

01. Ego flos campi

(before 1609?)

Caterina Assandra

(ca. 1590-after 1618)

arr. William Melton

Assandra, Caterina

(born Pavia, ca. 1590; died after 1618)

As the above birth and death dates testify, much of Caterina Assandra's biography remains frustratingly elusive. That she lived as the nun Suor Agata at the Benedictine convent of Santa Agata at Lomello in the diocese of Pavia is known, however. So, too, are her great abilities as composer and keyboard player – the publisher Lomazzo extolled her talents in a dedication of works by Giovanni Paolo Cima in 1606. Assandra studied with Benedetto Re, *maestro di cappella* in Pavia (her pieces were issued in collections of Re's works in 1611 and 1618), and she published her own collection of *Motetti a 2 e 3 voce par cantar nell' Organo con il Basso Continuo*, Op. 2 in Milan in 1609.

In Caterina Assandra's motet *Ego flos campi*, Lodovico Grossi da Viadana's modern concertante style is prominent, along with the imitative, melismatic treatment of vocal lines and sequential harmony as seen in the madrigals of Claudio Monteverdi. The text *Ego flos campi* is derived from the Song of Solomon, chapters 2:1-5 and 4:12, 15, and was also set by the leading composers Jacobus Clemens non Papa, Andrea Gabrieli, Francisco Guerrero, and Claudio Monteverdi.

Ego flos campi et lilium convallium.

Sicut lilium inter spinas sic amica mea inter filias.

Sicut malus inter ligna silvarum, sic dilectus meus inter filios.

Sub umbra illius quem desideraveram sedi, et fructus ejus dulcis gutturi meo.

Introduxit me Rex in cellam vinariam ordinavit in me charitatem.

Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis quia amore langueo.

Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus fons signatus.

Fons hortorum puteus aquarum viventium quae fluunt impetu de Libano.

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

As the apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons.

I sat down under his shadow with great delight: and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

He brought me into the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: because I am sick of love.

A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

Text by William Melton