 and 10 was *Cinquante pseaumes de David avec la musique à 5 parties d'Orlande de Lassus; Vingt autres pseaumes à 5 et 6 parties par divers excellents musiciens de nostre temps* (Fifty Psalms of David with music for five voices by Orlando di Lasso; twenty other Psalms for five and six voices by diverse excellent musicians of our time), published in 1597. Quoted in van der Kamp, liner notes to *Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck,* 36.

[45] Ibid.

who were wealthy merchants, citizens of Amsterdam, and members of the Collegium

Musicum.[46] Stylistically, the psalms continue the Renaissance polyphonic tradition, especially

that of Clemens non Papa and Goudimel.

IV. Psalm Settings: Types
A. Sub-Genres of the Keyboard Psalms

The keyboard psalm variations can be categorized into several sub-genres based on the

number of voices they employ and their handling of the *cantus firmus*. Both keyboard settings of

Psalms 116 and 140 include *bicinia* (two-voiced compositions). The *bicinia* occur at the

beginning of the variation sets; in subsequent variations additional voices are employed. These

bicinia bear a close relationship to English virginalist writing.[47] Psalm 116 opens with a

bicinium in which the psalm tune is unaltered in the soprano voice. The lower voice begins with

vorimitation, or foreshadowing of the psalm tune with an imitative section (Ex. 1a and Ex. 1b).[48]

Example 1a. *Psalm 116*, phrase 1.[49]

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[46] Ibid., 39.
[47] Willi Apel, *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700*, transl. and rev. Hans Tischler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 334. Certain types of figuration, such as triadic outlines and repeated notes, appear frequently in English virginalist writing.
[48] *Vorimitation* is defined in the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* as: "The process whereby a principal theme, stated in long note values in one part of a polyphonic texture, is anticipated by an imitative section in the other parts, usually based on a rhythmic diminution of the theme." "Vorimitation." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/29687 (accessed December 27, 2013).
[49]The tune of Psalm 116 first appeared in Geneva, 1562. From van der Kamp, liner notes to *Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: The Complete Psalms,* 32.

Example 1b. *Psalm 116*, var. 1, mm. 1-3.[50]
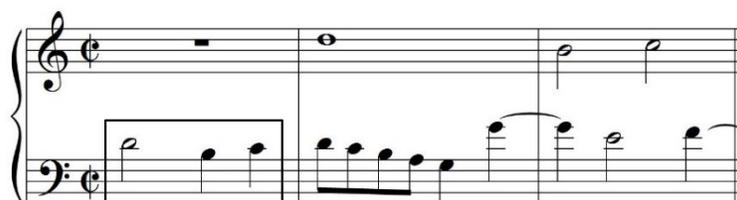
It also makes use of various figures, many of which are closely tied to the psalm tune. For example, in the opening measures, the span of a perfect fifth occurs repeatedly, reminiscent of the intervallic distance of the first phrase of the psalm tune (Ex. 2a and Ex. 2b).

Example 2a. *Psalm 116,* phrase 1.

Example 2b. *Psalm 116*, var. 1, mm. 5-7.
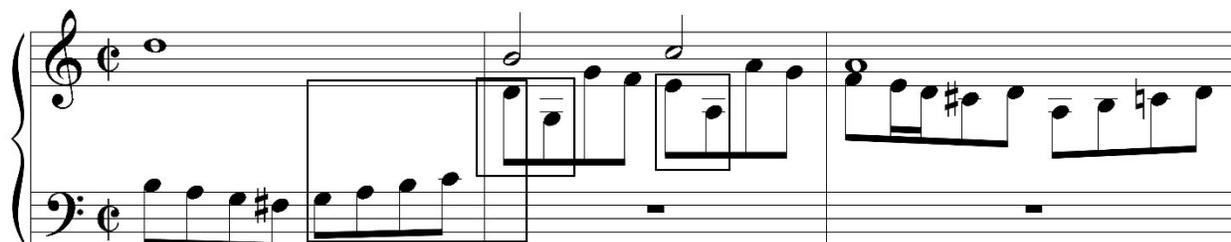
[50] Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, *Complete Keyboard Works, Vol. 3: Variations on Chorales and Psalms*, ed. Pieter Dirksen and Harald Vogel (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2006), 93. All keyboard examples are taken from this edition unless otherwise indicated.

The lower voice seamlessly moves from one motive to another, often by way of brief sequences or echo technique (Ex. 3).[51]

Example 3. *Psalm 116*, var. 1, mm. 10-11.
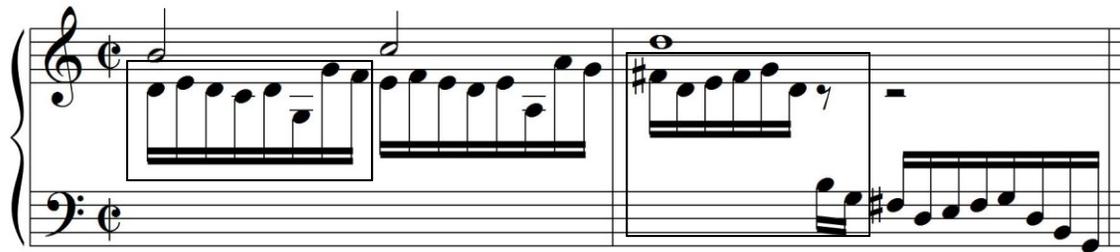
The accompanying voice begins with slower rhythmic values, gradually increasing in virtuosic figuration as the variation progresses. This continued swell in activity, common to many of the psalm variations, gives the listener a natural sense of forward motion. The ending of the *bicinium* is extended, as figuration is sequenced and chained to the second, three-voice variation (Ex. 4).

Example 4. *Psalm 116*, var. 1, mm. 31-33.

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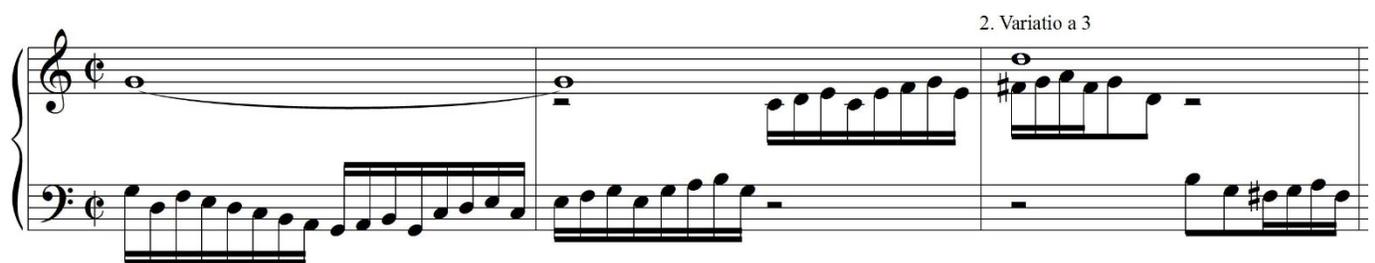
[51] Echoes in keyboard music of this period are typically indicated, either with dynamics or with red ink (such as in Sweelinck's *Echo Fantasia*). In *The Keyboard Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck*, Dirksen uses the term "echo" to describe passages such as this, where the figure or motive is transposed by an octave (Pieter Dirksen, *The Keyboard Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck*, 159). Throughout this paper, "echo" will be used to refer to an octave transposition of the original statement (Example 3, m. 11) or to describe an exact restatement of the motive (such as in Example 44b, m. 40).

The first two variations of Psalm 140 are also *bicinia*; in both cases the psalm tune is located in the soprano voice. Like the *bicinium* in Psalm 116, the lower voice in the first variation of Psalm 140 opens with slow note values and gradually increases in momentum, ending with running sixteenth notes. The figuration spans a large range, from C3 to D5. Like Psalm 116, the first phrase of the psalm tune is stated in the opening left hand figuration (Ex. 5).

Example 5. *Psalm 140*, var. 1, mm.1-2.
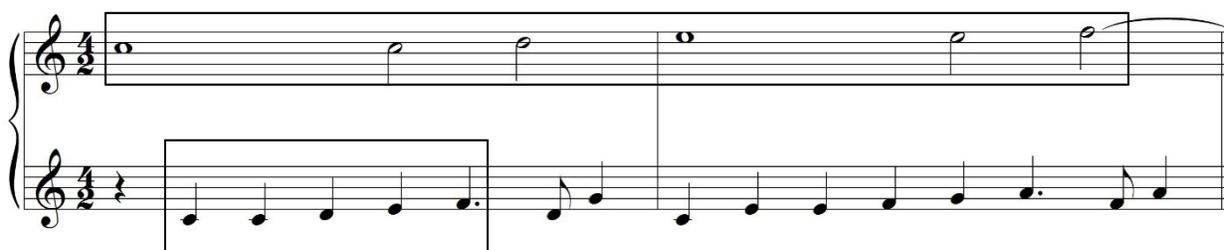
In this *bicinium*, the lower voice often mirrors the motion of the psalm tune. For example, figuration in the opening measures ascends upwards, coinciding with the ascent of the psalm tune phrase (see Ex. 5). As the tune descends, so does the figuration; in fact, it descends a diminished 12th, from C5 to F$^{\#}$3. In m. 8, the syncopated figuration descends through a series of thirds (Ex. 6).

Example 6. *Psalm 140*, var. 1, mm. 8-10.

While the first *bicinium* of Psalm 140 exhibits a multitude of rhythmical figures, the second variation, also a *bicinium*, is comprised of almost exclusively running sixteenth notes.
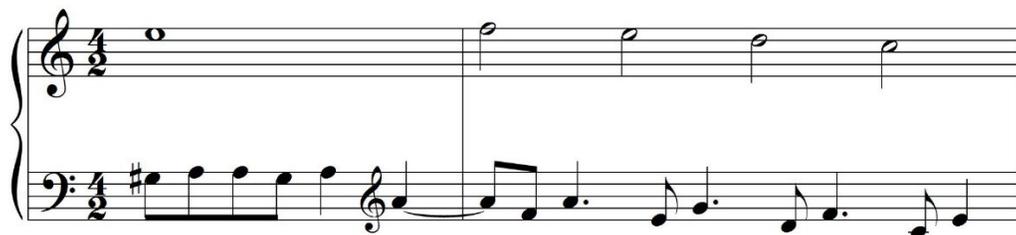
The livelier activity in the second *bicinium* gives the first two chained variations diversity. A wealth of different melodic figures permeates the second variation, giving it melodic richness in the midst of its rhythmic stasis: the entire variation is comprised of running sixteenth notes against the *cantus firmus*. The lower voice travels rapidly throughout the range; in mm. 42-43, for example, it descends and ascends two octaves in just two measures (Ex. 7).

Example 7. *Psalm 140*, var. 2, mm. 42-43.
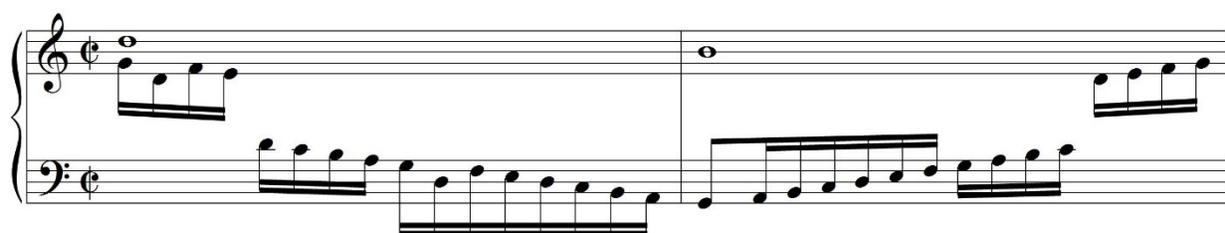
The vigorous motion in this *bicinium* creates an affect of urgency and resolve, related directly to the text of Psalm 140. The text, metricized by Théodore de Bèze, appeals to God for deliverance from the enemy and defense from malice. It begins, "*O Dieu donne moy déliverance/De cest home pernicieux*" ("O Lord, grant me my deliverance from evil men").[52] The *bicinia* within the psalm variations exhibit a plethora of figures, often referring to the psalm tune itself, but allowing the tune to be clearly heard.

Three-part settings, or *tricinia,* comprise half of the psalm variations under study. The settings tend to add voices as the variations progress, so the *tricinia* are usually found in the middle of a variation set. The following six variations are strictly composed of three voices: Psalm 116, variation two; Psalm 36, variations one and two; and Psalm 140, variations three through five. Of these, half are tenor *cantus firmus* settings. While the four-voice settings tend

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[52] Mark Wiggins, transl., liner notes to *Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: The Complete Psalms*, Gesualdo Consort, Amsterdam, dir. Harry van der Kamp, Glossa Records, GCD922407, CD, 80.

to be homophonic, the *tricinia* are contrapuntally diverse. Often, the motion between the three voices is rhythmically stratified; each voice maintains a distinctive rhythmic pattern, resulting in lively interplay. The second variation of Psalm 116, a soprano *cantus-firmus* setting, opens with figuration that imitates the movement of the first psalm tune phrase (Ex. 8a and Ex. 8b).

Example 8a. *Psalm 116*, var. 1-2, mm. 32-33.
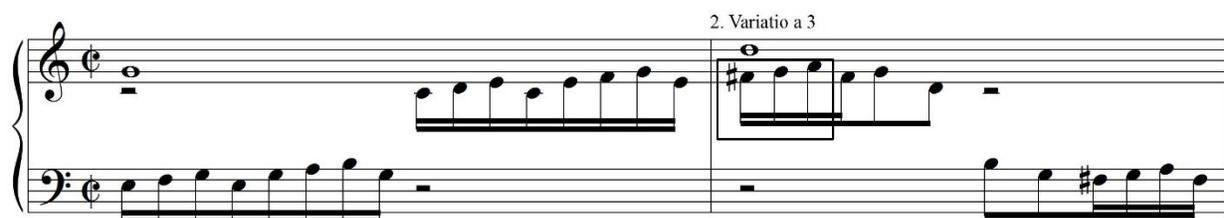
Example 8b. *Psalm 116*, phrase 1.
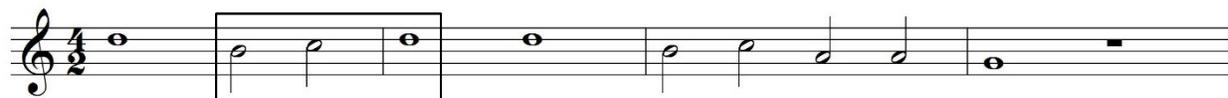
Next, it launches into a short repeated-note figure derived from the repeated notes in the psalm tune, which is passed between the lower voices (Ex. 9). Richness of figuration and counterpoint surrounding the *cantus-firmus* shows Sweelinck's mastery of the *tricinium*.

Example 9. *Psalm 116*, var. 2, mm. 34-36.
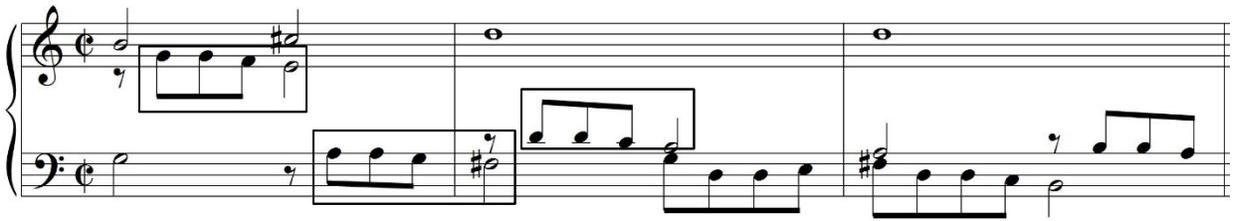
Four-voice sections are found at the conclusion of the variation sets.   The final variations of

Psalm 116 and 140 end with four voices, but they contain mostly three-part writing, with the

exception of several homophonic passages supporting a soprano *cantus firmus* in Psalm 116

(Ex.10a and Ex. 10b).

Example 10a. *Psalm 116*, var. 4, mm. 128-13
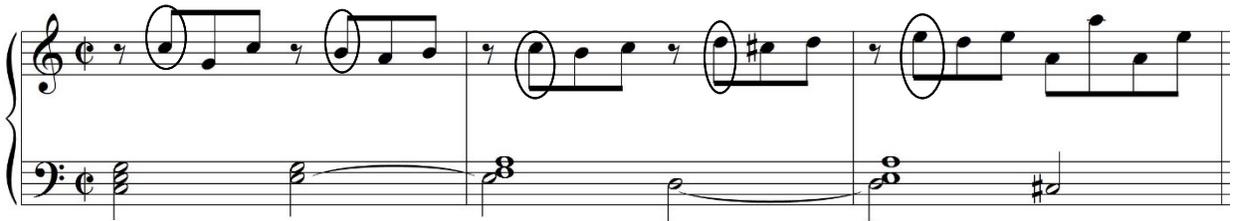
Example 10b. *Psalm 116*, phrase 3.

The final variation of Psalm 36 is the only variation of the three psalms under study that is

constructed with four voices throughout. This variation also demands pedal, a rarity in

Sweelinck's keyboard œuvre. Brief statements of figuration are passed between the hands, and

increasing rhythmic motion towards the end brings a climax to the variation set as a whole (Ex. 11).

Example 11. *Psalm 36*, var. 3, mm. 159-160.
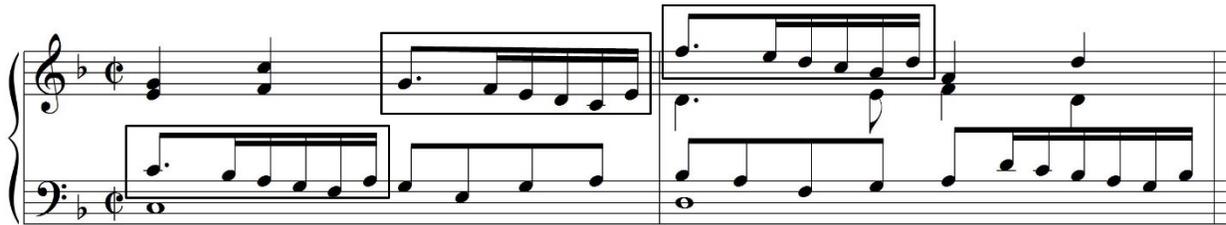
Sweelinck treats the psalm tune, *cantus firmus*, in two principal ways in the keyboard settings. The majority of the variations are long-note *cantus firmus* settings, with unembellished statements of the psalm tune. A few variations employ *coloratura* treatment, with variants on the tune itself. Psalm 140 presents only straightforward statements of the *cantus firmus*, while Psalm 36 includes several very slight embellishments on the tune. However, Psalm 116 is the most ornamented of the three, perhaps because it was a beloved tune at the time.[53] Dirksen suggests that Sweelinck must have improvised on the Genevan psalm tunes more than the Lutheran chorales and chant melodies in his regular recitals, and probably found them much easier to embellish.[54] Although some slight deviation can be found in the second variation of Psalm 116, variations three and four display the most colorful and ornate melodies (Ex. 12a and Ex. 12b).

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[53] Dirksen, *The Keyboard Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck*, 148.
[54] Ibid., 148-149.

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Example 12a. *Psalm 116*, var. 3, mm. 72-78, soprano.
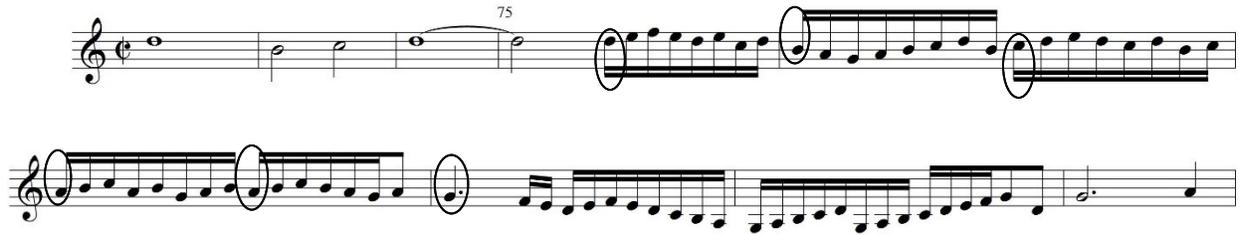
Example 12b. *Psalm 116,* phrase 1.

The fourth variation contains a solo *coloratura* line supported by three or four voices. Sweelinck

uses reiterated motives as a means of elaborating the tune in the final variation (Ex. 13).

Example 13. *Psalm 116*, var. 4, mm. 115-118.
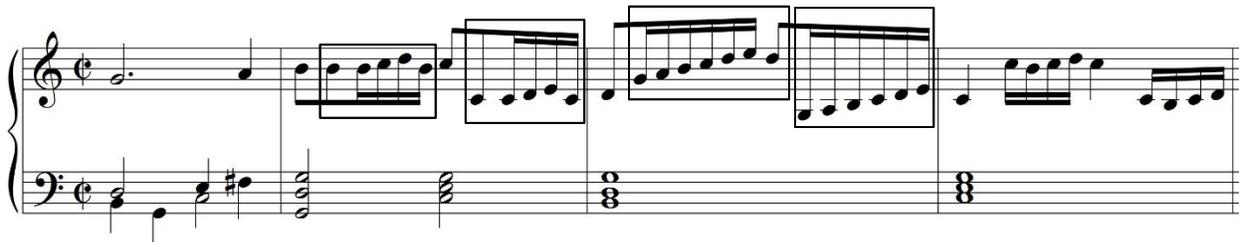
The straightforward presentation of the *cantus firmus* in the first two variations followed by

coloratura treatment in the final two gives a sense of balance to the set.

Several psalm variations contain a migrating *cantus firmus*. In Psalm 36, the *cantus*

firmus is found in a different voice in each variation. It begins in the soprano voice in the first

variation, is placed in the tenor for the second, and can be heard in the bass voice in the final

variation. The psalm tune of Psalm 140 begins in the soprano and migrates to the tenor voice for

the final two variations.

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B. Sub-Genres of the Choral Psalms

The choral settings can be divided into two sub-genres based on Sweelinck's handling of the psalm tune. The *cantus firmus* was treated in two principal ways in the fifteenth century: either it was left unchanged, or it was freely used as a basis for the composition, employing paraphrase technique.[55] An alternate *cantus firmus* technique was the echo psalm, which quotes the melody in full (usually in the soprano), often repeating the tune in another part (commonly the tenor).[56] All three sections of the choral Psalm 36 use *cantus firmus* technique; the psalm tune is placed in the tenor in variations one and three, and in the soprano in variation two. Psalm 116 uses paraphrase technique. Motives based on fragments of the psalm tune infiltrate the texture, but the tune is never stated plainly. Psalm 140, on the other hand, employs the echo technique, sometimes with an ornamented *cantus firmus*. The ornamented psalm tune is clearly stated in the soprano voice, sometimes with slight melodic and rhythmic alteration, followed by interpolations of the tune in between statements of each psalm phrase (Ex. 14a, Ex. 14b, Ex. 14c, and Ex. 14d). The tenor voice always echoes the psalm tune after the soprano statement.

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[55] Elders, *Composers of the Low Countries*, 30. Elders describes paraphrase technique as the means of adopting the cantus firmus as the basis for a new melody using interpolations and ornamentation. He notes that this type of quotation was frequently used by Netherlanders.

[56] van der Kamp, liner notes to *Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: The Complete Psalms*, 38. The terminology "echo psalm" by van der Kamp is problematic. Usually, the tenor reiterates the soprano phrase in *stretto* fashion, before the soprano statement has finished, which does not qualify as an "echo." In addition, the statements between the soprano and tenor are not always identical; therefore, the description "echo" is misleading. Because the "echo psalm" is a legitimate type within the choral psalms, however, van der Kamp's terminology will be employed.

Example 14a. *Psalm 140,* mm. 1-4.[57]

Example 14b. *Psalm 140,* phrase 1.[58]

[57] Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, *Cinquante Pseaumes de David* (Premier Livre des Pseaumes de David), Vol. II of *Opera Omnia*, ed. R. Lagas (Amsterdam: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1965), 148-152. All subsequent examples of the choral Psalm 140 are taken from this edition.

[58] The tune of Psalm 140 was composed by Loys Bourgeois; it appeared in Geneva, 1562. R. Lagas, introduction to Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, *Cinquante Pseaumes de David*, transl. H. J. Wesselink and Nora Smabers, Vol. II of *Opera Omnia,* ed. R. Lagas (Amsterdam: *Verenigning voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis,* 1968), xv.

Example 14c. *Psalm 140*, mm. 20-26.

Example 14d. *Psalm 140*, phrase 2.

V. Stylistic Features of the Keyboard and Choral Psalms

A. Keyboard Psalms: Form

The psalm variations for keyboard display remarkable contrapuntal writing, a result of the vocal polyphonic tradition inherited by Sweelinck. His use of sixteenth-century polyphony along with virtuosic figuration facilitated the growth of idiomatic keyboard music.[59] Unlike the works of his contemporaries, Sweelinck's psalm variations for keyboard omit a harmonized statement of the tune.[60] The variations typically contain two to four voices, often adding a voice in subsequent variations, although the number of voices generally remains constant throughout

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[59] John Butt, "Germany and the Netherlands," 166.
[60] Noske, *Sweelinck,* 104.

each individual variation.[61] Dirksen notes that frequent chaining of variations is a significant

aspect of Sweelinck's style.[62] Of the three psalm variations under study, the second and third

variations of Psalm 36 are labeled "*Versus*" in the manuscript, and, like Sweelinck's choral

version, comprise three independent settings. Both Psalms 116 and 140 contain chained

variations.

B. Voicing Within the Choral Psalms

The choral psalms 36, 116, and 140 are all for five voices, the most common

arrangement, comprising sixty-two psalms from the entire collection.[63] Unlike the keyboard

settings, the choral psalms are not variation sets. Most of the psalms (ninety-nine) employ only

the first stanza of the psalm, including Psalms 116 and 140. Sweelinck set the entire text of

several psalms, including Psalm 36; these have several independent sections. Psalm 36, labeled

"*tout en long"* or "*in full length*," is one of twenty-two settings that include the complete psalm

text.[64]

C. Modality

All of Sweelinck's works are modal; the mode of the psalm tune determined the mode for

the entire composition. The psalm tunes themselves were composed around the middle of the

sixteenth century.[65] Sweelinck's *Composition Regeln* (Rules of Composition), a treatise that

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[61] Noske, *Sweelinck,* 104.
[62] Ibid., 127.
[63] Rasch, "Modality in Sweelinck's Psalms," 159.
[64]Ibid.
[65] Ibid., 148. The Genevan Psalm tunes differ from the modal psalm tones. They were first compiled by Calvin in Strasbourg in conjunction with the 1539 edition of the *Genevan Psalter*; many of them were already familiar to the local congregation in Strasbourg. The melodies were composed by Guillaume Franc, Louis Bourgeois, and an unknown "Maître Pierre."

adapts parts of Zarlino's writings, gives monophonic examples of the twelve modes.[66] The

Genevan psalms tend to use the Dorian and Lydian modes the most often.[67] Genevan Psalm 36

is in Lydian; Psalm 116 uses Mixolydian; while Psalm 140 is Hypoionian.[68]

D. Harmonic Language

The harmonic language present in the psalm variations conforms with the third part of

Zarlino's *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (1573), which Sweelinck translated and adapted.[69] Zarlino

established rules for handling consonances and dissonances, codifying the compositional rules

governing Franco-Flemish polyphony. Portions of the psalms exhibit strict counterpoint, as

described by Zarlino, contrasted with homophonic sections and madrigalisms.[70] Chromaticism

does not appear frequently, and traditionally-handled dissonances are scattered throughout.

Cross-relations also appear from time to time. Sweelinck's compositional focus in the psalm

variations lies in figuration rather than in harmonic experimentation.[71]

E. Aesthetics

The aesthetics at play in Sweelinck's psalm variations embody a trait described by Frits

Noske as *varietas*.[72] An important principle of Renaissance aesthetics, this concept derived from

classical rhetoric. Sweelinck's abundance of motifs and the rhythmic contrast present in his

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[66] Rasch, "Modality in Sweelinck's Psalms," 154.
[67] Ibid., 157.
[68] Ibid., 158.
[69] Tollefsen and Dirksen, "Sweelinck," in *Grove Music Online* (accessed December 8, 2013).
[70] "Madrigalism" is defined by the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* as "the use of musical gesture(s) in a work with an actual or implied text to reflect, often pictorially, the literal or figurative meaning of a word of phrase." Tim Carter, "Word-painting." *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/30568 (accessed January 7, 2014).
[71] Robert L. Tusler, *The Organ Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck* (Bilthoven: A. B. Creyghton, 1958), 82.
[72] Noske, *Sweelinck*, 128-129.

variations exhibit *varietas*.[73] Within the variety, however, Sweelinck unifies the music by tying

the figuration to the psalm tunes themselves.   An emphasis on elaboration of pre-existent

material over new invention is evident in the psalm variations.[74]

F. Figuration

1. English Virginalist Influence

Sweelinck's keyboard writing is replete with figuration that he borrowed in part from the

English virginalists.[75] English figuration also encompassed a significant amount of

ornamentation. Oblique strokes indicating embellishment appeared in English sources by the

early sixteenth century.[76] The English were forward-looking in this regard; these

embellishments helped to differentiate instrumental music from vocal music.[77] Various English

features surface in Sweelinck's figuration. Triadic outlines were common in the works of

Redford, Tallis, and Bull (Ex. 15a and Ex. 15b).[78]

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[73] Ibid., 129.
[74] van der Kamp, liner notes to *Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: The Complete Psalms*, 37.
[75] Kenneth Kreitner, et al., "Ornaments," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/49928pg3 (accessed December 3, 2013).
[76] Ibid. The most common of these symbols, the double stroke, was the motivic idiom that Sweelinck used and transmitted to the North German school; J. A. Reincken mentions it in his *Hortus musicus* (1687). (Kreitner, et al.)
[77] Curtis, *Sweelinck's Keyboard Music,* 126.
[78] Ibid., 127-128.

Example 15a. Thomas Tallis, *Felix namque* (1564), mm. 211-216.[79]

Example 15b. Sweelinck, *Erbarm dich mein O Herre Gott*, var. 6, mm. 228-230.

Often, a three-note repeated figure may result in rhythmic displacement, another English trait

cultivated by Tallis and Byrd (Ex. 16a and Ex. 16b).[80]

Example 16a. Thomas Tallis, *Felix namque* (1562), mm. 87-88.[81]

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[79] Thomas Tallis, *Felix namque* (1564), from *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, Vol. 2, ed. J.A. Fuller Maitland and W. Barclay Squire (New York: Dover Publications, 1963), 5-6.
[80] Curtis, *Sweelinck's Keyboard Music*, 128-129.
[81] Tallis, *Felix namque* (1562), from *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, Vol.1, ed. J.A. Fuller Maitland and W. Barclay Squire (New York: Dover Publications, 1963), 430.

Example 16b. Sweelinck, *Toccata a 4 voce*, mm. 33-36.[82]
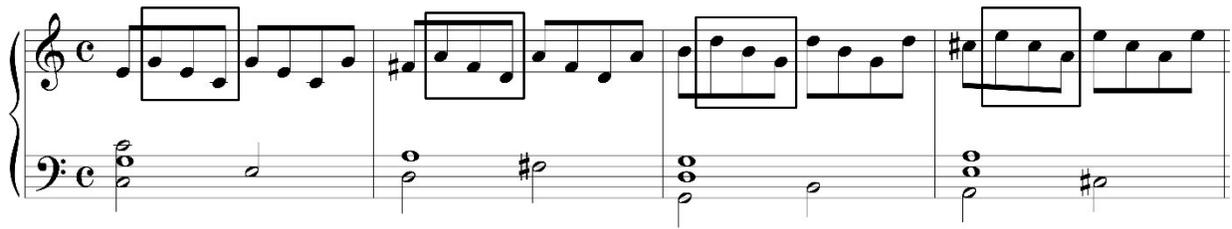
Rapid alternation of chord tones and repeated notes also occur in Sweelinck's figuration, techniques used extensively by John Bull (Ex. 17a and Ex. 17b).[83]

Example 17a. John Bull, *Walsingham*, var. 8, m. 1.[84]
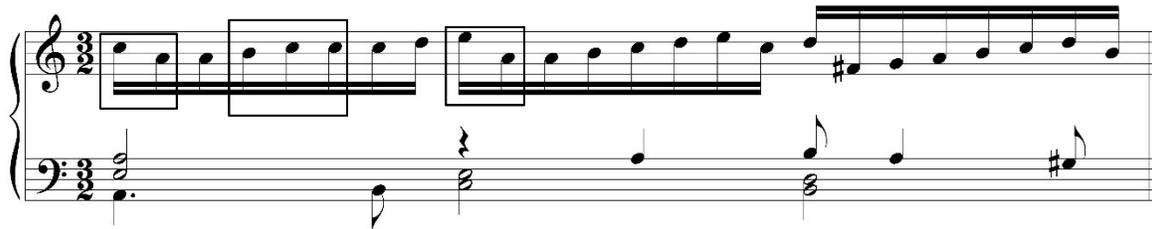
Example 17b. Sweelinck, *Psalm 116*, var. 3, mm. 101-102.
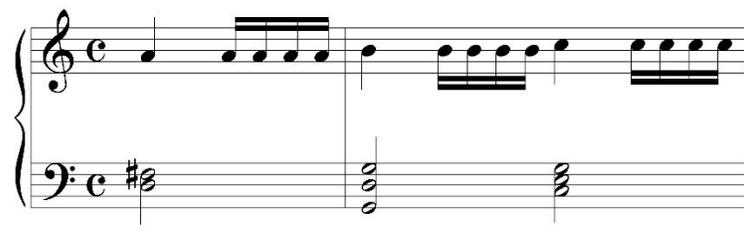
Sweelinck adopted and refined the English language of figures; his figuration exhibits a high level of intricacy and often bears close relationship to the psalm tune.

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[82] Calvert Johnson, ed., *The Netherlands*, Vol. 11 of *Historical Organ Techniques and Repertoire*, ed. Wayne Leupold (Colfax, NC: Wayne Leupold Editions, Inc., 2012), 134.

[83] Curtis, *Sweelinck's Keyboard Music*, 132.

[84] John Bull, *Walsingham*, from *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, Vol. 1, ed. J.A. Fuller Maitland and W. Barclay Squire (New York: Dover Publications, 1963), 4.

2. Examples of relationships between figuration and the psalm tune

The figuration in Sweelinck's psalm variations is extensive and tightly controlled, and it is often based on the psalm tune itself. Sweelinck uses figuration in a variety of ways in relation to the independent phrases within his variation sets. [85] First, figuration can change with each new phrase of the psalm tune. An example of this technique occurs in the first variation of Psalm 36, where each phrase is associated with a different motive. The first motive derives from the initial psalm tune phrase (Ex. 18a and Ex. 18b).

Example 18a. *Psalm 36,* phrase 1.[86]

Example 18b. *Psalm 36*, mm. 1-5.

It is inverted in mm. 3-4 (Ex. 18b). Successive statements of this motive are incorporated throughout the remainder of the first psalm tune phrase. The downward shape of the second phrase is reflected in new figuration in mm. 7-9 (Ex. 19a and Ex. 19b).

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[85] In a description of the figuration in Sweelinck's variations, Willi Apel uses the word "tasteless." However, the close relationship of figuration to the psalm tune shows mature artistry. Found in Willi Apel, *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700*, transl. and rev. Hans Tischler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972, 334.

[86] The tune of Psalm 36 was composed Matthias Greiter, Strasbourg, 1539. R. Lagas, introduction, xv.

Example 19a. *Psalm 36,* phrase 2.
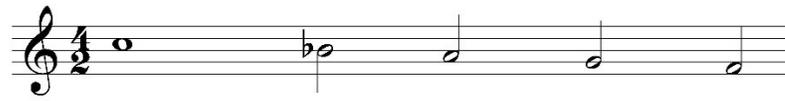
Example 19b. *Psalm 36*, var. 1, mm. 7-9.
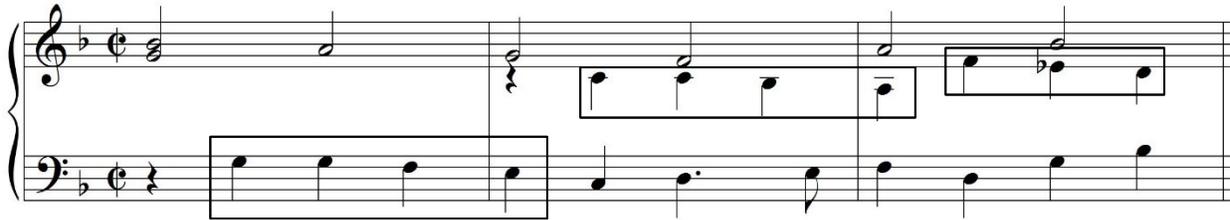
Just before the third psalm tune phrase is introduced, a new motive enters in the tenor, foreshadowing the third phrase (Ex. 20 and Ex. 21).

Example 20. *Psalm 36*, var. 1, mm. 10-15.
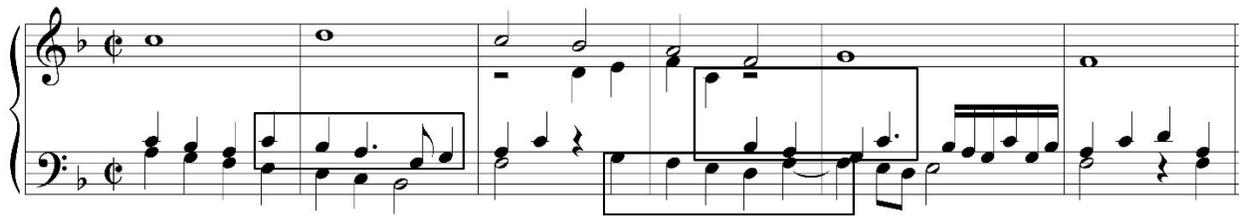
The tune of Psalm 36 is tightly constructed. It is composed of twelve phrases; the initial three are repeated (Ex. 21).

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Example 21. *Psalm 36*, phrases 1-6.
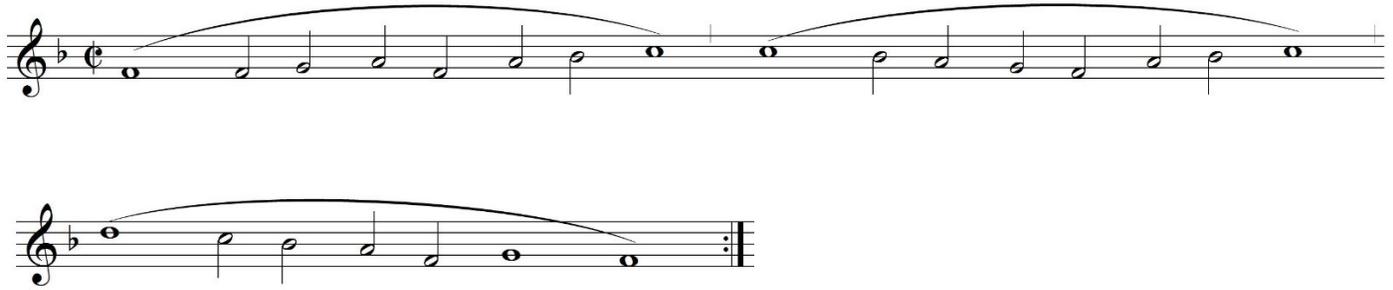
It is not by coincidence that Sweelinck makes use of the structure of the tune in his figuration: while phrases one through three each contain one distinct motive, phrases four through six each include two distinct types of figuration (Exs. 22a, 22b, and 22c; two types of figuration within each psalm tune phrase are bracketed).

Example 22a. *Psalm 36*, var. 1, mm. 15-20, psalm tune phrase four.
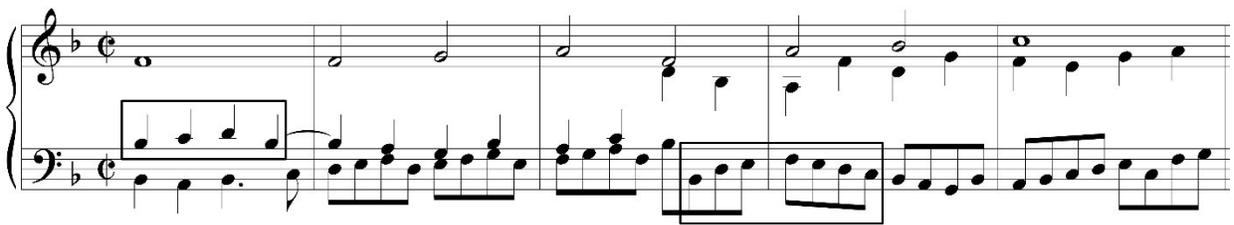
Example 22b. *Psalm 36*, var. 1, mm. 21-25, psalm tune phrase five.
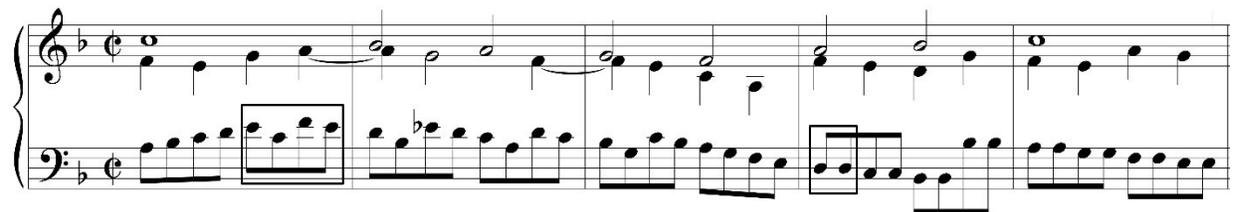
Example 22c. *Psalm 36*, var. 1, mm. 26-30, psalm tune phrase six.
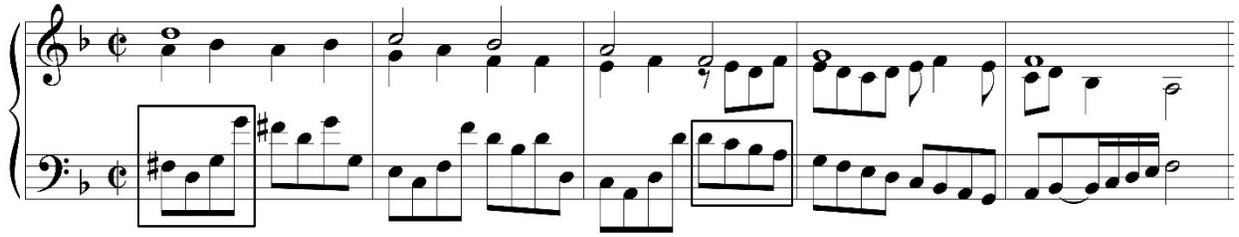
Numerical symbolism plays a role in the correspondence of figures with the psalm tune phrases in the keyboard setting of Psalm 140. The third variation exhibits the number three in multiple ways, possibly referencing the Trinity. It opens with three voices, and begins with parallel thirds (Ex. 23a). The accompanying motives appear and recede rapidly; the first three psalm tune phrases—all but the final phrase—have three accompanying motives each (Ex. 23b). For example, in mm. 60-65, the second phrase of the psalm, the first motive comprises sixteenths with underlying eighth note motion (carried over from the first phrase); the second motive consists of an eighth followed by two sixteenths, and the third motive uses dotted rhythms.

Example 23a. *Psalm 140*, var. 3, mm. 53-56.
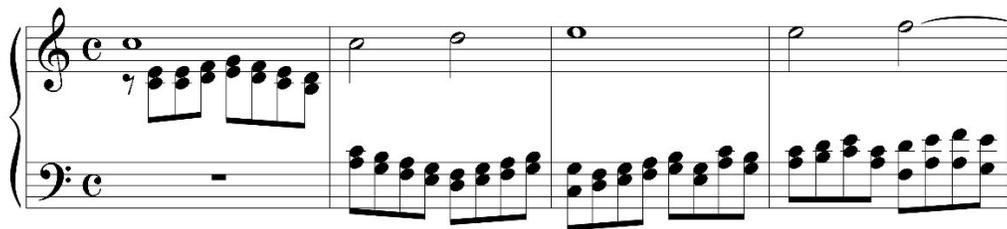
Example 23b. *Psalm 140*, mm. 60-65.

Next, Sweelinck organizes the figuration with rhythmic figures derived from the psalm tune. In Psalm 140, the syncopated lower voice in mm. 7-10 derives from the first phrase of the psalm tune (Ex. 24a and Ex. 24b).

Example 24a. *Psalm 140*, phrase 1.

Example 24b. *Psalm 140*, var. 1, mm. 7-10.

In the choral setting of Psalm 140, syncopation derived from the first line is present in multiple voices, adding rhythmic interest to the setting (Ex. 25).

Example 25. *Psalm 140*, mm. 43-47.

Next, the figuration is often composed of motives and intervals based on the psalm tune itself.   Often, the figures are reiterated using the technique of *vorimitation*, such as in mm. 11-12 of the first variation of Psalm 36. *Vorimitation* in the tenor precedes the third psalm phrase, resulting in a figure that appears successively in the bass and alto voices (Ex. 26a).

Example 26a. *Psalm 36*, var. 1, mm. 10-15.

The second and third variations of Psalm 36 open with *vorimitation* in canon. In the third

variation, *vorimitation* appears with the start of the seventh phrase, which contains three repeated

notes, reflecting the repeated notes in the psalm tune (Ex. 26b and Ex. 26c).

Example 26b. *Psalm 36*, var. 3, mm. 164-166.
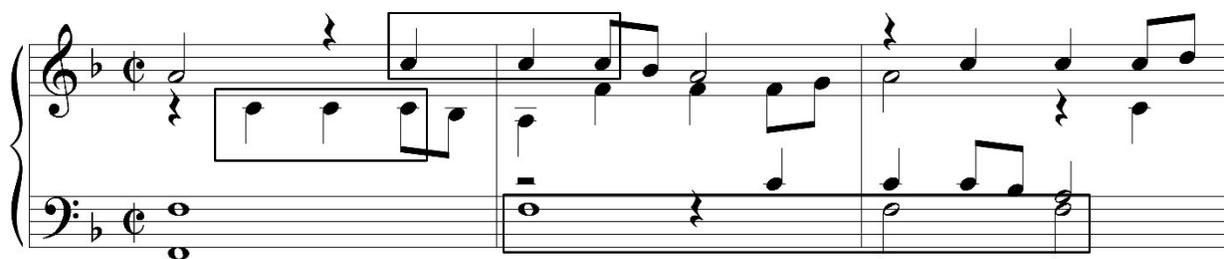
Example 26c. *Psalm 36*, phrase 7.

Imitation in Psalm 140, variation two, appears in the accompaniment near the end of the final

phrase, which Sweelinck then develops into a motive (Ex. 27a and Ex. 27b).

Example 27a. *Psalm 140*, var. 2, mm. 49-50.
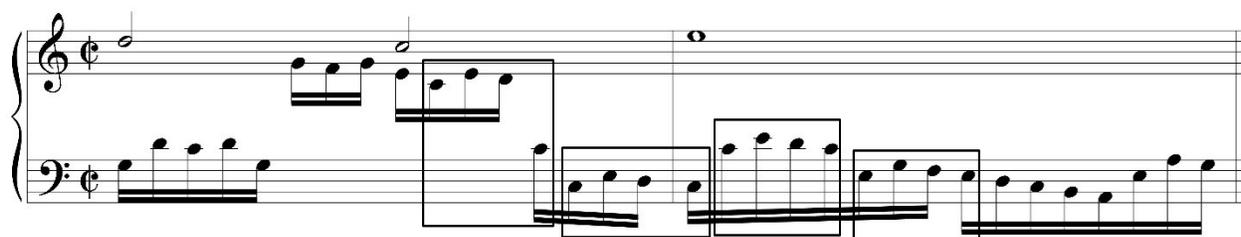
Example 27b. *Psalm 140*, phrase 4 (bracket indicates the portion seen in figuration, Ex. 27a).

Imitation plays a prevalent role in the choral psalms. Similar to the keyboard settings, the voices iterate a motive briefly—in succession—before a new idea is introduced. Psalm 36, part 1, opens with a motive in the *altus* that is imitated in each voice except the *tenor,* since it carries the psalm tune (Ex. 28).

Example 28. *Psalm 36*, part 1, mm. 1-7.[87]

In m. 17, the *bassus* initiates a new motive (indicated with a bracket) with the text "*Cartant se plaist*," later heard in each voice (Ex. 29).

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[87] Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, *Livre Second Des Pseaumes de David,* vol. III of *Opera Omnia*, ed. R. Lagas (Amsterdam: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1966), 87-101. All subsequent examples of the choral setting of Psalm 36 are taken from this edition.

Example 29. *Psalm 36,* part 1, mm. 16-19.

Sometimes imitation stems from the *cantus firmus*; in the same variation, the fifth psalm tune phrase is accompanied with a motive derived from the tune (Ex. 30a and Ex. 30b).

Example 30a. *Psalm 36,* part 1, mm. 20-23.

Example 30b. *Psalm 36,* phrase 5, seen in *tenor*, Ex. 30a.

Imitation is used more strictly throughout Psalm 116; the opening motives permeate the texture (Ex. 31a and Ex.31b).

Example 31a. *Psalm 116*, mm. 1-4.[88]

Example 31b. *Psalm 116*, phrase 1.

[88] Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, *Livre Quatriesme et Conclusional Des Pseaumes de David,* vol. V of *Opera Omnia,* ed. Jan Van Biezen and Randall H. Tollefsen (Amsterdam: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1988), 74-77. All subsequent examples of the choral setting of Psalm 116 are taken from this edition.

A distinctive rhythm in the *cantus* part, m. 15, is elaborated during the next six measures (Ex. 32).

Example 32. *Psalm 116*, mm. 15-17.

Intervals based on the psalm tune itself can be seen throughout the figuration. In the second variation of the keyboard setting of Psalm 36, thirds figure prominently, stemming from the thirds in the psalm tune; all but the last three phrases of the psalm tune include a leap of a third (Ex. 33).

Example 33. *Psalm 36.*

The treble voice in m. 86 contains ascending thirds, and the figuration in the following measures ascends a third in stepwise motion in both voices (Ex. 34).

Example 34. *Psalm 36*, var. 2, mm. 86-88.
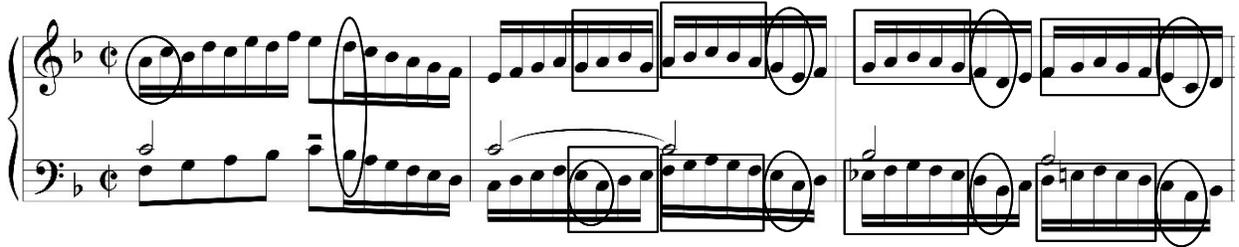
Measures 90-96 display many stepwise thirds in the soprano voice; stepwise thirds also occur in mm. 111-115 (Ex. 35 and Ex. 36).

Example 35. *Psalm 36,* var. 2, mm. 90-96.

Example 36. *Psalm 36*, var. 2, mm. 111-115.

In mm. 118-19, Sweelinck harmonizes the psalm tune with thirds (Ex. 37).

Example 37. *Psalm 36*, var. 2, mm. 118-119.

Figuration in the final phrase contains many fourths, reflecting the ascent of a fourth in the final

psalm phrase. Fourths are also present in the penultimate measure of the variation, in the

soprano line between f and c and between e-flat and b-flat; the alto voice imitates this phrase in

turn (Ex. 38a and Ex. 38b).

Example 38a. *Psalm 36*, var. 2, mm. 122-127.

Example 38b. *Psalm 36*, final phrase, seen in tenor, Ex. 38a.

The third variation of Psalm 140 opens with thirds in the accompaniment, undoubtedly taken from the opening three pitches of the psalm tune (Ex. 39a and Ex. 39b).

Example 39a. *Psalm 140*, phrase 1.

Example 39b. *Psalm 140*, var. 3, mm. 53-54.

The second measure of Psalm 116 contains a stepwise descent of a fifth in the accompaniment, taken from the shape of the first psalm tune phrase, which begins on D5 and descends to G4 (Ex. 40a and 40b).

Example 40a. *Psalm 116*, phrase 1.

Example 40b. *Psalm 116*, mm. 1-3.
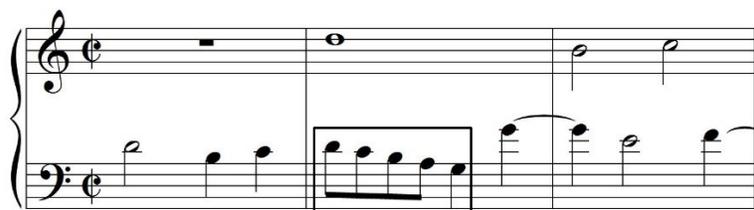
This motive occurs multiple times within the first psalm tune phrase (Ex. 41).

Example 41. *Psalm 116*, mm. 5-7.
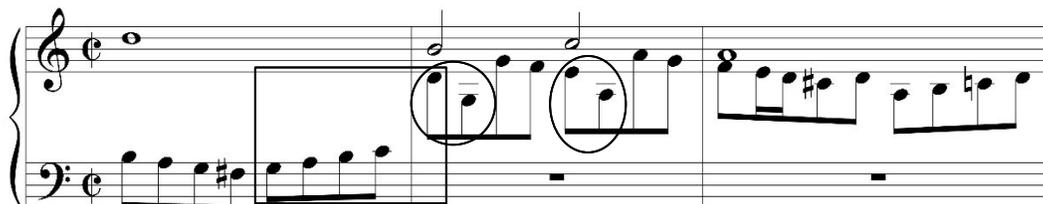
The second variation of Psalm 116 is replete with thirds, foreshadowing the opening interval of the second psalm tune phrase (Ex. 42).

Example 42. *Psalm 116*, mm. 40-43.

In the choral setting of Psalm 36, part three, the repeated pitches at the beginning and in the middle of the eighth psalm tune phrase are displayed in the surrounding figuration (Ex. 43a and Ex. 43b).

Example 43a. *Psalm 36*, phrase 8.

Example 43b. *Psalm 36*, part 3, mm. 26-28.

Finally, the figuration also parallels the melodic contour of the psalm tune phrase, without necessarily duplicating the pitches of the psalm tune. In the second variation of Psalm 140, the constant sixteenth-note motion is scalar in the third phrase of the *cantus firmus*, undoubtedly related to the descent of a full octave, G5 to G4, in third phrase of the psalm tune (Ex. 44a and Ex. 44b).

Example 44a. *Psalm 140*, phrase 3.
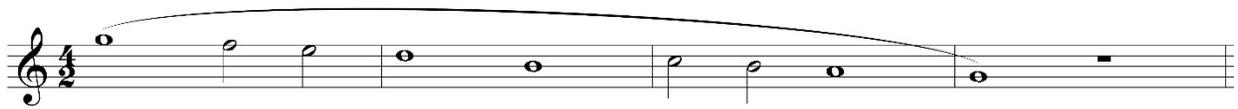
Example 44b. *Psalm 140*, var. 2, mm. 40-41.
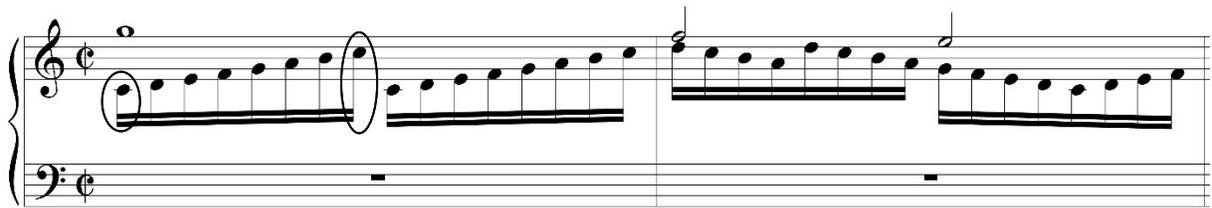
In Psalm 140, variation one, the opening phrases of the lower voice mirror the ascent of the psalm tune (Ex. 45).

Example 45. *Psalm 140* var. 1, mm. 1-2.
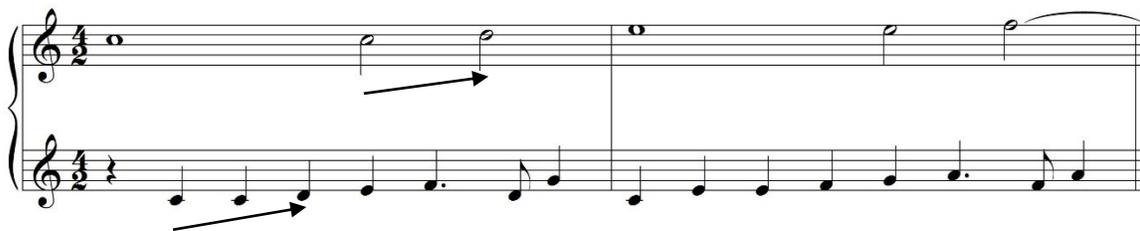
Psalm 116 exhibits rising figuration along with the ascent of the second psalm tune phrase, spanning over two octaves (Ex. 46).

Example 46. *Psalm 116*, var. 1, mm. 9-11.
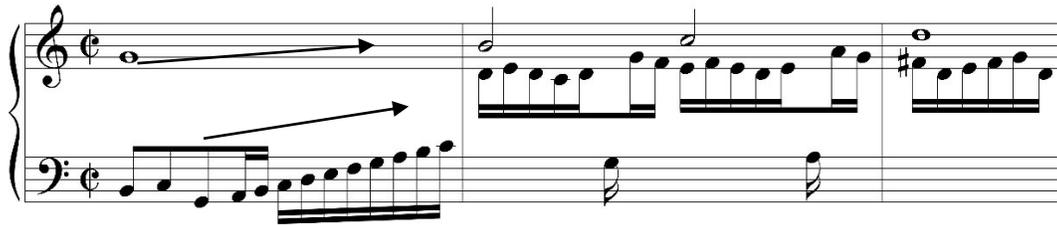
Another instance occurs in the second variation of Psalm 116; the figuration aligns with the contour of the psalm tune phrase (Ex. 47a and Ex. 47b).

Example 47a. *Psalm 116*, beginning of phrase 2, shown in soprano voice, Ex. 47b.

Example 47b. *Psalm 116*, var. 2, mm. 40-43.
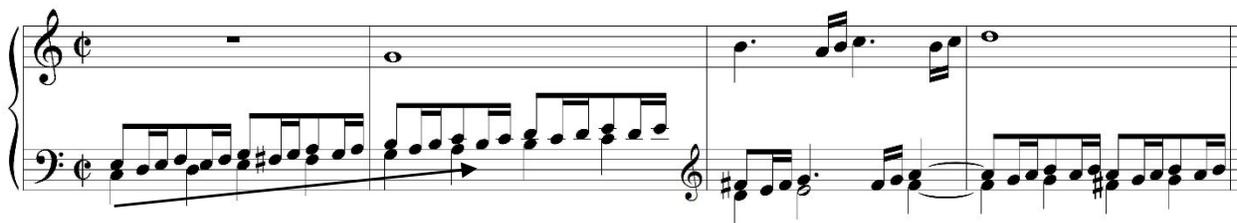
The overarching phrase structure of the entire psalm tune can reflect how the figuration is adapted to the contour of each phrase. For example, each phrase of Psalm 36 contains a leap of some sort, except for the final three, which all move only by step (Ex. 48a).

<p style="text-align:center">Example 48a. Psalm 36.</p>
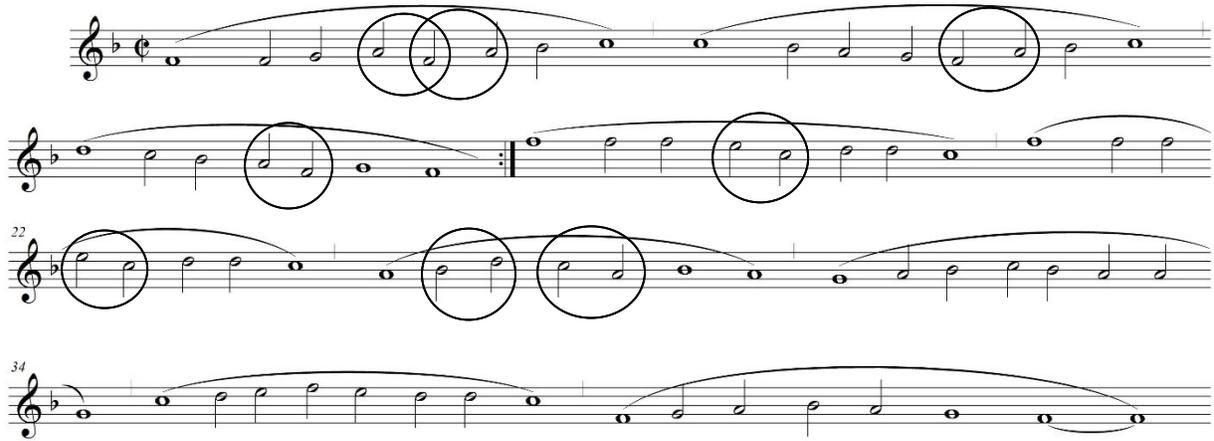
In the second variation of the keyboard setting of Psalm 36, scalar figuration elides with the final

psalm tune phrases to emphasize their scalar movement (Ex. 48b and Ex. 48c).

<p style="text-align:center">Example 48b. *Psalm 36,* penultimate phrase.</p>

Example 48c. *Psalm 36,* var. 2, mm. 116-121.

Sweelinck's figuration in the psalm variations may appear non-methodical. However, a close
examination of the keyboard figuration reveals a strong motivic correspondence between
ornament and *cantus firmus*, an important organizational element in the music.

G. Triplet Rhythms

Sometimes the *cantus firmus* is associated with triplet rhythms. In the keyboard setting
of Psalm 140, triplets occur at the end of the fourth variation (Ex. 49) and even more extensively
at the end of the final variation, giving a brilliant affect to the concluding psalm tune phrase.

Example 49. *Psalm 140*, var. 4, mm. 105-110.
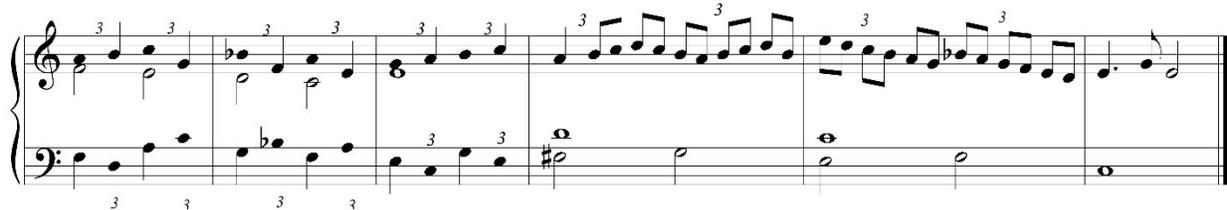
In one instance, triplets accompany an identical psalm tune phrase in both the keyboard setting
and the choral setting of Psalm 36. Towards the end of the second part of the choral setting,

triplets surround the phrase "*O que tes graces nobles sont*" ("O, how noble are thy graces") (Ex. 50). Duple and triple meters are both superimposed and juxtaposed.

Example 50. *Psalm 36*, part 2, mm. 21-23.

Similarly, in the second variation of the keyboard setting of Psalm 36, triplet rhythms coincide with the same psalm tune phrase (Ex. 51a). Duple and triplet sections are juxtaposed in the keyboard setting as well, since the second half of the psalm tune phrase uses duple meter (Ex. 51b).

Example 51a. *Psalm 36*, var. 2, mm. 97-99.

Example 51b. *Psalm 36*, var. 2, mm. 101-104.

Example 51c. *Psalm 36*, phrase 7. Seen in examples 51a and 51b.

A rhythmic parallel exists between the keyboard setting and the choral setting; duple and triple meters are associated with an identical psalm tune phrase.

H. Text-painting

Some instances of text-painting occur in the keyboard psalms, although much of the figuration is based on the structure of the tune itself. In the second variation of Psalm 36, during the text "*Tes jugements semblent hauts monts, Un abysme test actes bons*" ("Your just acts surmount mountains, your judgments reach to the deepest depths"), the figuration ascends rapidly, covering a twelfth in just one measure; the following scalar figuration adheres to the text, giving an aural sense of height and depth (Ex. 52).[89]

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[89]Wiggins, liner notes to *Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: The Complete Psalms*, 87.

Example 52. *Psalm 36*, var. 2, mm. 84-86.
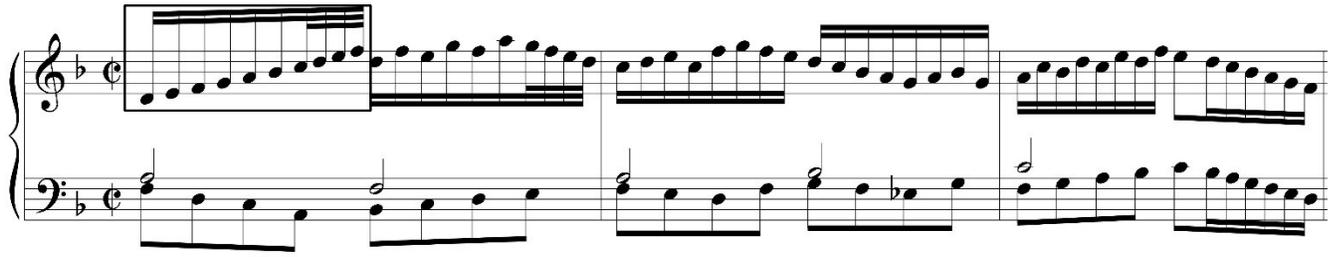
The choral psalms are replete with text-painting. In the first variation of Psalm 36, the downward scales on "*fin*" and "*fuyant*" correspond with the text "*Son parler est nuisant et fin*" ("His words are frauds and lies") and "*Doctrine va fuyant, a fin*" ("at good and wise he sneers") (Ex. 53a and Ex. 53b).[90]

Example 53a. *Psalm 36,* part 1, m. 28.
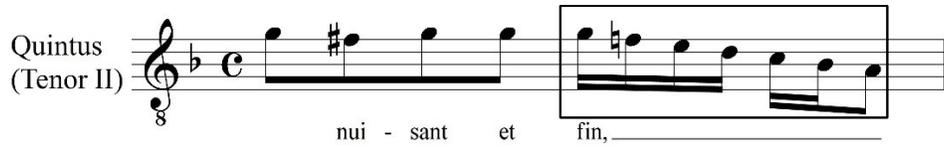
Example 53b. *Psalm 36*, part 1, m. 31.
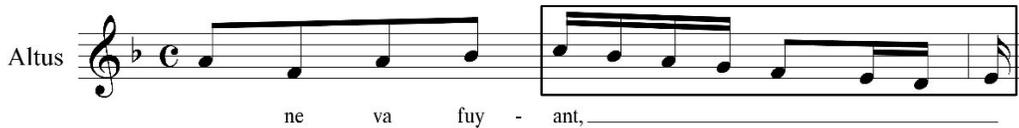
The line "*Au chemin tors est arresté*" ("He sets his feet on crooked paths") is vividly depicted by jagged, syncopated rhythms (Ex. 54).[91]

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[90] Wiggins, liner notes to *Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: The Complete Psalms*, 86.
[91] Ibid., 87.

Example 54. *Psalm 36*, part 1, mm. 38-41.

In the second variation of Psalm 36, an upward leap accompanies "*touché aux cieux*" ("fills the skies") in mm. 7-9 (Ex. 55).

Example 55. *Psalm 36*, part 2, mm. 7-9.

"*Hauts monts*" ("high mountains") are illustrated in a similar fashion (Ex. 56).

Example 56. *Psalm 36*, part 2, m. 15.

Another example of text-painting is the flowing scalar passages found in conjunction with "*fleuve*" ("river") (Ex. 57a and Ex. 57b).

Example 57a. *Psalm 36*, part 2, m. 33, *quintus*.

Example 57b. *Psalm 36*, part 2, m. 34, *bassus*.

Likewise, the phrase "*pour boire*" ("to drink") beginning in the *altus* in mm. 36-37 is illustrated with a fluid gesture (Ex. 58).

Example 58. *Psalm 36*, part 2, mm. 36-37, *altus*.
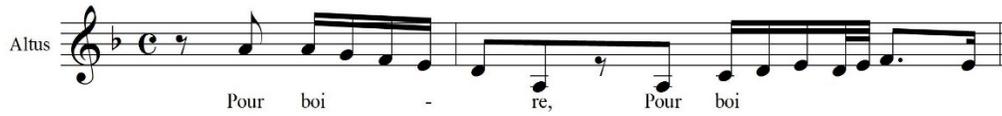
In the third part of Psalm 36, "*les iniques cherront*" ("the wicked are overthrown"), a descending scalar figure appears consecutively in each voice, conjuring a spiraling motion (Ex. 59).[92] Sensitive handling of the text is evident; the settings convey vivid imagery and careful declamation.

Example 59. *Psalm 36*, part 3, mm. 33-35.

VI. Conclusion: Influence of the Psalm Settings

The lasting influence of Sweelinck's teaching and keyboard writing cannot be over-estimated. His application of sophisticated polyphony and subtle figuration to instrumental writing formed the basis for the North European baroque keyboard style.[93] The most significant

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[92] Wiggins, liner notes to *Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: The Complete Psalms*, 87.
[93] Dirksen, *The Keyboard Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck*, 608.

Dutch composer to follow in the style of Sweelinck was Anthoni van Noordt (1619-1675), whose *Tabulatuur-boek* continued Sweelinck's mature, contrapuntal language and, in addition, used obbligato pedal parts. His ten psalm variations resemble those of Sweelinck. Sweelinck's emphasis on the art of variation was further developed by his German students. Samuel Scheidt composed variations on both sacred chorales and secular works.[94] Jacob Praetorius also composed variation sets, but only on sacred melodies.[95]

Sweelinck was most famous for his vocal output during his lifetime. His masterful setting of the entire *Genevan Psalter* exhibits an abundance of melodic and rhythmic nuance, careful text declamation, and mature contrapuntal writing. These pieces deserve additional scholarly attention and many more performances. The psalm-based works by Sweelinck are a monument of their time. At the beginning of Sweelinck's *Livre troisieme des Pseaumes de David,* an anonymous French poet writes the following:

> Sweelinck marries the notes so skillfully with the words / that the body, enchanted by this sweet harmony, / follows the spirit and is thereby brought to life. // David delighted the soul with his words / and Sweelinck has invigorated the body with his music / and breathed new life into both body and spirit.[96]

Likewise, may new life be breathed into Sweelinck's psalm-based organ and choral music.

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[94] Ibid., 316-17.
[95] Ibid., 316.
[96] van der Kamp, liner notes to *Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: The Complete Psalms*, 40-41.

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