

## Reviews

László Dobszay and Janka Szendrei, eds., with the collaboration of Beáta Meszéna, *Responsories*. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2013. 2 vols. 1,653 pp. HUF 12,000. ISBN 978 9 635 06902 6.

László Dobszay was as generous as he was brilliant. For thirty years, he and his colleague Janka Szendrei formed a sort of double star in the constellation of the IMS study group Cantus Planus, anchoring a strong community of chant scholars from around the world. As a dedicated teacher and musician, Dobszay also inspired the next generation of medieval musicologists studying in Hungary and elsewhere, and led, with Szendrei, the internationally renowned *Schola Hungarica*. Among his important contributions to chant studies are the series *Musicalia Danubiana* and *Corpus Antiphonarium Officii Ecclesiarum Centralis Europae* (CAO-ECE). In 1999, he and Szendrei published a comprehensive three-volume collection of antiphons in the series *Monumenta Monodica Medii Aevi* (Baerenreiter), and then set their sights on producing a similar study for responsories. Ten years later, the collaborative efforts of Dobszay, Szendrei and their team of musicologists at the Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences<sup>1</sup> produced a preliminary version that was put on display at the 2009 Cantus Planus meeting in Dobogókő, Hungary. Sadly, Dobszay passed away in 2011, two years before this publication was complete.

This two-volume work mainly consists of an edition of the *responsoria prolixa* for Matins (as well as the short melismatic responsories in the Little Hours in Lent) as preserved in the medieval tradition of the metropolitan see of Esztergom and in the traditions of the Hungarian Franciscans, totalling 1,149 chants. The first volume begins with a brief discussion, revised linguistically by David Hiley, of the history and characteristics of the genre, previous studies, and the guiding principles for the edition. Then modally specific ‘Commentaries’ on the composition of each responsory type are given, followed by a liturgical and an alphabetical index. Responsories in the first three modes conclude the volume. The second volume is given entirely to the edition of the responsories in modes 4 to 8.

The transcriptions here are presented according to the modes as found in the Esztergom tradition, represented by fourteen sources, all described in the introduction. The Franciscan tradition is represented by the four-volume antiphoner OFM-118, 119, 122, 121 (in the University Library in Budapest) and a fourteenth-century antiphoner OFM-49 held in Istanbul at Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi. Where Franciscan sources have a different melody for the same text, it is listed apart. Within each

<sup>1</sup> János Mezei, Orsolya Csomó, Judit Fehér, Gabriella Gilányi, Gábor Kiss, Miklós Földváry and Gergely Hajdú.

mode, the responsories are ordered according to melodic type. Since responsories are generally formulaic, this approach is appropriate. Perhaps the focus on typology is especially natural for Dobzsay and Szendrei as experts in melodic families in Hungarian folk song as well as chant, inspired by the work of Benjamin Rájecky.

The Introduction to the edition provides a description of the basic structure of a responsory, and the division of the respond section into three main parts, each of them divisible into two phrases: the 'Antecedent Part', 'Middle Part' and 'Subsequent Part' (or AP, MP and SP). This three-period, six-phrase conception of the structure of a standard responsory is consistent with that of Wagner and Pfisterer, although these two are not mentioned here.<sup>2</sup> By identifying the recurring musical gestures that make up these main parts in each of the eight modes, a typology for most of the main, traditional layer of responsories can be constructed. Previous efforts in this typological vein, such as the analysis of responsories undertaken by Frere,<sup>3</sup> are briefly acknowledged. But the aim of this edition is not so much to provide a taxonomy, with all its labels and charts, as it is to group chants according to similar melodic construction more generally. This leads to the idea that whole melody types might be guided by the singer's expectations concerning the nature and order of the musical structure: 'one may sense the outline of the path the responsory will take in more general terms. The actual melody and intervallic structure of the chants may be different, but they seem to be directed by similar pivotal notes' (p. 20). However, no indications are given as to what those pivotal notes might be, or whether one might be able to model the 'path' of the responsory more generally. The focus remains on the individual chant's relationship to its modal type and to chants similar to it, discussed in further detail in the Commentaries section.

The main melodic type is presented first, followed by responsories belonging to the subcategories that differ in one or several identified ways. At the end of each modal section come the freely composed responsories. These 'new-style' responsories are organised according to (1) prose text, (2) prose text with a characteristic repetendamelisma and (3) poetic strophes, ordered according to the number of lines, the syllable-count of the first line, and the metric pattern. For each mode, the six 'Lines' making up the three 'Parts' are discussed using short notational examples and a description of what the musical function of each line is. It is unclear whether the musical samples come from specific responsories or – more likely – are simply a redaction of multiple chants. The detailed descriptions refer to the functional roles that specific pitches have within the overall melodic structure of the piece. Here is an example from the description of the typical 'Middle Part' of first-mode responsories: 'The typical incipit of Line 3 is a start on D (i.e., the cadence-note of Line 2) and a transition with an FGA motif to G, which is usually followed by a neutral motif around G suitable for delivering the text. The line closes again on D, which differs,

<sup>2</sup> Peter Wagner, *Einführung in die gregorianischen Melodien. III: Gregorianische Formenlehre*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1921), 331; and Andreas Pfisterer, 'Skizzen zu einer gregorianischen Formenlehre', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 63 (2006), 145–61, at 158.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Howard Frere, 'Introduction' to *Antiphonale Sarisburiense: A Reproduction in Facsimile of a Manuscript of the Thirteenth Century* (London, 1901–24).

however, from Line 2 in two respects' (p. 39). In some cases, the adaptation of a melodic formula to a different textual accentuation is noted. On one occasion, the Esztergom melodic formulas are compared to the central Italian tradition recorded in Lucca 601, resulting in a list of functionally equivalent melodic formulas, some of which even cadence on different pitches.

A short description of every chant, grouped according to type and subtype, follows the examination of the main melodic type. The main melodic groups are indicated with Roman numerals and the subgroups with Arabic numbers. In mode 1, the main melodic type has seven subtypes according to the extension of certain 'Parts' or the omission of others: I/1 has twelve responsories, I/2 has twelve, I/3 has nine, I/4 has twelve, I/5 has ten, I/6 has six and I/7 has eleven. The second main melodic type contains only two subtypes: II/1 has eighteen responsories and II/2 has four. The third main type has three subtypes: III/1 is made up of thirty responsories that are linked by similar opening phrases; III/2 contains thirty-five responsories that were all written later than 1000 and have *repetenda-melismas*; and III/3 has forty-four responsories with versified texts. In the other seven modes, a similar approach to categorisation is taken. While this method works effectively for those responsories whose melodies follow similar paths, the grouping of 'new-style' chants according to their textual characteristics, or even to the presence of a *repetenda-melisma*, may not be to their advantage. Most of these 'new-style' responsories are parts of poetic *and* musical efforts to honour particular saints, and to understand them best, one should compare across the modes to find the elements that contextualise and unify them, since they are usually part of a larger liturgy composed in ascending modal order by a single author.

In the written descriptions of each responsory in the 'Commentary' section, sometimes the Gregorian and the Old Roman versions of a chant are compared. This is extremely valuable scholarship, providing a good source for future research in this direction. Although the Gregorian–Old Roman relationship is discussed very briefly in the Introduction, one might wish that larger, more general conclusions had been attempted. Another very interesting feature is the comparisons drawn between the responsory and antiphon repertoires in terms of musical material and its function. This is a good reminder that responsories did not, of course, exist in musical isolation from other chant genres, and that features of musical taste were not restricted to one type of chant or another, regardless of differences in structure or liturgical function.

The monumental value of this publication truly lies in the transcriptions of the responsories themselves. The appearance of the notation will be familiar to those who know other CAO-ECE publications: note heads spaced to reflect neume groupings on a modern, five-lined staff in the treble clef with a descending stem attached to the highest pitch in a note grouping. Editorial insertions of divisions are indicated using bar-lines or half bar-lines, determined by the sequence of grammatical and musical units. Instead of using the traditional CAO numbers (where applicable), each chant is labelled with a four-digit number, the first of which indicates the mode. The ascending numerical order of the next three digits helps to organise the

chants with respect to the main melodic type in each mode; the lower the number, the more 'typical' is it. Each transcription begins with the Esztergom version, with any variations noted below. Then the Franciscan version is given (with variants in that tradition noted.) The verse tones are included with each responsory, and where a doxology is found in the source, it is given after the verse in a smaller font. All chants are transposed into their original modal assignment (i.e., ending on regular modal finals: D, E, F and G). The editors have found that liquescents and note groupings are so varied between sources that it was impossible to take them into account in the final version of the transcription, and since b flat signs are often given as a way of indicating clef, these are also generally omitted, although some special cases in modes 4, 7 and 8 are retained. 'The omission of the flat-sign does not mean, of course, that in actual performance the singer should sing the melody with B-natural. He/she can decide, having regard for the information in the Notes, but naturally also allowing for musical taste' (p. 30). The spelling of the text has been normalised and punctuation is omitted.

Because of their number and complexity, responsories have not received the same amount of scholarly attention as other genres of chant, but this collection certainly redresses the balance. The evidence of attention to detail in the transcriptions is as impressive as it is helpful to those working with these chants for either analytical or musical purposes. One might regret the omission of a bibliography for responsory studies and the lack of general conclusions concerning melodic types, but the wealth of musical information in the transcriptions more than makes up for this. The interested reader should also be reminded that images and indexes of some of the sources used in this publication are available on the CAO-ECE website.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <http://earlymusic.zti.hu/cao-ece/cao-ece.html>.