Jean L'Héritier

Alma redemptoris mater

(Marian antiphon)

A.A.T.Bar.B.

ed. S. Biazeck

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

Sources: Cappella Sistina, MS 26, ff. 143v-147r, 1515 – 1521.

Secundus liber cum quinque vocibus. Antonio Gardane, Venice, 1539.

Originally notated a perfect fourth higher in the following clefs: G2, G2, C2, C3, C4.
Cue-sized accidentals within the staves are editorial *musica ficta,* and remain in force for the duration of one measure.
Cautionary accidentals are editorial.
Ligatures are exclusive to Capp. Sist. MS 26 whilst all *sesquialtera* notation is from Gardane's edition, which has no ligatures.

Musica ficta: Leading-note cadences, whether dissonant or not, are approached from a linear perspective, and as such, are easily discernible from a single part; signed by return from above immediately before the final syllable of a musical and/or textual phrase.

Sometimes where there is a strong feeling for a cadence, one finds a tail in the melody after the note on which the final syllable falls.

No attempt has been made to perfect harmonic tritones (typical of this period) by the application of editorial *musica ficta*, a practice falsely assumed to be the habit of singers during the Renaissance.[1] In nearly all cases requiring the application of a flat, the melodic (linear) content of a phrase (often chant-related) determines practice. In a few others, the harmonic context clearly holds sway. Interestingly, there is no theoretical evidence for avoiding a melodic tritone by raising the lower note, only by lowering the upper, and in such cases, hexachord mutation was not a priority (c.f. *Altus,* b. 42 & b. 66).

Jean L'Héritier (c. 1480 - after 1551) was a native of the diocese of Thérouanne, in the Pas-de-Calais, France, who spent most of his working life in Italy (Rome, Mantua, Verona and possibly Venice) as a leading exponent of the Franco-Flemish style of High Renaissance. Today he is known for a handful of motets, foremost amongst which are the five-voice *Nigra sum* (upon which Palestrina wrote a Mass) and *Surrexit pastor bonus*. Of the 48 documented motets, not all are extant, whilst a number have been attributed to other composers – Jean Mouton, Adrian Willaert and Philippe Verdelot. In style they are considered transitional, ranging from the mature counterpoint of Josquin Desprez (of whom he is said to be have been a pupil) to the smooth and evenly spaced imitative style exemplified by Palestrina in the late Renaissance. In addition, only one Mass survives, along with four settings of the *Magnificat* and a couple of *chansons*. However, his reputation was high enough to ensure the publication of his motets throughout Europe in at least 66 manuscripts and 45 printed collections in countries as far afield as Spain, Austria, Bohemia, and Poland, as well as France and Italy.

Alma redemptoris mater is the Marian antiphon that since the 13th century has been recited at Compline from the first Sunday in Advent until the Feast of the Purification (Feb. 2). Following revision of the Liturgy of the Hours, it may be used throughout the year.

The text, composed by Herman Contractus (Herman the Cripple) (1013-1054), was assembled from phrases taken from the writings of St. Fulgentius, St. Epiphanius, and St. Irenaeus.

L'Héritier's five-voice setting is in two parts and is modelled on the Mode 5 festive tone chant antiphon[2] with occasional references to the simple tone.[3] The counterpoint is typical of the aforementioned transitional style: at times looking back towards Josquin whilst anticipating the Roman School of the late 16th century. L'Héritier eschews *cantus firmus* treatment in favour of free paraphrase, where at each new point of imitation the melody is outlined in all parts.

Translation:

Nurturing Mother of the Redeemer, who remain the open portal of heaven and the star of the sea, come to the aid of your fallen people, who are anxious to rise again.

You who, to the astonishment of all creation, brought forth your holy Creator while being a virgin both before and afterwards, claiming for yourself from Gabriel's mouth that 'Hail', have mercy on us sinners.

Simon Biazeck, June 8, 2015.

[1] In the often-misinterpreted discussion on the sixth tone in his treatise on mode, Johannes Tinctoris states that false concords should be avoided even if it necessitates the use of a linear tritone. However, he is not talking about performers' accidentals. Rather, he is referring to the rules of composition, knowing full well what singers' practice was, and advising composers (in his rather schoolmasterly tone!) to observe the rules and to be clear in their notation. In this way he is actually confirming common practice, and we should feel reasonably sure that fifteenth and sixteenth century composers knew exactly what they were doing, and were no more constrained by the rules of counterpoint than composers or singers of any other age.

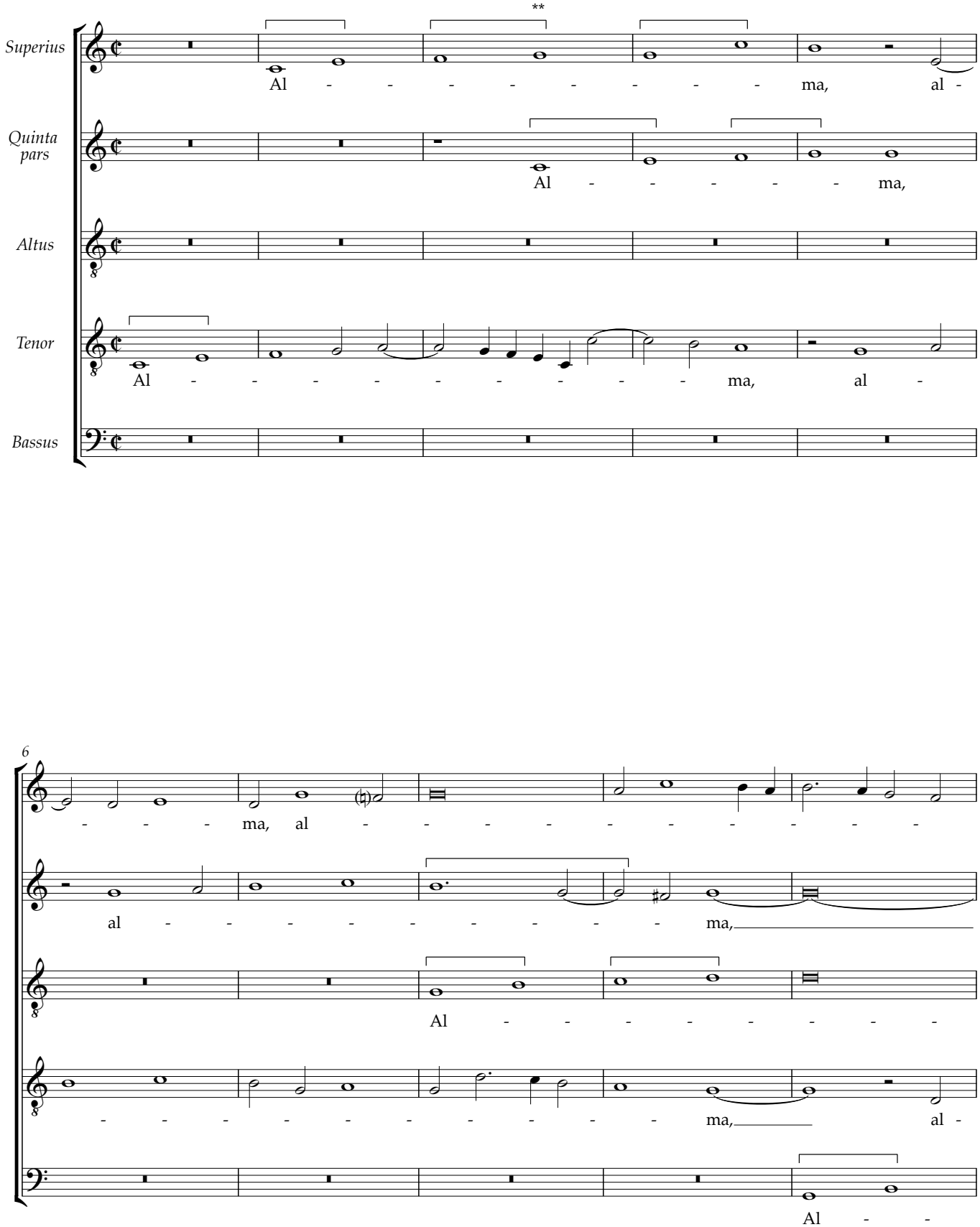
[2] http://gregobase.selapa.net/chant.php?id=4694

[3] http://gregobase.selapa.net/chant.php?id=1851

Alma redemptoris mater

Edited by Simon Biazeck

Jean L'Héritier
(c. 1480 - after 1551)



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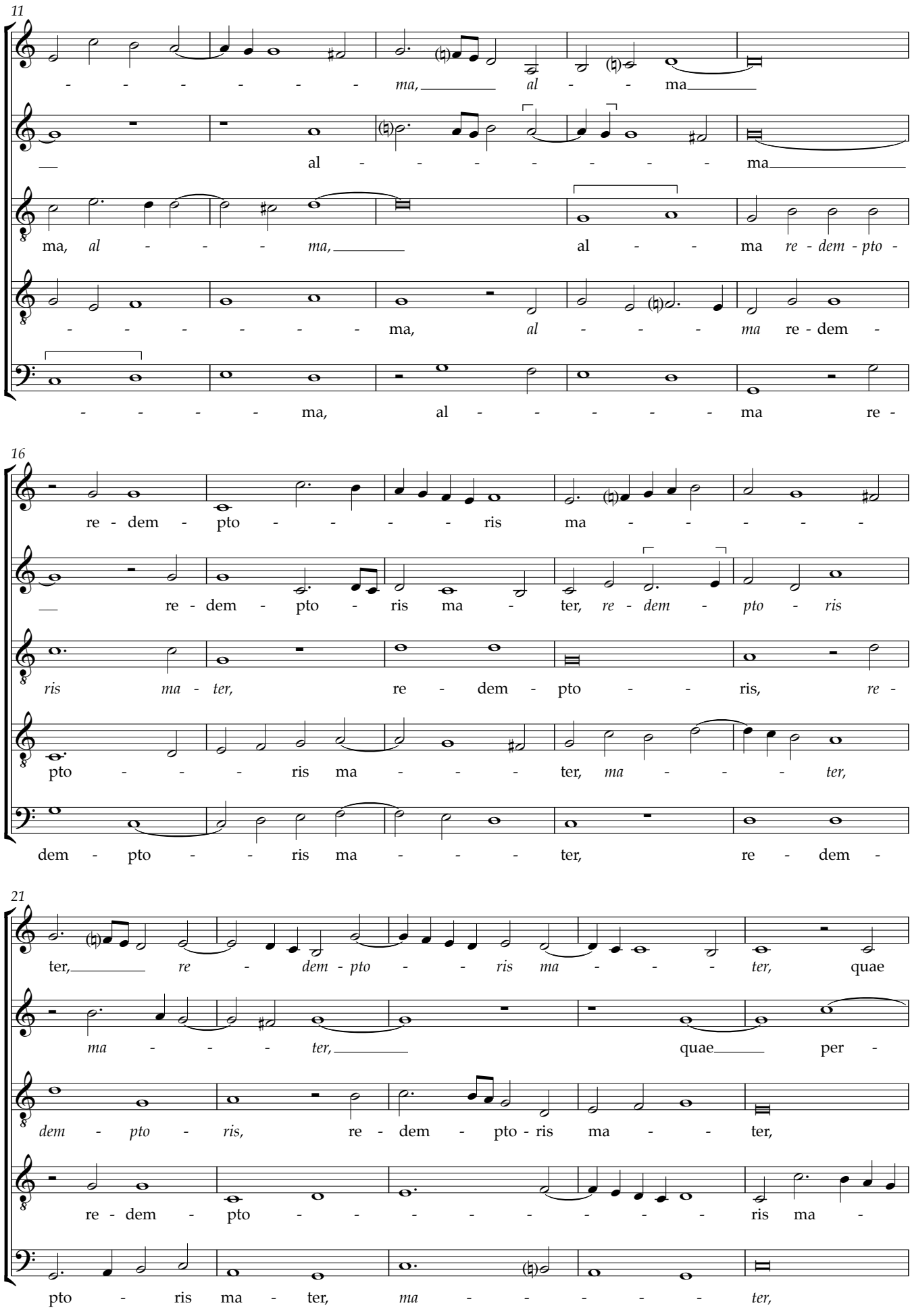
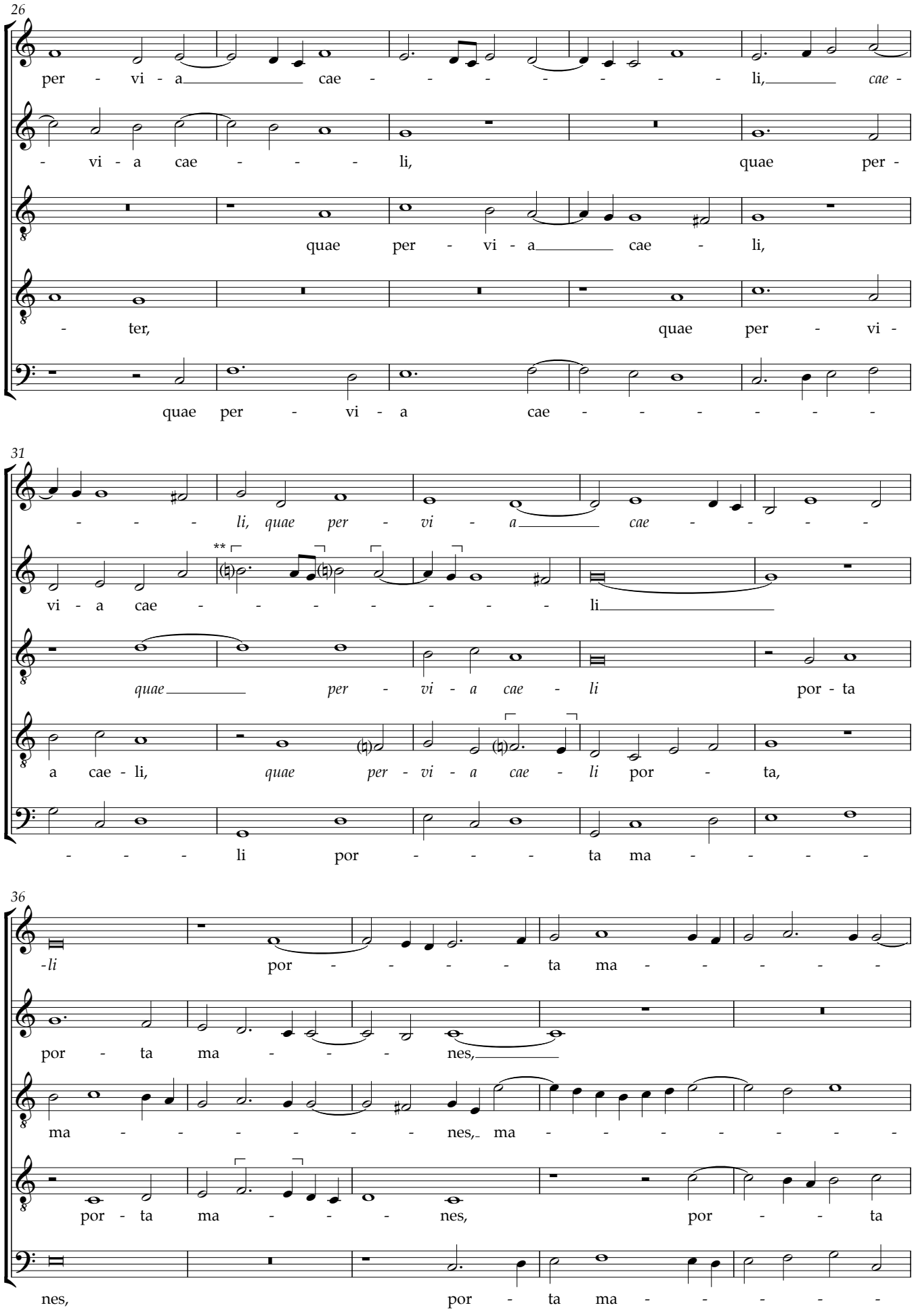

11
- - - - - - - ma, al - - ma
al - - - - - - - - ma
ma, al - - - - ma, al - - ma re - dem - pto -
- - - - - - - ma, al - - - - ma re - dem -
- - - - - ma, al - - - - - - ma re -
16
re - dem - pto - - - - ris ma - - - - - -
re - dem - pto - ris ma - ter, re - dem - pto - ris
ris ma - ter, re - dem - pto - - ris, re -
pto - - - ris ma - - - ter, ma - - - - ter,
dem - pto - - ris ma - - - - ter, re - dem -
21
ter, re - dem - pto - - ris ma - - - - ter, quae
ma - - - - ter, quae per -
dem - pto - ris, re - dem - pto - ris ma - - ter,
re - dem - pto - - - - - - - - - ris ma -
pto - ris ma - ter, ma - - - - - - ter,



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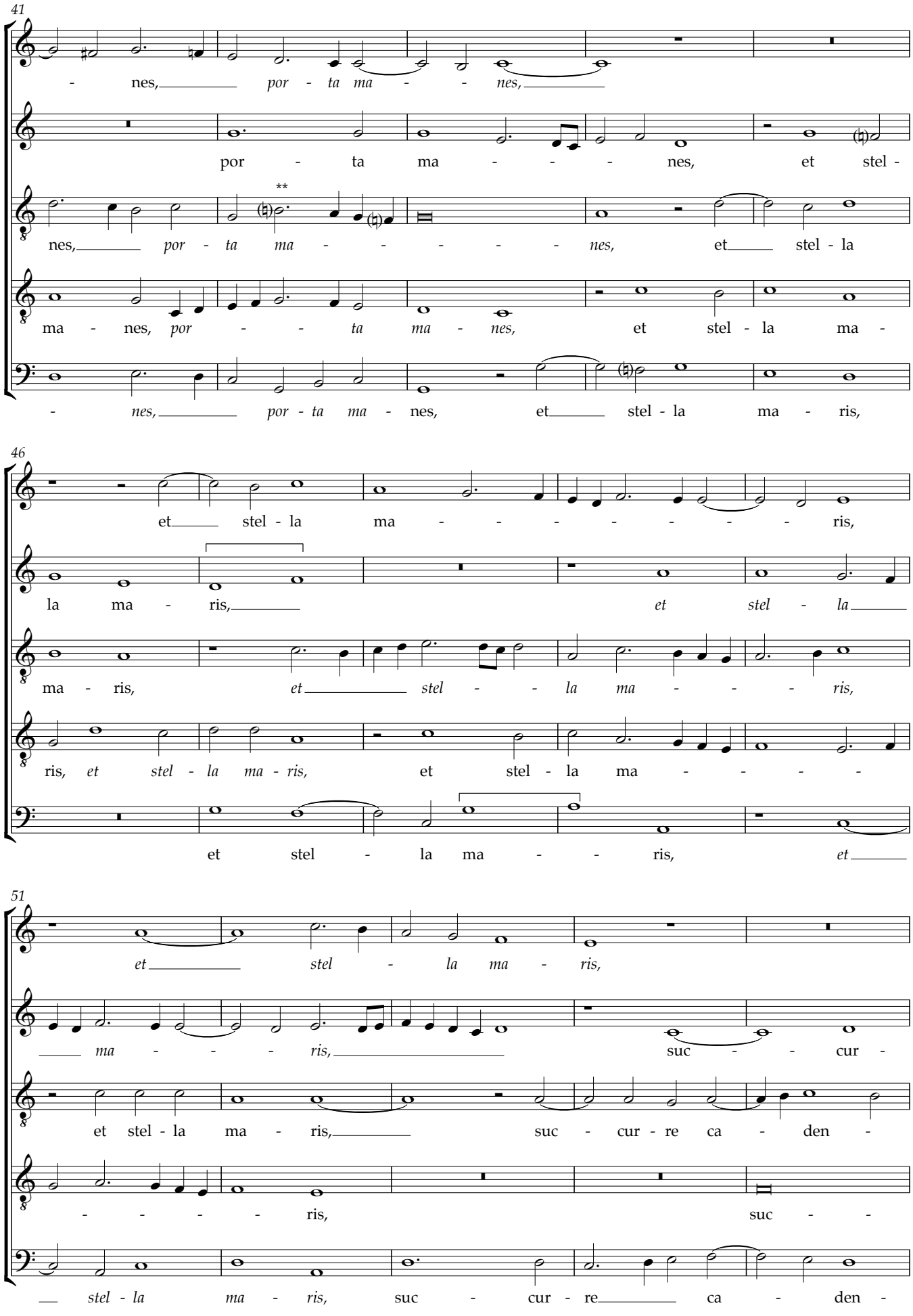

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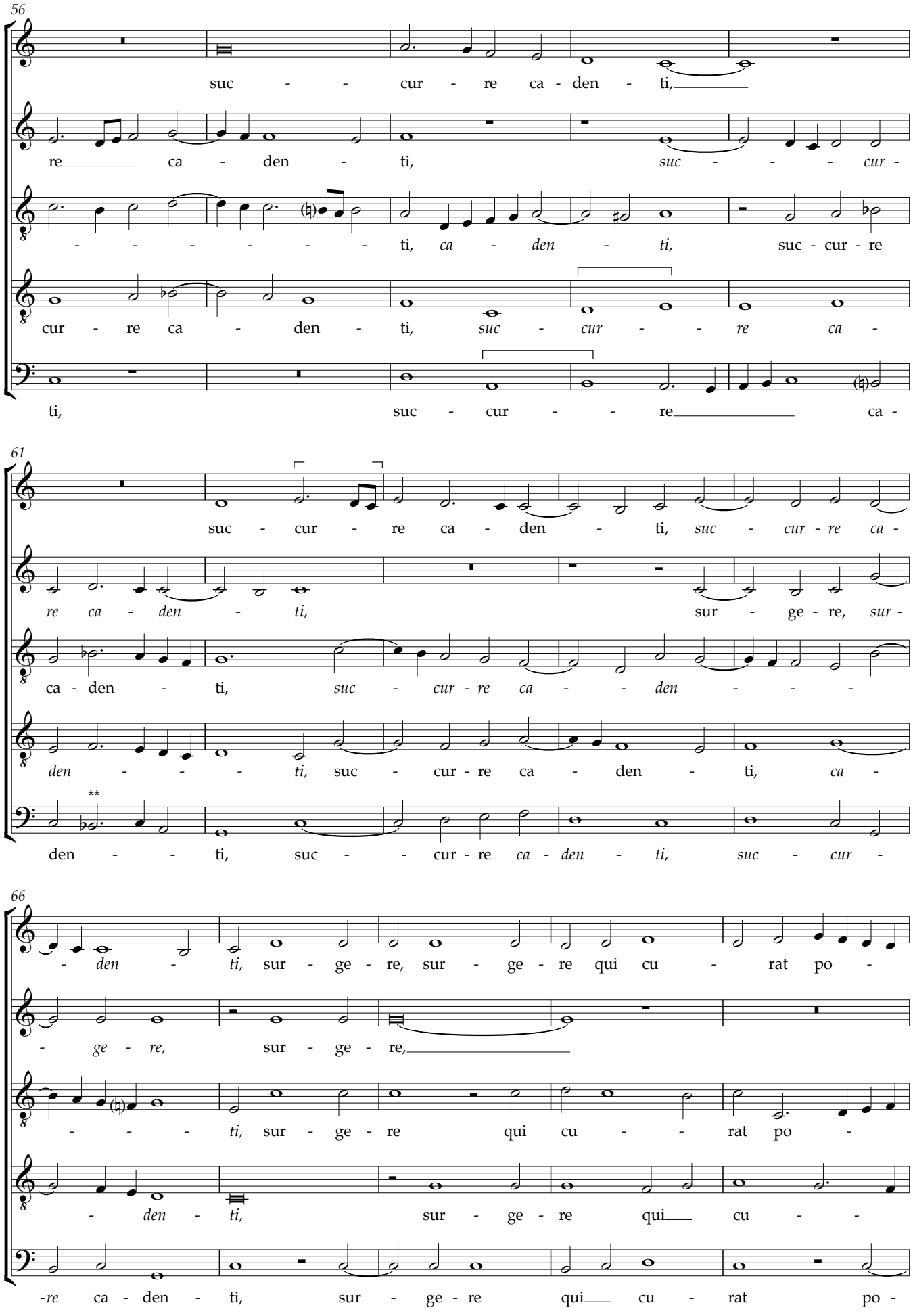

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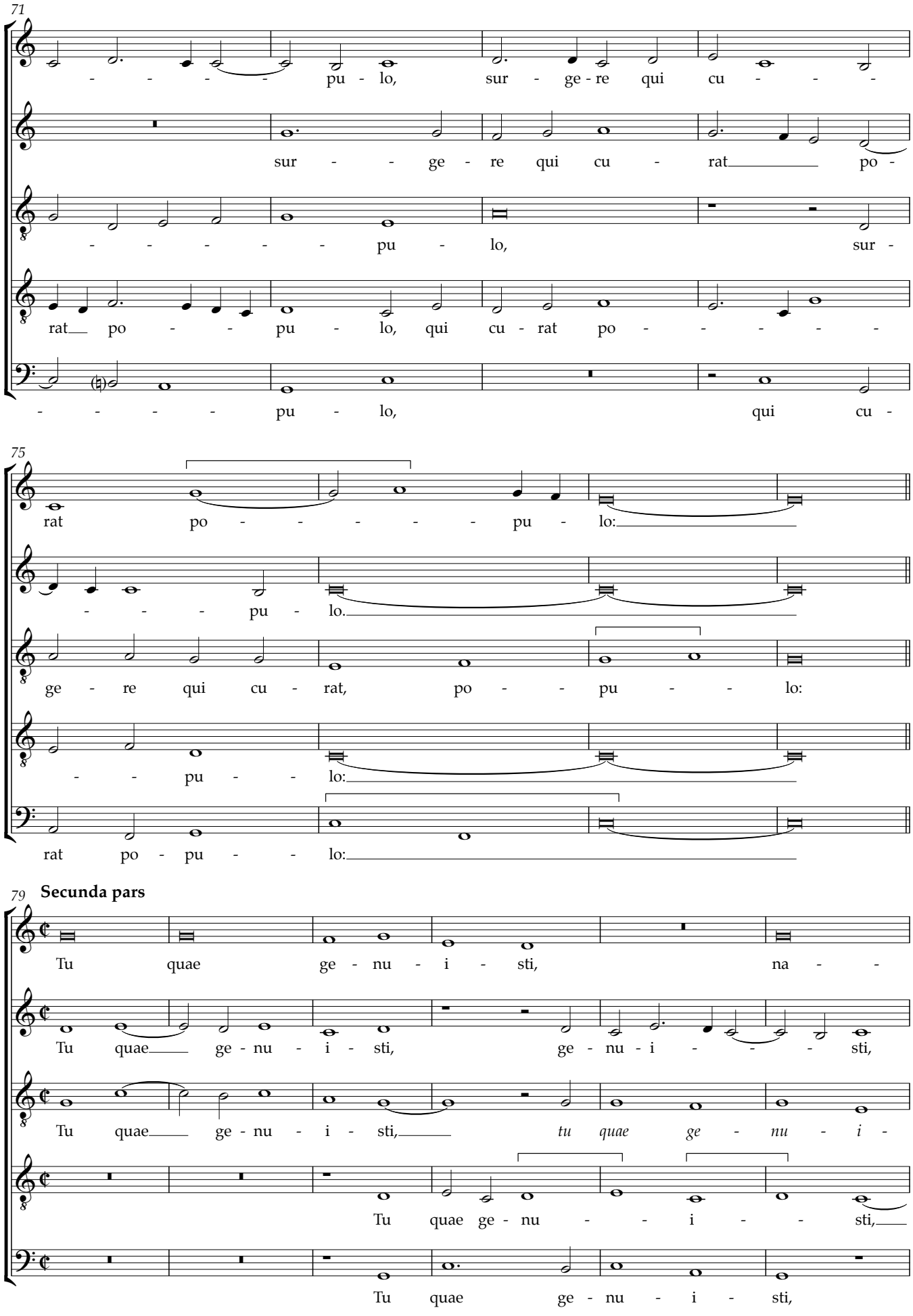
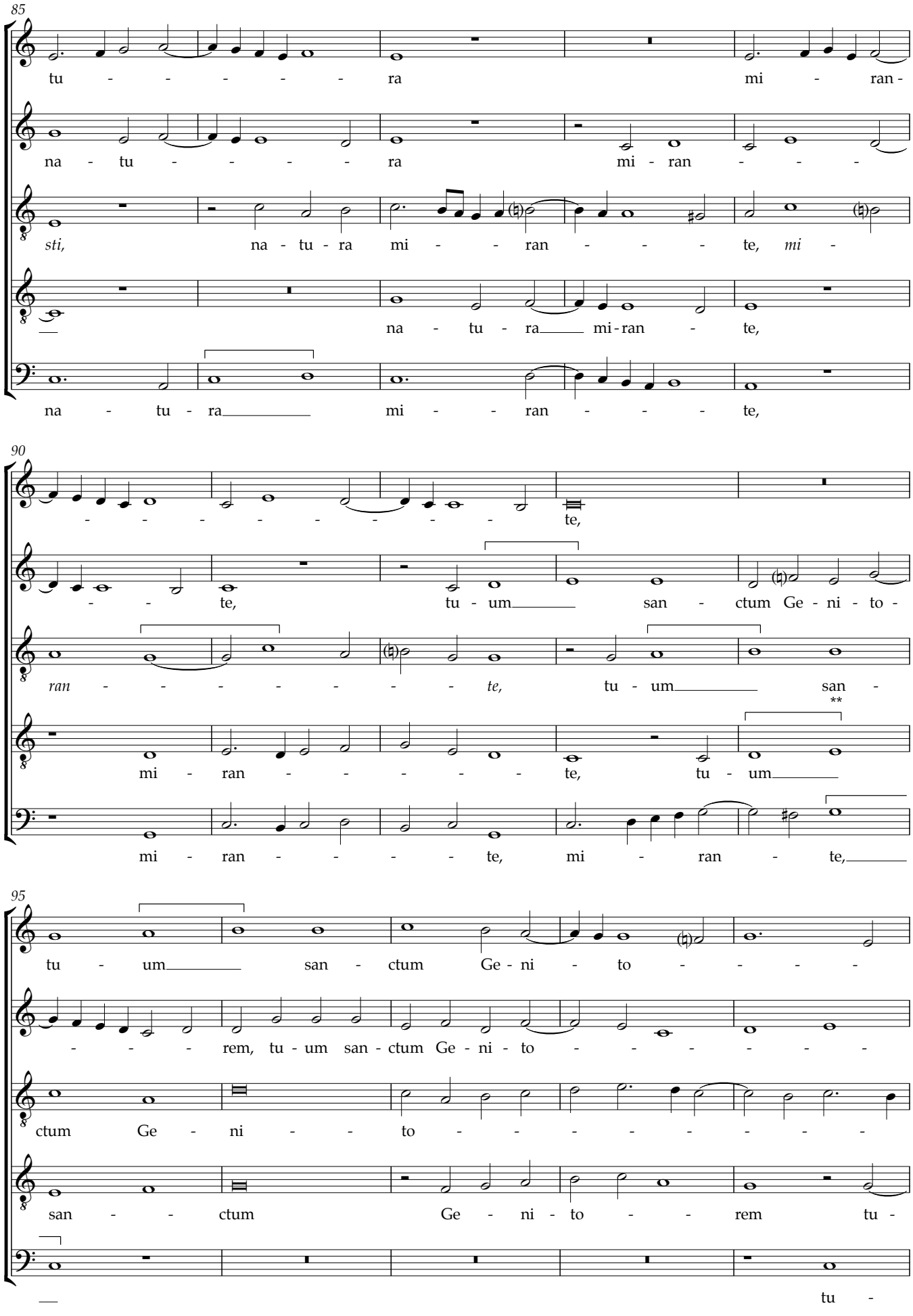

71
- - - - - pu - lo, sur - ge - re qui cu - - - -
sur - - ge - re qui cu - rat po -
- - - - - - pu - lo, sur -
rat po - - pu - lo, qui cu - rat po - - - - - -
- - - - pu - lo, qui cu -
75
rat po - - - - - - pu - lo:
- - - pu - lo:
ge - re qui cu - rat, po - - pu - - lo:
- - pu - - lo:
rat po - pu - - lo:
79 Secunda pars
Tu quae ge - nu - i - sti, na - -
Tu quae ge - nu - i - sti, ge - nu - i - - - sti,
Tu quae ge - nu - i - sti, tu quae ge - nu - i -
Tu quae ge - nu - - i - - sti,
Tu quae ge - nu - i - sti,



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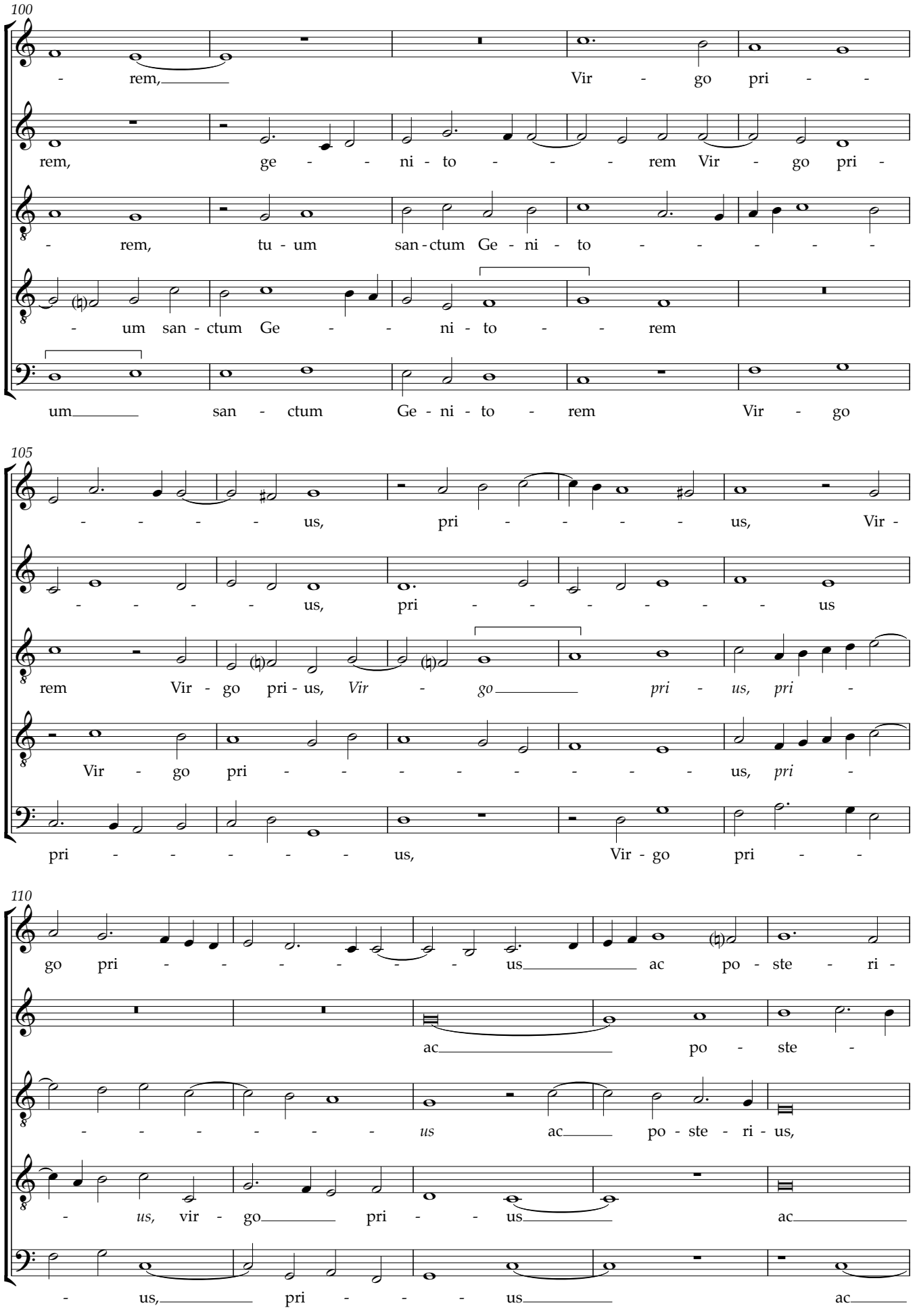
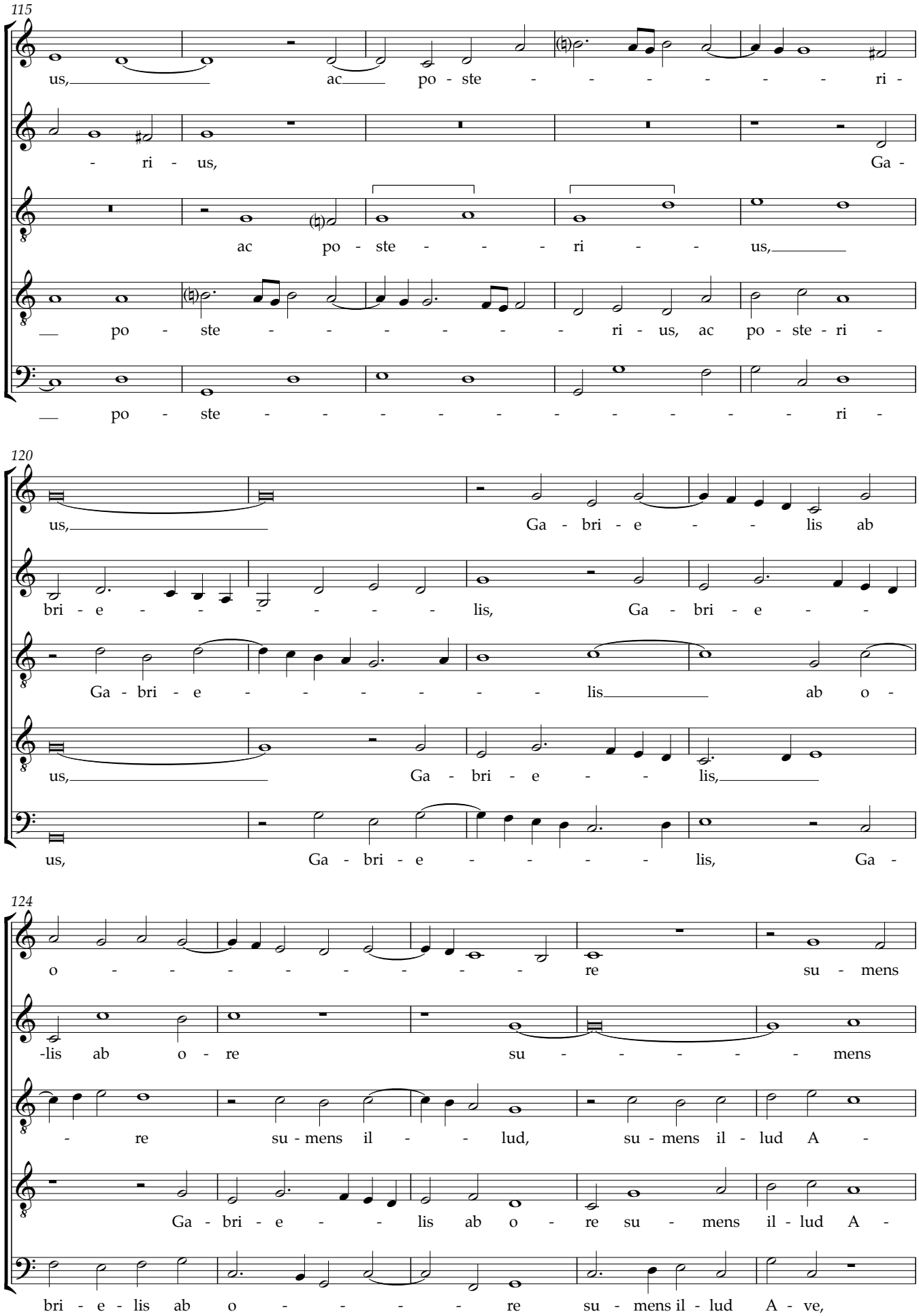
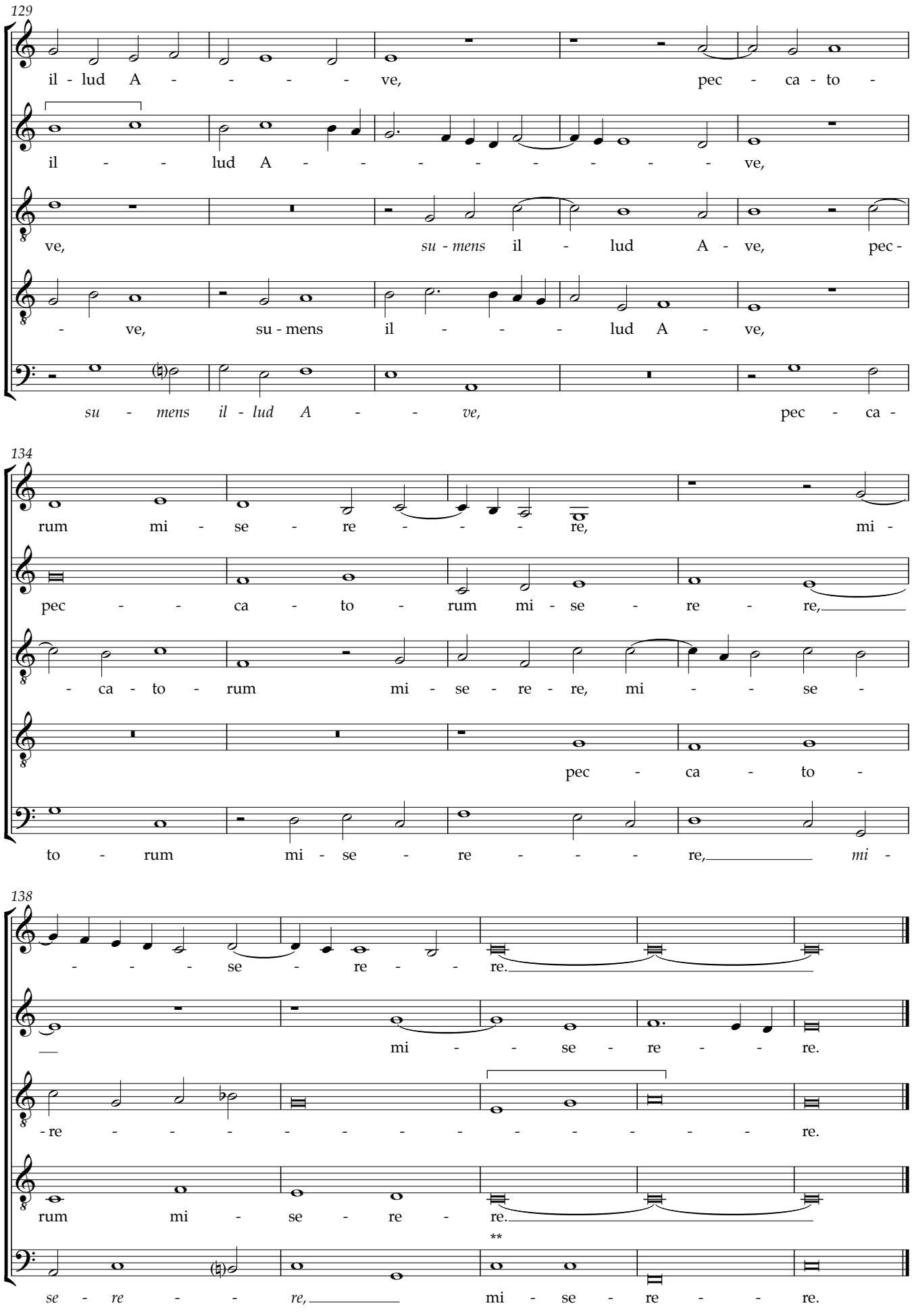

100
- rem, Vir - go pri - -
rem, ge - - ni - to - - - rem Vir - go pri -
- rem, tu - um san - ctum Ge - ni - to - - - - -
- um san - ctum Ge - - ni - to - - rem
um san - ctum Ge - ni - to - rem Vir - go
105
- - - - - us, pri - - - - - us, Vir -
- - - - - us, pri - - - - - - - us
rem Vir - go pri - us, Vir - go pri - us, pri -
Vir - go pri - - - - - - - - - us, pri -
pri - - - - - - us, Vir - go pri - -
110
go pri - - - - - - - us ac po - ste - ri -
ac po - ste -
- - - - - - - us ac po - ste - ri - us,
- us, vir - go pri - - us ac
- us, pri - - - us ac


115
us, ac po - ste - - - - - - - ri -
- ri - us, Ga -
ac po - ste - - - ri - - us,
po - ste - - - - - ri - us, ac po - ste - ri -
po - ste - - - - - - - - - - ri -
120
us, Ga - bri - e - - lis ab
bri - e - - - - - - - lis, Ga - bri - e - -
Ga - bri - e - - - - - - lis ab o -
us, Ga - bri - e - - lis,
us, Ga - bri - e - - - - lis, Ga -
124
o - - - - - - - - - re su - mens
-lis ab o - re su - - - - - mens
- re su - mens il - - lud, su - mens il - lud A -
Ga - bri - e - - lis ab o - re su - mens il - lud A -
bri - e - lis ab o - - - - - re su - mens il - lud A - ve,



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