

# Optimam partem elegit

*Optimam partem elegit sibi Maria  
Quæ non auferetur ab ea in æternum.*

*Mary has chosen the best part for herself,  
which will never be taken away from her.*

Marian Communion Antiphon, assigned to the  
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the 1570 Missal

William Byrd (1543–1623)  
edited by Richard Shakeshaft

The musical score is presented in five staves, each with a vocal part label on the left. The Soprano part is in a soprano clef, Alto I and II in alto clefs, Tenor in a tenor clef, and Bass in a bass clef. The music begins with a common time signature (C) and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). A vertical line separates the initial rests from the start of the vocal entries. The Soprano part enters first with the lyrics 'Op - ti - mam par - tem e - -'. The Alto I and II parts enter next with 'Op - ti - mam par - tem e - le -'. The Tenor and Bass parts have rests in the first measure and then enter with a whole note in the second measure.

Soprano  
Superius

Alto I  
Medius

Alto II  
Contratenor

Tenor  
Tenor

Bass  
Bassus

Op - ti - mam par - tem e - -

Op - ti - mam par - tem e - le -

Op - ti - mam par - tem e - le -