

## **Masters of the Choirboys and the Strategies of their Appointment at the Cathedral of Cambrai, 1459-1539**

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Masters of the choirboys ("magister puerorum altaris") is an interesting object for the scholar of Renaissance Music, not only for there are many renowned composers who were in the office but its primary functions, social status, and the criteria of appointment are relatively unknown to us. This article treats these matters taking as example the cathedral of Cambrai, which has been considered to provide lavish support for music and employ many talented musicians.

Investigation of the activities and the processes of installation of the eleven masters who took the post at Cambrai from 1459 to 1539 reveals that: (1) the series of the failure of recruitment in the 1460s attests the post was not regarded very desirable by musician as many scholars would think and it was only from the end of the fifteenth century that the chapter of the church began to support it consciously; (2) Contrary to the supposition posed by Paula Higgins that the norm of employment dramatically began to change in the late fifteenth century ("from skilled pedagogue to creative mentor"), the canons at Cambrai rather made much of the musician born and bred with whom they could entrust the boys in the long term; (3) from the beginning of the sixteenth century, there appeared a route of promotion through which former pupils of the "maitrise" at Cambrai could get the seat for the canons of the church after a long service as master of the choirboys.

Finally the author concludes this article insisting that these phenomena reflect in a different way from what Higgins presents the transition of the social status of musician from the end of the Middle Ages, so it is quite necessary to put together such examples taken in other "musical centers" as much as possible and to compare those carefully for rather precise and also vivid perspectives of the musical life of what we know as Renaissance.