

## INTRODUCTION

This instalment-type edition of the Trent 89 repertory succeeds my previous *Ex Codicis II* series, and the editorial method is the same as with my current work on Trent 91.

Anybody who is vaguely familiar with the contents and size of the Trent manuscripts will realise that academic coverage of them is inconsistent. The most neglected are probably Trent 93 and Trent 89. Regarding the latter, by far the biggest contribution to modern studies was Louis Gottlieb's Ph. D. dissertation of 1958 which gave descriptions and transcriptions of what he thought were the complete cyclic Masses in the manuscript. This is still an amazing and very thorough piece of work. Gottlieb's priorities were slightly different to those which the writer of such a study might have nowadays. What he wrote – I think – was heavily influenced by the following considerations. Firstly there were few accepted criteria for assessing a work as English or Anglophile, so he probably felt duty-bound to explain his thoughts about the provenance of individual works. Secondly, he may have felt equally obliged to explain the oddities of fifteenth-century partwriting in a meticulous, 'Reesian' manner which makes this study a gem for those investigating the music for the first time. Third, he must have been aware that his chosen subject was a relatively new world – full of uncertainties – into which only a few people had ventured. Lastly, he was also no doubt aware that some Masses which he wrote about had already been the subject of intensive study, while with others he was the first person to write about them in modern times. He was a gifted man, and we can only speculate what superb things he might have done with the tools available to us today.<sup>1</sup>

The situation with many of these Masses (which are the chief contents of Trent 89) has not changed. Some of them (like the *Missa Caput*) have been written about exhaustively, while others with widely-separated movements have only recently been recognised as cyclic works or Mass pairs. Trent 89 also contains a plethora of Magnificat settings, Vespers hymns, scattered motets and other sacred and secular pieces – of which relatively few of these have been published. Which is the best way to present this music? My own small *Ex Codicis II* series began by presenting works in similar batches, in particular giving an English-looking Mass for three equal voices with the Propers surrounding it in Trent 89. This is surely a sensible way to proceed, since a study which presents pieces strictly by formal type would give an incomplete picture of this huge and complex manuscript.

Trent 89 consists of 425 folios not including a couple of numbering hiatuses throughout. The range of its contents probably spans about 30 years of rapid changes in musical style. At one end of the range are English Masses and miscellaneous chant settings, some of which may date from the period of the Council of Basle or a little later in the 1440s. At the other end of the stylistic range are pieces such as the setting of *Veni redemptor gentium* and Hermannus de Atrio's *In Mariam vite viam*, which anticipate later trends. The best way to deal with little-known works seems to be as follows: those that need extensive description and analysis will have such material appended to the critical commentary, and others (such as paraphrase settings of well-known chants) will receive less textual attention. I am aware that in doing this I might not be 'doing the whole job', and in this context I mention a piece of private research from a student in central Europe which I have recently been sent. I prefer its author to remain anonymous here, and this is a model study of a single Vespers hymn setting. It explores the chant paraphrase involved, it traces variants and separate traditions of the chant melody, and it shows how these differences emerged through the travels of different monastic orders as they made new foundations throughout eastern Europe. In an ideal world this is surely the way to proceed for each individual chant setting in Trent 89. However time, space and other considerations unfortunately do not allow me to be so thorough.

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<sup>1</sup> He was also highly original outside the world of music, had experience as a performer and a stand-up comic, and tried to bequeath his Californian ranch to God. The legal system eventually prevented this on the grounds that God had no fixed address in the State of California, and therefore could not be sent any documents regarding property taxes..

For those interested in the paleographical aspects of the manuscript, I refer readers to the fairly concise description in my 2004 article for what I think might be the most up-to-date information, and much of which was taken from the exemplary articles on Tridentine palaeography by Peter Wright and others.<sup>2</sup> The most important discovery to emerge in recent years is that Johannes Wiser (the chief scribe of the later Trent manuscripts) appears to have had assistants for the later Codices who copied his method and scribal style carefully. Therefore the previously accepted view of Wiser as a tireless, voluminous copyist over a period of at least two decades changes somewhat. Additional stimulus on the subject of what music passed through Trento (and what music was picked up by travellers with connections in fifteenth-century Trento) has been provided by the recent work of Reinhard Strohm, the late Adelyn Leverett, and others.<sup>3</sup>

There are, too, many people to thank for helping to bring this work to completion. These are (in no particular order of debt or chronology) Nick Sandon – my previous dissertation supervisor, much valued by me for knocking off some of my very rough edges in the early days. Margaret Bent, for taking an interest in my work when her own time and commitments did not really allow it. David Fallows, Bonnie Blackburn and Leofranc Holford-Strevens for providing encouragement and elusive items of information. Also Peter Wright, Reinhard Strohm, Martin Kirnbauer, Tom Noblitt, Jaap van Benthem, Robert J. Snow, Marco Gozzi, and Danilo Curti-Feininger. Without the help of these generous people progress towards the current state of this project simply would not have been possible.

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The Masses presented here are relatively little-known, although the pair by Touront has received some attention in recent years. Mass 1 is the first in Trent 89, and deserves closer study because of its connection with the Plummer three-voice Mass in Brussels 5557.<sup>4</sup> Mass 2 was not discussed by Gottlieb, and I was the first to identify its cantus firmus and its scattered movements as part of a probable cycle. It is probably by the same anonymous composer as Mass 5.<sup>5</sup> The Touront Masses (nos 3 and 4) are technically in advance of the previous two; Mass 1 probably dates from the 1440's or early 1450's and Mass 2 is probably roughly contemporary with the Touront works. Masses 2-5 may have only circulated in the German-speaking world. The *Missa Wiplich figur* and *Missa Wünschlichen schön* use lied Tenors as their cantus firmus, and so far no western concordances have turned up for either of the Touront works.

The career of John Plummer (d. 1483 or slightly later) has attracted some recent interest. By 1441 he was a member of the Royal Household Chapel, and was master of the children there from 1444 to 1455. By 1458 he seems to have moved to Windsor but he remained associated with the Chapel Royal until at least 1467. By 1460 he was verger of the Royal Free Chapel at Windsor Castle, a position which he probably held for the rest of his life.<sup>6</sup> The Mass presented here seems to be stylistically halfway between his quite well-known earlier motets and the Brussels 5557 cycle, which features moments of floridity reminiscent of early Tudor sacred music.

In contrast, what little we know about Johannes Touront seems to conform to the image of the well-travelled Franco-Flemish musician. The only documentary reference which mentions him cites his employment at the

<sup>2</sup> See, Mitchell, R., 'Regional styles and works in *Trent 89* and related sources: a short survey' in Gozzi, M. (ed), *Manoscritti di Polifonia nel Quattrocento Europeo* (Trento, 2002) pp. 153-178.

<sup>3</sup> In particular, Reinhard Strohm's pathbreaking *The Rise of European Music 1380-1500* (Cambridge University Press, 1993) which should provide enough leads in fifteenth-century studies for many years to come, and analytical studies of music such as Wright, P., 'Early 15<sup>th</sup>-Century Pairings of the Sanctus and Agnus Dei, and the Case of the Composer "Bloym"' in *Journal of Musicology* XXII (2005) pp. 604-643.

<sup>4</sup> Published in Sandon, N. (ed), *John Plummer: Missa Sine Nomine* (Antico Edition RCM 6, Newton Abbot, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> See Mitchell, R., 'A forgotten Mass and its composer' in *Plainsong and Medieval Music* X (2001), pp. 135-154.

<sup>6</sup> This information is provided from Sandon, *ibid.*, p. ii.

Imperial chapel in 1460, and my earlier investigation of his known output seems to suggest that he was composing by the 1440's and had a musical career which probably lasted for at least a further twenty years. His presumably earlier pieces – which are somewhat indebted to English idiom – seem to be succeeded by a notable series of short motets and three or possibly four Masses, all of which may date from the 1450's or slightly later. All of the Masses are in Trent 89 and the majority of his shorter pieces are scattered between the Trent Codices, Strahov, Schedel and other manuscripts of central European origin. There are also a number of anonymous works in these sources (particularly the Trent Codices and Strahov) which suggest either that there are Touront *opera dubia* or that his residence in Austria spawned musical imitators.

The third composer represented in this instalment (if he is actually a single anonymous) is the composer of the *Wiplich figur* and *Wünslichen schön* Masses. He too seems to have been resident in the south German lands at approximately the same time as Touront, and a fairly recent study of mine highlighted some anonymous shorter works which might also be the work of the same man – including an individual-looking *Alma redemptoris* setting in Strahov which features rambling melismas like the Superius of the *Wünslichen schön* Sanctus.<sup>7</sup> The existence of such music is symptomatic of two things. Firstly, as a result the musical flotsam and music-collecting of scribes like Johannes Wiser in the post-conciliar period. Secondly, the lied-based Masses here illustrate the beginnings of an indigenous style of sacred polyphony in Austria and possibly also the German states slightly further north. Which brings us to several important points concerning surviving sacred polyphony collections.

The mere survival of large accumulations of part-music from this period poses two important questions. First, how was such music transmitted and secondly how did it change (if at all) during the process? In our own times the first question has largely been answered by identifying significant occasions where music might have changed hands, such as church councils or Friedrich III's Imperial coronation in Rome. Or by tracing the careers of migrant musicians such as Brassart and Touront, and the Franco-Flemings who worked at various times in Italy and the Spanish kingdoms. Regarding how recopied music might have changed, much effort in recent research has been devoted to the habits of individual scribes, paleographical studies, and how scribes consciously or unconsciously edited some of what they copied.<sup>8</sup> Which – of course – in turn might have been edited by somebody else before the copy that reaches the twenty-first century is examined closely. In connection with this line of enquiry I am sure than much in Trent 89 has only reached us after a fair amount of musical travels, and it would be extremely easy for me to produce a paper on the sheer amount of music in the manuscript where modified transmission in some way seems likely.

Much the same also applies to the other Trent manuscripts, and the biggest casualties for relatively poor transmission often seem to be the music that travelled the farthest. In this context, the fairly large number of English Mass Ordinaries and cyclic Masses in these manuscripts come to mind. Likewise, one occasionally finds oddities in the Trent collection which are so remote from their original context that they bear little resemblance to the probable original, or can have had little practical use in the Trento area. The garbled text to the *Agwillare* song in Trent 88 comes to mind, as does the Trent 89 *Adoretur* motet celebrating Charles VII's reconquest of the Bordeaux area plus its marginal comment indicating the anniversary intended for celebration. But despite these curiosities the later Trent Codices have a strategic importance for one very good historical reason other than their mere size and survival; in Trent 88 and Trent 89 we see the scribal realisation that movements of cyclic Masses – the most important musical form of the day – are most effectively copied in full and without their movements being split up between different fascicles of Glorias, Credos and other movements as in Trent 90 and parts of Trent 92.

<sup>7</sup> See Mitchell, *op.cit.*

<sup>8</sup> Regarding the main scribe of Bologna Q15, see Bent, M. Bologna Q15: The Making and Remaking of a Musical Manuscript (2 vols, Libreria Musicale Italiana, Lucca, 2008), I, pp. 106-113. Regarding the scribes of Mu 3232a, see Wright, P., Rumbold, I. & Staehelin, M. (eds), Der Mensuralkodex St. Emmeram (2 vols, Wiesbaden, 2006) , II, pp. 96-99.

Regarding Trent 89 we are therefore dealing with arguably one of the biggest and most comprehensive sources for the cyclic Mass in the 1450's, and also one of the few sources that preserves any quantity of chant settings and motets from the same period. As I have indicated in a previous article, too, a fair number of these may turn out to be indigenous products rather than Franco-Flemish or English imports.<sup>9</sup> It is therefore about time that much of this music has its own edition, as during my own lifetime ways of examining such music, performing it and even looking it up have changed drastically for the better.

I began looking at Trent 89 35 years ago (aged 18) when a copy of the much-used Bibliopola facsimile fell into my hands. After doing some basic research with bulky volumes of DTÖ and a few shelves of periodicals, it became clear that this was a little-visited manuscript and that I might quietly busy myself on it for years without treading on anybody else's academic feet. Those days (the 1970's) were the times of noxious-smelling wet-ink cartridge photocopiers, inter-library loans that took ages, and massive amounts of musical handcopying when my student grant didn't stretch to extra money for large-scale photocopy. Additional disadvantages were that geographically remote sources were not easily available on microfilm, and even when they *were* available that medium sometimes gave a less-than-ideal reproduction of a manuscript which was not of much practical use. There were also few ways of acquiring much knowledge about continental chant sources without access to obscure publications or extra finance to travel abroad.

All of this has now changed, and even the Trent manuscripts themselves are available online in digital photo format. This is – as somebody wrote to me fairly recently – a brave new world, in which the right tools for the task are no longer inaccessible or a struggle to locate. Finally, just to get to the point of beginning to publish this music has been a long journey, albeit for the most part an enjoyable one.

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Postscript (August 2016): the two Touront Masses in this instalment are now also available in van Benthem, J. (ed), Johannes Tourout, Ascribed and attributable compositions (Vol. II), 2016, pp. 1-19 and 21-51.

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<sup>9</sup> See Mitchell, 'Regional Styles...'