

# INTRODUCTION TO INSTALMENT 1

This is the first instalment of my Trent 88 edition, which differs very little in format from my previous work on Trent 89 and Trent 91. One important difference is that my critical commentary here no longer records text positionings. The sometimes Gertrude-Stein-like tracts of text positionings in my previous critical commentaries were there for a reason. Before the days of easily obtained digital photos of manuscripts there was no other way to tell the reader exactly how the text was handled (or rather sometimes mishandled) in the sources concerned. Now the Trent manuscripts and similar sources are easily available online in good photographic reproductions there is no need to be so painstaking.

Trent 88 is 422-folio manuscript and therefore almost the same size as Trent 89. Neither is the largest of the Trent manuscripts (Trent 90 is bigger) but Trent 88 contains a very extensive repertory of cyclic Mass Ordinaries, Propers, motets, hymns and Magnificat settings plus a scattering of secular pieces which are mostly unica. This first instalment presents all of the motets, isolated Mass Ordinaries and composite cycles made up of independent Ordinary settings therein.

The Appendix contains two cyclic Masses which have Mass-related motets in Trent 88, and also the Trent 90 Gloria by Hainricus Collis which seems to be connected to his Sanctus setting. Most of the copying in Trent 88 seems to date from the 1450's to approximately the mid-1460's, and the main scribe is the copyist of Trent 90 and much of the rest of the later Trent collection, Johannes Wisser.

My initial interest in Trent 88 began in the 1970's when - as I was working on Trent 89 - I realised that there was insufficient knowledge of Trent 88's contents and also how and why it was put together. Beginning with the more complex and at the same time lesser-known works such as the Faugues Missa *Le serviteur*, I was collecting and finalising transcriptions of Trent 88 repertory from about 1980 onwards. This interest grew as I realised the importance of Trent 88's main corpus, since it contains an extensive collection of Proper cycles (which seems to be partially the work of Dufay) plus several Masses that were then relatively unknown. Early experiences of some of this wonderfully melismatic music persuaded me that I had to explore the manuscript's repertory and contents more deeply.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile (as I was preoccupied with Trent 89 and Trent 91 until 2019) Rebecca Gerber meanwhile produced her sizeable and extremely valuable edition of the whole manuscript in 2007. I owe at least some of my enthusiasm for the music here to her edition and also the online images of Trent 88 which vastly improve on the old Bibliopola facsimile of the manuscript.<sup>2</sup>

I use the term 'motet' in this instalment to describe structured cantus firmus pieces, commemorative works in Latin, and antiphon settings which are elaborate and often multisectional. Trent 88 contains an extremely varied collection of such pieces, ranging from the Johannes de Quadris *Gaudeat ecclesia* no. 2 to thoroughly imitative pieces such as Touront's *O florens rosa* no. 14. The former might well date from the 1420's or 1430's, and the Touront piece probably comes from the 1460's. During those years the writing of structured motets and similar pieces underwent considerable changes, and filler Contratenors were generally superseded by more bass-like supporting parts.

The recent discovery of the MuV fragments expands the number of works by Johannes de Quadris, who is otherwise known as a Venice-based musician much influenced by the Liège school and also the fauxbourdon fashion. His *Gaudeat ecclesia* seems to be freely composed and its unison imitation is reminiscent of similar

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<sup>1</sup> My earliest experiences of the Trent 88 Propers were from the 1970 recording Lyrichord LLST 7237 (Cappella Cordina, dir. Alejandro Planchart) where the Trent 88 Trinity Propers are recorded with Dufay's Missa *Ecce ancilla*.

<sup>2</sup> At least the uppermost stave of f. 235r in the Trent 88 reproduction was added by a modern hand, and there are probably other efforts therein to help make up for the poor photographic quality of some pages.

passages in Ciconia's motets. But - like several other works to be mentioned here - its text may not be genuine and a little editorial expansion is needed to give the piece enough text to make it singable. I have attempted this by using part of the parent text from which the Trent 88 version draws.<sup>3</sup> This motet (like several by Ciconia) may have originally had a civic or a political text. *Stella celi extirpavit* no. 1 has a similar contrafactum problem to no. 2; the Trent 88 text seems to be too short to fit the music and may have been entered over erasures. My substitute text here (*Salve Regina*) allows the piece to be heard without the arguably excessive repetitions that would be needed for the *Stella celi* text. But (as my critical notes suggest) not even the *Salve Regina* text may be satisfactory because this piece might have originated as a troped Kyrie.

Other likely contrafacta here are a little better presented in Trent 88. *Imperatrix angelorum* (no. 3) is a sacred contrafactum of a civic cantilena motet by Dufay and its new text works well, but I regard the Superius divisi notes therein as suspect. Similar divisi notes also occur in the Trent 88 copy of Dufay's *Ave regina celorum II* (no. 15). *Salve virgo mater pia* (no. 7) seems to be a reasonably adapted contrafact version of a Walter Frye Mass movement (possibly the missing Kyrie from his *Missa Summe trinitati*) but specialists are not yet decided on whether this is a genuinely independent motet addition to the Mass or just a Kyrie adaption. Some of these pieces were well-travelled works before they were copied in Trento, and some of the textual adaptations may have already been present in the exemplars used by Wisser and his fellow scribes. For example, two Mass-related motets reach us here with almost identical *Gaude virgo* texts (nos 13 and 21) but we cannot be certain whether either or both of these are adaptations because the texts are not exactly the same.

Some of the shorter works here such as Touront's *O florens rosa* and the anonymous *O sacrum convivium* are entered between large stretches of copying which mostly consists of cyclic Mass movements. However, one small group of pieces here (nos 4-6) attract my interest because they are copied close together and may be a small nest of pieces from a western repertory. The impressive *Salve Regina* no. 4 is the first of these, which is noteworthy for its length, its mostly dense texture and pedal passages. Likewise, *O quam glorifica* is a well-written four-part piece whose text may be the original. Finally in this group comes the well-distributed and probably English *O pulcherrima*, given here in a four-part version but with many errors (as is also the case with some other readings for this piece).

*O pulcherrima* is one of the shortest of a sizeable number of works commonly grouped together as English Song of Songs settings, which largely occur in continental sources from between the 1420's and 1460. Several of these are also copied together in Trent 88 as nos 16-19, and they are not copied particularly well here since the concordant reading for the first of them in Bolzano eliminates what would otherwise be a pair of consecutive fifths in a duet passage. Other pieces in this instalment that may be English include *Salve Regina* no. 8. This is a slightly awkward piece and probably not the creation of an established master, but nevertheless it is interesting that the way in which it treats motivic material is also reflected in the Sanctus of Composite Mass 1 (no. 24d). These two pieces might even be the work of the same anonymous composer.

In 2003 and 2010 I issued two booklets which contained the Mass Ordinaries and some Propers from Trent 89.<sup>4</sup> The introductory essay to one of those booklets stressed the decline of single Mass Ordinary settings towards 1450, and explained that the selection of pieces of this type in Trent 89 were very much a 'mixed bag' of fairly local works and isolated international transmissions. The quality of the works concerned also varied considerably. Much the same is true of the Mass Ordinaries contained in Trent 88. In three cases, Trent 88 preserves versions of well-travelled works which are distinctly inferior to the readings of these works in earlier sources. The first of these is the Binchois *Agnus* no. 24e. There are five concordant readings, four of which are part of the Aosta-Trent relationship with the fifth being in the Ljubljana fragment. Like the latter,

<sup>3</sup> Regarding this and details of other works mentioned here, see the critical commentary.

<sup>4</sup> Ex Codicis Tridentinis Series II.I and II. II (now replaced by the updated items nos 160-192 in the DIAMM online Trent 89 edition).

the Trent 88 copy appears to be peripheral to the other and mostly more reliable readings. Much the same situation occurs with Dufay Gloria no. 38; here, Trent 88 seems to be the latest and least reliable source, where the dotted-C mensuration has caused the scribe to insert several guiding ‘2’ signs where alteration is required. It would therefore seem that around 1450 familiarity with the use of dotted-C might have been declining. The last of these three pieces where Trent 88 provides an inferior reading is its copy of the anonymous Gloria no. 37. The scribe has copied the text rather badly, and to make the piece sound satisfactory I think it essential to import some variants from the concordant source Mu 3154. That this is suitable editorial policy is perhaps confirmed by the other concordance (in Spec) being closer to Mu 3154 than to Trent 88.

Oppositely, Trent 88 is a more satisfactory source than some readings for the two Kyries nos 29 and 30. Both of these may be by Touront. In the first of these Kyrie settings, either Trent 88 or Mu 3154’s first copy is preferable to the second copy in Mu 3154 (which seems to be partly rewritten) or the Strahov version (which is probably simplified). Kyrie no. 30 only occurs in Trent 88 and Strahov, and here again the latter looks like a poor reading in which there are simplified elements. Most of the Ordinaries cited so far seem to have been reasonably well-travelled, and the same may be true of the Bourgois Gloria (no. 33) which found its way into Trent 87 as well as Trent 88. Here, close study of the Trent 88 reading puts elements of the other reading into focus for what might not be strictly essential. There are scoring differences between the two readings, notably in the absence of the fourth voice from Trent 88 and also some Contratenor passages. Therefore the Trent 87 reading may be a slightly developed version.

The idea that ‘no extant source is ideal’ for some of this music is also very much present in the readings for the ‘Flemmik’ Sanctus and Agnus no. 31. The Strahov and Spec readings for the Sanctus are related, and the Agnus Dei looks poorly transmitted in both surviving copies (this time in Strahov and Trent 88). Alongside these pieces with connections in central European manuscripts, we also find occasional works in Trent 88 that contain unhappy-looking passages probably because they are clumsily composed rather than badly transmitted. Such a piece is the Collis Sanctus (no. 23) which should be taken into consideration with the Trent 90 Collis Gloria given in the Appendix. The composer is probably traceable as a Professor of Theology at Friedrich III’s court in 1440, and as such may have been a musical amateur since his style is rather jagged, asymmetrical and dissonance-laden. These movements (which share F finals plus stylistic and some melodic details) may have once been part of a larger set of pieces that formed an Ordinary cycle. Nowadays such music will probably find a more appreciative audience than it might have done 80-100 years ago, but that does not alter the fact that Collis seems unskilled as a composer. Cadential figures occur at unexpected places in his music, and he seems to be on musically safe ground until his textures start to use more than a few minims - since it is usually in such places that dissonance occurs. His melodies tend to favour triadic motives to the extent of occasionally being fanfare-like. Regarding his Gloria in particular, maybe he had heard something English like Forest’s well-known *Ascendit Christus* motet, and possibly he tried to imitate its sound without being as fussy as career musicians about partwriting.

A slightly higher skill level is evident in the three Kyrie settings nos 34-36, which are close together in Trent 88 and have one thing in common: all three almost exclusively use Superius paraphrase and there is minimal sharing of chant material in the lower voices. The Passau Rite equivalents of the melodies used in these alternatim settings matches them quite well, so possibly these too are Austrian pieces like the Collis Mass Ordinaries. The middle one of these settings (which uses the *de Apostolis* chant) is not that competently written. At 47-48 there is a duet subsection where the Contra moves from B flat to E above, since it helps to make a cadence here where the Tenor enters on A (an unusual crossing of standard voice functions not imitated anywhere else, so far as I know). These Kyrie settings are also preceded by a setting of the *Resurrexi* introit, which is stylistically similar and (as suggested by Gerber) may be part of the same composer group.

I hope that I may be forgiven for not sounding too enthusiastic about some of these pieces, but I do not wish to leave the impression that these chant settings (like a few of their more poorly-written counterparts in Strahov) are beneath notice. The pair of Kyries which are attributable to Touront - with their use of drive

devices - make exciting singing. Likewise the two composite Masses that seem to be arbitrarily made up of collected Ordinary settings contain attractive and well-written music, some of which may be English. These are not the only examples of Masses made up from unrelated movements, and the second Mass in particular looks like an unconvincing assembly since different movements have different vocal scorings. I am equally enthusiastic about the ‘Flemmik’ Sanctus-Agnus pair, which is a beautifully sonorous pair of movements deserving of careful performance.<sup>5</sup> These pieces may be by the same composer as an isolated Sanctus in Trent 89, Strahov and Spec which is also given a ‘Flemmik’ attribution. Less well known is the independent Sanctus setting no. 26, another piece perhaps worthy of attention in view of its length, rhythmic elegance and relatively high-pitched Superius. While this piece is stylistically like so many other mid-century Sanctus settings that are chant-based, no chant use seems to be detectable here and it may be an extended free composition. Since it occurs within the small group of western-looking works mentioned earlier (nos 4-6 inclusive) it may not be a piece local to Austria. Also amongst these Ordinary settings is a short Kyrie which precedes the Bourgeois Gloria setting and which may be the work of the same composer (as Gerber suggested) plus also an extended five-voice Gloria-Credo pair on *Pax vobis ego sum* (no. 28) which looks insular. This too has a descriptive essay here following its critical notes so I refer interested readers to that section. Finally amongst the Mass Ordinaries the Gloria Pascale no. 27 stands out by virtue of its rhythmic modernity, proportional usage and relative complexity. This may well be one of the pieces contributed to the later Trent Codices by a composer who I have tentatively identified elsewhere as the “O2 anonymous”. In view of the style of his music and the devices which he uses he may well have been Franco-Flemish. However the chant version used in the Gloria seems to be close to the Passau version, and one of the other pieces that are probably his is motet no. 20 which is addressed to Bishop Georg Hack of Trento (1444-1465). It therefore seems that the “O2 anonymous” may have been resident in the Trento-Bolzano area or a visitor, if perhaps only for a short period.

The *Esclave* and *Meditatio cordis* Masses are presented in this instalment because of their associable Trent 88 motets. The latter occurs only in Strahov, but is important here because the Strahov copy omits random sharps that occur in the Trent 88 *Gaude Maria / Meditatio cordis* motet and also (curiously) in the Cornago Mappamundi Mass. The *Meditatio cordis* Mass is a relatively simple work with English traits, but also with features which might indicate a continental admirer of English music rather than an English composer. I suspect that its associate motet is not by the same musician as the rest of the Mass, and there is at least half a case for considering Cornago as the motet composer. Finally, the *Missa Esclave* is probably the least-known of several allegedly ‘early’ Masses using secular Tenor cantus firmus, and I describe it as least-known because it was not published until 2007. Similar works that are usually mentioned in more or less the same sentence in historical studies are the *Missa O rosa bella* I, the *Missa Le serviteur* I and Le Rouge’s *Missa Soyés aprantiz*. Those who get to know the *Esclave* Mass and its associate motet will probably realise - as I have - that details of the Ordinaries are quite unlike works by any named fifteenth-century musician and it is best left as truly anonymous. Its motet may also be an integral part of the whole work rather than an addition by a second composer.

This instalment contains what I consider to be some of the most outstanding pieces amongst mid-century sacred music. Therefore if singers do not have time to sample all of the contents here, I particularly recommend Touront’s *O florens rosa*, Dufay’s *O proles / O sidus* and the densely-scored motets nos 4 and 5 as worthy of attention. Lastly my thanks also go to the following friends whose generosity and help made the completion of this work possible. David Fallows, Thomas Schmidt-Beste, Warwick Edwards, Leofranc Holford-Stevens, Margaret Bent and Peter Wright.

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<sup>5</sup> I cite the 2016 Cappella Mariana CD Etcetera 8711801015712 here as giving a particularly good all-voices performance of no. 31’s Sanctus, although the variants used therein are not the same as in this edition.