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## Musical Terminology

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# The Terms Selete and Pause in the Manuscripts of the Productions of The Seven Joys of Mary in Brussels: the Significance and the Functions

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to an issue present in the studies of music and musical terminology in the Dutch mysteries of the late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. Two terms are examined here in detail – namely, *selete* and *pause*, present in the comments of two manuscripts of the productions in Brussels of *The Seven Joys of Mary*, consisting of various episodes in the lives of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary. The productions of *The Seven Joys of Mary* took place in Brussels from 1448 to 1566 and were timed to the annual procession in honor of the miraculous statue of the Virgin Mary. Analysis of the terms *selete* and *pause* is carried out with the consideration of the practice of production of the mystery theater, the peculiarities of the arrangement of the play space of the simultaneous scene, as well as the theatrical activities of the rhetoricians. A number of questions is raised in the article: whether or not there exists any connection between

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the *selete* and a particular stage setting, whether the functions of the terms *selete* and *pause* differ, how does the use of the term *selete* in the Brussels manuscripts correlate with the practice of production of the German Passion and Easter rites of the late Medieval period, and the term *pause* – with the productions of mysteries in France, what musical instruments were used, what chants and musical episodes signified the indicated terms, and also, where were the musicians placed during the performance. In the process of analysis of the manuscript text, various types of comments are revealed being of direct concern to the music of *The Seven Joys of Mary*. Among them there are side notes containing only *selete* and only *pause*, comments in which one of these terms is supplemented by the specification *sanc of spel (singing or playing)*, as well as side notes indicating the musical accompaniment, but not containing the terms *selete and pause*. As the result of the undertaken research, a conclusion is arrived at about the polyfunctionality of the terms *selete and pause* in the productions of *The Seven Joys of Mary* and their correspondence to the traditional terms of mystery theater.

**Keywords:** *selete, pause,* musical terms, *The Seven Joys of Mary*, side notes, simultaneous scene, production of mysteries, scene of rhetoricians

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## Музықальная терминолеқсиқа

Научная статья

# Термины selete и pause в рукописях брюссельских постановок «Семи Радостей Марии»: значение и функции

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проблеме Аннотация. Статья посвящена изучения музыки терминологии нидерландских и музыкальной мистериях В Средневековья и начала Нового времени. В ней подробно рассматриваются два термина — selete и pause, содержащиеся в ремарках двух рукописей брюссельских постановок «Семи Радостей Марии», включающих различные эпизоды из жизни Иисуса Христа и Богоматери. Представления «Семи Радостей Марии» проходили в Брюсселе с 1448 по 1566 год и были приурочены к ежегодной процессии в честь чудотворной статуи Девы Марии. Анализ терминов selete и pause проводится с учетом исполнительской традиции мистериального театра, особенностей организации игрового пространства симультанной сцены, а также театральной деятельности риторов. В статье поднимается ряд вопросов: существует ли связь между selete и определенной мизансценой, различаются ли функции указаний selete и pause, каким образом соотносится использование термина selete в брюссельских рукописях с постановочной практикой немецких Страстных и Пасхальных действ периода позднего Средневековья, а pause — с мистериями во Франции, музыкальные инструменты использовались, какие и инструментальные эпизоды обозначали указанные термины, а также где располагались исполнители во время представления.

Анализ текстов рукописей помог выявить различные типы ремарок, имеющих непосредственное отношение к музыке «Семи Радостей Марии». Ряд таких ремарок содержит только selete и только pause, в других один из этих терминов дополнен уточнением sanc of spel («пение или игра»), в третьих указывается на музыкальное сопровождение, но без употребления selete и pause. В результате проведенного исследования сделан вывод о многофункциональности терминов selete и pause в постановках «Семи Радостей Марии» и их соответствии традиционной лексике мистериального театра.

**Ключевые слова:** *selete*, *pause*, музыкальные термины, «Семь Радостей Марии», ремарки, симультанная сцена, постановка мистерий, сцена риторов

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#### Introduction

Turning to the subject of terminology in the manuscripts of medieval theater is perceived to be important for the study of the conceptual nomenclature of the mystery scene, since it contains direct relations to the issue of the historical (authentic) versions of theatrical terms. The preserved manuscript texts and the "theater producers" copies of the Passion and Easter acts, miracles, morality plays, and plays devoted to the episodes of the life of the Virgin Mary written in Latin and the old European languages contain various types of terms. Most of them are closely connected with the production practice of medieval theater: the player space, the stage setting and the music. However, this theme remains on the fringe of research of Russian theater historians, who give their preference to basic concepts of the study of theater, "the creation of a terminological apparatus adequate to a new understanding of theater" [1, p. 171].

Undoubtedly, the solution of the goals of topical theater studies is of utmost significance, but without the consideration of the specific features of authentic theatrical terminology of the "distant" times (from the times of Ancient Greece to the Enlightenment), the history of 20th and early 21st century theater would not be complete and, what is more essential, would not be veracious. It is necessary to develop a strategy and methodology for researching historical theatrical terms (the self-designations of the epoch),

considering the similar experiences of contiguous scholarly disciplines, including musicology, where steadfast attention is paid to the study not only of contemporary, but also of authentic musical terms. During the course of recent years, numerous articles have appeared devoted to various aspects of the comprehension of the terminological apparatus of music scholarship, among which the historical conceptions from the 16th to the 18th centuries, and their correlations with contemporary musical knowledge [2; 3; 4; 5] are examined. In 2019, the *Fourth Congress of the Russian Society for Music Theory* devoted to these issues. The chief content of the reports of the participants of this musicological forum demonstrated that "discussion of the term is hardly limited to the discussion of words and names, but it is primarily a conversation about the substances of the phenomena themselves" [6, p. 3]. In the present article, the attempt is made on the example of the texts of two manuscripts from the texts of the Brussels productions of *The Seven Joys of Mary* to example the meanings and the functions of *selete* and *pause*, indicating at the necessity for a musical insertion.

#### The Prehistory

The history of the productions of *The Seven Joys of Mary* in Brussels is closely connected with the festive procession of the Brussels Ommegang¹ devoted to the miraculous statue of the Virgin Mary from the *Church of Our Lady of Sablon*.²

According to a legend, one pious lady, a native of Antwerpen, dreamed several times of the Virgin Mary, who commanded her to take the statue of her³ from the Antwerpen church and bring it to Brussels. The woman stole the statue and, as the result of a series of wondrous events, transported it on a boat to Brussels, where she passed it to a guild of arbalesters, who placed the statue in their chapel built in Sablon in honor of the Virgin Mary, the patroness of the guild.⁴ In memory of this event, the members of the executive board of the guild promised to organize a festive procession, which has received the name of Ommegang. Starting from 1348, each year, during the Sunday before Pentecost, the miraculous statue of the Sablon Virgin Mary was brought along a particular route from the church to the town hall at the Grote Markt. As part of the process, various scenes from the lives of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary were shown in living pictures presented on the wagons. After a century, in 1448, after the end of the procession, they began showing the Bliscap⁵ — *The Joy of Mary*. Historian of Dutch literature, Herman

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Dutch word "Ommegang," stemming from "omgang," means: detour, religious procession, and festive pageantry. All the translations of the names and titles from other languages have been made by the author of this article.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The Dutch word "Onze Lieve Vrouw van de Zavel" (the Church of Our Lady on Sands"), but the more widespread French variant of the name is the Church of Our Lady of Sablon (L'Église de la Notre-Dame du Sablon).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> In Dutch: "Onze-Lieve-Vrouw op 't Stocxken" ("Our Lady on the Perch").

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The story narrates that the Virgin Mary helped shooters from an arbalest to win competitions, and since then arbalesters began worshipping her as a benefactress of the guild and in gratitude to her help built a chapel in honor of the Virgin Mary in 1304.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Bliscap, from Dutch "bleidschap," means – joy, merriment.

Pleij reckons the Bliscaps among the traditional "games before the processions" [7, p. 130]. Altogether, there were seven so-called Marian plays devoted to important episodes from the life of the Mother of God: the Annunciation, Christmas, the Adoration of the Magi, the Resurrection of Jesus, the Ascension of Christ to heaven, the Descent of the Holy Spirit on Mary and the Apostles, and the Ascension of Mary. Each year, one of the seven plays was presented and, thereby, a recurrent seven-year cycle was formed, which was interrupted in 1566 because of the iconoclastic insurrection.

The Ommerang, which happened in the morning, and the Bliscap, which was carried out during the day, was organized by the guild of arbalesters, with the exception of the period between 1559 and 1566, when at the request of the executive board of the guild, the performances were directed by the commissioner of the *Brussels Chamber of Rhetoric (Rederijkerskamers) De Corenbloem (The Cornflower) Frans van Ballaer.* The rederijkers were fans of poetic versifications pertaining to various different urban social categories, engaged in theater productions and organized festive processions in the city.

The reason the guild of arbalesters turned to the commissioner of the chamber *The Cornflower*<sup>8</sup> is unknown, but the fact itself is not surprising. Close connections existed between the shooters' guilds and the chambers of rederijkers, including those in regards to preparing city festivities. Thus, for example, during the triumphant entrance into Brussels of Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Friedrich III on July 21, 1486, in addition to the living picture presented by the guild of arbalesters, the chambers of rederijkers *The Book* and *The Cornflower* performed one play each [8, p. 111].

#### The Manuscript Texts

Only two of the seven manuscripts of the Bliscaps were preserved — the first and the seventh. The first is devoted to the Annunciation — this scene concludes the act, and it is preceded by episodes occurring in hell, in paradise, in heaven, on earth. Not only Biblical characters participate in them, but also allegorical ones, such as *Envy (Nijt)*, *Bitter Suffering (Bitter Ellende)*, *Intimate Prayer (Innich Gebet)*, *Compassion (Ontfermicheit)*, and *Truth (Waerheit)*.

The action begins with a scene from hell, where Lucifer and Envy decide to send the Serpent to tempt Eve with the forbidden fruit. After the scene of the Fall, God drives Adam and Eve out of Paradise. Then two devilish feasts are held, where Lucifer

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> First in front of the Church of the Sablon Virgin Mary, and subsequently in front of the town hall.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> In Dutch: rederijkers, from the French: rhetoricien and Latin: rhetorica — rhetoric. Commissioner (factor) — a sort of artistic director of the association of referijkers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> At that moment, in Brussels, in addition to the *Cornflower*, there were three more chambers of redereikers: *The Book, The Lilly*, and *The Violet*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The manuscript of the Seventh Bliscap became open to the public in 1882, and the manuscript of the First Bliscap — in 1962. Both are written on parchment, not by their author, but are copied by the selfsame copyist. At the present time, they are preserved at the Albert I Royal Library in Brussels (the First Bliscap — hs. IV 192, the Seventh — hs. II 478).

and Envy celebrate their victory. In the following episode, Adam tells his children that he is old and ill and sends Seth to Paradise to find out whether there is any medicine that could help him. The angel gives Seth a branch and informs him that Adam shall free himself of his malady and obtain redemption from the branch of the tree from which the forbidden fruit was plucked. Upon returning home, Seth finds Adam dead and feels obligated to plant the branch over Adam's head, from which a beautiful tree would grow. Subsequently, the action is transferred to the threshold of Hell, where Adam, Eve, David, Job and its other inhabitants abide in despair. The allegorical characters, Bitter Suffering and Intimate Prayer send the character Compassion to Heaven to intercede for the fate of the righteous people stranded in hell. Compassion and Justice engage in an argument before God. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit confer with each other and with the help of Truth arrive at a decision that is consoling for the righteous people. Next follows a scene in which Joachim sees how the bishop and the priests reject his sacrificial lamb, because his childlessness is perceived as a chastisement sent by God. Joachim escapes from his shame to the desert, where an angel appears to him with tidings from God; he returns to the city, meets with Anna at the Golden Gates, and then informs the priests about the birth of Mary. In the following scene, Joachim and Anna leave Mary in the Temple, which is followed by her betrothal to Joseph. The action of the First Bliscap is concluded with the Annunciation scene.

The action of the Seventh Bliscap, in contrast to the First, is dedicated to one event — the Death of the Virgin Mary, the allegorical characters do not take part in it. In the first scene, John brings Mary to his home at the foot of Mount Zion, himself setting out to reach to the populace, while Mary visits the places connected with the final days of the earthly life of Jesus. The Jews are outraged by the behavior of the Mother of God and decide that her body must be burned after her death, and the ashes scattered. Mary prays to God that he would take her to heaven, after which an Angel appears and tells her of God's consent. In a miraculous way, first John, and then the other Apostles, with the exception of Thomas, gather in Mary's house. She announces to the Apostles of her imminent death and bids each of them farewell. Lucifer sends two devils to tempt and torment the Mother of God at her deathbed, but they are driven away by Archangel Michael, who guards the entrance to Mary's house. The culmination of the act is the Virgin Mary's hour of death and God's acceptance of Her soul. The Apostles in a funeral procession carry Her body to a grave in the Valley of Jehosaphat, while the Jews, carrying out their threat, attempt to gain possession of the body, but as soon as two of them touch the Virgin Mary's coffin, they go blind and their hands "fall off." In the following episode, Thomas appears, having tardily arrived from India. He tells the Apostles that on his way back, he met an angel, who told him about everything. The Apostles go to Mary's grave, but find there only Her clothes. The act ends with a threefold hymn of praise pronounced by the Apostles John, Peter and Andrew.

The text and the side notes of the manuscripts contain various stage directions, among them, *selete* and *pause*, <sup>10</sup> (literally, *silence* and *pause*) repeated numerous times, stand out. They have a direct relation to the music.

For the first time, the meaning of these terms was commented by Dutch literary historians, Gerrit Kalff and Pieter Leendertse (1907). And while Kalff only touched upon the issue of applying the terms, Leendertse advanced several hypotheses. At first, he equated *selete* and *pause* to an instrumental piece or a pause, then presumed that both terms may have signified a break (rust) in the action and appeared only in those cases when "the action was fully transferred to the other side of the stage, so that the audience was compelled to relocate to another part of the theater space. In order to hold the audiences' attention during the lengthy intermission, performances were organized — living pictures or pantomimes — and music was played. But, in the final outcome, I was inclined to think that *pause* may indicate both instrumental and the cessation of action between the scenes, and *selete* — the change of the place of the action.

Willem Hendrik Beuken, who realized the first scholarly publication of both manuscripts,<sup>14</sup> equated the terms *selete* and *pause* with each other and made an assumption that both terms may mean a musical insertion, as well as a break in the action. Along with the German literary historian Ernst August Schuler,<sup>15</sup> he examines *selete* as a purely technical production element, indicating at its connection with the stage setting. Beukin also marked out two functions of the *selete* and *pause* — the connection with the previous and the anticipation of the subsequent scene.<sup>16</sup>

Notwithstanding the importance of the issue, as historian of Dutch literature, Willem Hummelen notes, "the question of the significance of the terms *selete* and *pause* has never brought to a precise research." In his opinion, *selete* and *pause* are "most important terms, signifying at the necessity of music-making in late medieval plays

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> In the texts of both manuscripts, there is a predominance of the Latin form *selete* (be silent!) and the French form *pause*, with the exception of the later additions, where the Latin form *silete*, *pausa* is used.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Kalff, G. (1907). *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche letterkunde. Tweede deel*. Groningen, pp. 368–369. Leendertz, P. (ed.). (1907). *Middelnederlandsche dramatische poëzie*. Leiden, pp. LXXXVII–XCII. Kalff published the texts of the first and the Seventh Bliscap, and Leendertse – only the Seventh.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Kalff, G. (1907), pp. 368-369...

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Leendertz, P. (1907), p. LXXXIX.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Beuken, W. H. (ed.). (1973). *Die eerste bliscap van Maria en Die sevenste bliscap van Onser Vrouwen*. Culemborg. In 1978 the second edition appeared: Beuken W. H. (ed.). (1978). *Die eerste Bliscap van Maria en Die sevenste Bliscap van Onser Vrouwen*. Tjeenk Willink / Noorduijn, Culemborg (Original work published 1973).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Schuler, E. A. (1951). *Die Musik der Osterfeiern, Osterspiele und Passionen des Mittelalters*. Kassel [enz.], pp. 46–48. In his monograph devoted to the music of German Easter and Passion actions, published in 1951, Schuler examines "selete" only as an indication towards "the purely stage direction nature" (rein aufführungstechnische Natur).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Beuken, W. H. (1973/1978), pp. 27–28.

of the 15th and 16th centuries" [9, p. 133]. It could be added to this that the terms *selete* and *pause* in the side notes of the manuscripts of the Biscaps present important keys to the research of the production practice of the mystery theater and are tightly connected with them. In order to reveal this connection, it is important to examine not only the meaning but the function of these terms.

The quantity times the respective terms *selete* and *pause* appear in the stage comments of the two manuscripts differs. In the First Bliscap — *selete* appears 10 times (2 times among them, with the specifications *short* and *very short*), while *pause* appears 3 times (2 times among them, with the specifications *short* and *small*, as well as three comments of another kind: *Selete*; *sanc of spel*, *Selete*; *pause*, *Pause*; *sanc of spel*. The Seventh Bliscap has *selete* appear 9 times (one of them with the specification *short*), while the appearances of *pause* are numbered from 1 to 6.

Both terms in the Bliscap texts appear in the most varied situations, at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the scene; at the same time, *selete* is used much more often than *pause*; moreover, in the First Bliscap we discover additions to both terms. Hummelen, while analyzing the text of the First, marks out the comments that "include the two terms, which do not have the same meaning. After all, it would not be logical" [9, p. 135]. Such indications as *Selete*; *sanc of spel*, *Selete*; *pause*, *Pause*; *sanc of spel*, where the terms stand close to each other, are called *incoordinate* (*ongecoördineerde*) and assumes that particularly they disclose the path towards the answer to the question of what *pause* and *selete* mean in the manuscripts of the Bliscaps.

Let us examine *selete* and *pause* with consideration of the organization of the stage action, plot twists, music and erformance tradition of the German and French mystery theater of the late Middle Ages.

#### The Stage of the Bliscaps

The Bliscaps were staged on wooden platform floorings (*stellages*), where several places of act, following the aws of simultaneous stages, organized a single playing space. During the performances of the Seventh Bliscap, the platform flooring could present: the alley of Jehosophat with the Virgin Mary's grave, Mount Zion, the Virgin Mary's house on Zion, Golgotha, three Heavens, Jerusalem, the plaza on Ephesus, several nameless cities, India, and Hell [8, p. XCVII]. Since no information survived about the positions of the "places of action," only one thing may be assumed with certitude — that Paradise and Hell, according to the stage practice of mystery theater, were situated not adjacently to each other, but at a considerable distance from each other, very likely, at the opposite sides of he wooden flooring.

There are no depictions or descriptions of the productions of the Brussels Biscaps available, but considering the cultural connections between the Netherlands and the adjacent countries, it makes sense to turn to the German and French theater traditions of the neighboring lingual areas, as well as to the production practice of the rederijks who participated in the productions (1559–1566).

In the German productions of the Passion and Easter performances, most often, separate "places of action" were set up directly on the ground and, for the most part, against each other, while in France, as a rule, they were set on the wooding floorings in rows. Most likely, the Brussels-based artists viewed the French version as their reference



Illustration 1. Timothy De Paepe.

Antwerp Landuvel Scene (3D model, 2008).

Available at:

https://3dtheater.wordpress.com
(accessed: 01.08.2024)

point. In any case, up to that time, until Frans van Ballaer engaged himself in the Bliscap productions. It was quite likely that since that time the playing space was set up differently, in correspondence with the stage practice rhetoricians. The perforof the mance continued to be carried out on the wooden floorings, but already not in front of separate constructions, but of the facades (a type of scaenae frons) with several apertures covered by curtains, beyond which was the inner space (compartimenten), made use of during the performances. Such a presumption is possible not only because of the depictions of the scene of the two Landjuweels from Ghent (1539) and from Antwerp (1561, see Illustration 1, 2), but also of the stage side notes inscribed by Van Ballaer's hand into the manuscript of the Seventh Bliscap in regards to the opening and the closing of the Heavens, Hell and Mary's house, as well as the custom of the rhetoricians creating living pictures in the compartments.

The Selete: the Stage Space and the Stage Setting

There is no other information available about the stage settings other than that which may be brought out from the text itself and the production practice of the mystery stage. According to Hummelen, "the *selete* must be audible, must last a certain period of time and must serve as a signal towards continuing the playing, even if no speech has been pronounced. The only thing that meets these requirements and fits the medieval plays is music" [9, p. 135].

Analysis of the side notes in the ma-nuscripts of the First and the Seventh Bliscaps has shown that the appearance of the term *selete* in them is in a number of cases directly

connected with the protagonists moving within the stage space from one lace of action to another. But there is one nuance here. In the Seventh Bliscap, God, following Mary's request, commands the angels to gather the Apostles together at the Virgin Mary's deathbed. The angels lift up first John, and then the other Apostles, with the exception of Thomas, and bring them to the threshold of Mary's house. This occurs the following way. At the end of the scene of John's sermon in Ephesus, the commentary states: "Here two angels appear and envelop St. John with clothing resembling a cloud. Having covered him in this fashion, they deliver him to Mary's threshold; or transfer him in another fashion, depending on what convenient."17 The dialogue between Mary and John is followed by a side note: "Selete. Now the Apostles should gather in one cloud in front of Mary's doorstep, and they will be very surprised."18

One cannot fail to observe that of these two comments, only one contains the word *selete*. There is an explanation to this elucidating one of the functions of *selete* in the Bliscap productions. During John's transferal from Ephesus to Mary's house, a conversation was taking place between three parishioners who were discussing John's sermon and his sudden <u>disappearance</u>. Hummelen draws our

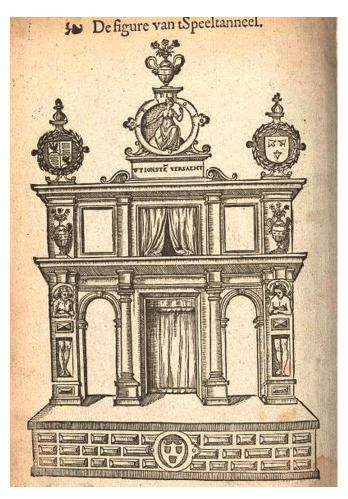


Illustration 2. Unknown artist. Antwerp Landjuweel scene from 1561 (engraving from the book Spelen van sinne, Antwerpen, 1562, 21.7 x 15.3 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. Source of illustration:

Vandommele J.J.M. Als in een Spiegel: vrede, kennis en gemeenschap op het Antwerpse Landjuweel van 1561. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. s.n. Verloren, 2011. P. 35.

<sup>17</sup> Beuken, W. H. (1973/1978), p. 164. The content of the commentary testifies to the fact that the author of the Seventh Bliscap based himself on the text of *The Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine: "At the time when John was preaching in Ephesus, there was a clap of thunder among the clear skies, a snowy-white cloud enveloped the Apostle and, raising him up, transferred him to Mary's threshold. After having knocked at the door, John came into Her private rooms, immaculately, greeting the Virgin. Upon seeing him, Mary stood transfixed with happiness…". See: Voraginskiy, I. (2019). Ob Uspenii Presvyatoy Devy Marii, Glava CXIX [Jacobus de Voragine. About the Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary. Chapter 69]. In Voraginskiy I. *Zolotaya legenda*. [Jacobus de Voragine. *The Golden Legend*]. In 2 Volumes. Izdatel'stvo Frantiskantsev [The Franciscans' Publishing House], vol. 2., pp. 190–191.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Beuken, W. H. (1973/1978), p. 172.

attention to the fact that such a scene is absent in the sources to which the author may have turned, which means that it was thought of specially for the sake of covering over the action occurring simultaneously to it. As the result of the use of such a *covering up scene*, the *selete* was not required during John's transferal. On the contrary, during the Apostles' transferal to the house of Mary, there was no other action taking place, so the necessity appeared for the "selete," indicating the musical insertion.

The Selete: the Change of Place of Action and the Appeal towards Silence

One cannot help noticing that the *selete* in the side notes in the Bliscap manuscripts also appears during the change of scenes, which testifies to the close connection of the Brussels production with the tradition of Silete-singing prominent in the European mysteries, where it appeared in similar cases: when the place of action transferred within the space of the simultaneous stage, and the audience changed their positions, following this, creating a sizeable amount of noise. In order to reestablish silence, a sort of a signal addressed to the audience was necessary. The function for such a signal was taken up by the Silete-singing performed by the angels' choir as an appeal towards silence. In the German mystery theater, beginning from the 14th century, in the Passion and Easter acts, the following formula obtained broad dissemination: "Silete, silete, silentium habete!" ("Be silent! Be silent! Observe silence!") [10, p. 293]. In the numerous texts of the Passion and Easter acts, Silete-singing appears numerous times during the course of the action particularly as an appeal to the audience from silence.<sup>19</sup>

Thereby, in the productions of the First and the Second Bliscaps, during the change of the place of the action and the transferal of the audience, the *selete* carried out the function of Silete-singing in the mystery scene. While in the other scenes it is far from always clear, whether *selete* signifies the singing or the music, in this case, it undoubtedly means singing. Although the manuscripts of both Bliscaps do not contain any information about the performers, it may be presumed that in the Brussels productions, as well, the scenes of the *selete* were sung by a chorus of angels, following the performance tradition of mystery theater.

#### The Selete: an Appeal to Attention

From the function of the *selete* as an appeal to the audience for silence, its other role developed: to induce the audiences to pay attention in especially important moments of the action, to accentuate them. For this reason, we find the selete in the scenes of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Virgin Mary and the Apostles, the prayers of the Virgin Mary, the prayer of the Apostles, and the sacrificed offered by Joachim. This comment is also used upon the indication of the protagonists' statuses. It comes with the appearance of angels with messages from God, as well as the appearance of God Himself. Thus, at the end of the First Bliscap, it is expressed in the episode when Gabriel descended from Heaven to Mary's room to bring Her the glad tidings; it appears in the Seventh

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> For more detail, see [8, pp. 293-294].

Bliscap before God's address "to His heavenly host." We also find the *selete* in the scenes occurring in Heaven (at the beginning and the end). It is unknown to us, what was it that particularly sounded, since there are no indications present about this in the comments. Nonetheless, if we consider the production practice of the mystery scenes, we can assert that the "selete" on the staged Heaven was performed by angels.

The functions of the selete are not limited to the aforementioned examples. In the First Bliscap, the *selete* also symbolizes the flow of time: at the end of the dialogue between the two priests glorifying the birth of Mary, it is stated in the comment after the *selete*: *three years later*; and after the scene of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary into the Temple, after the *selete* it is written *eleven years later*.

#### Selete and Pause: Live Pictures

An analysis of comments found in the Bliscaps shows that in the silent scenes *selete* and *pause* are used on an equal footing. We find both terms in the scenes of the wordless prayer. In the First Bliscap, it is Mary's prayer at the time of Gabriel's visitation: "*Pause* cort. Gabriel kneels before Mary, who is praying in her room, reaching her hands forth to God."<sup>20</sup> In one of the side notes in the Seventh Bliscap, it is said: "*Selete*. Mary lies in her room, immersed in prayer."<sup>21</sup> Another side note states: — "*Selete*. Here the Apostles shall lie, immersed in prayer. At that time, Lucifer appears and calls upon his servants to send for Mary's soul."<sup>22</sup>

In the latter case, we encounter an interesting example of combining together two scenes that the audience viewed at the same time. Against the background of the taciturn action in one section of the playing space, in the other speech is heard: Lucifer gives the order with detailed instructions to two devils to lure the Virgin Mary on her deathbed to temptation, in order to ruin her soul. The Apostles' prayer is undoubtedly presented here, as in the other cited examples, as a live picture.

It is also possible to relay to live pictures the pantomimic scene in which three young Virgins prepare Mary for burial, added by Van Balaer in 1559, when he was working on the production of the Seventh Bliscap. The appearance of the live pictures is unsurprising; they were met in many of the rederijkers' plays, where they were always accompanied by music:

In the Middle Ages, a live picture was considered to present a full-fledged theatrical form and was frequently used during processions on chariots and on the wooden floorings along the route during the Triumphal Entrances on the wooden floorings and triumphal arches. Under the name of toog, it was also used in rederijks' morality plays, where it was usually disclosed at the end of the play [11, p. 45].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Beuken, W. H. (1973/1978), p. 139.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

However, the rederikers in the commentaries to their plays indicating at the presentation of a live picture, as a rule, made use of the term *pausa*, rather than *selete*. In texts, in similar cases, we find *pausa*, as well as *selete*. It could be presumed that the use of any particular timbre is connected with the indication of various kinds of musical accompaniment: singing (*selete*) and instrumental music (*pausa*).

All the manifestations of the term *pausa* in the manuscript of the Seventh Bliscap were numbered, as has been mentioned before. Hummelen expressed the hypothesis that the numeration may have been connected with the necessity of carrying out payments for the musicians who performed the intermezzi, since unlike the boys' choirs, they did not have anything to do with the church [9, p. 136]. As another presumption, let us add that in this case, the live pictures themselves, since all the pausas with the indication of the numbers were inscribed in Van Ballaers' hand, the rederijkers in their plays frequently used the term *pausa* for the indications of the musical accompaniment of live pictures.

What remains is to elucidate the question connected that, which was indicated by *selete* and *pause* in the scenes of wordless prayers presented as live pictures — music (*Pause cort* in the First Bliscap) and chant singing (*Selete* in the Seventh Bliscap)? Or was it that *selete*, along with *pause*, indicated an instrumental piece? The presumption of the genre-related division of two terms, previously uttered by Leenderts, is confirmed by one of the side notes from the First Bliscap: *pause spelen* (*to play the pause*). Another argument in favor of Leenderts' hypothesis may be found in the text of a Middle Dutch play *About the Five Wise Virgins and the Five Foolish Virgins* (*Van de V vroede ende van de V dwaeze magden*), dated the late 15th century.<sup>23</sup> The play begins with the indication: *pause*, while in one of the side notes it is inscribed: *and they play the pause* (*ende men speelt pause*), that is, *pause* here clearly indicates at an instrumental performance.

#### Selete and Pause + Sanc of Spel

In two side notes in the First Bliscap, along with *selete* and *pause*, the word-connection *sancofspel(singingorplaying)*. Inbothcases, playing on musical instruments is presumed. In the episode of the banishment of Adam and Eve from Paradise, it is indicated in the side notes: *Selete; sancofspel*, while Anna's address to Godwith gratitude about the conception: *Pause, sancofspel*. But in the scene in Hell, after the conversation between the righteous people and at the end of the dialogue between the allegorical characters, the side notes indicate only *sanc of spel* with *selete* or *pause*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> The original manuscript of this play from the late 15th century is lost, while the preserved text is dated the early 16th century. The other texts of 15th century plays preserved until our days do not contain the term pause or are known from later listings, which does not present a veracious perspective in relation to the content of the comments.

From Hummelen's point of view, it is absolutely obvious that here the distinction has been made between *selete* and *pause* in the comments: *Selete*; *sanc of spel* and *Pause*; *sanc of spel*. He considers that such a distinction "is possible only in that case, if *selete* corresponds to one of the parts of *sanc or spel*, and *pause* pertains to the other" [9, p. 136]. In other words, according to Hummelen's discourse, selete must correspond to sanc (singing), a *pause* — *to spel* (*playing*). However, another supposition may be expressed. The specifications *sanc of spel* together with *selete* and *pause* testify, in this case, that the producer was presented the possibility of choosing between *singing* and *music*. Regardless of the enumerated suppositions, it must be observed that the specification of the terms *selete* and *pause* with the word-connection *sanc of spel* discloses the variability of the terms *selete* and *pause* and characterizes their musical nature.

In addition to the terms *selete* and *pause* in the text of the First Bliscap, we also find other comments having a direct relation to music. Some contain the indication of singing and instrumental music, for example, "Here in the Heavens there must be singing and dancing by the throne"<sup>24</sup> before God sends the Angel to inform Joachim that a child shall be born unto him. In others we could perceive the possibility of choice, for example: "Here must be singing or dance, and then Lucifer comes"<sup>25</sup> after the scene where Seth plants the branch from the tree of knowledge. Or the duration of the musical insertion is indicated, for example: "Singing, playing rather lengthily"<sup>26</sup> at the end of the scene of the meeting of Joachim and Anna near the Golden Gates. These comments do not contain musical terms, but, nonetheless, they can be called with certitude "musical comments," since there are concise indications of *singing* and *playing* given in them.

#### The Tradition of Musical Insertions

For a comprehensive analysis of the terms *selete* and *pause* in the manuscripts of the Brussels Bliscaps it would be necessary to examine their usage in the context of other Middle Dutch plays of this kind. However, as has been mentioned before, besides the "Play of the Five Wise Virgins and the Five Foolish Virgins" of the 15th century, the plays of the Medieval period have not been preserved. For this reason, the production tradition of the French-speaking Netherlands, in particular, the *Book of Guidance of the Theater Producer (Livre de conduite du régisseur)*, written especially for the performance of the *Mystery of the Passion of our Savior Jesus Christ* (1501, Mons, 50 kilometers to the south-west of Brussels) must be taken into account.

In the *Guidance*, the indications *silete* and *pose*, similar to those of the Brussels productions, are frequently encountered in one comment and, as in the Bliskaps, the singing and the instrumental music in certain scenes are presumed at the discretion of the producer. Thus, for example, when Noah says

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Beuken, W. H. (1973/1978), p. 115.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

a prayer, it is stated in the side note "in Paradise one *silete* is sung, or the minstrels play on some kind of instrument, or an organ pause".<sup>27</sup> Just as in the texts of the two Bliskaps, when the characters are required to pass from one to another, their *path* is frequently accompanied by music. for example, while Joachim and Anna "go to the Temple to present Mary, the Silete sounds,"<sup>28</sup> In the side notes, we can also find the coordination of *silete* and *pose* with the continuance of the transferal, for example: "Then they leave. An organ *pause*, or something of that sort, sounds as they go." The seven days of the expectation and the return of the raven and the dove to the Arc are resented with the help of *petite pose* and *een sillete*.<sup>29</sup> Thereby, the *pose* and *silete* as a musical accompaniment in the *Mystery of the Passion* from Mons, as in the Bliskaps, symbolizes the flow of time. Thereby, the use of the terms *selete* and *pause* in the manuscripts of the Brussels productions corresponds to the general traditions of the mystery stage.

#### The Musicians

There remains another circle of issues not connected directly with the functions and the meaning of the terms *selete* and *pause*, but having a direct relation to the performers of church chants and musical pieces sounding at the time of the *selete* and *pause*.

The bookkeeping accounts (rekeningpost) connected with the production of the Bliscap in 1486 contain the following fragment: "also 4 trumpet players of this city were paid 10 s. gr. for 4 evenings for playing the trumpet between the intermissions at the front façade of the town hall and on the house of Our Lady." This short note makes it possible to judge of the place of the position of the musicians in the playing space, about the musical instruments, about the music sounding at the Bliscaps and about the payment for the musicians.

It follows from the stated note that the trumpet players were situated on top of Mary's House. Hummelen expresses the supposition that such a *house*, most likely, appeared in the productions of the entire Seven Bliscaps [9, p. 137]. Most likely, that was the way it was. However, due to the absence of the descriptions and depictions, unfortunately, it is unclear, what the *house* looked like, on top which the trumpeters were situated. It is also unclear, how the three Heavens looked, within the space of which not only the protagonists, but also the choir of angels, and the musicians performing the *heavenly* music was supposed to be situation. According to the comments in the texts of the two manuscripts, the performances of the Bliscaps included the participation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Cohen, G. (ed.). (1925/1974). Le livre de conduite du régisseur et le compte des dépenses pour le Mystère de la Passion, joué à Mons en 1501. (Original work published 1925), p. 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Keyser, P. de. (1934). Nieuwe gegevens omtrent Colijn Caillieu (Coellin), Jan de Baertmaker (Smeken), Jan Steemaer (Perchevael) en Jan van den Dale. *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taalen Letterkunde*. *Jaargang*, 53, p. 276. We also find a similar note in regards to the years 1501–1502.

not only of trumpet players and an organist, but also of a choir of angels, i.e., a boys' choir from the *Church of Our Lady of Sablon*.<sup>31</sup>

It remains not entirely clear, which musical instruments were used in the productions of the Brussels Bliscaps<sup>32</sup> besides trumpets (pijpen), organ (orgel) and certain string mentioned in the comments and retorts of the characters. Thus, for example, in the text of the Seventh Bliscaps, after the Archangel Michael drives away the devils from Mary's house, the side note: slaet af pijpers. In the scene of Mary's funeral procession, an organ is mentioned, while the music sounding in it is labelled by one of the Jews as "orgelen en somtijts snaren": "Sometimes it seems to me that I hear music on the organ, sometimes strings sound out, sometimes it sounds like singing."34 Here we find an indication of a Psalm: "Upon the Exodus of Israel from Egypt" sung by the Apostles: "Here they raise their stretcher and sing: 'Upon the Exodus from Egypt. Alleluia. And the angels around the throne shall also sing and play the organ.' Hearing this, the Jews come and raise a disturbance."35 This is the sole example of a concrete title of a chant, in contrast, for example, to the play *About the Five Wise Virgins and the Five* Foolish Virgins, which indicates performances of Te Deum laudamus, the antiphons Sanctus and Benedictus, and the Psalm Suscipe nos Domine.<sup>36</sup> In the "Guidance" for the Passion from Mons, instead of the titles of the chants, we find extensive characterizations: ung beau (very beautifully), joyeux silete (joyous silete) or genre-related definitions: "In heaven there is great joy and melody, when in the limb one motet is sounded,"37 "Here it is possible to perform one motet that is heard in Paradise." <sup>38</sup> It is not unthinkable that the productions of the two Brussels Biscaps included, besides the psalm "Upon the Exodus of Israel from Egypt," other psalms, antiphons, hymns and church chants were sounded, but their titles are absent from the side notes of the manuscripts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> The trumpet players were in the service of the city, participation in theatrical productions did not form apart of their duties, so they received additional remuneration for it. No information has been preserved about payment to the organist and the choir. Similarly, we can turn to the list of expenditures of the production of the "Passion" from Mons. It does not mention the payments to the choir or the musicians, but indicate about the remuneration of the vicars and organists who sang and played the organ. See: Cohen G. (ed.) (1925/1974). *Le livre de conduite du régisseur et le compte des dépenses pour le Mystère de la Passion, joué à Mons en 1501*. (Original work published 1925), p. 575. Apparently, the boys' choir of the Church of Our Lady of Sablon did not receive any payment for their performance in the Bliscaps. The question concerning the remuneration of the organist remains open.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> In contrast to the manuscripts of the German Passion and Easter acts from the 15th and early 16th centuries, where we discover such musical instruments as trumpets, harsthorns, drums, bagpipes and pipes. See: Schuler, E.A. Die Musik der Osterfeiern, Osterspiele und Passionen des Mittelalters. Kassel. 1951. S. 48–52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Undoubtedly, by "orgel," what is presumed here is the portable wooden organ, widespread in Europe between the 12th and the 15th centuries.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Beuken, W. H. (1973/1978), p. 199.

<sup>35</sup> Ihid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Cohen, G. (ed.). (1925/1974), p. 126

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 341.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 451.

In the texts of the First and the Seventh Bliscap, we find direct and indirect comments also indicating at the sound of "heavenly music." Thus, for example, in the First Bliscap, Joachim's address to God with the question, why is he punished by barrenness, is followed by the comment: "Here in heavens it is proper to sing and play music." In the Seventh Bliscap, Mary, lying on her deathbed, says that she hears angels singing and playing — apparently, after when on the staged Heavens angels have really begun to sing. The sound of music and singing is mentioned in Peter's words about Mary's Ascension and in Thomas's narration. But we do not know what kind of music was there, and whether there was any music.

#### Conclusion

The undertaken analysis shows that *selete* and *pause* as terms indicate at singing and instrumental music; correspondingly, they are directly connected with the playing stage and the production practice of the mystery stage. However, it was not only these two term that defined the *score* of the two Bliscaps. Along with them, in the texts of the manuscripts we find the words sanc, singen, and spelen, containing quite concrete references to the sound of music. So why was it that there arose the need for the terms *selete* and *pause*, not containing direct indications towards performance, and wherein lies their distinctness? It may be presumed that both terms are connected with the age-old tradition of indicating musical insertions, and so they are present in the manuscripts of the Brussels Bliscaps. They are neutral and relative, do not reflect any concrete action, but have the character of generalization, so in a certain sense they are convenient for the indication of musical episodes, and coexist on par with the concrete indications *sing* and *dance*.

These musical terms are of great interest for studying not only the peculiarities of he performance of the Brussels Bisklaps, but also other productions of medieval theater, because during the course of a lengthy period of time it was used in theatrical plays of various genres for the indication of musical insertions.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Beuken, W. H. (1973/1978), p. 115.

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