

## OTKRIĆA, NOVOSTI — NEW INSIGHTS

### FIFTEENTH- AND SIXTEENTH-CENTURY POLYPHONY IN A GRADUAL FROM THE BADIJA FRANCISCAN MONASTERY NEAR KORČULA

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#### *Abstract*

The Music Archive of the Franciscan Monastery in Dubrovnik holds a *Gradual de sanctis* (MS XII), containing short polyphonic compositions. Of particular interest is the two-part setting of the introit *In medio ecclesie*, written in black mensural notation during the first half of the fifteenth century. The manuscript also contains four-part Mass responses belonging to the current of simple polyphony, dating from the sixteenth century. The author puts forward arguments for the view that these entries were

made in one of the Dominican monasteries in the territory of the Republic of Dubrovnik. The manuscript then found its way to the Franciscan monastery on the island of Badija near Korčula, and was moved to Dubrovnik after the Second World War.

**Key words:** 15th- and 16th-century polyphony, Dominicans, Republic of Dubrovnik, Badija, Franciscan monastery, Dubrovnik, Franciscan monastery

The Music Archive of the Franciscan Monastery in Dubrovnik, apart from numerous eighteenth- and nineteenth-century manuscripts and prints, holds an interesting collection of liturgical books containing a medieval chant. These manuscripts are at present the subject of detailed research being conducted under the direction of Professor Franz Prassl (Graz).<sup>1</sup> During my stay in Dubrovnik in Au-

<sup>1</sup>This research has been conducted as part of the Scientific Project No. 213-0000000-1033, financed by the Croatian Ministry of Sciences, Education and Sports.

gust 2008, I had an opportunity to examine this collection.<sup>2</sup> My attention was drawn then to gradual *de sanctis* (MS XII) which, as it turned out, contained short polyphonic works. The gradual belongs to a group of a few chant books, which found their way to Dubrovnik after the Second World War. They came from the Franciscan monastery on the island of Badija near Korčula, which was then closed down. The gradual deserves to become the subject of in-depth liturgical and musicological studies. This article reports only the initial results of research, concentrating on the polyphonic works contained in the manuscript.

The presence of polyphony in liturgical books is not a particularly rare phenomenon — usually these are works belonging to what is called ‘simple polyphony’, written using chant notation or simplified forms of mensural notation. We often find them at the end of books, as is the case with the manuscript from the island of Badija, where the later additions appear after a group of sequences closing the gradual proper. The additions open with a sequence for St Elizabeth, *Gaude syon quod egressus*, after which comes the two-part *In medio ecclesie*, a fragment of Credo and the sequence *Dies irae*. All these entries undoubtedly come from the fifteenth century, probably from its first half (Anđelko Badurina dates the gradual to the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries<sup>3</sup>). Later, in the sixteenth century, a paper fascicle was added to the manuscript, with four Credos and then also a four-part setting of Mass responses. At the end of this fascicle there also appears a sequence for St Antoninus, *Antonino magno laudes concinant*, the entry of which should be dated to the seventeenth, or even eighteenth, century.<sup>4</sup> The table below shows a detailed list of the compositions in the last two fascicles of the manuscript (polyphonic works have been marked in bold):

Folios	Title and liturgical function	Musical notation	Remarks
Fascicle XIX, fols. 181—186, parchment			
181r—182r	<i>Ave virgo gloriosa</i> , Marian sequence	nota quadrata	continuation from fascicle XVIII
182r—183v	<i>Salvatoris mater pia</i> , Marian sequence	nota quadrata	

<sup>2</sup> This was made possible through the academic collaboration between the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Department for the History of Croatian Music) and the Polish Academy of Sciences (Institute of Art). I would like to thank Dr Vjera Katalinić and Prof. Stanislav Tuksar for organising the research in Dubrovnik, and for the help given to me. I would also like to express my gratitude to Prof. Franz Prassl, as well as his students from the Music Academy in Zagreb — Hrvoje Beban and Ana Čizmić — for the exchange of observations on medieval manuscripts.

<sup>3</sup> Anđelko BADURINA: Iluminirani rukopisi samostana Male Braće u Dubrovniku, in: *Samostan Male Braće u Dubrovniku*, Kršćanska Sadašnjost, Zagreb 1985, 559 (No. 25).

<sup>4</sup> Along with the manuscript, there is also a surviving loose folio with a copy of a Credo in simple mensural notation. As in the case with the sequence for St Antoninus, it should be dated to the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

183v—184v	<i>Gaude syon quod egressus</i> , sequence for St Elizabeth	nota quadrata	
185r	<i>In medio ecclesie</i> , introit	black mensural	polyphony (two voices)
185r	[ <i>Patrem omnipotentem</i> ]	nota quadrata with mensural elements	fragment from 'Confiteor', continuation from a missing folio which preceded fol. 185
185v—186v	<i>Dies irae</i> , sequence	nota quadrata	
Fascicle XX, without foliation, paper			
[187r—189v]	'Credo Patriarchino'	nota quadrata with mensural elements	
[189v—192r]	'Credo Angelorum'	as above	
[192r—194v]	'Credo Todesco'	as above	
[194v—197r]	'Credo Apostolorum'	as above	
[197v]	<i>Amen, Et cum spiritu tuo, Habemus ad Dominum, Dignum et iustum est</i> , Mass responses	white mensural	polyphony (four voices)
[198r]	<i>Sed libera nos a malo, Gloria tibi domine</i> , Mass responses	as above	polyphony (four voices)
[198r]	<i>Antonino magno laudes concinant</i> , sequence for St Antoninus	white mensural (breves only)	

The two-part composition recorded on fol. 185r deserves particular attention. This is a setting of the introit *In medio ecclesie*, which opens the Masses of St John the Evangelist (fol. 5r) and St Dominic (fol. 42r) in the gradual from Badija. The tenor of the composition contains a chant melody quoted without any changes in the long rhythmic values. The discant is led in ornamented counterpoint in *tempus perfectum*, using four rhythmic values — *brevis*, *semibrevis*, *minima* and *semiminima*. In spite of the structure of this work being fairly uncomplicated, we certainly can-

not regard it as simple polyphony. It belongs to the category of *musica figurata*, as do other polyphonic settings of this text known from fifteenth-century manuscripts.<sup>5</sup> In view of the features of the notation (black mensural notation) we can assume that the two-part *In medio ecclesie* was written down in the first half of the fifteenth century, before white mensural notation became widespread. The work must undoubtedly have been used in liturgy on the occasion of an important feast day. Since the manuscript, in spite of originating from a Franciscan monastery, contains Dominican liturgy,<sup>6</sup> we should assume that the polyphonic *In medio ecclesie* was sung during a St Dominic Mass.

Of lesser interest are the polyphonic entries in the paper fascicle from the sixteenth century. These are short formulae of Mass responses, set for four parts in *nota contra notam* technique. In spite of the poor condition of the paper (many deficits caused by borers) it is possible to see that there are errors in leading the voices and in the use of white mensural notation. These works were composed much later than *In medio ecclesie*; however, it is they which belong to the current of simple polyphony. That kind of polyphony is characterized not only by simplicity, or at times even dilettantism, but also by its ties to the oral tradition (hence numerous errors in the written record). The paper fascicle also contains a group of monophonic Credos belonging to *cantus fractus* — written using square notation with mensural elements.<sup>7</sup> Similar examples of rhythmicising the chant — and, particularly, the *Et in terra* text — are numerous in European manuscripts;<sup>8</sup> we even find one such example in another manuscript from the island of Badija (MS VII, pp. 267-270). Although we are not dealing with polyphony here, the Credos referred to above provide evidence of the fluidity of the division between *musica plana* and *musica mensuralis*.

The key issue in interpreting the works described here is that of the provenance of the manuscript. As has previously been stated, it contains Dominican liturgy, and thus must originate from a monastery other than the Franciscan one on the island of Badija. Clearly, it is very difficult to establish the location where the gradual had been created; however, it is highly probable that it was being used in the territory of the Republic of Dubrovnik as early as the fifteenth century. Evidence for this is provided by two additions to the manuscript which originate from that period: the St Stephen Mass was interpolated in the rubric on fol. 49r, while a

<sup>5</sup> Three settings of *In medio ecclesie* have been preserved in the Trent codices; see: Guido ADLER & Oswald KOLLER (ed.): *Trienter Codices I*, Graz 1959 (Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, Jahrgang VII, vol. 14—15), 19—80 (Thematischer Katalog).

<sup>6</sup> Information obtained from Professor Franz Prassl. The manuscript was being used by the Dominicans until at least the seventeenth century, as evidenced by the sequence *Antonino magno laudes concinans* (fol. [198v]), dedicated to St Antoninus, Bishop of Florence, one of the patrons of that order.

<sup>7</sup> The grotesque style of the initial letters (fol. [192r] and [194v]) suggests that these Credos were entered at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Precise dating of fascicle XX may be obtained through investigating the paper, which has a watermark depicting crossed arrows.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Marco GOZZI & Francesco LUISI (ed.): *Il canto fratto: l'altro gregoriano. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Parma-Arezzo, 3-6 dicembre 2003*, Torre d'Orfeo, Roma 2005.

sequence for St Elizabeth was recorded on fols. 183v-184v. This highlights the cult of Hungarian saints, widespread in the Republic, which formally remained under the sovereignty of the King of Hungary. Some ties to Central Europe are also indicated by 'Credo Todesco', written down in the sixteenth century, as well as parchment fragments used to strengthen the corners of the folios, which carry German chant notation. One could thus suppose that the manuscript previously belonged to one of the Dominican monasteries within the sphere of the Republic's influence. Choosing such a centre is very difficult, since the fifteenth century was a period of particularly strong development of the Dominican order, which had about 70 monasteries throughout the territory of the Dalmatian province, including the monasteries in Gruž (from 1437) and Lopud (from 1482), linked to the later Dubrovnik congregation (*Congregatio Ragusina*).<sup>9</sup>

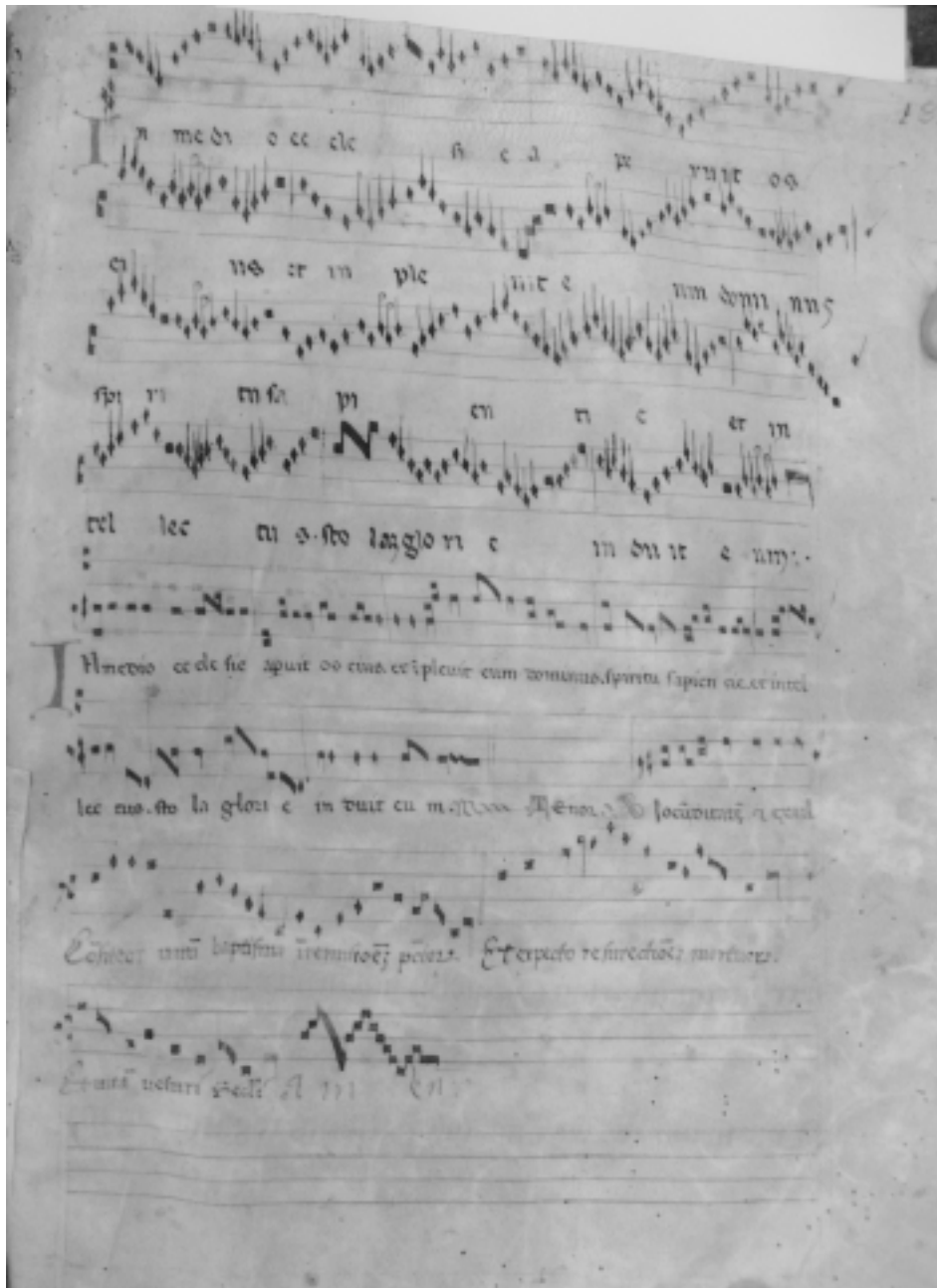
The polyphonic compositions in the gradual from the island of Badija confirm the important role played by Dominican friars in the spread of polyphony in the area of Dalmatia. It needs to be remembered that written records of polyphonic settings of *Benedicamus domino*, dated to the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which include a distinctive trope in the Croatian language, originate from the Dominican monastery at Stari Grad on the island of Hvar.<sup>10</sup> In Dubrovnik in the sixteenth century, the Dominicans sang four-part Marian litanies.<sup>11</sup> *In medio ecclesie* is also one of the oldest surviving polyphonic works in the territory of Croatia, all the more significant by belonging to the current of mensural polyphony. It partially fills the gap between the Benedictine cartulary from Zadar (*Codex Jadrensis*), in which a two-part *Sanctus* was entered in the thirteenth century, and the manuscript from Stari Grad mentioned above.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Stjepan KRASIĆ: *Dominikanci. Povijest Reda u hrvatskim krajevima*, Hrvatska dominikanska provincija, Zagreb 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Hana BREKO KUSTURA: Primjeri jednostavnog liturgijskog višeglasja iz Hrvatske u europskom kontekstu, *Arti musices*, 39 (2008) 1, 10–23 (older literature quoted here).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Miho DEMOVIĆ: *Musik und Musiker in der Republik Dubrovnik vom Anfang des 11. Jahrhunderts bis zur Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts*, MIC, Zagreb 1981, 68.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Rudolf FLOTZINGER: Mittelalterliche Mehrstimmigkeit in Dalmatien, im übrigen Kroatien und in Slowenien, *Revista de Musicología*, 16 (1993) 3, 1433–1453; Hana BREKO KUSTURA: *op. cit.*, 3–33.



Introit *In medio ecclesie* in the gradual *de sanctis*, Dubrovnik, Glazbeni arhiv Male Braće, MS ZII, fol. 185 r

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## Sažetak

VIŠEGLASJE IZ 15. I 16. STOLJEĆA U GRADUALU  
FRANJEVAČKOG SAMOSTANA NA BADIJI KRAJ KORČULE

Glazbeni arhiv franjevačkog samostana Male braće u Dubrovniku čuva i fond ukinutog franjevačkog samostana s otoka Badije kraj Korčule. Među njegovim rukopisnim kodeksima nalazi se i gradual *de sanctis* (MS XII), koji sadrži kratke višeglasne kompozicije. Osobito je zanimljiv dvoglasni introit *In medio ecclesie*, ispisan crnom menzuralnom notacijom tijekom prve polovice 15. stoljeća, kojim započinju mise za sv. Ivana Krstitelja (fol. 5r) i sv. Dominika (fol. 42r). Pripada kategoriji *musica figurata* i nesumnjivo se rabio u liturgiji u prigodi neke važne svečanosti, najvjerojatnije one za sv. Dominika. Tenor ove kompozicije sastoji se od nepromijenjene gregorijanske melodije, a diskant je vođen u ornamentiranom kontrapunktu u *tempus perfectum* s uporabom četiriju ritamskih vrijednosti, *brevis*, *semibrevis*, *minima* i *semiminima*.

U ovom rukopisu nalaze se također četveroglasni odgovori u misama koji spadaju u jednostavnu polifoniju iz 16. stoljeća, a sastoje se od kratkih formula uglazbljenih u tehnici *nota contra notam*. Ova vrsta višeglasja vezana je uz oralnu tradiciju, a njezina zabilježba u ovome kodeksu posljedično očituje neke pogreške u vođenju dionica i uporabi bijele menzuralne notacije.

Autor postavlja tezu da su svi ovi dodatci napravljeni i ispisani u jednom od dominikanskih samostana na teritoriju Dubrovačke Republike. (Cijeli rukopis se potom našao u posjedu franjevačkog samostana na otoku Badiji kraj Korčule, odakle je nakon Drugog

svjetskog rata prenesen u Dubrovnik.) Višeglasne kompozicije u ovom gradualu na taj način potvrđuju pretpostavku, da su dominikanci imali važnu ulogu u širenju polifonije na području Dalmacije. Kao jedno od najstarijih pronađenih višeglasnih djela na teritoriju Hrvatske, *In medio ecclesie* ispunjava prazninu između benediktinskog kartulara iz Zadra (*Codex Jadrensis*) iz 13. stoljeća i polifonijskih uglazbljenja *Benedicamus domino*, datiranih u 15/16. st., iz Starog Grada na Hvaru.

Gradual *de sanctis* (MS XII) zaslužuje daljnje detaljnije liturgičko i muzikologijsko istraživanje, a ovaj članak obrađuje i izvješćuje tek o početnim rezultatima istraživanja.