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*The revision of gregorian melodies
in the 16th-century theorists*

By now historiography has outlined with a certain clarity the real extent of the effects – or non effects – produced on ecclesiastical musical practice by the canons on music formulated by the Council of Trent. Regarding the criteria that inspired the orders to revise the books of liturgical chant and their actual realization, recently an attempt has been made to go beyond the generic condemnation of famous (or notorious) editions such as the Editio Medicea and instead to go and investigate its constituent features. It is possible to detect very different situations between the different types of book and even between the same books. Concerning the Missal of 1570, Giacomo Baroffio has summarized the type of operation carried out as follows: “The Tridentine reform in the first place concerns the texts and not so much the melodic version”.¹ The textual (or one might even say literary) component is pre-eminent in the hymnological repertoire, for its Latin sounded barbarous to the ears of the contemporary Humanistic culture, with its great fondness for the rediscovery of classicity. As is only natural, the revision and correction of the chant books reveals concerns that are more strongly linked to musical factors.

A first point to stress is that operations were regularly entrusted to genuine musicians, and more specifically important contemporary composers, not to theorists: Palestrina and Annibale Zoilo, Soriano and Anerio, Marenzio, Nanino, Dragoni and others in Rome; Balbi, Gabrieli and Orazio Vecchi in Venice. These were famous polyphonists and writers of ‘contemporary music’, not historians or scholars or well-known specialists of Gregorian Chant. On the part of publishers like Gardano, who published the Gradual of 1591 in Venice, there was certainly, even if not exclusively, also a commercial consideration. Ever since the 1540s a custom had taken root in the publishing world whereby the preparation of an edition was entrusted to musicians of renowned competence (and the fact was very plainly announced on the title-pages and in the dedications), in such a way as to attract purchasers with the

¹ BONIFACIO GIACOMO BAROFFIO, *Il Concilio di Trento e la musica*, in *Musica e liturgia nella riforma tridentina*, ed. Danilo Curti and Marco Gozzi, Trento, Provincia Autonoma di Trento. Servizio Beni Librari e Archivistici, 1995, pp. 9-17: 12.

guarantee of diligent supervision.² Perhaps the decision to turn to musicians directly involved in the practice of the musical chapels and church choirs was also a sign of realism and attention to concrete realities.

What were the criteria guiding the actions of these musicians? On the one hand they could have applied tendencies current in the practice of the period, as we shall see. And at the same time we must not neglect to explore the ideological and cultural background. In general, as we said above, this meant the humanistic mentality of the time. More specifically, it was the music theorists who transferred the contemporary cultural tendencies onto a more technical level. We shall therefore try to ‘read’ the revised melodies in the light of the Renaissance treatises, beginning with the Breve of 1577 with which Gregory XIII commissioned Palestrina and Zoilo to correct the musical books with the aim of eliminating “quamplurimi barbarismi, obscuritates, contrarietates ac superfluitates”.³

In grammar a barbarism occurs when short and long syllables are confused, which in this period meant atonic and tonic syllables. In the tradition of music theory that meant not having long notes on short syllables and vice versa, especially in cantillations. Attention is drawn to this point by Guido d’Arezzo:

Non autem parva similitudo est metris et cantibus, cum et neumae loco sint pedum et distinctiones loco sint versuum, utpote ista neuma dactylico, illa vero spondaico, alia iambico more decurrit, et distinctionem nunc tetrametram nunc pentametram, alias quasi hexametram cernas, et multa alia ad hunc modum. Item ut in unum terminentur partes et distinctiones neumarum atque verborum, nec tenor longus in quibusdam brevibus syllabis aut brevis in longis obscoenitatem paret, quod tamen raro opus erit curare.⁴

This type of error is technically designated by the term *barbarismus* already in the *Metrologus*, a commentary of the *Micrologus* written by an anonymous writer of the 14th century:

² See IAIN FENLON, *Musica e stampa nell’Italia del Rinascimento*, ed. Mario Armellini, Milano, Sylvestre Bonnard, 2001, p. 102 (original ed.: *Music, Print and Culture in Early Sixteenth-Century Italy*, London, The British Library, 1995).

³ Text published in RAPHAEL MOLITOR, *Die Nach-Tridentinische Choral-Reform zu Rom. Ein Beitrag zur Musikgeschichte des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols., Leipzig, Leuckart, 1901-1902, I: *Die Choral-Reform unter Gregor XIII*, p. 297.

⁴ GUIDONIS ARETINI *Micrologus*, ed. Joseph Smits van Waesberghe, n.p., American Institute of Musicology, 1955 (*Corpus scriptorum de musica*, 4), pp. 173-174.

Item ut in unum terminentur partes et distinctiones neumarum atque verborum, nec tenor longus in quibusdam brevibus syllabis aut brevis in longis obscoenitatem paret, quod tamen raro opus erit curare propter barbarismum, nam in cantu saepe oportet barbarizare. Barbarismus autem fit scripto et pronuntiatione. Scripto quattuor modis: si quis in verbo litteram vel syllabam adiciat, mutet, transmutet vel minuat. Pronuntiatione vero fit in temporibus et tonis; per tempora quippe fit barbarismus si pro longa syllaba brevis ponatur aut pro brevi longa, sicut iam supra diximus per tonos plagas proti, si accentus in aliam syllabam commutetur.⁵

Without troubling ourselves with the remoter sources,⁶ it can be stressed that both Guido and his commentator judged such barbarisms to be a practically inevitable phenomenon in liturgical chant.

The author of the *Summa musicae*, working in the 13th century, proposed a different interpretation. In his opinion, it occurs when one interrupts a melisma in order to take a breath and inserts a break before arriving at the following syllable:

Item cantor clausulam sive congeriem notularum per se canat distincte, et anhelitum recipiendo pausans nequaquam syllabam incipiat post pausam nisi forte prima fuerit dictionis; talis enim scissio in cantando faceret barbarismum et sic incongruam ostensionem.⁷

If the undue interruption of long melismas occurred frequently, perhaps we here see one of the causes that prompted the tendency to abbreviate the melismas themselves: a tendency most evident in the 16th- and 17th-century revisions, but also current from before then, as we shall see.

If we come to the period that concerns us, we must go back and focus our attention on the long/short (tonic/atonic) relationship. A significant example is the exasperating insistency of Jerzy Liban, in his treatise significantly devoted to accentuation.⁸ Also referring to the matter in a similar way are Sali-

⁵ *Expositiones in Micrologum Guidonis Aretini*, ed. Joseph Smits van Waesberghe, Amsterdam, North-Holland Publishing Company, 1957 (Musicologica Medii Aevi, 1), p. 88.

⁶ A musicographical source *lato sensu* could, for example, be Augustine's *De musica*, which mentions barbarisms in II, 2.

⁷ *The Summa Musicae: A Thirteenth-Century Manual for Singers*, ed. Christopher Page, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991 (Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs), p. 171.

⁸ JERZY LIBAN, *De accentuum ecclesiasticorum exquisita ratione, scilicet Lectionali, Epistolari, et Euangelico, Libellus omnibus sacris iniciatis, Vicarijs et Ecclesiae Ministris, non minus Vtilis quam necessarius*, Cracow, Scharffenberg, 1539 (facsimile edition: Cracow, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1975).

nas, Guillaume Guerson, Stefano Vanneo and Stoquerus, whose rules can be easily verified with the electronic assistance of the *Thesaurus Musicarum Latinarum*. In the Italian environment an authority of great stature is Zarlino:

Ma etiandio dovemo osseruare, di accommodare in tal maniera le parole della Oratione alle figure cantabili, con tali Numeri, che non si oda alcun Barbarismo; si come quando si fà proferire nel canto una sillaba longa, che si dovrebbe far proferir breve: o per il contrario una breve, che si dovrebbe far proferir longa; come in infinite cantilene si ode ogni giorno; il che veramente è cosa vergognosa. Ne si ritrova questo vizio solamente nelli Canti figurati; ma anco nelli Canti fermi, si come è manifesto a tutti coloro, che hanno giuditio: Conciosia che pochi sono quelli, che non siano pieni di simili barbarismi; et che in essi infinite volte non si odi proferire le penultime sillabe di queste parole Dominus, Angelus, Filius, Miraculum, Gloria, et molte altre, che passano presto, con longhezza di tempo; il che sarebbe cosa molto lodevole, et tanto facile da correggere, che mutandoli poco poco, si accommodarebbe la cantilena; ne per questo mutarebbe la sua prima forma: essendo che consiste solamente nella Legatura di molte figure, o note, che si pongono sotto le dette sillabe brevi, che senza alcun proposito le fanno lunghe; quando sarebbe sofficiente una sola figura.⁹

Moreover, one must also avoid assigning syllables to notes of too short a length, a recommendation evidently dictated by the concern (that was very much alive!) of guaranteeing the intelligibility and clarity of the sung text:

La Prima Regola adunque sarà, di porre sempre sotto la sillaba longa, o breve una figura conveniente, di maniera, che non si odi alcuno barbarismo: percioche nel Canto figurato ogni figura cantabile, che sia distinta, et non legata (eccettuando la Semiminima, et tutte quelle, che sono di lei minori) porta seco la sua sillaba; il che si osserva etiandio nel Canto fermo: essendo che in ogni figura quadrata si accomoda la sua sillaba; eccettuando alcune volte le mezzane, che si mandano come le Minime; et anche come le Semiminime; come si comprende in molte cantilene, et massimamente nel Credo in unum Deum, il quale chiamano Cardinalesco.¹⁰

⁹ GIOSEFFO ZARLINO, *Le istituzioni harmoniche*, Venezia, 1558, parte IV, cap. 32, p. 340. On this passage and on 'barbarisms', see MARCO GOZZI, "L'edizione veneziana del Graduale curata da Vecchi, Balbi e Gabrieli (1591)", *Polifonie*, V/2, 2005, pp. 9-31: 19 ff.

¹⁰ ZARLINO, *Le istituzioni*, p. 341.

A work that does not mention the term barbarism, but dedicates detailed exemplification to correct pronunciation is the *Libellus* by Biagio Rossetti of 1529, which is worth quoting in full as an exemplary case of the humanistic attention to the linguistic aspect in liturgical matters:

Idque fiet, si cuncta debite proferentes singulas quasque dictiones suis accentibus pronunciemus, non plures ad invicem collidentes, aut unam in duas secantes, semper unam normam pronunciationis servantes ne velocius principium, medio, fineve versus psalmi inveniatur, ut nonnullorum est abusus, qui absorbentes litteras collidunt, aut certo finalem litteram unius dictionis alteri annectentes significata confundunt, ut verbi gratia, quum aequaliter psalmodiam concinere oporteat et distincta, ut hic patet:

Bene: [cfr. Tavola I, primo esempio]

Isti e diverso hoc modo pronunciantes et grammaticam et musicam confundunt, dicentes:

Male: [cfr. Tavola I, secondo esempio]

Qui abusus omnino abolendus est. Namque vides in priori exemplo, ut dicentes “Domine labia mea aperies”, illa syllabam “Do” pronunciamus cum minima et puncto, quo aptius breviter illa syllaba “mi” subsequens, quae naturaliter brevis est. Esto et illa syllaba “Do” sit natura brevis, sed utcumque producit propter initium orationis, et sic undique venustiorum pronunciationem et veriore in priori exemplo reperies quam in posteriore. Modo non contineatur aliquando spiritus sub palato, et post violentius evomatur, quod in plerisque non absque dedecore videmus. Qui et dentes aliquando comprimunt, aliquando spiritu vehementiore proloquuntur, quod neutique est laudabile, quia in talibus non est reperire aequalitatem concentus aut vocis. Sed et vide ut foedas in secundo exemplo litterae finales copulentur cum dictione sequenti, summe ergo cavendum ne tales abusus praevalent. Sed duobus his exemplis minus contenti pauculas pronunciationes subiiciemus, quibus facile laudabiles et veri modi psallendi comprobantur, et abusus facile diiudicabuntur.¹¹

¹¹ BIAGIO ROSSETTI, *Libellus de rudimentis musices*, ed. Albert Seay, Colorado Springs, Colorado College Music Press, 1981 (Critical Texts, 12), *De choro et organo compendium*, VII, pp. 73-74.

CCMP/CT12:74,1

Domine labia mea aperies & os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.
 Deus tu adiuutor meus intende Domine ad adiuuandum me festina
 gloria patri & filio & spiritui sancto sicut erat in principio
 & nunc & semper & in secula seculorum amen alleluia laus tibi
 Domine rex eterne glorie

CCMP/CT12:74,2

Domine labia mea aperies Deus in adiutorio meo intende Domine
 in uocatum me festina gloria patri & filio & spiritui sancto sicut erat in
 principio & nunc & semper & in secula seculorum amen alleluia

It is also worth mentioning that the adoption of figures with implications of differentiated temporal duration is also substantially linked to the correct pronunciation of Latin and, in the case of the Hymns, to the connection with poetic rhythm.¹²

We can find no precise technical significance for the two successive terms mentioned in the Breve: *obscuritates* and *contrarietates*. The latter is found in Guido d'Arezzo and in the anonymous *Commentarius* of the 12th century in connection with the modal distortions produced by B flat,¹³ whereas *obscuritates* generally refers to the scant clarity with which the ancient musicians tackled music theory.¹⁴ Even *superfluitates* is vague, though it contains a basic principle that is constantly reasserted: *ars* is incompatible with *superfluitas*, a synonym of disorder and, in the final analysis irrationality: “cum superfluitas in arte vicium reputetur”, writes the author of the *Summa musicae*.¹⁵ *Ars* is by definition devoid of licence; otherwise it would give rise not only to *superfluitates*, but also to confused and ambiguous situations that can be likened to the preceding *obscuritates* and *contrarietates*, above all in the field of modality:

Si autem duorum vel plurimorum modorum unam vocem esse liceat, videbitur haec ars nullo fine concludi, nullis certis terminis coarctari. Quod quam sit absurdum, nullus ignorat, cum semper sapientia confusa quaeque et infinita sponte repudiet.¹⁶

In the opinion of the Cistercians, an interesting case of *superfluitas* is found in the psalm cadences (the *differentiae*):

¹² An assessment of the genuine value of the different note figures in the theory and practice of Gregorian Chant in the 17th and 18th centuries, with references also to the period under consideration here, is found in ANGELO RUSCONI, “Il ritmo del canto gregoriano nei trattati italiani del Seicento e del Settecento”, in *Il canto fratto*. Atti del convegno di Parma-Arezzo, ed. Francesco Luisi and Marco Gozzi, Roma, Torre d'Orfeo, in press.

¹³ *Expositiones in Micrologum*, p. 123.

¹⁴ GUIDONIS ARETINI *Micrologus*, p. 95; HERMANNI CONTRACTI *Musica*, ed. and trans. Leonard Ellinwood, Rochester-New York, Eastman School of Music, 1936 (Eastman School of Music Studies, 2), p. 41.

¹⁵ *The Summa Musicae*, p. 155 (which contains others comments of a similar tenor).

¹⁶ GUIDONIS ARETINI *Epistola ad Michaelem*, 161-162, in Id., *Le opere (Micrologus, Regulae rhythmicae, Prologus in Antiphonarium, Epistola ad Michaelem, Epistola ad archiepiscopum Mediolanensem)*. Introduction, translation and comment by Angelo Rusconi, Firenze, Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Franceschini, 2005 (La tradizione musicale, 10; Le regole della musica, 1), p. 148. In fact, the scale obtained with the first division of the monochord could continue indefinitely “nisi artis praeceptum sua te auctoritate compesceret” (*Micrologus*, cap. III, p. 98).

D. Quot differentias habet?

M. Exclusis multiplicium, quae ab aliis canuntur superfluitatibus, differentiae tres quibusdam videntur necessariae. Prima, quae maturis et gravibus; secunda, quae levibus et acutis; tertia, quae mediocribus habeat subservire principiis.¹⁷

In conclusion, *barbarismus* is the only term used in Leo XIII's Breve that has a precise meaning in the technical terminology of music theory. Regarding the other terms, in spite of their apparent vagueness, they have a very precise sphere of reference in the theoretical tradition, to which a musician could easily refer. A brief survey of the Cistercian vocabulary tells us that the chant is vitiated by *absurditas*, *falsitatum spurcitia*, *licentiae*, *confusio*, *gravis dissimilitudo* and *inconsulta trasmutatio*, which make it *vitiosum et incompositum nimis*.¹⁸ Modal confusion arises because many chants fail to begin or end with the proper notes, because they exceed the range of the regular *ambitus* either above or below, or because they are attributed sometimes to one and sometimes to another mode; because the flat is used incorrectly; or because the scribes are not careful about joining and disjoining notes. If we conduct research into these and similar terms in the Renaissance theoretical literature, it takes little effort to come across a similar sample referring to the same problems. For example, the repetition of words in plainchant, a behaviour censured by the Cistercians, is also to be found in Zarlino:

Nel Canto piano non si replica mai parola, o sillaba: ancora che si odino alle volte alcuni, che lo fanno; cosa veramente biasimevole.¹⁹

In fact the revisers of the chant melodies seem to have interpreted their task on the basis of principles not unlike these. Writing to Philip II on the criteria to be adopted in the reform of the chant books, the musician Fernando de las Infantas explained that changes would be made to “certain things that in appearance do not observe the tone, others that do not observe the accent and a large number of melismas; changes that serve to avoid prolixity”.²⁰

¹⁷ *Tonale Sancti Bernardi*, in MARTIN GERBERT, *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica sacra potissimum* [...], 3 vols., Sankt Blasien, 1774 (facsimile edition: Hildesheim, Olms, 1963), II, p. 269.

¹⁸ Terminology taken from: *Epistola S. Bernardi De revisione cantus Cisterciensis, et Tractatus Cantum quem Cisterciensis Ordinis ecclesiae cantare*, ed. Francis J. Guentner, n.p., American Institute of Musicology, 1974 (*Corpus scriptorum de musica*, 24).

¹⁹ ZARLINO, *Le istituzioni harmoniche*, p. 341. It is not clear if the reference is to pieces from the ancient repertoire or to new offices written in modern times.

²⁰ Quoted in MARCO GOZZI, “Le edizioni liturgico-musicali dopo il Concilio”, in *Musica e liturgia*, pp. 39-55: 44.

In checking these measures, we shall analyze the same phenomena identified by Giacomo Baroffio in his analysis of the revised melodies:²¹

- 1) reduction of the *tristropa* to a single note;
- 2) the shifting of embellishments to the tonic syllable of the word;
- 3) particular treatment of Hebrew words;
- 4) adaptation of intermediate cadences to the fundamental note and final;²²
- 5) exclusion of notes exceeding the theoretical ambitus of the modes;
- 6) contraction or suppression of melismas (as regularly evidenced in the Medicea alone).

It is clear that these phenomena are the expression of different situations. The reduction of the *tristropae* was presumably an acclimatization to established practice; indeed it is possible that many of the manuscripts taken as the basis for the revisions were already partially free of them. More closely connected to a cultural issue is point no. 2, a measure aimed at suppressing the barbarism generated by the melodic embellishment of a short syllable. Concerning point no. 3, the question is somewhat complex and would require further specific inquiry. In the Gradual *Ex Sion* examined by Baroffio, the Medicea and the Venetian editions agree in shifting the melisma to the first syllable, as against the traditional sources that accentuate the final syllable. And yet the Renaissance musicographers, who were always very attentive to matters of language, took pains also to regulate Hebrew words. They discuss the matter in the context of psalmody and cantillation and establish that there should be a lengthening of the last syllable in Hebrew and Greek words that cannot be declined in the Latin way:

Quum vero intercantandum in dictiones monosyllabas incideris, ut sunt me, te, se, sum, es, est, fac, nos, et vos. Ex hebraicis. Iesus, Daud, Syon, Hierusalem, Moyses, Aaron, Abraam, Isaac, Jacob, Israel, Esau, Esaias, et reliqua id genus, eas utique dictiones in penultima scandente notula, ultima relicta, defines instar interrogative pronunciationis.²³

²¹ GIACOMO BAROFFIO, *La trasmissione delle melodie gregoriane nell'Editio Medicea e nelle fonti parallele*, in the next issue of this journal.

²² Baroffio notes that within the tradition sometimes a form of uniformity in the opposite sense is found.

²³ STEFANO VANNEO, *Recanetum de musica aurea*, Roma, Valerius Doricus, 1533 (facsimile reprint: Bologna, Forni, 1969), c. 37r. Almost all the northern treatise writers expand on this subject.

And again:

Haec autem posui, non ut per tales mensuras choraliter semper cantetur, sed ut proportionum longae et breves et semibreves aequaliter cantando differantur. Sed etiam in lecturis ecclesiasticis et sermonibus publicis, si recte intelligi debeant, oportet syllabas quasdam aliis teneri longius, primas scilicet semper post silentium, ne in aperitione oris leviter tunc sileant, et dominantes; quae sunt in monosyllabis dictionibus ipsamet dictio, in dissyllabis latinis semper prima, in polysyllabis longa ultimae proxima, in hebraicis vero et graecis semper ultima.²⁴

Perhaps the Italian revisers did no more than apply a current pronunciation, without taking the grammar into account; or, more likely, they were convinced they were making a grammatically correct change, little knowing that *Sion*, even when it is declined in the Latin way, requires a stress on the long *-o*. They were famous *maestri di cappella*, and not theorists and scholars, and their linguistic knowledge was perhaps not always irreproachable. Whatever the case, this aspect must be kept well in mind when assessing the nature of their changes.

As in the case of barbarism, the search for modal unity, which was pursued by adjusting the intermediate cadences to match the *finalis* of the piece, was inspired by a theoretical principle that was anything but new. Again it dates back to Guido d'Arezzo at least:

Item [proponat sibi musicus] ut ad principalem vocem, id est finalem, vel si quam affinem eius pro ipsa elegerint, pene omnes distinctiones currant, et eadem aliquando sicut et vox neumas omnes aut perplures distinctiones finiat, aliquando et incipiat, qualia apud Ambrosium si curiosus sis, invenire licebit.²⁵

The Cistercians seem to have adopted this principle, but Cristiano Veroli has shown that we must be extremely cautious when assessing the significance of their changes, given that melodic versions that are apparently 'Cistercian' can in most cases be found also in 'traditional' sources.²⁶

²⁴ *Das Cantuagium des Heinrich Eger von Kalkar*, ed. Heinrich Hüschen, Köln, Staufen, 1952 (Beiträge zur rheinischen Musikgeschichte, 2), p. 46.

²⁵ GUIDONIS ARETINI *Micrologus*, pp. 170-171.

²⁶ CRISTIANO VEROLI, "La revisione musicale bernardina e il graduale cistercense", from the journal *Analecta Cisterciensia*, 47, 1991; 48, 1992; 49, 1993 [= I, II, III], Roma, Editiones Cistercienses, n.d., in particular I, pp. 118-121. Here Veroli refers above all to certain late

Another measure that already had precedents is the regulation of the *ambitus* of the melodies. It is applied in a notably strict and systematic way in the Cistercian books, but certain chants turn out to have been already modified in other traditions in accordance with the theorists' instructions.²⁷ A well-known example is the antiphon *O beatum pontificem*, often divested of the phrase "O sanctissima anima".²⁸

Even in the case of the suppression of melismas we are dealing with, as Baroffio's tables show, a process that had long been current and that can be found in many manuscript books. For the preceding centuries there is not only the Cistercian reform: once again, Veroli has shown that, with the exception of the particular case of the Alleluias, the melodic simplifications are found in 'normal' manuscripts, where at times they are even more substantial. This observation shifts the focus from theory towards the tendencies established in practice: for while the theorists habitually stress the modal issue (though generally without introducing significant novelties compared to the medieval approach), nobody, to my knowledge, theorizes and professes melodic reworkings of this type. In the Cistercian writings themselves there is only one reference, and it is controversial in interpretation.²⁹ This is even more true when we reach the late 16th and early 17th centuries, when the concerns of the theorists turn to the quality of the performance and insist on the prime elements of music, on modality, on psalmody. Evident examples of this are the two most widespread theoretical summaries: the *Compendium musices*,

sources from north-eastern France (by late what is meant is close to the 12th century), but also finds cases, for example, in the Aquitanian tradition. This would therefore partially modify the extent of the claims of DOMINIQUE DELALANDE, *Le Graduel des Prêcheurs. Vers la version authentique du Graduel Grégorien: Recherches sur les sources et la valeur de son texte musical*, Paris, Les Editions du Cerf, 1949 (Bibliothèque d'histoire dominicaine, 2), p. 45.

²⁷ VEROLI, "La revisione", II, p. 26 ff.

²⁸ Theorists of different periods – from the author of the *Dialogus de musica* (11th century) to Engelbert of Admont († 1331), and also including the compilers of various Tonaries – have censured the presumed anomaly of this antiphon: on the phrase "O Martine dulcedo" the melody oversteps the range of Mode 2 (the plagal *Protus*) and overruns into the modal range of Mode 1 (the authentic *Protus*); the same melodic phrase is repeated afterwards at the words "O sanctissima anima", which is suppressed in order to avoid the insistence on a procedure considered irregular. The comment of the *Dialogus* can be read in the edition of GERBERT, *Scriptores*, I, p. 256b; that of Engelbert in the edition of PIA ERNSTBRUNNER, *Der Musiktraktat des Engelbert von Admont (ca. 1250-1331)*, Tutzing, Schneider, 1998 (*Musica Mediaevalis Europae Occidentalis*, 2), p. 323. For the comments of the Tonaries, see MICHEL HUGLO, *Les Tonaires. Inventaire, Analyse, Comparaison*, Paris, Société Française de Musicologie-Heugel et C^{ie}, 1971 (Publications de la Société Française de Musicologie, Troisième Série, Tome II), pp. 214-216. The cut still appears in the Solesmes *Antiphonale monasticum* of 1934.

²⁹ VEROLI, "La revisione", I, pp. 34-35; II, p. 38 ff.

recently published by David Crawford,³⁰ and the *Compendium*, which begins to make its appearance in the Dominican Processionals from the 1530s, then remaining unvaried for centuries.

In short it is not easy to interpret the revisers' work and the connections of cause and effect. As regards stressing and modality, they could consult a fairly detailed theoretical tradition; but there were no texts that would offer help over the melodic tradition in the strict sense, especially as regards the simplification and suppression of melismas. It is possible that this tendency, which had long been verified in so many manuscripts and could probably be attributed to the increasing incomprehension – and even intolerance – of the Gregorian musical language, encountered (and became legitimated by) the idea of a purification from presumed 'gothicisms' that was typical of the contemporary cultural climate and was interpreted independently, sometimes in extreme forms (as in the *Editio Medicea*).

It is certainly true that the boasts of ultra-careful correction much publicized by editors and publishers in the prefaces of the chant books must not be taken too literally. One can only smile at the theatrical tone adopted by Gardano, when, referring to his Gradual prepared by Vecchi, Balbi and Gabrieli (1591), he swears not to have overlooked anything with regard to "expensis, vigiliis et aerumnis". These are exactly the same claims that the printers appended to hundreds of literary editions to encourage the interest of potential buyers – often just a snare for the unwary. The same was also encountered in the musical field in the case of polyphonic editions:

Sempre più spesso e con sempre maggior enfasi stampatori e editori non esitavano nei frontespizi o nelle lettere dedicatorie a sottolineare, più o meno veritieramente, quanto si fossero prodigati per restituire al suo primo stato un testo musicale corrotto dalla trascuratezza, dall'avidità o dall'ignoranza di mestieranti senza scrupoli.³¹

Having taken these due precautions, we must nonetheless observe, along with Marco Gozzi, that many radical changes were genuinely made to the chants. Often these radical changes were not accepted in usage and they even disappeared from the following printed tradition.³² This is particularly evident in the case of the *Medicea*, but it also applies to the Gradual of Vecchi, Gabrieli and Balbi. In such cases we are dealing with changes made at the

³⁰ *Compendium musices, Venetiis, 1499-1597*, ed. David Crawford, n.p., American Institute of Musicology, 1985 (*Corpus scriptorum de musica*, 33).

³¹ FENLON, *Musica e stampa*, p. 102.

³² GOZZI, "L'edizione", pp. 21-22.

‘drawing board’, so to speak, rather than reflections of actual practice. Equally true is that substantial abbreviations are marked in the contemporary manuscripts (by means of erasures, deletions, strips of paper), as we have often stressed. It is likely that a more subtle work of analysis needs to be done. Perhaps the practical tradition did not accept overhauls in the better-known works of the Kyriale whereas it was prepared to simplify complex pieces of the Proper, sometimes radically, as happens (surprisingly) also in the Ambrosian environment.³³

Examined from the perspective of the musicographical literature, the methods of revision of the chant books found only partial support and justification in the words of the theorists. Most likely, the contributions occurred on different levels. And the precepts that had been present in music theory for centuries were interwoven with current practical uses and personal translations of the ideological orientations of contemporary culture.

³³ See ANGELO RUSCONI, “Esempi di canto neo-ambrosiano”, in preparation for the journal *Musica e storia*.