

The national edition of the works of Palestrina*

The national edition of the works of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina appears in a triple format, for each volume contains not only the modern edition itself, but also a semi-diplomatic version and a facsimile reproduction of the original work.

The facsimile edition consists of a (reduced) reproduction in phototype of a copy of the earliest edition of the work in question. Though lacking the emendations and additions that even the contemporary performance practice required, it nonetheless stands as a guarantor of the composer's intentions and as an exemplary version to which the modern performer can profitably refer in cases of doubt.

The semi-diplomatic edition, though almost completely faithful to the original semiography, accomplishes a first decisive step towards satisfying the requirements of the modern performer. In other words, it caters to the needs of ensemble reading by laying out vertically the various voice parts, but it avoids imposing any form of systematic rhythmic division. It has no bar lines, therefore, and it retains all the original indications concerning tempus,

* The new National Edition of the works of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina has now been launched with the issue of the first volume: the *Primo Libro delle Messe* (Roma 1554). The work is edited by Francesco Luisi and printed by Editalia-Gruppo Istituto Poligrafico and Zecca dello Stato. Promoted by the Fondazione Palestrina, the project also acquired the backing of the Italian Ministry of Culture, which appointed an International Committee of experts made up of the following scholars: Peter Ackermann, Maria Antonella Balsano, Bonifacio Baroffio, Lino Bianchi, Agostino Borromeo, Paolo Emilio Carapezza, Angela Adriana Cavarra, Alain de Chambure, Michel Laplenie, François Lasserre, Luciano Luciani, Francesco Luisi, Raffaello Monterosso, Jean-Pierre Ouvrad (†), Noel O'Regan, Sergio M. Pagano, Armando Petrucci, Peter Philips, Luigi Puliti, Amedeo Quondam, Giancarlo Rostirolla, Richard Sherr, Anna Maria Vacchelli and Agostino Ziino. The committee elected Giancarlo Rostirolla, director of the Fondazione Palestrina, as its chairman and constituted an Editorial Committee formed by Francesco Luisi, Giancarlo Rostirolla and Agostino Ziino. This restricted committee duly nominated Francesco Luisi chief editor and called on him to draw up the norms for the new edition. These norms (in the form and content presented here) were discussed and approved by both the Editorial Committee and the International Committee. Though the editorial norms are included in the edition itself, the Editorial Committee has decided to publish them also in this journal of choral singing for the benefit of its readers. Also offered here, for exemplification, are a few extracts from the volume, as given in both the modern edition and the semi-diplomatic edition: the *Kyrie and Agnus Dei III* of the *Missa Ecce sacerdos magnus*, the second *Hosanna* of the *Missa Ad coenam Agni providi*, and the second *Hosanna* of the *Missa Virtute magna* (The Editorial Committee of the National Edition of the Works of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina).

prolatio and proportions, as well as the clefs and mensural figures (with the sole exception of the *ligaturae* groups, which are written out as separate notes, both to clarify their rhythmic interpretation and to comply with the requirements of score). But even though the semi-diplomatic edition makes use of notational features of the *editio princeps*, it is also influenced by the modern edition. From the modern edition it accepts all the critical and philological emendations, ranging from the application of *musica ficta* to the writing out of *ligaturae* and the syllabic distribution of the text in accordance with present-day spelling and rules.

As for the new modern edition, its purpose is distinctively semiological: to define the notation in a way that is both as close as possible to the original and consistent with the need for an authentic, historical interpretation of Palestrina's music. In particular, it avoids adopting compromise solutions that do no more than reconvert the notation (i.e. provide an intelligible version of the old text in modern notation). For while such reconversions might make the old notation practicable (by using a notation that complies with the norms of modern musical script), they also carry a risk: the very modernity expressed by such notation, deprived of its original semiological meaning, can encourage an uncritical, biased approach to the music and have damaging consequences in performance.

A correct reading of an early musical text, therefore, requires first an interpretation of the notation and a direct understanding of its semiological value. The present edition attempts to supply the materials needed to restore the original musical text both philologically and historically, though it does so with a full awareness of the complex problems attending such an ambitious publishing venture. To this same end it also adopts the solution of the triple edition, a measure designed not only to permit internal comparison, but also to make this formidable enterprise more resistant to the passage of time.

Principles and general criteria of the semi-diplomatic edition

The chief aim of the semi-diplomatic edition is to reproduce the original notation faithfully in the revised format of score. And the essential key to a plausible semiological understanding of the original text is provided by the early notation, with its variety of graphic forms that are either untranslatable or amenable only to approximate translation.

The presence in early musical texts of differentiated graphic elements, which have traditionally been viewed merely as different ways of indicating the same solutions, has posed a number of questions. Today the idea that the diverse notational formulae are in actual fact equivalent and have no influ-

ence on interpretative issues can no longer be sustained, especially in view of the semiological results that have emerged from the examination of graphic variants found in all forms of writing (even non-musical) from their origins to the present day.

Though the graphic signs express sounds or groups of sounds, their expressive meaning is dependent on the rhythmic and polyphonic context in which they appear. Their realization is subject to the recognition of codes of interpretation conventionally expressed by a diversity of graphic symbols in those situations that permit different forms of expression.

For example, a dotted minim followed by a semiminim could never satisfactorily translate an epitrita (blackened semibreve followed by blackened minim), for the epitrita surely indicates a rhythmic fluctuation that requires a personal application of performance practice. Or again, an episode in color might even be correctly written out in terms of sesquialtera or synco-pation, but it will never carry the same degree of rhythmic contrast that is suggested by the almost violent interruption of the graphic system in the old notation (which implies some form of subversive impulse in the rhythmic execution). Or yet again, a minima caudata might even be correctly expressed rhythmically as a semiminim, but it will have lost the semiological value of the dealbata notation used by the composer to express situations of particular gravity.

It can also be asserted that a singer can profit from reading in the original clefs, for through the clef used he may more readily identify the vocal range indicated and may distinguish, merely by observing the notation on the staff, the vocal areas requiring performance in an appropriate register. Moreover, one can also hold that a correct reading of the musical text should be based on the original signs of tempus and prolatio, which subdivide the unity of the *tactus* without recourse to modern time signatures and irritating bar lines.

Indeed one can even argue, as an ultimate exercise in authenticity and performance practice, that the score itself should disappear. For at times the score imposes adjustments to the original notation in order to satisfy the requirements of verticality or for reasons of a rhythmic nature. Witness the case of *ligaturae*, for example. For the purposes of alignment the ligated notes are given their mensural values and indicated by square brackets, but in this way they lose their important semiological function, which descends from the Gregorian neumes and certainly suggested to the singer different effects, even in relation to the square or oblique forms.

There is a claim, therefore, for doing without the score altogether and singing from the separate voice parts. But that obviously exceeds the scope of the semi-diplomatic edition. Besides, to do that one need only resort to the facsimile reprint included in the present edition.

Particular criteria and norms of the semi-diplomatic edition

The semi-diplomatic edition preserves the original notation and transfers it from its original partbook or “a libro” format to that of modern score in order to facilitate ensemble reading. Although it aims to reproduce the original notation as closely as possible, certain limited (though necessary) changes are made in compliance with the primary semiological aim of the publications. These changes concern specific details, where the use of the original notational forms would create genuine difficulties for the reader. More specifically, they concern the insertion of the original notation within the score format, since the vertical alignment of the musical text calls for adaptations that inevitably modify the original notation.

The edition adopts the criteria listed below. Of these some aim to preserve, others to transform, the notational forms.

A. Preservation of the notational forms of semiological value.

Forms reproduced with complete semiographic fidelity:

- the *epitrita (color minor)*, alerting the reader to the presence of a group carrying a specific interpretative value; it is retained even if it begins on the second note of a *ligatura cum opposita proprietate*, reproduced as a blackened semibreve;

- any sequence in *color* that indicates either the imperfection of the note values or ternary movement, i.e. in *hemiolia*;

- all the original proportional indications expressed in fractional form; their rhythmic function is emphasized by indicating the values of the relevant proportion above the staff;

- the *minimae caudatae* of semiminim value, to draw attention to the calmer and more restrained value of the dealbata notation;

- the original signs of tempus and prolatio;

- the original clefs;

- the original accidentals in the antique form (double x) and in the position indicated; they include repetitions on notes that are contiguous or close, and apply only to the notes concerned; even the accidentals added after the collation of the parts (indicated in square brackets) are given in the antique form and original position;

- the original sharp sign (double x), even when a natural sign would be used today for the notes E and B;

- the rests are given in their original form, grouped in one position; they apply until the resumption of the figured notation;

– the *signum congruentiae* over the notes concerned, even though the entry of the respective voice is written out; it also appears over the note marking the end of the imitation; also to be preserved in this position is the fermata sign added above (if present).

B. Transformation of the notational forms for purposes of interpretation.

The following cases are taken into consideration:

– the *ligaturae* are written out rhythmically in order to comply with the needs of score; they are indicated by square brackets, as in the modern edition, and in the case of oblique *ligaturae* are indicated by square brackets placed obliquely;

– in cases of ternary tempus and prolatio, the perfect notes are distinguished by perfection dots even if they are lacking in the original (owing to the perfection implicit in their position); the dot is not added to perfect rests, since imperfection is determined by the presence of two shorter rests;

– recourse is made to *color* to indicate the perfection of values that would appear to be imperfect from their position (blackening of values erroneously reproduced in dealbata form);

– the note value subject to the *punctum alterationis* is tacitly doubled and recourse is made to the unitary value intentionally avoided in the old notation (because followed by a similar value that would have made it perfect);

– in cases of ternary tempus or prolatio, the corresponding modern times are indicated above the staff by the appropriate note forms (3 br, 3 sb, 3 m, 6 m, 9 m, etc.);

– in the presence of dupla, tripla, subdupla, etc. proportions, especially in the vertical dimension, the notation uses the antique forms, but respects the proportional figures adopted in the modern edition (i.e. with halved or doubled note values); the first value concerned is indicated in the box above the staff;

– in the subdupla proportions any minimae caudatae are reproduced as minims; the relationship between the original figure and the figure used in the transcription is noted at the beginning of the episode, in square brackets;

– for passages in triple or sesquialtera time, indicated by fractional proportions or *color* notation, the required use of triplets is indicated above the staff in square brackets;

– all the accidentals added to the modern edition are included, and also repeated on contiguous notes; they are placed above the notes and, in the case of sharps, assume the modern form;

- if the *signum congruentiae* used to indicate the end of the imitation is expressed solely by the fermata sign, it is replaced by the customary symbol indicating the start of imitation;
- all additions to the modern edition indicated in square brackets are also included; for clarification of these emendations, one must refer to the critical notes of the modern edition;
- the text is distributed as in the modern edition; it also includes italics for the repetitions indicated in the original and square brackets for additions;
- because of the lack of bars, the staff systems are numbered consecutively;
- the final notes of indeterminate length are indicated as *longae*; if the final note has a longer marked value, it is expressed as a *maxima* that applies until the end of the piece (unless otherwise indicated); the final notes are indicated without dots even if their values are perfect.

Principles and general criteria of the modern edition

The principle of modernizing the text — a principle that has traditionally accompanied modern editions of early music and was fully justified in the first half of the 20th century — is today surely superseded by a new need, one dictated by the aspirations to authentic performance of the leading specialist choirs: that of fully understanding the original text. A priority for the new edition, therefore, is that it should aid the new perspectives of interpretation. Its details, therefore, should aim to provide what is needed for authentic performance rather than merely facilitate reading by simplifying the notation.

It can be argued that the customary model of modern editing — using halved or quartered note values — has simplified access to the various repertoires of early music, but it has done so at the risk of making such access too perfunctory. Indeed performances of polyphonic music based on musical sources thus transcribed are liable to offer interpretations that disregard certain aspects of style and historical performance practice. In renditions of the ancient polyphony one often finds a certain “levelling” that reflects the modern principles underlying the editions used.

Hence the new edition of Palestrina’s works adopts a notation that is substantially original, yet given modern definition. The old *brevis*, therefore, is expressed as a breve, and all the other note values are correspondingly transcribed without halving or quartering. Exceptions, obviously, are the cases where proportional notation calls for changes, in compliance with the mathematical ratio imposed by the source.

The modern aspect of the edition is thus determined exclusively by the following features: the use of G and F clefs; the vertical rearrangement of the voice parts to satisfy the needs of measured score; the addition of implied accidentals to comply with the rules of cadences and *musica ficta*; the correct distribution of the verbal text; all justified emendations; and finally, the use of fractional signatures to interpret the original mensurations.

As regards perfect and imperfect tempus, without or without perfect prolatio, the modern edition completely avoids the circle and semicircle signs (with or without dot), of the old notation. The survival in modern notation of some of these signs, carrying connotations too distant from the original intent, is a strong risk: it can lead to inaccuracy and misleading effects. Consequently, exclusive use is made of fractional markings that express the original mensurations unequivocally.

Fundamental importance is therefore attributed to the *tactus*, and the transcription is based on the binary or ternary subdivision of the basic value originally indicated in the composition (*tactus* “alla breve” or *tactus* “alla semibreve” with a semiological, and not proportional, function). Given the principle that no changes are made to the original note values, which also carry the dynamic and expressive meaning of the musical text, the edition resorts to fractional indications to interpret the notation. Also requiring interpretation are those situations where the choice of the basic note value in the original deviates from usual contemporary usage (for example, the *brevis* for an undiminished *tempus* or the *semibrevis* for a diminished *tempus*): these are hybrid situations that nonetheless have dynamic-expressive functions of great interest.

While the pre-eminence of the *tactus* is a principle upheld throughout the edition, in the situations that present genuine proportions (either horizontally or in the vertical rhythmic structure) the note values are halved (where necessary) in order to represent the proportional ratio with appropriate notation. In passages to proportional time (though again safeguarding the *tactus* and paying heed to the needs of performance), the ratio expressing the proportion and clarifying the relationship between the preceding and following *tactus* value is indicated at the beginning of the episode by the corresponding modern notational figures. At the same time, the original proportion sign (with or without indication of *tempus*) and the first note of the highest part (in the case of halved or doubled note values) are indicated in the box above the staff. In the case of proportions affecting the vertical structure, for each of the voices concerned the box above the staff shows the original sign as well as the first note (again, in the case of halved or doubled note values).

Particular criteria and norms of the modern edition

1. As explained above, the national edition of Palestrina's works includes not only a facsimile reprint of the source, but also a semi-diplomatic edition that aims to reproduce the original notation faithfully in score, though without the modern expedient of rhythmic-accentual divisions (in this respect it can be considered as inspired by the historical precedent of the contemporary instrument tablatures). It follows, therefore, that the modern edition would benefit from a semiographic approach in line with modern notational systems. The transcription, however, is carried out with full respect for the original notation (which alone can guarantee a correct semiological interpretation of early music, and of Palestrina's in particular).

2. In compliance with this general principle, the possibility of halving the original note values in the modern transcription is ruled out (except in cases of proportions). This is done also in order to restore the semiographic order of the original notation, which in Palestrina's day considered the divisibility of the *tactus* "alla breve" to have been superseded by the new *tactus* "alla semibreve" (as attested by the music theorists from Zarlino to Zacconi). One assumes therefore, that the original indications of integral or diminished *tempus* reflected a desire to renew the notational system, which during this period was calling for dynamic markings that, though not yet explicitly required in notation (unfortunately) were nonetheless increasingly applied in musical practice in order to meet the growing needs of expression associated with the theory of the "affects".

3. Once one accepts the need to restore the original notation to an *ordo mensuralis* anchored to the *semibrevis*, then one must also accept the principle of dividing this figure into the two positions of the *tactus*: those of *depositio* and *elevatio*. It follows that the division of a *semibrevis* can be represented by the modern 2/2 when binary (*tempus imperfectum*) and by the modern 3/2 when ternary (*tempus perfectum*, imparting a trochaic movement to the *depositio* and *elevatio*).

4. In consequence, the presence of *tempus diminutum* (*imperfectum* or *perfectum*) is to be viewed in terms of a *tactus* "alla breve". In these cases, given the passage to a semiography based on large note values, we may encounter two specific conditions, each with significant features that exert a particular influence on the dynamic and agogic movement.

The first condition occurs when a *tactus* "alla breve" in diminished *tempus* (♮ or Ⓞ) corresponds to a notation with large note values consis-

tently based on the breve. In this case what is evident is the aim to associate the notation with a semantic approach that imposes a certain gravity of pace. In modern terms such a pace would be expressed by the modern 2/1 (for binary divisions) and 3/1 (for ternary divisions).

The second condition occurs when, again with a *tactus* “alla breve”, the notation fails to differ from that of the undiminished tempus (i.e. with a prevalence of smaller note values). This generates a graphically inconsistent situation, which in interpretative terms can be viewed as midway between the concept of levity implied by the *tactus* “alla semibreve” (expressed as 2/2 or 3/2) and that of gravity (expressed, as shown above, as 2/1 or 3/1). So here a plausible time signature — one that exerts some restraint on the fluency, though without implying a decidedly grave pace — is that expressed by the rhythmic groups 2/2+2/2 or 3/2+3/2.

5. Particular care is addressed to interpreting the fractional signs of rhythmic proportion, indicated in the modern transcription within a box above the staff. Here we must distinguish between the different aims at the start of a proportion (2/1, 3/1, 3/2, 4/3, etc.) from those of a passage to a proportional time (C3, O3, C3/2, O3/2, etc.). In the first case one cannot justify a change of time to express the move, albeit a long one, to ternary time (to express, say, a *proportio tripla* or *proportio sesquialtera*); in this case the original time signature is retained and triplet groups are used. In the second case, the modern transcription inserts the fractional sign that expresses the change of time and indicates (again above the staff) the proportion underlying the passage to the new proportional time (e.g. $\text{O} = \text{O}.$, or $\text{O} = \text{O}$).

6. In the presence of *color* indicating *hemiola temporis* or *hemiola prolationis*, the edition again retains the original time signature and resorts to modern triplets, indicating the beginning and end of the episode by broken brackets above or below the notes. Broken brackets are also used over individual notes or groups of notes in cases of *color minor* or of groups forming the *epitrita*.

Any notation expressing semiological intents by other figures, such as the minima caudata instead of the semiminim, is also recorded by indicating the relationship of the original figure to the transcribed modern figure in a box above the staff.

7. The following criteria are also adopted:

a) The incipit in the old notation is given at the beginning of each voice part, indicating the clef, mensural sign and first note (including preceding rests, if any) in their original forms.

b) As an integral part of the incipit preceding the transcription, the original names of the voice parts are also given (Cantus, Altus, Tenor, Bassus, Quintus, etc.).

c) The modern staves are grouped by square brackets. They use the modern G, transposing tenor G and F clefs. Original accidentals are given in the key signature, though not if they are lacking in one of the voice parts. This is followed by the fractional time signature (categorically avoiding the use of the original *tempus* signs) and the vocal ranges of each voice; to be repeated within the same work only where there is a change of vocal register or time.

d) Modern bar lines are used for each staff and modern ties are added for values that extend over the bar. The numbering of the bars is indicated at the beginning of each system. For $2/2+2/2$ or $3/2+3/2$ time signatures the bar lines are inserted every four or six half-notes respectively, though each bar is divided into two by broken lines between the staves (positioned every two or three half-notes respectively, and obviously without ties over them).

Time signatures, if identical to the preceding ones, are not repeated at the beginning of a new section of the same work (even if given in the original); they are indicated, however, above the staff in a box.

e) The presence of *ligaturae* in the original notation is indicated in the transcription by square brackets above or below the group concerned. If *ligaturae* from a secondary source are adopted for reasons of text distribution, the bracket has broken lines. The oblique *ligaturae* are indicated by square brackets placed obliquely.

f) At cadences the presence of an extra half *tactus* is indicated by extending the bar without notice.

g) The final *longa* or *maxima* notes of undefined value are indicated by the relevant unitary value representing a whole bar, beneath a fermata sign. In the case of *tempus perfectum* with *prolatio perfecta* (= $9/2$) the final note is expressed as a modern dotted breve under a fermata sign.

h) The original accidentals are given against the note as in modern practice, and they apply to the whole bar (and are not repeated within the bar even if given in the original). The editorial accidentals considered plausible are indicated above the note and also apply to the whole bar in which they appear. The accidentals found in the collated sources, on the other hand, are given against the note concerned in square brackets; they again apply to the whole bar.

i) All editorial emendations, additions and reconstructions concerning either the musical notation or the literary text are indicated in square brackets. For these, explanations are given in the textual notes. Also in square brackets are indicated the entire vocal parts derived from the realization of

the *signa congruentiae* as well or other literary indications regarding canon formulae. If the concluding *signum congruentiae* indicating the interruption of the imitation is indicated only by a fermata sign, it is replaced by the customary sign indicating the beginning of the imitation; the fermata sign may remain, however, if it is combined with the *signum congruentiae*.

j) In the textual repetitions marked “ij”, the text concerned is given in italics; where the repetition sign is lacking, any text reproduced by the editor is placed within square brackets.

k) The presence of *minimae caudatae* instead of semiminims is marked at the beginning of the episode above the staff in square brackets, indicating the semiminim = *minima caudata* relationship (♩ = ♩^{c}). If the *minimae caudatae* are found in an episode in *subdupla* proportion, this will be marked in square brackets (♩ ex ♩^{c}).

8. Attention is also drawn to the fact that each volume presents a comprehensive, though succinct, critical study offering a thorough examination of the work transcribed and illustrating the features that emerged from analysis.

9. Each volume adopts the following arrangement of the critical material:
 Editorial preface (complete with General criteria);
 Introduction;
 Description of the source(s) and critical-exegetical report;
 Transcription of the liturgical or secular texts (except for the texts of the *Ordinarium Missae*);
 Particular criteria of the edition (if necessary);
 Critical notes;
 Transcriptions.