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‘EPULEMUR IN AZIMIS’ FROM THE MANUSCRIPT D-TRs 322/1994:
AN ATTEMPTED RECONSTRUCTION IN THE FORM
OF A CIRCULAR CANON

One of the forms of late-medieval popular polyphony in Central Europe was the circular canon, which in fifteenth-century theoretical treatises was termed a *rotulum*.¹ Analysis of preserved repertoire shows that this is a very simple canon, usually notated in the form of single melodic line.² The melodic line is divided into three or four parts of equal length (depending on the number of voices), with special symbols – *signa congruentiae* – indicating the entrances of successive voices. The repetition of the musical material *ad infinitum* is suggested by a melodic and textual incipit notated at the end of the piece.

The notation is not the only way to recognise a circular canon: these forms are identified in compositions which seem to be monophonic. Good examples include *Ave virgo sanctissima* from the manuscript PL-WRu I Q 132, interpreted as a rotulum

- 1 See treatises by Anonym Boz1, *De musica mensurali*, and Anonym Boz2, *Ars compendiosa de cantu mensurali*, from MS PL-Wn BOZ 61 (Elżbieta Witkowska-Zaremba, ‘Musical treatises from the manuscript WaN BOZ 61: Text edition’, in: *Notae musicae artis. Musical notation in Polish sources 11th–16th century*, ed. Elżbieta Witkowska-Zaremba, Kraków 2000, pp. 487–535); Anonymous, *Tractatus de musica mensurabili* (Johannes Wolf, ‘Ein Breslauer Mensuraltraktat des 15. Jahrhunderts’, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 1 (1918–19), pp. 331–345); Paulus Paulirinus de Praga, *Tractatus de musica* (Józef Reiss, ‘Pauli Paulirini de Praga Tractatus de musica (etwa 1460)’, *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 7 (1924–25), pp. 261–264). All definitions from the above treatises are included in the entry ‘rotulum’, in: *Lexicon musicum Latinum medii aevi*, http://woerterbuchnetz.de/cgi-bin/WBNetz/wbgui_py?sigle=LmL&mode=Vernetzung&hitlist=&patternlist=&lemid=MR00080#XMR00080, accessed 12 May 2019. Virginia Newes analyses definitions of the rotulum (from *Tractatus de musica mensurabili* and Paulus Paulirinus’ *Tractatus de musica*) in her unpublished PhD dissertation *Fuga and related contrapuntal procedures in European polyphony ca. 1350–ca. 1420*, Brandeis University 1987, pp. 33–35.
- 2 See *Ex trinitatis culmine* (PL-GD 2153a), *Domine ad adiuvandum me festina* (H-Bn lat. 534), *Ave virgo sanctissima* (PL-WRu I Q 132) and compositions attributed to Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz: *Promittat eterno* (PL-WRu I F 269) and *Presulem ephebeatum* (i.a. D-Mbs Clm 14274).

by Fritz Feldmann,³ and the offertory *Gloriose flos* from the Gradual of Eleanor of Brittany (F-LG 2(17)), in which Marcel Pérès identified a canon.⁴ The reverse situation occurs in manuscript D-TRs 322/1994, held in the Stadtbibliothek Trier. A composition entitled *Epulemur in azimis* (fol. 210r) exhibits all the notational peculiarities of a rotulum, but was not interpreted as such because of many ambiguities in the writing of the melodic material. These ambiguities make it almost impossible to correctly coordinate the voices according to the rules of counterpoint. The possibility of a canon occurring in this piece was first hypothesised by Paweł Gancarczyk, who drew my attention to this source and provided crucial materials.⁵ The edition included in this article represents an attempt to reconstruct *Epulemur in azimis* in the form of a circular canon.

SOURCE DESCRIPTION

The manuscript D-TRs 322/1994 belonged to the Augustinian monastery of Eberhardsklausen in Klausen until 1802. During secularisation, it was transferred to the Jesuit library in Trier (and later to the Stadtbibliothek). The manuscript consists of two parts, not directly related to each other. The provenance of the first part (according to modern foliation, fols. 1–107) is unknown. It contains sermons written c.1400.⁶ The second part of the manuscript (fols. 108–215) was probably copied at Eberhardsklausen.⁷ Fols. 108–206v contain the philosophical poem *Liber Alani de planctu naturae*, while fols. 207r–215r carry a musical part, which was discovered at the end of the nineteenth century. It was described in detail for the first time by Rudolf Ewerhart in the 1950s.⁸ The manuscript measures 285 × 210 mm. The folios of the second part (108–215) were initially larger, but were trimmed to the same size as the first part, with no damage to the musical notation.⁹

The manuscript D-TRs 322/1994 includes twenty-six mono- and polyphonic compositions written in black mensural notation. Its features (e.g. the shapes of the *custodes*) indicate that the manuscript was probably copied at the beginning of the fifteenth century (c.1430). Taking also palaeographic features into account

3 Fritz Feldmann, *Musik und Musikpflege im mittelalterlichen Schlesien*, Breslau 1938, p. 129.

4 That interpretation was borne out by a performance of this piece as a canon during workshops with Marcel Pérès as part of the Poznań Katharsis Festival (23–25 May 2018).

5 I am grateful to Prof. Paweł Gancarczyk for all his help with preparing this article.

6 Rudolf Ewerhart, *Die Handschrift 322/1994 der Stadtbibliothek Trier als musikalische Quelle*, Regensburg 1955, pp. 17–18.

7 This hypothesis was discredited by Marco Brösch. He analysed the dialect of the German-language texts and suggested that the manuscript came from a region located further north than Trier (close to the border of Lower Rhein and the Netherlands), see Marco Brösch, 'Die Klosterbibliothek von Eberhardsklausen und ihre Bestände. Von den Anfängen bis ins 16. Jahrhundert', PhD dissertation, Trier 2010, p. 604.

8 R. Ewerhart, op. cit.

9 Ibid., pp. 4–5.

(e.g. *prolatio* signs), Paweł Gancarczyk claims that the polyphony dates from the second quarter of the fifteenth century.¹⁰ Analysis of the watermarks confirms this dating: the paper was produced between 1380 and 1425.¹¹ The polyphonic pieces were written on paper folios dating from the fourteenth century.¹² Palaeographic analysis revealed that the compositions were probably copied by two scribes: the first one was responsible for the text, the second for the musical notation.¹³ The artwork of the manuscript is very meagre. The initials have been marked with the same brown ink as the other elements. The ornaments are limited to a few small drawings, integrated with initials and lateral lines. They depict fish, dragon and two fighting characters – one armed with a crossbow, the other with a spear. The clumsiness of these caricatural images may indicate that they were not drawn by an illuminator, but by a copyist, who, perhaps jaded from his arduous work, amused himself by ornamenting the manuscript.¹⁴

Some ‘amateur’ elements appear in the musical notation as well. The writing is not always legible (the notes overlap the text, there is a lack of keys in many places), in which it resembles musical fragments of Central European provenance.¹⁵ The used forms (*cantio*, motet, rotulum) and concordances (including with the Speciálník Codex – CZ-HK II A 7, and the Spiš Fragments – H-Bn lat. 534) also link the manuscript to this region. Moreover, the composition *Jesus Christus nostra salus*, based on a text by Jan Hus, was included in the manuscript.¹⁶

The pieces in the manuscript D-TRs 322/1994 represent the *devotio moderna* movement for religious reform. It is an important example of music cultivated under the influence of the Congregation of Windesheim. The texts, as befitting *devotio moderna*, are ascetic: they have a simple, strophic form and a prayerful, laudatory character. The dominant themes related to Christ and Mary.¹⁷ The musical settings correspond to the texts. They are often limited, in the form of monophonic singing or simple polyphony (which accords with the principles of *devotio moderna*¹⁸).

10 Paweł Gancarczyk, ‘Memory of genre: The polytextual motet in Central Europe and its two traditions’, in: *Resounding past: Music as history and memory*, ed. Karl Kügler, in print.

11 Burkard Wehner, ‘Einführung: Datierung der Handschrift’, in: *Vox Nostra, heyllich ist der dag* [CD], Stiftung Kloster Dalheim, LWL-Landesmuseum für Klosterkultur, 2014.

12 P. Gancarczyk, op. cit.

13 B. Wehner, op. cit.

14 Such drawings were popular at this time throughout Europe; see Maciej Gutowski, *Komizm w polskiej sztuce gotyckiej* [The comic element in Polish gothic art], Warszawa 1973, pp. 229–238.

15 See manuscripts H-Bn lat. 534, PL-WRu I F 269, PL-GD 2153a and D-Gs XXX,1.

16 R. Ewerhart, op. cit., pp. 62–63.

17 Ulrike Hascher-Burger and Hermina Joldersma, ‘Introduction: Music and the devotio moderna’, *Church History and Religious Culture* 88 (2008) no. 3, pp. 319–320.

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 323–325.

The piece was written in a single melodic line. The form of a three-part rotulum is indicated by two *signa congruentiae* in the shape of a cross within a circle and the repetition of the opening notes and the textual incipit at the end. The first *signum congruentiae* unambiguously indicates the entry of the second voice. The entry of the third voice and part of the melody after it cause more problems. The sign is written between the notes *b* and *c*. In order to close the canon properly, it was necessary to add a breve note *c*. In the following parts of the piece, many rhythmic changes had to be made to achieve the desired contrapuntal relations, and they are still not always satisfactory, due to the frequent unisons and octaves.

Given the chaotic notation (the most salient example appears in the group of notes written almost above each other and separated by a line, which suggests that they belong to the passage before the change of the key), it can be assumed that the piece was written from memory or that the copyist only knew the beginning well (clear and unambiguous notation) and thereafter partly ‘improvised’. The transcription given below is not the only possible solution. It is an attempt to reconstruct the potential polyphonic form of this composition.

Epulemur in azimis

D-TRs 322/1994

[3,3], ♠ = ♩.

1) 2) 3) 4)

E - pu - le-mur in a - zi - mis sin - ce - ri - ta - tis vin -
 gra - tu - le-mur in lau - di - bus pre - cel - se de - i vir - gi-

6

5) 6) 7) 8)

- ctis Et ve - ri - ta - tis gres-si-bus mun - di hu-ius so - la - ci -
 ne ut no - bis su-um fi - li-um cor - dis ca-na-mus pe - di-

1) 2) 3) 4)

E - pu - le-mur in a - zi - mis sin - ce - ri - ta - tis vin -
 tu - le-mur in lau - di - bus pre - cel - se de - i vir - gi-

10) 9) do - nec pur - gan - do ve - te - ra quo
 bus zi - ma pur - ga - to ve - te - ri quo

5) Et ve - ri - ta - tis gres - si - bus mun -
 ne ut no - bis su - um fi - li - um cor -

1) 2) 3)
 E - pu - le - mur in a - zi - mis sin -
 tu - le - mur in lau - di - bus pre -

2

13) 14) 15)
 pre - mi - mum no - stra vi - ci - a no - stra vi - ci - a E -
 fir - men - tur mi - se - ri mi - se - ri D.s. §

(7) - 8) 9)
 di hu - ius so - la - ci - um
 dis ca - na - mus pe - di - bus D.s. §

4)
 ce - ri - ta - tis vin - cis
 cel - se de - i vir - gi - ne D.s. ⊕

- 1), 3) in ms. semiminima
- 2), 4) in ms. only semibreves
- 5) in ms. ligature *d-f*
- 6) in ms. *f*
- 7) in ms. semibreves
- 8), 14) in ms. minimae
- 9), 11) in ms. minima
- 10) *c* repeated, it does not occur in ms.
- 12) notation of rhythmic value not precise, semibreves with unclearly added caudae?
- 13) repetition of the note *d* omitted
- 15) note *c* added to close the canon properly

THE TEXT OF *EPULEMUR IN AZIMIS*

The text consists of two strophes. Each of them uses the whole musical material and consists of six lines, the last two rhyming. It was necessary to repeat the last words of both strophes (i.e. 'nostra vicia' and 'miseri') to close the canon properly.

As already mentioned, the subject of the composition is linked to *devotio moderna*. The text is of a laudatory character and features Mary ('Virgin of God') and Christ ('her Son'). One also finds an interesting hint about the intended use of the piece and performance practice: a call for Jesus Christ and Mary to be extolled through singing with the accompaniment of string instruments ('chordis') and with dance ('pedibus'). It can be assumed that this composition was used for private prayer (as was emphasised by the exponents of *devotio moderna*), probably not in church (if in church, then unofficially).

Given below is the text as it appears in the Wolfgang Katzenschlager edition (the words in square brackets originally occur in the manuscript; they are retained in the musical transcription as well):²²

Epulemur in azimis
sinceritatis veteris [vinctis]
et veritatis gressibus
mundi huius solacium
donec purgando vetera
quo premimur nos [nostra] vicia

Let us feast with the unleavened bread
of erstwhile honesty
and truth! This is solace
on the path through this world,
until we are cleansed of the old sins
which [still] oppress us.

gratulemur in laudibus
precelse dei virginis [virgine]
det [ut] nobis suum filium
chordis canamus pedibus
zima purgato veteri
quo firmentur miseri.

Let us give thanks in praise
to the sublime Virgin of God,
that she may give us her Son.
Let us sing with strings and feet [with dance]:
cleanse the old leaven,
that the weak might be strengthened.²³

22 Wolfgang Katzenschlager, 'Die Liedtexte in der Reihenfolge der Handschrift mit deutscher Übersetzung', in: *Vox Nostra, heyllich ist der dag*, op. cit.

23 Translation based on the Latin text and German translation by Wolfgang Katzenschlager published with the above-mentioned *Vox Nostra* album.

„EPULEMUR IN AZIMIS” Z RĘKOPISU D-TRs 322/1994:
PRÓBA REKONSTRUKCJI UTWORU W FORMIE KANONU KOŁOWEGO

Jedną z form popularnej polifonii, charakterystycznej dla okresu późnego średniowiecza w regionie Europy Środkowej, jest kanon kołowy, w piętnastowiecznych traktatach teoretycznych występujący pod nazwą *rotulum*. Kanon ten zapisywany był zazwyczaj w formie pojedynczej linii melodycznej, podzielonej, w zależności od liczby głosów, na trzy lub cztery równej długości odcinki za pomocą symboli (*signa congruentiae*), wyznaczających zarazem wejścia kolejnych głosów. Powtarzanie materiału muzycznego „w nieskończoność” sugeruje notacja początku melodii wraz z incipitem tekstowym na końcu utworu.

Powyższe cechy odnaleźć można w notacji kompozycji *Epulemur in azimis* z rękopisu przechowywanego obecnie w Bibliotece Miejskiej w Trewirze pod sygnaturą 322/1994, wykazującego wiele związków z regionem Europy Środkowej. Przy odczytaniu *signa congruentiae* jako symboli oznaczających wejścia kolejnych głosów okazuje się, że liczne niejednoznaczności w zapisie materiału muzycznego uniemożliwiają skoordynowanie głosów zgodnie z zasadami kontrapunktu. Dlatego też we wcześniejszych edycjach (autorstwa Rudolfa Ewerharta i Christopha Burmestera) utwór transkrybowano w postaci jednogłosowej.

Hipotezę o możliwości wystąpienia kanonu w tym utworze po raz pierwszy wysunął Paweł Gancarczyk. Niniejszy artykuł stanowi próbę rekonstrukcji ewentualnej polifonicznej formy *Epulemur in azimis*. Jej przeprowadzenie wiązało się z przyjęciem konkretnych założeń dotyczących menzuracji oraz wprowadzeniem wielu innych modyfikacji (takich jak przedłużenie niektórych wartości rytmicznych, czy powtórzenie słów). Kluczowym dla niniejszej propozycji okazało się odniesienie do innego rotulum, zachowanego w rękopisie PL-GD 2153a – *Ex trinitatis culmine*.

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