

## “NOW QUICKLY, NOW AGAIN SLOWLY” TEMPO MODIFICATION IN AND AROUND PRAETORIUS

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**Izvleček:** Michael Praetorius opisuje modifikacije tempa v različnih kontekstih. Izvajalci so spreminjali *tactus* glede na besedilo in glasbo, da bi vzbujali čustva, v skladu s spremembami dinamike in zasedbe, zaradi prilagajanja prevladujočim notnim vrednostim in zaradi potrebe po raznolikosti. Takšni prijemi so bili pomemben del izvajalske estetike in potrjujejo jih številni italijanski in nemški viri.

**Ključne besede:** Michael Praetorius, spremembe tempa, *tactus*, izvajalska praksa

**Abstract:** Michael Praetorius describes tempo modification in a variety of contexts. Performers changed the speed of the *tactus* according to text and music, to move the affects, in accordance with dynamics or scoring, to adjust to changes in prevailing note-values, and for reasons of variety. Such practices were an important part of performance aesthetics and are confirmed by a number of German and Italian sources.

**Keywords:** Michael Praetorius, tempo modification, *tactus*, performance practice

The term “tempo modification” refers to tempo changes within a piece of music, with an emphasis on modifications introduced by, or required from, performers without any explicit indication in the notation. It presupposes the presence of a musical beat as a starting point, and is used here in the limited sense of changing the speed of the *tactus*, as described in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources, and not for other forms of tempo manipulation, *rubato* or agogic inflection, however interrelated such phenomena may be.

The German equivalent *Tempomodifikation* was introduced for practices described by theorists from Cyriacus Schneegass to Marin Mersenne in Georg Schünemann’s book on the history of conducting, published in 1913.<sup>1</sup> The term can, however, also be understood as a modernization of Nicola Vicentino’s “*mutazione della misura*”<sup>2</sup> or Paolo Quagliati’s “*misura alterata*”,<sup>3</sup> both of which refer to unwritten practices, or of Michael Praetorius’s Latin heading of the eight chapter of the third volume of his *Syntagma musicum*, “*De Tactus seu Mensurae variatione in Cantilenae tum progressu tum egressu*” (On Variation of *Tactus* or Measure in Songs, both in Their Progression and Ending), or, in Praetorius’s

<sup>1</sup> Schünemann, *Geschichte des Dirigierens*, 64–67, 108–110.

<sup>2</sup> Vicentino, *L’antica musica*, bk. 4, ch. 42, fol. 94v [=88; incorrect numbering in the print].

<sup>3</sup> Facsimile of the relevant page in Quagliati, *Il primo libro de’ madrigali*, xxviii.

German version, “Uff was massen etliche *Variationes* und Verenderungen in *depressione & elevatione Vocis & Tactus* angestellet werden können.”<sup>4</sup> Praetorius not only mentions changing or varying the *tactus*, but specifies its physical downward and upward movement in performance.<sup>5</sup> The Latin version of his heading makes it clear that the *tactus* will change within pieces, as opposed to the simple concept of different pieces having different tempi, and also at their end, the latter referring to the practice of prolonging the penultimate note as described in the chapter’s final paragraph. Furthermore, here and elsewhere Praetorius associates tempo modification with variation in dynamics.

Writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, Schünemann was eager to relate such evidence to flexible tempi of his own time and regard it as an early manifestation of a characteristic of modern conducting.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, some of his contemporaries and, later, several respected musicologists in the 1950s and 1960s, presumably under the influence of different aesthetic priorities favouring steadier tempi, endeavoured to explain away various indications for tempo modification in the light of the idea of strict proportions and an unchanging, fixed *tactus*.<sup>7</sup> Praetorius’s demand for “sometimes a slower, sometimes a quicker *tactus*, on account of the text” was interpreted as being limited to changes of time signature.<sup>8</sup> Verbal tempo directions were understood as describing or confirming the notation, warning performers to keep the existing tempo regardless of the changing note-values rather than being an instruction for any particular action.<sup>9</sup> Even Praetorius’s unambiguous demand for differing tempi in solo and tutti sections was presented as a precautionary means to avoid slowing down in the tuttis.<sup>10</sup> Similar interpretations are still encountered today,<sup>11</sup> and little has been done to refine our understanding of the wealth of material on tempo modification from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 2, ch. 8, 79. English translations of texts from the *Syntagma musicum III* are based on Jeffery Kite-Powell’s translation with frequent tacit alterations.

<sup>5</sup> For other possible meanings of *tactus*, see DeFord, *Tactus, Mensuration, and Rhythm*, 51.

<sup>6</sup> Schünemann, *Geschichte des Dirigierens*, 108.

<sup>7</sup> Apel describes this as “the principle of tempo-stability” and defines *tactus* as “a fixed, i.e., unchangeable unit of time”. Apel, *Notation of Polyphonic Music*, 147, 189–190.

<sup>8</sup> Chybiński, “Zur Geschichte des Taktschlagens”, 388.

<sup>9</sup> Herrmann-Bengen, *Tempobezeichnungen*, 47. Dahlhaus, “Zur Entstehung des modernen Taktsystems”, 236–240, on the other hand, interprets verbal tempo directions as instructions for moving the *tactus* to a different note-value with the actual tempo remaining constant. This view is still found in Dahlhaus, “Die Tactus- und Proportionslehre”, 360. See also Machatius, *Tempi in der Musik um 1600*, 92, and Winzenburger, “Meter and Tempo Indications”, 17–18.

<sup>10</sup> Herrmann-Bengen, *Tempobezeichnungen*, 47.

<sup>11</sup> Ham, “Sense of Proportion”, 232, thinks that “it is not entirely clear that Vicentino is referring to anything more than the method of beating”, which would imply maintaining the same tempo and proportional relationships regardless of text, affect and music. Lawrence-King, “Il palpitar del core”, 161–162, considers applying “the same *tactus*, around one beat per second [...] to the entire seventeenth-century repertory”, allegedly as “a radically historical approach”.

<sup>12</sup> For notable exceptions, see Wolf, *Notation und Aufführungspraxis*, and Lütke, *Con la sudetta sprezzatura*. See also Bartels, *Vokale und instrumentale Aspekte*, 179–183, and Butt, *Music Education*, 95–103. Lütke has to be read with caution, however, since he translates sources in a tendentious manner, supporting his idea of gradual slowing down and speeding up.

Some of the modern scepticism can probably be ascribed to the elusive, non-mechanical nature of such phenomena. Praetorius calls for discretion: "Often the composition, as well as the text and the meaning of the words in itself, necessitates that the *tactus* sometimes, but not too frequently or even too rigorously, be conducted now quickly, now again slowly, and also that the choir resonates now softly and gently, now strongly and lively. Greater restraint will, however, be necessary in the church than at table with such alternations."<sup>13</sup> He mentions differing opinions regarding alternation of tempo and dynamics indicated by appropriate Italian directions. While he does not find this disagreeable, provided that "they are carried out in moderation and refinement, expressing the affects and moving them", he points out that "there are many, especially in churches, who think it is not good."<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere, he refers to changing notational styles and, consequently, variable speed of the *tactus* within pieces: "Some people are unwilling to allow the intermingling of the motet and madrigal styles in the composition of any song. I do not agree with this opinion, however."<sup>15</sup> In his preface to *Terpsichore* he cites Claudio Merulo when apologizing for the prefaces to his collections, saying that "it is customary to preface works with special observations which I [intend] for those who do not fully understand these skills and may find them somewhat strange and unknown".<sup>16</sup> Incidentally, this passage follows directly after the paragraph on alternating slow and fast *tactus*.

Other writers likewise describe potential difficulties and disagreement among contemporaries. Tempo modification, like changes in dynamics, was not normally indicated. Nicola Vicentino (1555) mentions that such changes, introduced to bring out the affect of

<sup>13</sup> "Es erfordert aber solches offermahls die *composition*, so wol der Text und Verstand der Wörter an ihm selbst: daß man bißweilen/ nicht aber zu oft oder gar zu viel/ den *Tact* bald geschwind/ bald wiederumb langsam führe, auch den *Chor* bald stille und sanfft/ bald starck und frisch *resoniren* lasse. Wiewol in solchen und dergleichen umbwechselungen/ in Kirchen viel mehr/ alß vor der Taffel eine *moderation* zugebrauchen vonnöten sein wil." Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 3, ch. 1, 112 [=132; incorrect numbering in the print]. Kite-Powell, "Michael Praetorius's Variable Opinions", in this volume, cites passages on varying the tempo from *Syntagma musicum III* in the context of Praetorius's variably flexible views on various performance issues.

<sup>14</sup> "Ob zwar etliche/ das sich dessen/ sonderlich in Kirchen zugebrauchen nicht gut sey/ vermeinen: So deuchtet mir doch solche *variation* und umbwechselung/ wenn sie fein *moderatè* und mit einer guten *gratia*, die *affectus* zu *exprimiren* und in den Menschen zu *moviren*, vorgenommen und zu werck gerichtet wird/ nicht allein nicht unlieblich oder unrecht seyn/ sondern viel mehr die *ures & animos auditorum afficire*, und dem *Concert* eine sonderliche Art und *gratiam conciliare*." Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 3, ch. 1, 112 [=132].

<sup>15</sup> "Ettliche wollen nicht zu geben/ daß man in *compositione alicujus Cantionis* zugleich Motettische und Madrigalische Art untereinander vermischen solle. Deroselben Meynung ich mir aber nicht gefallen lasse; Sintemahl es den *Motecten* und *Concerten* eine besondere lieblich: unnd anmütigkeit gibt unnd *concilliiret*, wenn im anfang etliche viel *Tempora* gar pathetisch und langsam gesetzt seyn/ hernach etliche geschwinde *Clausulen* daruff folgen: Bald wiederumb langsam und gravitetisch/ bald abermahl geschwindere umbwechselung mit einmischen/ damit es nicht allezeit in einem *Tono* und *Sono* fortgehe/ sondern solche und dergleichen verenderungen mit eim langsamem und geschwindem *Tact*." Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 2, ch. 8, 80.

<sup>16</sup> "[...] pflegen offtmahls etliche besondere *Observationes* vorzulauffen/ welche ich den jenigen/ so dieselbige *Faculteten* selbst nicht vollkömlich verstehen/ etwas frembd und unbekand vorkommen." Praetorius, preface to *Terpsichore*, §12, (:):(v) [verso].

the words and the music when singing in the vernacular, “cannot be written down”,<sup>17</sup> that they will seem strange when not properly executed, and that singers in an ensemble have to agree on when the measure is to be changed.<sup>18</sup> He also reports that “some believe that you should not change the measure when beating *alla breve*”.<sup>19</sup> This is possibly related to differences of opinion on practices appropriate for church music, since a *breve tactus* was associated with the more traditional style of notation as opposed to the *semibreve tactus* required in the newer *note nere* madrigals.<sup>20</sup>

Praetorius’s younger contemporary Daniel Friderici criticizes cantors who apply an unchanging *tactus* with clock-like strictness.<sup>21</sup> This analogy is not surprising, given that several sixteenth-century writers compare the *tactus* to the striking of a clock, some even suggesting that beginners practise with an actual clock.<sup>22</sup> Lodovico Zacconi is among the theorists who make this analogy,<sup>23</sup> but he also describes varying the tempo, warning that one should not compromise the performance when slowing down or quickening the *tactus*.<sup>24</sup> Later in the seventeenth century, Marin Mersenne writes that singing teachers should use the pendulum to become accustomed to beating the measure regularly (“*reglément*”) at any speed they choose. He follows this advice with an unusually explicit description of tempo modification: “But because they change the measure several times, either binary or ternary, when letting people sing a single piece of music, by hurrying or slowing down the lowering and raising [of the hand] following the text and the words, or the different affects of the subject which they treat, it is difficult to apply any certain rule if they do not use as many different [lengths of] cords as they wish to have different measures.”<sup>25</sup>

<sup>17</sup> “[...] & qualche volta si usa un certo ordine di procedere, nelle compositioni, che non si può scrivere.” Vicentino, *L’antica musica*, bk. 4, ch. 42, fol. 94v [=88].

<sup>18</sup> “[...] ad alcuno non li parrà cosa strana tal modo di mutar misura, tutti à un tratto cantando mentre che nel concerto s’intendino, ove si habbi da mutar misura che non sarà errore alcuno”. Vicentino, *L’antica musica*, bk. 4, ch. 42, fol. 94v [=88].

<sup>19</sup> “[...] avvenga che alcuni sono d’opinione, che battendo la misura alla breve, non si dè mutare misura, & pur cantando si muta”. Vicentino, *L’antica musica*, bk. 4, ch. 42, fol. 94v [=88].

<sup>20</sup> This practice is described in Vicentino, *L’antica musica*, bk. 4, ch. 8, fol. 67r. For an interpretation of Vicentino account, see DeFord, *Tactus, Mensuration, and Rhythm*, 77.

<sup>21</sup> Friderici, *Musica figuralis*, ch. 7, rule 16, fol. C [verso]. See note 111 below. This is translated into Latin by Johannes Praetorius (no relation to Michael) in 1629: “Those who measure the *tactus* with precision, not paying attention to the decorum or to the convention of text and music, are therefore in error.” (In the original: “Errant igitur qui tactum ad amuβim quasi dimetiuntur, nec decorum aut textus & harmoniae conventiam attendunt.”) Praetorius, *Musicae practicae et arithmeticae*, rule 14, fol. Dr.

<sup>22</sup> See DeFord, *Tactus, Mensuration, and Rhythm*, 77.

<sup>23</sup> Zacconi, *Prattica di musica* (1592), bk. 1, ch. 32, fol. 20v, and ch. 33, fols. 21v–22r.

<sup>24</sup> “Di poi nel allargarlo, & nel stringerlo; di stringerlo & allargarlo con maniera, & modo, che non si habbia a por in periculo quel che si canta.” Zacconi, *Prattica di musica* (1592), bk. 1, ch. 33, fol. 22r.

<sup>25</sup> “Mais parce qu’ils changent plusieurs fois de mesure, soit binaire ou ternaire, en faisant chanter une mesme piece de Musique, en hastant ou retardant le baisser et le lever, suivant la lettre et les paroles, ou les passions differentes du sujet dont ils traitent, il est difficile d’y apporter nulle regle certain [sic], s’ils n’usent d’autant de filets differents comme ils veulent faire de mesures differentes.” Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle*, pt. 2, bk. 5 “De la Composition”, 324v.

A number of authors, especially in prefaces to printed collections, leave the details to the discretion of the performers and appeal to their good judgement. This is somewhat more common in the context of solo performance. In his letter to Giulio Caccini, Giovanni de' Bardi criticizes singers, who "are so complacent when performing *passaggi* that they disregard the *tactus*, breaking it down and stretching it out so much that they do not allow their companions to sing at all in a good manner".<sup>26</sup> Bardi applies different criteria to solo singing: "When singing alone or to the lute, harpsichord, or other instrument, one may quicken or lengthen the *tactus* at will, as it is up to the singer to lead the measure according to his judgement."<sup>27</sup>

The inventor of the Nürnberg *Geigenwerk* Hanns Haiden (1536–1613) lists the possibility of tempo modification among the advantages of his instrument, "on which one alone can achieve that which would otherwise require five or six violin players." He points out a telling difference as compared to a string ensemble: "Secondly, the player can change the measure as he pleases, guiding it now slowly, now again quickly, which is also required in order to move the affects. Several violinists together, however, do not do this simultaneously nor can they achieve such good ensemble."<sup>28</sup> Praetorius cites the first part of Haiden's statement in his chapter on the *Geigenwerk*, substituting the remark on limited flexibility of string ensembles with a recommendation that the practice of varying the measure "can similarly be observed on other instruments."<sup>29</sup> While the paragraph on varying the *tactus* in the preface to *Terpsichore*, his collection of dances for string ensemble, does not make it clear whether he expected tempo changes within movements,<sup>30</sup> markings in Paul Rivander's four- and five-part dances published in Ansbach a year later demand a faster *tactus* in up to three short sections within a movement.<sup>31</sup>

Praetorius is an especially rewarding source of information, offering several references to such phenomena in his work, including instructions for specific pieces. In the

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<sup>26</sup> "Altresi si trovano altri che per dar compiacimento à passaggi loro non avendo riguardo alla battuta, tanto la vanno rompendo et stracchiando che i suoi compagni con buon modo per via alcuna cantar non lasciano." Palisca, *Florentine Camerata*, 124.

<sup>27</sup> "Cantandosi solo, o in su'l liuto, o gravicembalo, o, altro strumento si puote à suo piacere la battuta stringere, e allargare, avvengache à lui stia guidare la misura à suo senno." Palisca, *Florentine Camerata*, 124.

<sup>28</sup> "[...] auff welchem einer allein das kan zu wegen bringen/ darzu sonsten fünff oder sechs Geiger gehören. Für eins. Zum andern/ kan der Instrumentist/ nach seinem selbst gefallen mit der Mensur wexln/ die jetzt langsam/ dann bald wiederumb geschwinder führen/ welches auch darzu gehört/ die *affectus* zu *movirn*, So aber mehr Geiger/ zu gleich mit einander nicht thun/ noch so eben zusamm treffen können." Haiden, *Musical instrumentum reformatum*, fol. Bvr.

<sup>29</sup> "Welches auch die *affectus* zu *movirn*, nicht undienlich: Und in andern Instrumenten gleicher gestalt kan in acht genommen werden." Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum II*, pt. 2, ch. 44, 62.

<sup>30</sup> See Praetorius, preface to *Terpsichore*, §11, (:)(:)IVr.

<sup>31</sup> Rivander, *Prati musici*. The markings are explained in the tenor partbook, A4v: "In den *Cantionibus* ohne Text/ hab ich die jetzt gebräuchliche art (in dem man bißweilen still bißweilen starck/ unterschiedlich begeret) in acht genommen, und *parentheses*, oder halbe Circkel [ unter di Noten ins *spacium* setzen lassen da zu mercken daß solche in *parenthesi* verfaste Noten/ still unnd etwas geschwinder/ nach geschlossenem Circkel aber ] wider der vorige Tact und klang mag gehalten werden."

chapter on “Variation of *Tactus* or Measure”, he first cautions against excessive speed, recommending slower tempi.<sup>32</sup> The Latin text insists on equality of measure in singing “so that the music is not deformed or disrupted”, warns against offending God and mentions Plato, probably hinting at the description of the creation of the world as “a symphony of proportions” from *Timaeus*.<sup>33</sup> This demand is then qualified: “But nevertheless, using sometimes a slower, sometimes a quicker *tactus* on account of the text has a singular majesty and grace and adorns the song marvelously.”<sup>34</sup> The subsequent paragraph stresses the importance of variation in dynamics.

While the title is Praetorius’s own, the Latin portion of this chapter is based on Georg Quitschreiber’s small singing primer consisting of eighteen rules *De canendi elegantia*, first published in 1598.<sup>35</sup> Instead of drawing on Plato, Quitschreiber cites an excerpt from *Corinthians* (“Let all things be done decently and in order”) and the eleventh chapter from *Wisdom of Solomon* (“but thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight”).<sup>36</sup> A more concise version of the passage had already been published in 1591 by Cyriacus Schneegass, as the eleventh and last of the rules for elegant singing, also entitled *De canendi elegantia*, at the end of his *Isagoges musicae*.<sup>37</sup> Schneegass does not mention God, Plato or the Scriptures, and does not express caution against excessive speed. In contrast to Praetorius, who suggests sometimes a slower, sometimes a quicker *tactus*, both Schneegass and Quitschreiber only mention using a slower *tactus* from time to time, but for the same reason and with the same effect.

A recognizable early version of this text is found as the last of ten rules published by Praetorius’s uncle Christoph Praetorius in 1574.<sup>38</sup> The demand for an equal beat is followed by the observation that “in a slower *tactus*, however, the music is better perceived and has greater majesty and grace.”<sup>39</sup> The fact that there is no reference to the sung text and no adverb of time such as “interdum” makes it doubtful whether this refers to tempo modification,<sup>40</sup> especially in the light of the fact that Quitschreiber and Michael Praetorius cite this sentence, slightly altered, in a different context: “A song is not to be rushed, for confusion will be created in the entire concord, as agreeable as it might be. In a slower *tactus*, however, the music is made more gracious and is better perceived.”<sup>41</sup> Possible

<sup>32</sup> Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 2, ch. 8, 79. See note 41 below.

<sup>33</sup> *Timaeus*, 32c, in Plato, *Complete Works*, 1237.

<sup>34</sup> “Sed tamen pro ratione Textus interdum tardiore Tactu uti, interdum celeriore per vices uti, singularem majestatem & gratiam habet, & Cantum mirificè exornat.” Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 2, ch. 8, 79.

<sup>35</sup> Quitschreiber, *De canendi elegantia*, rule 15, fol. A3v–A4r.

<sup>36</sup> 1 Cor. 14:40; Ws 11:20.

<sup>37</sup> Schneegass, *Isagoges musicae*, rule 11, fol. GIII [verso].

<sup>38</sup> Praetorius, *Erotemata musices*, rule 10, fol. K4v.

<sup>39</sup> While Christoph Praetorius, Schneegass and Quitschreiber all use the expression “maiolem maiestatem & gratiam”, Michael Praetorius changes it into “singularem majestatem & gratiam”.

<sup>40</sup> Dahlhaus, “Über das Tempo”, 768, interprets the passage as belonging to the same tradition as the descriptions of tempo modification by Schneegass, Quitschreiber, Calvisius and Michael Praetorius quoted here.

<sup>41</sup> “*Cantus non est praecipitandus*: Fit enim confusio totius Symphoniae etiam jucundissimae: Ad

reasons for recommending slower tempi include the use of smaller note-values, greater affective power, emphasis, clarity and comprehensibility.<sup>42</sup>

In fact, these texts go back to an even earlier source. Georg Quitschreiber, cited by Michael Praetorius as his source, cites a passage from Franchino Gaffurio's *De harmonia musicorum instrumentorum opus* (1518) on measure, number and weight in the context of intervals,<sup>43</sup> but more importantly, he bases his textbook on the rules for singing from Andreas Ornithoparchus's *Musice active micrologus*, first published in 1517. Ornithoparchus follows his frequently cited demand for "equality of measure"<sup>44</sup> with a complaint that his countrymen in Eastern Franconia and the Church of Prague make the notes in plainchant "sometimes longer, sometimes shorter than they should".<sup>45</sup> Similar concerns expressed by other writers concern individual notes rather than *tactus* changes. Conrad von Zabern demands that in plainchant, "not more or less time be spent on one note than on others, whatever measure is sung, either longer or shorter according to the solemnity of the day", and describes a common fault of violating the measure by singing a single high note longer than the following ones.<sup>46</sup> In 1569 the Czech music theorist Jan Blahoslav criticizes singers for disregarding written note-values and spoiling the songs, but also suggests that the rhythm be sung in a way that agrees with the prosody of the text, and allows for a certain flexibility in plainchant.<sup>47</sup>

To the rules for singing that precede Michael Praetorius and that we have already quoted, one may add that which appears in a collection of *bicinia* published by Seth Calvisius:

Mensurae pre omnibus teneatur aequalitas. Nam sine lege ac mensura canere: est deum ipsum offendere, qui omnia numero, pondere, & mensura benefecit. (Andreas Ornithoparchus, *Musice active micrologus*, 1517, book 4, chapter 8, rule 4, fol. MII [verso])

Ad aequalitatem mensurae tanquam ad scopum intendant, Inaequalitas enim mensurae harmoniam deformat, & perturbat. Ad tactum autem productiorem harmonia melius percipitur, & maiorem maiestatem & gratiam habet. (Christoph Praetorius, *Erotemata musices*, 1574, chapter 5, rule 10, fol. K4r)

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tactum autem productiorem harmonia fit gratior, & melius percipitur." Quitschreiber, *De canendi elegantia*, rule 14, fol. A4v. Quoted in Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 2, ch. 8, 79.

<sup>42</sup> Some of these elements are rooted in ancient rhetoric. According to Quintilian slow tempo is used "to insist, to emphasize, and to drive points home. A slower Delivery is more emotive [...]". ("[...] alii pressa conveniet pronuntiatio [...] hac instamus inculcamus infigimus. Plus autem adfectus habent lentiora.") Quintilian, *Orator's Education*, bk. 1, ch. 3, 111, 142–143.

<sup>43</sup> Gaffurio, *De harmonia*, bk. 2, ch. 14, fol. xxxvii.

<sup>44</sup> Sebastiani, *Bellum musicale*, ch. 36, rule 4, X3r. Incomplete translation of this paragraph by John Dowland in Ornithoparchus, *Andreas Ornithoparchus His Micrologus*, 89.

<sup>45</sup> Ornithoparchus, *Musice active micrologus*, bk. 4, ch. 8, rule 4, fol. MII [verso]. In the same work (fol. FIII [verso]) Ornithoparchus also mentions the equality of measure in the chapter on *tactus*. See Dowland's English translation in Ornithoparchus, *Andreas Ornithoparchus His Micrologus*, 46, 89.

<sup>46</sup> "[...] quod uni notae non plus vel minus temporis impendatur quam alteri, qualiscumque mensura cantetur sive longior sive brevior secundum temporis exigentiam". Zabern, *De modo bene cantandi*, 4r–5v.

<sup>47</sup> Hostinský, *Jan Blahoslav a Jan Josquin*, 38.

Mensurae servanda est aequalitas, ne harmonia deformetur vel perturbetur: Sed tamen pro ratione textus, tardiore tactu interdum uti, maiorem maiestatem & gratiam habet, & cantum mirificè exornat. (Cyriacus Schneegass, *Isagoges musicae*, 1591, rule 11, fol. GIII [verso])

Mensurae servanda est aequalitas, ne harmonia deformetur vel perturbetur: Nam sine lege & mensurâ canere, est DEUM ipsum offendere, qui omnia numero, pondere & mensura benefecit. [...] Sed tamen pro ratione textus tardiore tactu interdum uti, maiorem majestatem & gratiam habet, & cantum mirificè exornat. (Georg Quitschreiber, *De canendi elegancia*, 1598, rule 15, fol. A3v–A4r)

Tactus ratione Harmoniae & textus interdum acceleratur, interdum producitur, ad illum igitur diligentissimè attendendum. (Seth Calvisius, *Bicinia septuaginta*, 1599, rule 18, fol. X3r)

Mensurae etiam servanda est aequalitas, ne harmonia deformetur vel turbetur: Nam sine lege & mensura canere, est Deum ipsum offendere, qui omnia numero, pondere & mensura disposuit, ut Plato inquit. Sed tamen pro ratione Textus interdum tardiore Tactu, interdum celeriore per vices uti, singularem majestatem & gratiam habet, & Cantum mirificè exornat. (Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, 1619, part 2, chapter 8, 79)

Christoph Praetorius, Schneegass, Quitschreiber and Michael Praetorius all repeat Ornithoparchus's demand for equality of measure. Taken out of context, this could be misinterpreted as being a warning against any tampering with the *tactus*, thereby even running the risk of offending God. Similar instructions are found elsewhere, often in the form of moral imperatives. The earliest known description of physical time-measurement in music, Giorgio Anselmi's *De musica* of 1434, asks singers to mark the *mensura* by tapping the foot or hand "as equally as possible".<sup>48</sup> Shakespeare's King Richard II is sometimes cited in the context of steady, constant *tactus* and the performance of proportions: "Ha, ha, keep time! How sour sweet music is when time is broke and no proportion kept."<sup>49</sup> A different threat is expressed in a poem in the Lutebook of the North Frisian pastor Johannes Nauclerus, copied before 1620, which ends with the lines "You also have to observe the *tactus* if you want to court pretty maids."<sup>50</sup>

It is unlikely that such simple requirements of keeping time are intended to preclude tempo modification. Competent execution on a different level is a more likely goal, as in the following description by Lodovico Zacconi: "Different *tactus* may be faster or slower, according to the place, time, and occasion, because this variety does not create any defect in music, as long as the one who gives the *tactus* knows how to speed it up and slow it down and make the above-mentioned rising and falling motions equal, and not altered."<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> "[...] quantum potest equaliter". Anselmi, *De musica*, 171.

<sup>49</sup> Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, act 5, scene 5, 184. Cited in Ham, "Sense of Proportion", 79, and, along Ornithoparchus, in Lawrence-King, "Il palpitare del core", 157.

<sup>50</sup> "Auch mustu den *tactum observiren*/ Wiltu schonen Mägdlein hofiren." Facsimile in Nauclerus, *Lautenbuch*, 67. A version of this poem is found in the lute manuscript previously known as the *Johannes Stobaeus Lutebook* (1635–1640); facsimile in Stobaeus, *Die Lautentraktate*, 40.

<sup>51</sup> "[...] perche piu tatti poßano essere quali piu presti, & quali piu tardi, secondo il loco, il tempo, & l'occasione, che questa varietà alla Musica non apporta verun difetto se però chi regge il tatto, lo sa restringere, & allargare, & far che la sudetta alzata, & cadduta venghi in atto eguale,



In the second part of his treatise, published in 1622, Zacconi demands that the equal *tactus* should be "so solid, stable, and firm that one cannot discern the least bit of inequality".<sup>52</sup> He describes the effects of an improperly fast *tactus* as producing actual inequality, the beats being "altered in an ugly and monstrous way, there being always more time on the upstroke than on the downstroke."<sup>53</sup>

In contrast to such disapproval, Schneegass, Quitschreiber and Michael Praetorius describe tempo changes as a feature adding "majesty and grace", something that "adorns the song marvelously". Later in the same chapter on varying the *tactus*, Praetorius associates mixing the motet and madrigal styles with "a special charm and delight when several quite expressive and slow breves at the beginning are followed by several quick phrases, and the once again slow and stately passages alternate with faster ones."<sup>54</sup> Elsewhere in *Syntagma musicum III*, he describes how tempo changes indicated by Italian directions affect "the ears and souls of the listeners and bring about a special style and grace to the concerto."<sup>55</sup> In the *Polyhymnia caduceatrix* he states that concertos of a certain type "will be heard with more grace and delight" if the performers modify the tempo according to the alternation between solo and tutti passages.<sup>56</sup>

Another recurrent feature is the phrase "now slow, now quick", which is often found in descriptions of tempo modification. Schneegass and Quitschreiber only suggest sometimes taking a slower *tactus*, so the phrase seems to be Praetorius's own. It has a direct precedent, however, in Calvisius's above-quoted rule, which was appended to a collection of *bicinia* published in 1599 and reprinted in the enlarged edition of 1612: "For reasons of music and text, the *tactus* is sometimes accelerated, sometimes slowed down, which must therefore be most diligently attended to." A similarly clear instruction is later given by Daniel Friderici and the Stettin Cantor Johannes Praetorius: "In singing you should not always hold to the same *tactus*, but let it conform to the words and stress of the text, so that it is made now slower, now faster."<sup>57</sup> A related example of a change from a single option to both slow and fast is found in John Playford's translation of Giulio Caccini's preface to *Le nuove musiche*. While Caccini, one of whose publications Praetorius knew, only speaks of making the value of the notes shorter,<sup>58</sup> Playford's version describes making

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& non alterato". Zacconi, *Prattica di musica* (1592), bk. 1, ch. 33, fol. 21v. English translation after DeFord, "Zacconi's Theories", 157.

<sup>52</sup> "Egli deve essere si equale, saldo, non se li possi conoscere pur una minima parte d'inequalità". Zacconi, *Prattica di musica* (1622), bk. 1, ch. 65, 56.

<sup>53</sup> "[...] gl'atti d'uno intervallo e l'altro, che sono quelli, che noi communemente chiamamo battuta, non essendo equali, sono alterati di brutta, e mostruosa alteratione, essendo sempre più tempo nella levata, che nella caduta". Zacconi, *Prattica di musica* (1622), bk. 1, ch. 65, 56.

<sup>54</sup> See note 15 above.

<sup>55</sup> See note 14 above.

<sup>56</sup> "[...] wird auch mit desto mehrerer *gratia* und ergötzlichkeit angehört werden". Praetorius, *Polyhymnia caduceatrix*, bassus generalis partbook, concerto 18, "O Lamb Gottes unschuldig", fol. F11r.

<sup>57</sup> "In cantu non idem semper *tactus* observetur, sed ad textus verba atque emphasin conformetur, ita ut jam tardius, jam celerius ducatur." Praetorius, *Musicae practicae et arithmeticae*, rule 14, fol. Dr. This is based on Friderici's rule quoted in note 112 below.

<sup>58</sup> Caccini, *Le nuove musiche*, fol. C2r. While the meaning of this passage is not entirely clear,



il dir presto et tardo, et secondo le parole muovere la misura  
il moto della misura si dè muovere [...] più tardo, & più presto  
(Nicola Vicentino, *L'antica musica* [1555], book 4, chapter 42, fol. 94v [=88])

si puote à suo piacere la battuta stringere, e allargare  
(Giovanni de' Bardi, Discourse addressed to Giulio Caccini [c. 1578])<sup>68</sup>

[il tatto] nel allargarlo, & nel stringerlo; di stringerlo & allargarlo  
(Lodovico Zacconi, *Prattica di musica* [1592], book 1, chapter 33, fol. 22r)

Tactus [...] interdum acceleratur, interdum producitur  
(Seth Calvisius, *Bicinia septuaginta* [1599], rule 18, fol. X3r)

con una misura alterata, tal'hora larga, e tal'hora presta  
(Paolo Quagliati, preface to *Libro primo de' madrigali* [1608])<sup>69</sup>

insistendum tantisper, indulgendum tardiat, aliquanto etiam festinandum  
(Aquilino Coppini, Letter to Pier Francesco Villani [1609])<sup>70</sup>

mit der Mensur wexln/ die jetzt langsam/ dann bald widerumb geschwinder führen  
(Hanns Haiden, *Musical instrumentum reformatum* [1610], fol. Bvr)

ora sostentare, ora apprestare la battuta  
(Severo Bonini, postface to *Affetti spirituali* [1615])<sup>71</sup>

portandola [la battuta] hor languida, hor veloce  
(Girolamo Frescobaldi, preface to *Toccate e partite d'intavolatura di cimbalo* [1616])

in alcuni passi stringerla & allentarla [la battuta]  
(Giovanni Domenico Puliaschi, postface to *Musiche varie a una voce* [1618], [56])

interdum tardiore Tactu, interdum celeriore  
den *Tact* bald geschwind/ bald wiederumb langsam führe  
verenderungen mit eim langsamen und geschwinden *Tact*  
(Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III* [1619], part 2, chapter 8, 79, 80; part 3,  
chapter 1, 112 [=132])

den *Tact* bißweilen (*Lento*) langsam/ bißweilen/ [...] (*Presto*) geschwind führen  
(Michael Praetorius, preface to *Polyhymnia caduceatrix* [1619], bassus generalis partbook,  
§8, AII [verso])

changer le mouvement, haster [...] et tarder  
(Jehan Titelouze, Letter to Marin Mersenne [1622])<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Palisca, *Florentine Camerata*, 124.

<sup>69</sup> Facsimile in Quagliati, *Il primo libro de' madrigali*, xxviii.

<sup>70</sup> Coppini, *Epistolarum libri sex*, bk. 3, 101.

<sup>71</sup> Lüdtkke, *Con la sudetta sprezzatura*, 96.

<sup>72</sup> Collette, "Lettres inédites de Titelouze", 279.

ricercano la battuta hor lenta hor veloce  
(Orazio Modiana, preface to *Sacri concerti* [1623])<sup>73</sup>

bald ein geschwinder/ bald ein langsamer *tactus* erfordert wird  
(Daniel Friderici, *Musica figuralis* [1624], chapter 7, rule 19, fol. Dr)

[tactus] jam tardius, jam celerius ducatur  
(Johannes Praetorius, *Musicae practicae et arithmeticae* [1627], chapter 6, rule 14, fol. Dr)

sapere dove conviene accelerare, o ritardare la battuta  
facendo accelerare, o ritardare la battuta con qualche segno  
(Giovanni Battista Doni, *Trattato della musica scenica* [1635])<sup>74</sup>

hastant ou retardant le baisser & le lever  
(Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle*, part 2, book 5 “De la Composition” [1637], 324v)

guidare la battuta, ricercandosi hor presta, hor tarda  
(Giovanni Bonachelli, preface to *Corona di sacri gigli* [1642])<sup>75</sup>

There are also several descriptions of tempo modification that do not refer to both slow and fast. Rules for singing published by Schneegass and Quitschreiber merely suggest that the beat should sometimes be slowed down, as do prefaces to music prints by Marcello Albano, Alessandro Piccinini and Ignazio Donati, published between 1616 and 1636.<sup>76</sup> Giovanthomaso Cimello and Paul Rivander, on the other hand, are content to mention that performers should sometimes adopt a faster beat within a piece.<sup>77</sup> Adriano Banchieri demands both retardation and acceleration of the *tactus*, but only one or the other occurs in his prefaces to different publications.<sup>78</sup> Such distinctions may depend on the desired effect, the starting or underlying tempo, the compositional genre and the character of the music. In the preface to his collection of motets for four to eight voices of 1603 Agostino Agazzari describes both slowing down and quickening the *tactus* in the new style of setting texts, suggesting “a very broad measure, especially in exclamations and affectionate words, being able sometimes to speed it up in the middle, as in some proportion or restruck fugue [probably *canzona* with repeated notes in its subject], returning afterwards to the first [measure], since in this way more affect is given to the song and strength to the words, not losing the gravity due in the church.”<sup>79</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Goldschmidt, *Die italienische Gesangsmethode*, 78.

<sup>74</sup> Doni, *De' trattati di musica*, ch. 10, 23, and ch. 28, 83.

<sup>75</sup> Lüdtke, *Con la sudetta sprezzatura*, 117.

<sup>76</sup> Their reasons are different. Albano suggests slower cadences, Piccinini writes that slowing down the measure will make the playing more passionate, while Donati allows time for additional ornamental passages. See the address to the readers at the end of each partbook of Albano, *Il primo libro di canzoni*, 24; Piccinini, preface to *Intavolatura di liuto*, ch. 3, 1; and Donati, “Avertimenti per potere insegnare” in *Il secondo libro de motetti, canto* partbook, fol. A2r.

<sup>77</sup> See notes 31 above and 82 below.

<sup>78</sup> See notes 81 and 97 below.

<sup>79</sup> “Et primieramente desidero, che chiunque virtuoso si degnerà di cantar’ simil’opra, sappi, che

Similar considerations of musical form frequently seem to play a role. Several authors besides Agazzari, including Haiden, Rivander and Michael Praetorius, mention returning to the original tempo after a section in a faster or slower *tactus*.<sup>80</sup> Others suggest varying the tempo in repeated material. Banchieri asks for a faster tempo for the sake of variety when repeating complete canzonas.<sup>81</sup> Likewise, Giovanthomaso Cimello, a composer and theorist of Vicentino's generation, writes that one may use a quicker *tactus* when repeating the introit in plainsong and figural music.<sup>82</sup>

An especially characteristic feature is the emphasis on the affect or meaning of the sung words. Mentions of the music, usually referred to as "harmony" or "composition", as in Vicentino, Calvisius, Michael Praetorius and Johannes Praetorius, are also common.<sup>83</sup>

Michael Praetorius suggests a strong link between tempo and dynamics on several occasions. When explaining Italian indications for tempo and dynamics, he writes that the direction *pian* instructs that the voice not only be restrained, but should also sing more slowly.<sup>84</sup> Indications alternating between *Presto*, *forte* and *Lento*, *piano* are sometimes found in his music.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, an instruction in one of his sacred concertos featuring three sopranos requires the third singer to reply very softly and slowly like an echo from afar.<sup>86</sup> As in the title of Praetorius's chapter on "the raising and lowering of the voice and

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questo stile, oltre li cantanti sicuri, richiede la misura molto larga, massime nelle esclamazioni, & parole affettuose potendo tal volta nel mezzo ristrengerla, com'in qualche proportione, ò fuga ribattuta, ritornando poi alla primiera, sendo che cosi si dà piu affetto al canto, & forza alle parole non perdendo la gravità dovuta nella Chiesa." Agazzari, preface to *Sacrae laudes de Jesu* [...] *liber secundus* (1603). Wolf, *Notation und Aufführungspraxis*, vol. 2, 6.

<sup>80</sup> See notes 28 and 31 above, and 96 below. Note that Haiden describes returning to the faster *tactus* whereas Agazzari, Rivander and Praetorius (except when quoting Haiden) assume a slower *tactus* as a starting point.

<sup>81</sup> "Quinta, la prima fiata devesi suonare adagio in guisa di ricercare, & nella replica strettamente, rendendo tal varietà nuovo diletto, e per ciò vengono signate le Repliche." Banchieri, *Moderna armonia di canzoni alla francese* (1612). Wolf, *Notation und Aufführungspraxis*, vol. 1, 55.

<sup>82</sup> "Vero è ch'è lecito nel canto piano et nel canto figurato quando introito si deve repetere che la seconda volta si stringa la battuta. Similme[n]te si cantando un mottetto un madrigale ò canzone villanesche si debbe stringere la battuta che con tale varie di estrettezze più piaccion e più diletino." Cimello, *Collected Secular Works*, 182. Cimello writes that one should likewise quicken the beat in motets, madrigals or *canzone villanesche*, because such variation is more pleasing and entertaining. His words have been quoted out of context and misunderstood by Haar, "Lessons in Theory", 169, and, consequently, by DeFord, *Tactus, Mensuration, and Rhythm*, 210.

<sup>83</sup> Michael Praetorius repeatedly refers to both text and music in such contexts: "[...] *ex consideratione Textus et Harmoniae*". Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 2, ch. 7, 51. In the same (pt. 3, ch. 1, 112 [=132]): "Es erfordert aber solches offtermahls die *Composition*, so wol der Text und Verstand der Wörter an ihm selbst". Praetorius, preface to *Polyhymnia caduceatrix*, bassus generalis partbook, §8, AII [verso]: "[...] nach anleitung des Texts und auch der *Composition*".

<sup>84</sup> "Sonsten ist *Pian* so viel/ alß *placidè*, *pedetentim*, *lento gradu*: daß man die Stimen nicht allein messigen: sondern auch langsamer singen solle." Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 3, ch. 1, 112 [=132]. Paul Rivander uses brackets to indicate simultaneously both soft dynamics and, contrary to Praetorius's interpretation of *pian*, a quicker tempo. See note 31 above.

<sup>85</sup> See, for instance, concerto 28, "Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott", and concerto 37, "Ach, mein Herre, straf mich doch nicht", from the *Polyhymnia caduceatrix* of 1619.

<sup>86</sup> "Also daß der erste *Cantus* gar frisch und starck/ der andere etwas stiller/ und der dritte gar gelind

*tactus*”, tempo and dynamics are mentioned next to each other in ancient rhetoric.<sup>87</sup> When describing the practice of “uttering softly and loudly or fast and slow, or changing the measure in keeping with the words”, Vicentino explicitly mentions orators as a model.<sup>88</sup> In 1628 Vincenzo Giustiniani writes that, in contrast to the crude style of the past, singers in the new recitative style apply “now piano, now forte, now *adagio*, now *presto*”.<sup>89</sup>

In the preface to his collection of lute music published in 1623 Alessandro Piccinini describes slowing down the *tactus* under the heading “Del Suonare Piano, e Forte”.<sup>90</sup> Praetorius does the opposite in his preface to *Terpsichore*. Under the paragraph “Concerning the Alteration of Slow and Fast *Tactus*”<sup>91</sup> he first suggests giving grace to the dances by playing repeats with different dynamics. The paragraph continues with an ambiguous phrase, suggesting that performers also have to vary the *tactus* without making dynamic changes, especially in ballets, which Praetorius indicates by varying the time signature.<sup>92</sup>

A connection between tempo and dynamics is further confirmed by Praetorius’s recurrent demand to use a faster *tactus* in tutti passages and ritornellos and a slower one in solos.<sup>93</sup> When accompanying a boy soprano in a polychoral concerto, the organist should use the softest registers and a very slow *tactus*.<sup>94</sup> Praetorius associates the large 16’ principal and the *Schweitzerpfeiff* with slow tempi when used as soft solo organ stops.<sup>95</sup> On the other hand, he recommends moving to a faster *tactus* whenever trumpets start playing, and returning to the original tempo when they stop.<sup>96</sup> He ascribes this necessity to their habit of rushing and the difficulty of sustaining one’s breath in a slow tempo.

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wie ein *Echo* so von weitem langsam hernach antwortet”. Praetorius, *Polyhymnia caduceatrix*, bassus generalis partbook, concerto 37, “Ach mein Herre/ straf mich doch nicht”, §1, fol. PIIIr.

<sup>87</sup> See Schulz, *Die Stimme in der antiken Rhetorik*, 253–254.

<sup>88</sup> “[...] il dir piano et forte, et il dir presto et tardo, et secondo le parole muovere la misura”. Vicentino, *L’antica musica*, bk. 4, ch. 42, 94v [=88].

<sup>89</sup> “[...] e sopra tutto con far bene intendere le parole, applicando ad ogni sillaba una nota or piano, or forte, or adagio, or presto”. Solerti, *Le origini del melodramma*, 121.

<sup>90</sup> Piccinini, preface to *Intavolatura di liuto*, ch. 3, Ar, 1.

<sup>91</sup> “Von der abwechselung des langsamen und geschwinden *Tacts*”. Praetorius, preface to *Terpsichore*, §11, (:)(:)IVr.

<sup>92</sup> “Dieweil aber ohne daß auch sonderlich in den *Balletten*, wegen der *Varietät* dieser art Däntze bald ein geschwinder/ bald langsamer *Tact* muß gehalten werden”. Praetorius, preface to *Terpsichore*, §11, (:)(:)IVr.

<sup>93</sup> See Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 3, ch. 1, 111 [=131]; Praetorius, *Polyhymnia caduceatrix*, bassus generalis partbook, fol. FIrr (comment to concerto 18, “O Lamb Gottes”), fol. HIrr (comment to concerto 24, “Siehe wie fein und lieblich”); Praetorius, preface to *Puericinium*, VII. See also indications in concerto 28, “Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott”, and concerto 34, “In dulci jubilo”, from the *Polyhymnia caduceatrix*.

<sup>94</sup> “Es ist aber nötig/ daß der Organist/ wann der eine Knab zu ihm geordnet wird/ daß stilleste und sanfftste Gedact-Register auff 8. Fuß Thon/ im Rück-Positiff oder im Ober-Wercke ziehe/ und mit demselben Knaben/ auff einen gar langsamen *Tact* zugleich intonire”. Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 3, ch. 8, 173.

<sup>95</sup> Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum II*, pt. 4, ch. 2, 127–128.

<sup>96</sup> “Unnd ist hierbey dieses zu mercken; Dieweil die Trommeter ohne das gar zu sehr fort zu eilen gewohnt seyn/ sintemahl die Trommeten einen starcken Athem *requirirn* und erfordern/ welcher so langsam nicht kann *continuiret* werden/ daß man an der Ort da die Trommeter einfallen/ mit

Tempo differentiation between tutti and solo passages is corroborated by Adriano Banchieri who, in a four-part mass with organ, uses the ingenious means of indicating a slower *tactus* by the use of capital letters for underlaid text in all passages for one or two singers. In a movement consisting of twenty-eight bars governed by the same time signature throughout, Banchieri alternates the scoring and the tempi on average at intervals of fewer than eight semibreves. The only moment where he departs from the pattern of slower solos and faster tuttis occurs at the words "Jesu Christe", where capital letters indicate a slower tempo on account of the text even though all four voices are singing.<sup>97</sup>

The need for variety is stressed by Praetorius when suggesting that the intermingling of motet and madrigal styles, of slower and faster passages, and of a slow and quick *tactus* will prevent proceeding in a constant, monotonous fashion.<sup>98</sup> Vicentino likewise describes the effect on the listeners: "A composition sung with changes of measure is pleasing because of the variety, more so than one that continues on to the end without any variation of tempo. [...] You will find that in vernacular works the procedure gratifies listeners more than a measure that is always the same."<sup>99</sup> Other authors stressing variety include Cimello and Banchieri.<sup>100</sup>

Praetorius demands different *tactus* for motet and madrigal styles, and points out that Italian tempo directions can be used to avoid frequent alteration of time signatures.<sup>101</sup> The practice of introducing tempo modification via changes of time signature had a long tradition.<sup>102</sup> Sebald Heyden, in the dedication of the 1540 edition of his *De arte canendi*, admonishes "those innovators" for "changing the speed of a song, making it now slower, now faster, now very fast" by inventing different species of *tactus*.<sup>103</sup> In an especially telling passage Heinrich Glarean observes in 1547 how musicians will use signs of diminution

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dem *Tact* ein wenig mehr fort eile/ sonst kommen sie mit ihren *Sonaten* allzeit zu früh zum ende: Hernacher aber kan der *Tract* [*sic*] wiederumb etwas *protrahiret* werden/ biß und so lang wiederumb die Trommeter anfangen." Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 3, ch. 8, 170.

<sup>97</sup> "A questa [*Prima messa Vittoria a quattro*] ricercasi necessariamente l'Organo, e dove si trovano lettere MAIUSCOLE/ ivi è concerto solo ò Bino, però si moduli con la misura larga." The print, Banchieri's *Sacra armonia a quattro voci* (1619), is preserved incomplete, and Wolf, *Notation and Aufführungspraxis*, vol. 2, 7, 27–30, reconstructs the *Gloria* with the help of a later print that does not feature capital letters. Lodovico Viadana uses capital letters to distinguish passages sung as echoes in his four-part motet "Iam in somno" from the *Cento concerti ecclesiastici* of 1602.

<sup>98</sup> "[...] damit es nicht allezeit in einem *Tono* und *Sono* fortgehe". Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 2, ch. 8, 80.

<sup>99</sup> "[...] la compositione cantata, con la mutatione della misura è molto gratiata, con quella varieta, che senza variare, & seguire al fine [...] nelle cose volgari si ritroverà che tal procedere piacerà più à gl'oditori, che la misura continua sempre à un modo". Vicentino, *L'antica musica*, bk. 4, ch. 42, fol. 95v. English translation after Vicentino, *Ancient Music*, 301.

<sup>100</sup> See notes 81 and 82 above.

<sup>101</sup> Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 2, ch. 7, 51.

<sup>102</sup> See Paine, "Tactus, Tempo, and Praetorius". It should be noted that Agazzari, in the preface to his *Sacrae laudes*, compares unwritten *tactus* changes to "some proportion"; see note 79 above.

<sup>103</sup> "Cum enim tam multiplices Tactuuum species ob hoc tantum excogitatas videamus, ut motum cantus subinde mutarent, nunc tardiozem, nunc concitatiozem, nunc properantissimum faciendo. Quaeso ergo, quid nam illos novatores, de Proportionibus, Augmentationibus, ac Diminutionibus

whenever they “wish to accelerate the *tactus*, which they consider should be done when they believe the hearing is fatigued, namely, in order to remove weariness”.<sup>104</sup>

Praetorius suggests that different speeds of *tactus* are necessary to avoid extremes of speed, so that too slow a progression will not produce weariness and too fast one will not “lead to an abyss, just as the Sun’s horses dragged away Phaethon when he no longer paid attention to the reins.”<sup>105</sup> Writing in 1601, Joachim Burmeister similarly recommends that both binary and ternary mensurations be taken more slowly if they have many short values.<sup>106</sup> Relating variable *tactus* speed to prevailing note-values is, however, anything but straightforward. Reading Burmeister and certain passages from Praetorius’s *Syntagma musicum III*, one would perhaps naturally expect shorter note-values to be associated with a slower *tactus*, and longer note-values with a quicker one, but already the Italian tempo directions in Praetorius’s own works sometimes show the opposite.<sup>107</sup> It seems natural for composers to use shorter note-values when the text suggests a livelier affect. This has led researchers to question the meaning of tempo directions, regarding them variously as cautionary indications for the avoidance of slowing down in quicker passages or speeding up when slower note-values predominate, as instructions for moving the *tactus* to a different note-value while maintaining the same tempo, or as directions for changes of character rather than different *tactus*.<sup>108</sup> The frequent demands for an alternately quick and slow *tactus* show that such explanations are untenable. As has been shown above, many composers and theorists including Praetorius expect changes of affect to be supported by changing the speed of the *tactus*. Furthermore, authors such as Luis Milán, Giovanni Luca Conforti, Francesco Severi, Severo Bonini and Michael Praetorius himself demand that certain quick passages be performed faster, or even as fast as possible, in order to achieve their effect.<sup>109</sup> On the other hand, Paolo Quagliati, Ignazio Donati and

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intellexisse credamus?” Heyden, dedication in *De arte canendi*, fol. A3v. See also DeFord, *Tactus, Mensuration, and Rhythm*, 196.

<sup>104</sup>“Quoties aut volunt Musici tactu festinandum esse, quod tum faciendum censent, cum auditum iam fatigatum putant, ut scilicet fastidium tollant, lineam per circulum vel semicirculum deorsum ducunt”. Glarean, *Dodecachordon*, bk. 3, ch. 8, 205.

<sup>105</sup>“Ideo hinc celeriori, illic tardiori opus est Tactu, quò medium inter duo extrema servetur, ne tardior Progressus auditorum auribus pariat fastidium, aut celerior in Praecipitium ducat, veluti Solis equi Phaëtonem abripuerunt, ubi nullas audivit habenas.” Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 2, ch. 7, 50.

<sup>106</sup>Burmeister, *Musica autoschediastike*, accessio 3, section 2, “De antiphonis”, fol. Aa4r.

<sup>107</sup>See, for instance, the indications in concerto 34, “In dulci jubilo”, and concerto 37, “Ach, mein Herre, straf mich doch nicht”, from the *Polyhymnia caduceatrix*.

<sup>108</sup>See note 9 above.

<sup>109</sup>Milán demands that the chords be played slowly, and the runs quickly, in certain of his fantasias for vihuela; see Gásson, *Luis Milán*, 73. Conforti, “*Salmi passaggiati*”, xci, writes that diminutions of four or five beats should be sung “as quickly as possible, so that you do not have to take a breath.” Severi, preface to *Salmi passaggiati*, §5, demands that double crotchets be sung lively and as quickly as possible, provided that they are articulated from the chest and not from the throat. Bonini, in the postface to his *Affetti spirituali* (1615), recommends that the singer should speed up the beat at figures of diminution in quavers or semiquavers, “for otherwise the work will give little pleasure to the listeners and the singer will show little skill”; see Lütke, *Con la sudetta sprezzatura*, 96. Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 3, ch. 9, 236, says that “tiratae” or fast



some later writers, including Wolfgang Caspar Printz (1678), recommend taking more time for ornamentation.<sup>110</sup>

Valuable information, including short music examples, is provided in Daniel Friderici's singing treatise *Musica figuralis* first published in 1618. Friderici criticizes directors "who measure out the *tactus* so strictly in a line as the clock its minutes." This statement is followed by four music examples with contrasting texts and note-values, and Friderici explicitly states that these each demand a different *tactus*, accompanying each one with a corresponding comment.<sup>111</sup> One might have expected that semibreves and minims would imply a faster beat than quavers, even if the underlaid words "Tristitia" (sadness), "Gaudium magnum" (great joy), "Celeris praecedit" (the fast precedes), and "Tarda sequitur" (the slow follows) suggest the opposite. It is conceivable that some of Friderici's readers were puzzled; from the third edition (1624) onwards, he adds the reference to music, and, more important, provides the tempo directions "geschwind" and "langsam", making it clear that changes in the speed of the *tactus* amplify, rather than neutralize, the contrasts in the text, affect and notation.<sup>112</sup>

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scales on the keyboard will be more pleasing, the faster and more crisply they are performed, so long as each note is clearly heard. ("Je geschwinder und schärffer nun diese Läufllein gemacht werden/ doch also das man eine jede *Noten* recht rein hören und fast vernemen kan: Je besser und anmutiger es sein wird.")

<sup>110</sup> Quagliati, preface to *Il primo libro de' madrigali*, xxviii, writes that singers will use a certain judgement in applying "an altered measure, now slow and now quick, to give time and commodity to the gracious singers to embellish them with those graces and *affetti* required by this music." ("[...] una misura alterata, tal'hora larga, e tal'hora presta, per dar tempo, e commodità à i gratiosi cantanti d'adornarli con quelle gratie, & affetti, che questa Musica richiede.") Donati, "Avertimenti per potere insegnare" in *Il Secondo Libro de Motetti, canto* partbook, A2r, asks "not to sing with anxiety and fear. Since the organist sees in his partbook everything which is delivered by the singer, and, if they add other *passaggi*, will give time in his playing to do it well. But patience is required." ("[...] non cantar con ansietà è Timore. Perche il Signor Organista, vede nel suo libro tutto quello, che dice il Cantante, & se anco aggiungessero altri *passaggi* sempre aspettarà, & darà tempo con il suo sonare, di ben fare. Però ci vuole patientia.") See also Printz, *Musica modulatoria vocalis*, ch. 7, §9, 37.

<sup>111</sup> Friderici, *Musica figuralis* (1619), ch. 7, rule 16, fol. C [verso]: "Im singen soll durchaus nicht einerley Tact gespühret und geführet werden/ sondern nach dem die worte des Textus sein/ also muß auch der Tact gerichtet sein/also das eine *convenientz*, unnd *decorum* behalten werde. Irren demnach die *Cantores*/ welche den Tact so schnurgleich abmessen als das Uhrwerck seine *minuten*. Ein ander *Tact* wird hier erfordert: [...] Ein anderer aber allhier: [...] *Item* allhier: [...] Unnd allhier: [...]"

<sup>112</sup> Friderici, *Musica figuralis* (1624), ch. 7, rule 19, fol. Dr: "Im singen sol durchauß nicht einerley *tact* gespüret werden: Sondern nach dem die worte des *Textus* seyn/ also muß auch der *tact* gerichtet seyn. Irren demnach die *Cantores*, welche den *tact* so schnurgleich abmessen/ als das Uhrwerck seine *minuten*; Und *observiren* gantz kein *decorum* und *convenientz* des *textus* und der *Harmony*. Denn bald ein geschwinder/ bald ein langsamer *tactat* [*sic*] erfordert wird." The music example below follows a later edition of 1649 which contains corrections already present in the 1638 edition. It is reproduced in facsimile and erroneously cited as 1624 in Butt, *Music Education*, 98.

## Music example

**geschwind** **langsam**

**langsam** **geschwind**

The sheer quantity of sources discussing tempo modification, their original aim<sup>113</sup> and the wording in many of them all affirm the importance of such practices for the performance aesthetics of Praetorius's time. The present article forms part of a wider study of tempo modification that extends to other potential indicators of such phenomena, among them certain markings in the music, variant readings and ornamented versions. As has been shown, the manifold factors influencing tempo modification include the meaning of the words, affect, harmony, changes in prevailing note-values, scoring, dynamics, ornamentation and musical form, to which may be added the search for a desired effect, articulation, performance technique and the need for variety. It is doubtful whether it will ever be possible to establish with certainty what Praetorius considered to be "too frequently or even too rigorously",<sup>114</sup> and it will always be useful to remember his remark that "everyone can contemplate these things for himself and observe from a consideration of the text and the music where a slower or faster *tactus* should be taken."<sup>115</sup>

<sup>113</sup>This is particularly evident in the case of elementary rules for singing and primers intended for use in schools.

<sup>114</sup>See note 13 above.

<sup>115</sup>"Es kan aber ein jeder den Sachen selbstn nachdencken/ und *ex consideratione Textus & Harmoniae observiren*, wo ein langsamer oder geschwider *Tact* gehalten werden müsse." Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, pt. 2, ch. 7, 51.

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## »ZDAJ HITRO, ZDAJ SPET POČASI«: MODIFIKACIJE TEMPA PRI PRAETORIUSU IN SODOBNIKI

### Povzetek

Izraz »modifikacije tempa« je v tej študiji omejen na spremembe hitrosti taktiranja v 16. in 17. stoletju s poudarkom na praksah, ki jih niso izrecno označevali v notnem zapisu in so jih prepuščali izvajalcem. Takšni prijemi so razmeroma slabo proučeni in tudi nekateri novejši raziskovalci interpretirajo zgodovinske vire v luči glasbene prakse svojega časa. Poleg tega že izvirni opisi kažejo, da je tema izmuzljiva, saj navajajo nasprotujoča si mnenja, določeno mero izvajalske svobode, odgovornost izvajalcev in potencialne težave pri muziciranju. Nekateri opisujejo razlike med praksami v posvetni in cerkveni glasbi ali pri solistični in ansambelski igri.

Michael Praetorius omenja spremembe *tactus*a v različnih kontekstih, tudi v predgovorih objavljenih glasbenih zbirk in navodilih za izvajanje določenih skladb. Deloma jih predpisuje z italijanskimi oznakami ali spremembami taktovskega načina, sicer pa jih prepušča izvajalcem. V poglavju o variiranju *tactus*a ali menzure v tretjem zvezku svojega kompendija glasbene teorije in prakse *Syntagma musicum* citira pravila za pevce Georga Quitschreiberja, a je delom besedila, predvsem zahtevi po enakosti menzure, mogoče slediti vse do začetka 16. stoletja. Ta zahteva ne izključuje različnih tempov znotraj iste skladbe, kakršne opisujejo mnogi nemški, italijanski in francoski sodobniki. Posebno pogost je izraz »zdaj počasi, zdaj hitro«, ki izvira iz antične retorike. Najdemo ga v opisih glasbe in muziciranja v renesančni literaturi, kjer njegov pomen ni vedno enoznačen, mnogi skladatelji in glasbeni teoretiki druge polovice 16. in prve polovice 17. stoletja pa ga povezujejo prav s spremembami v hitrosti taktiranja.

Pogostnost takšnih zapisov, tudi v preprostih učbenikih in priročnikih za začetnike, in sama izbira besed kažeta, da so bile modifikacije tempa pomemben del takratne izvajalske estetike. Avtorji navajajo celo vrsto dejavnikov, ki so vplivali na spremembe tempa znotraj skladbe. Med njimi so pomen besedila, čustva, harmonija, spremembe v prevladujočih notnih vrednostih, zasedbi in dinamiki, ornamentacija, glasbena oblika, pa tudi želeni učinek, artikulacija in potreba po raznolikosti.