

## INTRODUCTION TO INSTALMENT 4

Most extensively-sized music editions have their ‘curiosity cabinet’ corners. This fourth instalment of the Trent 91 edition fulfils that function since it contains settings of Readings, the genealogy of Christ, miscellaneous pieces that seem unrelated to the main repertory, and three Mass cycles that equally seem unrelated to the others in the manuscript. In view of the way that I want to present the so-far unpublished part of this repertory, there is little alternative other than to present these miscellaneous works in a single batch.

Limited information is available on the parent chants of the Readings, the Book of Generations, the *Te Deum* setting and the pair of Magnificats given here. Therefore some reconstruction work seems necessary in presenting the chant excerpts which accompany these pieces. A similar situation is evident with the *Missa brevis*, whose stylistic closeness to Milanese pieces of the same type makes its provenance problematic. Nevertheless nearly all of the music given here is competently written, and so it deserves as much attention as the rest of this repertory.

The Reading settings are the most modern-looking of three sets of such pieces. Other polyphonic sets (in Glogau and Strahov) have less bass-like Contras and the Strahov set has textual variants. Performers will notice that the Trent 91 set has problematic conflicts between the A - B natural - C progression of the Superius chant formula and the B flats specified in the lower voices (see no. 82, measures 102-108). These works - along with the Book of Generations setting - help to form the part of the Trent 91 complex centred on Christmas celebrations. The use of such works was probably limited to prestigious centres, monasteries and schools.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly the Zwickau concordance for the Book of Generations setting transmits errors also found in the Trent 91 reading, so these two copies may not be separated by many intermediate stages.

The Trent 91 *Te Deum* setting draws on elements of chants that modern liturgical books identify as ‘Tonus solemnis’ and ‘Tonus simplex’. This piece is therefore problematic since it was probably composed with reference to a single chant that also had elements of both chant versions. Because of this it is hard to match the setting with appropriate chant verses from any one manuscript, but fortunately the setting is alternatim (enabling us to determine individual melodic verse characteristics) and the chant paraphrased is also sufficiently similar to the ‘Morem Romanum’ *Te Deum* chant to allow reconstruction of the chant verses. Questions remain about the origin of this setting. It may not be part of the main Trent 91 chant-setting complex and occurs in the part of the manuscript which also contains some Martini pieces and also the *Missa brevis* which seems to be Milanese-influenced. One specialist thought that this *Te Deum* setting might be an import since it is similar to some of Martini’s psalm settings.<sup>2</sup> My personal opinion is simply that we do not know enough about the piece to allocate a provenance. The same applies to the canonic Mass given in this instalment. However, one caution against regarding the *Te Deum* as an import is that it is adjacent to the rather similar *Asperges* setting in Trent 91 (no. 44 in this edition) and the latter seems to be part of the main group of Trent 91 chant settings.

The two Magnificat settings given here and the *Missa Sine nomine* also seem to be outside the sound-world of most of the Trent 91 chant settings. This is because they represent new departures in terms of style. Both Magnificats are succinct, both use Roman-variant Magnificat tones, and both are possibly the work of a single composer since they have similar four-part verses and also trio sections that begin with duets. No. 88 has a concordance in the earlier layers on Mu 3154, and its lower Contra has a passage where it rises a ninth in rapid stepwise values (see measures 48-49). This is something which we might expect to find more frequently in music by Agricola or Obrecht. Likewise, no. 89 has triple mensuration in three of its four polyphonic verses and the phrasing in these verses seems peculiarly short-winded. Their nearest musical counterparts in terms

<sup>1</sup> Settings of Readings in primitive polyphony are not uncommon; the mid-fourteenth century Moosburg Graduale contains such a setting of *Jube Domine benedicere*. For further settings, see the studies by Theodor Göllner and Jeremy Noble cited in the critical commentary.

<sup>2</sup> See Leverett, A., A paleographical and repertorial study..., I, p. 154-155.

of style seem to be amongst fifteenth-century lieder rather than other Magnificat settings. No. 88 also has one verse in Mu 3154 in a five-part version, which makes a magnificent conclusion to this piece.

My section on the structure of the *Missa brevis* also shows that we are dealing with music which is beginning to ‘break the mould’ of mid-fifteenth-century style. In the Gloria and Credo here we find declamatory wordsetting in homophony, and the Sanctus is texturally much like a movement with continuous chant paraphrase even though it does not seem to be that dependent on chant. The *Missa Sine nomine* in this instalment is texturally similar to the latter work, and is also noteworthy for its imitative writing and relative closeness to the Aulen *Sine nomine* Mass. This Trent 91 *Sine nomine* was probably written in the late 1460’s or early 1470’s, but it would not really look out of place in a manuscript from the end of the century.

Finally we come to the chansons and instrumental pieces which strayed into Trent 91. In some cases it can be shown that the Trent copies are almost at the end of already-explored transmission processes, and typically these pieces tended to acquire contrafact Latin texts during their travels. The Trent 91 version of *Quant ce viendra* also has the *si placet* fourth voice also found in Mellon, and like some other *si placet* parts it is arguable whether it improves the original piece. The fact that French secular pieces were still circulating in Trento late in the century can be demonstrated by the presence of Caron’s *Accueilly* in Trent 1947-4. However, many such pieces were probably obtained by Italian contacts rather than by the Alpine route used during the conciliar period.

To conclude I am fairly sure that the *Missa brevis* and *Missa Sine nomine* in this instalment will attract some interest, particularly since very little has been written about the latter. At the same time I make a plea for use of the other music presented here. Most chapels and ensembles will not have time for the almost twenty-minute Book of Generations setting at Christmas Day Matins. They might, however, take to the simply-scored canonic Mass or the *Te Deum* setting.

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NOTE: for continuation of complete two-sided print-out of the Trent 91 edition, the first page of this Introduction should be printed on the back of the previous instalment’s last page.