

INTRODUCTION TO INSTALMENT 5

This fifth instalment of the Trent 91 edition highlights a particular batch of works which I am certainly not the first to notice. Most (if not absolutely all) of them seem to have some connection with Johannes Martini, and a large proportion of them may be his work.

Martini seems typical amongst medieval and Renaissance musicians of renown in that we only know about part of his career. His formative years (probably in the 1460's) remain obscure. Likewise we have little music by Dunstable which seems to be later than *ca.* 1430, and probably equally little from the later years of Ockeghem, Binchois and Regis. Ockeghem's younger years also seem to be poorly documented.

One or two of the pieces included here are almost certain to be Martini's. The longer version of the Missa *Cucu* in Trent 91 may predate the shortened *Cucu* Kyrie in ModC. Likewise the two motets *Flos virginum* and *Jhesu Christe piissime* are contrafact sections of Martini's Missa *Coda di pavon* which have been musically revised and which share similar sources for their new texts (both texts are by Petrarch). Since *Jhesu Christe piissime* has added material which is similar to passages in other Martini pieces, it is hard to see how anybody except the composer could have been responsible for this revision. Likewise the wedding motet *Perfunde celi rore* is probably Martini's since it is similar to later music by him, and also because it was produced for his Ferrara patron at approximately the outset of Martini's career there.

The other works presented here will be considered in due course. For now, it is important to refer readers to the first forty folios of Trent 91, which make up a small and probably once-independent manuscript for which Leverett coined the name 'frontispiece collection'. This part of Trent 91 contains the *Cucu* and *Regina celi* Masses plus other works which are relevant to us. The scribe's small italic text hand and careful copying looks very different from the copying in most of the later Trent manuscripts, and there has been some speculation that this scribe might have been Martini himself.¹ However a similar-looking musical hand to that of the frontispiece scribe occurs on the first half-folio of Trent 1947-4.² While I cannot prove that there is a scribal concordance here, the presence of similar hands in Trent 91 and the latter manuscript may weaken the case for Martini being the frontispiece scribe. Additionally it has been shown that the paper on which this section of Trent 91 was copied has a watermark similar to that in Tridentine legal documents of the earlier 1470's.³ It is also relevant that one of the works in the frontispiece collection (Busnois's *In hydraulis*) is copied without its text. This copy is very close to the concordant reading in Mu 3154 (which is from Innsbruck). The Trent 91 reading shares minor errors with the Munich version, whose text is given in a paragraph separate from its music.⁴

All of these points prompt the following suggestions. Firstly, that the frontispiece collection was possibly produced locally to Trento like the greater part of Trent 91. Secondly that its scribe was reliant on at least some sources from Innsbruck - as with *In hydraulis*. Thirdly, that the scribe concerned (or people from the same music scriptorium with a similar copying hand as in Trent 1947-4) may have continued to work in the Trento / Tyrol area after Trent 91's completion. Fourth, our scribe(s) may not have been local. Despite some likely Germanisms in the Trent 91 frontispiece collection's spellings (e.g. 'la bassedancze') this scribe also spells 'In ydraulis' rather than 'hydraulis' and gives all of the French musicians' names in Compere's *Omnium bonorum* spelt correctly. Other spellings such as 'catholicam' with c instead of k do not necessarily betray a

¹ Leverett, A., A paleographical and repertorial study of the manuscript Trento, Castello del Buonconsiglio, 91 (1378) (Ph. D. dissertation, 2 vols, Princeton, 1990), I, p. 144.

² See the illustration of Trent 1947-4 f. 1r in Mitchell, 'Trent 91; first steps...' p. 77.

³ See Wright, P. 'Paper evidence and the dating of Trent 91' in Music and Letters 76 (1995), pp. 487-508.

⁴ For the transmission of *In hydraulis* in general see van Benthem, J., 'Text, Tone and Symbol: Regarding Busnois's conception of *In hydraulis*...' in Higgins, P. (ed), Antoine Busnoys... (Oxford, 1999) pp. 215-253. The shared errors mentioned are something that I have noticed while comparing the two readings, and their closeness is not unique. Several pieces shared between Mu 3154 and the later Trent Codices have close links, and again I am certainly not the first to comment on this.

particular national origin, and I believe that there is little in this section of the manuscript which might prove the scribe to be a francophone or otherwise.

For me these points cast doubt upon Martini being the frontispiece scribe, although the possibility still exists. But whoever the copyist was it is undeniable that certain works in this little collection seem to make up a journeyman's book, of which the ordering and contents may very well have something to do with Martini's musical development. One of the likely structural models for the *Missa Regina celi* is included (Faugues's bassedanse Mass), as is a little three-part *Benedicamus* setting which may be an accretion to the *Regina celi* Mass. Therefore, I suggest that this manuscript might be a direct copy from a Martini autograph. Certain occasional habits of the frontispiece scribe seem idiosyncratic, such as the repetition of syllables to indicate melismata, a tendency to put sharps under the notes to which they apply, and what looks like the deliberate placing of text in such a way as to break ligatures.⁵ Such features might have been picked up from an original draft featuring sensible personal practice by an up-and-coming master. This particular Trent 91 scribe is also a very fastidious copyist. He makes few errors, and tries to text supporting voices where the fairly tight spacing of his music allows it. Also he rarely omits mensuration signs. Painstaking copying of this sort may be the result of a master-imitator relationship.

The frontispiece manuscript and its modernistic repertory might have caused some local interest since the Credo given in this instalment as well as the *Perfunde celi* motet follow in Trent 91, but in different scribal hands. The Credo setting no. 107 is an excellent example of how up-to-date western chant settings of the 1470's could be different from their Austrian and generally Superius-paraphrase counterparts. It is in fact very well-worked in terms of imitation and textural contrast, even if some of the imitation involved is only intervallic rather than exact. I refer readers to the table of chant use for this piece in the critical commentary. By comparison, there are no chant settings by non-western composers in Trent 91 which match it in technical skill. The contrasting scoring throughout also makes it suggestible that the piece is Martini's since his *O beate Sebastiane* behaves similarly. Likewise its closeness to *Perfunde celi* and the frontispiece collection makes it probable that Martini is the composer. Comparison between this setting and the Clibano, Busnois and Regis settings of the same chant is also instructive. The Trent 91 setting seems superior to at least the first of these in terms of textural variety and imitative writing.

The Gloria which I present before this Credo does not strictly pair with it, but would match acceptably in performance despite being less technically advanced. The chant used is mostly in the Superius and Tenor, and again there is varied scoring as in *O beate Sebastiane*. This too is an impressive piece with its very low Contra bassus, but it has hybrid cadences at measures 83-84 and 115-116 and also outer-voice consecutive octaves at measure 3. Therefore, if it is Martini's it may well belong to an early phase in his career in the 1460's like the *Missa Regina celi*. A thorough explanation of why I consider the *Regina celi* Mass to be Martini's is given after its critical commentary.

The motet *Perfunde celi* is probably typical of early Martini in a number of senses. Firstly, the end of its first-section Contra primus features a 'cadential fingerprint' figure which is also found in the *Missa Cucu* and other works which are probably his. Secondly, several melodic motives are similar to those in *La Martinella* which - since it appears in Trent 89 - is probably also a work of the 1470's. The Superius G A Bb opening and the Tenor's opening G Bb A D are reminiscent of parts of Martini's instrumental piece, as is the preponderance of cadences on G, D and B flat. Also the use of the sesquialtera at the end is reminiscent of *La Martinella*, which has a sesquialtera passage just before its final panel. Other motets by him (such as *Levate capita vestra*) have a preoccupation with shortwinded phrasing centred on G and easy means of textural contrast. The busy, detailed and rather full texture of the first section (where the Superius retains most of the musical interest) is

⁵ On the third stave of Trent 91 f. 2v the scribe writes 'tuamam', he put a sharp under a G in the first Contra near the start of the opposite page, and at the second stave of the Tenor on f. 29v the first part-word is '-luia' written directly under a three-note ligature. These are rare instances, though. Other habits of his are as follows: his mensuration signs tend to be drawn to fill a single stave-space, he writes 'leyson' at the end of Kyrie sections, and he tends to write a few less ligatures than other copyists seem to.

typical of older music, and the Superius at measure 15,3 illustrates an old type of dissonance since it is consonant with the Tenor but not with the lowest Contra. Perhaps another reason for considering these Trent 91 copies as not personally close to Martini's work is that the text of this motet (which is undistinguished in any case) seems to be slightly miscopied.

Textual problems occur with the next two motets in this instalment. No. 109 (*Ave Maria...Et benedicta*) is another four-part work with the Contra primus 'fingerprint' at the end of its first section. Unlike in *Perfunde celi* Tenor cantus firmus is present in the first section, and there are a few chant references in the second section. The fairly elaborate first section of this eloquent piece is not dissimilar to that of *Perfunde celi*, and the second section continues the well-known *Ave Maria* text with a passage addressed to Mary's mother St. Anne. So far I have not come across this addition in any liturgical books or collections of devotional texts. Likewise the *Alma redemptoris* setting no. 110 is found in three sources, but none of them apart from Trent 91 give any clue as to what text the first-section Tenor should sing.

This motet - a work of quality like the *Ave Maria* setting - was given a fairly detailed description by Edgar Sparks since it uses multiple chants.⁶ The two upper voices imitatively paraphrase the well-known *Alma redemptoris* plainsong, and the Tenor is divided into two sections. Its second section has part of the well-known *Ave Regina...Ave Domina* antiphon, but the likely text of its first section was not made clear until I matched up a part of Becket's *Gaude flore virginali* text with the repeated rhythms of the Tenor. The result is a texted first-section Tenor which makes contextual sense with the Marian subject-matter of the upper parts. This motet (which follows the *Ave Maria* in Trent 91) may have been written with some knowledge of older repertory. Possibly its composer knew of the Dufay *Anima mea* setting with its shared chant presentation, and almost certainly he knew of pieces in the motet-chanson tradition like those which survive by Dufay, Compère and others. Like these, the psalm tone-like Tenor in no. 110 is unobtrusive for much of its first section and the musical interest is concentrated in the upper parts. Since no. 110 is next to a probable Martini motet and displays clear links with other western repertory, this piece too may be Martini's. But even so it is quite unlike any of his firmly-attributed works.

Amongst the smaller pieces in this instalment, the isolated Credo section (no.105) is probably from a Mass which otherwise does not survive. Quite why it was copied amongst a batch of probably central European Mass Ordinaries is uncertain, but here too there are clear links with western repertory. Consisting almost entirely of two-voice imitative exchanges within its three-voice scoring, the continual answering manner of this piece is not unlike similarly phrased work in Compère's *Nous sommes de l'ordre de St Babouin*.⁷ It could easily be the work of any westerner, and not necessarily Martini either just because of its short answering phrases. However, the discontinuous Credo text that results in individual voices here also occurs in some of Martini's Masses. Likewise, answering phrases and textural variety play a considerable role in the second of the two motets derived from Martini's *Missa Coda di pavon (Jhesu Christe piissime)*. Made up of part of the *Agnus* from the latter Mass and also some material similar to Martini's secular pieces, I consider this to be a slight piece and not really a successful adaptation. That is of course a value judgement, but its voice-exchanges and dance-like ending seem to make it a little too brief to command respect. Neither is there necessarily much that is Italianate or 'Renaissance' in spirit about the adaptor using prayer texts by Petrarch, since copies of the full texts concerned occur in central European sources of the early fifteenth century.⁸

The hymn settings at the end of this instalment need a little discussion to justify their inclusion here. Perhaps the most likely to be a Martini work is the *Christe redemptor* setting from Trent 89 at the end of this instalment. It has a typically central European version of the hymn chant as its unelaborated cantus firmus, and the 'cadential fingerprint' figure occurs here in the Superius at measure 36. Both outer voices have sesquialtera at their end, which is quite like the procedure in another of Martini's Tenor cantus firmus pieces - *Nenciozza*

⁶ Sparks, E., *Cantus Firmus in Mass and Motet 1420-1430* (Berkeley, 1963) pp. 209-212.

⁷ Published in Finscher, L. (ed), *Loyset Compère Opera Omnia* (CMM 15, 5 vols, 1958-1972), V, no. 33.

⁸ Both of these texts are found in the Prague national library manuscript Osek 37, f. 163v (from Osek monastery, ca. 1400-1410 and containing texts by Winterswick, Jensestein and Petrarch). *Flos virginum* is also in manuscript VII.G.18 (a psalter and prayerbook of ca. 1425-50), f. 25r-v.

mia. This hymn setting is also like Martini's *Festum nunc celebre* setting in having Tenor cantus firmus, but in the latter the cantus firmus is canonically treated between the two inner parts. Sesquialtera for the two outer voices alone also appears in this Martini hymn setting, albeit briefly in the middle of the piece. The relatively smooth partwriting and real bass also makes it suggestible that *Christe redemptor* might be a Martini work.

The *Proles de celo* setting no. 114 is another piece that uses the Contra primus cadential fingerprint (at 18-19) and this imitatively-written setting is another that has a real bass and some Tenor participation in carrying the cantus firmus. Otherwise, the chant is mostly in the Superius until near the end, when reference to the hymn melody concerned fades. This setting too seems to use a northern or central European variant of its parent chant, and like the *Christe redemptor* setting its Contra primus is grammatically inessential.⁹ However, in both pieces omission of these voices does not produce satisfactory three-part textures so the higher Contras in these settings were probably added last of all in the composition process. There is otherwise not a lot here which might suggest Martini's authorship, but its relative closeness to *Christe redemptor* in texture is at least worth mentioning.

Finally, a relative oddity amongst fifteenth-century Vespers hymn settings. *Ad cenam agni* no. 113 is high-pitched and has no fourths between any of its voices. The parent chant (again, in a version which might be central European) is set in a migrant fashion between the Superius and Tenor, with the latter voice having most of the chant pitches. Imitation is a structural feature in this setting, and the widely spaced voices and active dotted rhythms of this work make it reminiscent of secular cantus firmus pieces by Obrecht, Isaac and others. In [Trent 91](#) it follows *Proles de celo*, and this might be indicative that these two settings come from the same parent source. Amongst the other Vespers hymns settings in [Trent 91](#) there are none quite like this pair, so perhaps I am right to single them out as stylistically special. But admittedly any connection with Martini is tenuous at best.

I end this introduction with a note of caution regarding the attributions suggested. I began by saying that I am not the first person to notice Martini-like characteristics amongst some of the anonymous works in [Trent 91](#). My investigations here (including the following discussions of the *Regina celi* and *Gentil madona* Mass) have thrown the net rather wide, so that like anybody else with a "big catch" I have a few things in my net which others might want to throw back overboard again. But all of the pieces here are assembled for a reason: they may shed some light on Martini's earlier career. In connection with Murray Steib's research on how Martini helped to compile [ModC](#), it seems that for the Masses in this collection he could draw on his own work as well as that of other named composers, and significantly for us also the work of the composer(s) of the *Nos amis* and *La mort de St. Gotharda* Masses (both works which are fairly close to his in style but which are probably not Martini's). That helps to remind us how little we actually know about the work and wanderings of his contemporaries, and indeed how little we know about the frontispiece collection which preserves his *Missa Cucu*. But I hope that by trying to apply some logic I have made what picture we have a little clearer than before. To conclude, Martini, his travels, and his collaborations with Johannes Brebis are a fascinating subject illuminated not only by the recent Steib and Moohan edition but also the work of Lewis Lockwood and careful study of Martini's borrowing techniques by J. Peter Burkholder.¹⁰

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⁹ The chant models found for hymn melodies in this instalment do not necessarily come from locations where Martini might have worked, but I do not regard this as important since Gregorian chant dissemination was often by monastic order, parent-to-subordinate establishments, or along well-used trade routes rather than along national lines.

¹⁰ Lockwood, L., *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400-1505* (Oxford, 1984) and Burkholder, J., 'Johannes Martini and the Imitation Mass of the Late Fifteenth Century' in [JAMS](#) XXXVIII (1986), pp. 470-523.