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PRINCIPLES OF LINES COORDINATION IN THE EARLY ORGANUM

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Summary. The author applies typological analysis to reveal key features of the early organum including the opposition “unconscious *vs* conscious” and polymelodies. The conclusions are based on the contrastive study of examples from the Chartres codices 130 and the Winchester manuscript. The principles of identity, assimilation, and opposition of lines coordination are associated with the syllabic polyphony. Contrapuntal phenomena in syllabic organum exist in the framework of a moving timbre-texture form where not only splitting and merging but also dynamic interaction of voices is possible. The archetypal sensation of vibration and friction tend to represent ‘beat diaphony’.

Keywords: early organum; intonational rhythmic; lines coordination; trope; syllabic polyphony; polymelodies; friction; heterophony; Medieval liturgical singing.

Despite a number of significant research papers issued in recent years (Rankin, Hughes, Arlt, etc. [4]), early organum still remains a mystery to modern musicology. The problem is to choose the correct approach to conduct the study of the few sources that represent the semi-professional work of medieval singers [2]. This article proposes a historical-stadial approach formulated by M. Kharlap. Early organum is seen as a phenomenon based on the intonational rhythmic. At the same time, the very notion is revised and a new definition of ‘syllabic polyphony’ is introduced to refer to the interaction of voices as in ‘note against note’ principle.

Being free from theoretical prescriptions and avoiding certain simplifications, practice of syllabic polyphony worked out a range of unique principles of lines coordination. Most valuable of those include:

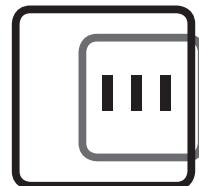
a) polymelodic character and variant heterophony;

b) splitting of choral unison into parts followed by their merger in unison again;

c) freedom of voices interaction in time;

d) fragmented character of parallel voice motion.

It is known that the Winchester manuscript is the only orderly collection of polyphonic pieces compiled in the first quarter of the 11th century. As S. Rankin quotes, “only with the various Saint-Martial codices – none copied before the early 12th century – do we next find polyphonic pieces assembled together in a relatively systematic way” [4, p. 64]. In other cases, there are only fragmentary examples of early polyphony, for example, continental sources Chartres, Fleury or Tours, Saint-Maurdes-Fossés. “Despite their stylistic diversity, an underlying trend of change





towards a freer style, analogous to that described in the meets the Montpellier and Milan treatises, is clear” but “it is the ‘old’ organum represented in the Winchester manuscript” that provides a unique opportunity for research of the relation between theory and practice of liturgical singing in Medieval times [4, p. 64].

At the same time, these collections may serve as confirmation of the idea that troping and polyphony formed two related trends in the singing culture of the Middle Ages. In the preface to the 1894 edition of the Winchester troper, W. Frere [5] and later, A. Plainchart, analysing Winchester repertoire, described three types of tropes – prosulae (text), melismas (melodic) and laudes (new verses containing both text and music). Textual tropes used to clarify and complement the main text.

As the examples show, there is a diaphonic ‘quarter modus’ in these manuscripts and organum *sub voce* may take the form of organum *supra vocem* (respectively, ‘under the voice’ and ‘above the voice’) and vice versa. This applies not only to the middle, but the beginning, when the upper voice from the first notes becomes the lower. Thus, a lot of ‘voice crossings’ appear to impede the perception of the vox principalis and the vox organalis.

Musical tropes were usually elaborated jubilations of enthusiastic religious character often on the final syllable of the word ‘Alleluia’. Musical-textual tropes in their turn appeared on the basis of musical ones by creating captions required to memorize long vocalisms. a more detailed analysis of tropes is provided in Frere’s edition [5].

Early sources of organum practice recorded two ways of musical notation – that with separate and joint fixation of voices. Samples of the separate type are found in the Winchester manuscript, organum pieces of the Chartres 4 and Fleury codices Vat. Reg. lat. 586 and 592. The other method is embodied in codices of Chartres 130 and 109, as well as Paris. bibl. nat. lat. 11631, 12584 12596. Both ways of notation fixation represent voice-leading (intonation) by well-sung singers who need no strict regulations about pitch, rhythm, and time of the piece.

Consider the two following fragments of the same chorale with separate and joint fixation of voices, one from text from the Chartres codices 130 and the other from the Winchester troper. This is Alleluia with verse ‘Dies sanctificatus’, which is an essential part of the Christmas Mass.

Example 1. *Opening of Alleluia V. Dies sanctificatus* Chartres [3, p. 127]:

Al-le-lu-ia



Example 2. *Opening of Alleluia V. Dies sanctificatus* Winchester [3, p. 129]:

In the initial phase, the two organa are almost identical representing the unison movement followed by a quarter interval. a small caveat is the inclusion of tone «h» into the Chartres 130 organal voice, the tone which had to be avoided according to the diaphonic rules set forth by treatises. a certain similarity in the melodic structure of voices is articulated by two- and three-note neumes.

Arsis as an essential element of rhythmic intonation, in both cases repeatedly identified on repercussions II of modus «f», emphasized by the adjacent tone «g» and multiple unison merging of voices. Both organa contain hints of pentatonic scale indicating their relation to the early polyphony.

The differences in this case are less apparent than similarities but realising them is crucial for considering the alleged counterpoint. If we assume the possibility of occasional correlation of voices 'note against note', i. e. strictly syllabic movement, then in the Winchester organum on "sanctifica-

tus" in the moments described by Guido as 'occursus', there often arise second frictions. In the Chartres organum in the same position only third and quarter combinations are used.

The principles of lines coordination here are associated with the notion of a strict (synchronous) and free (asynchronous) voice connection determined by intonational rhythm. As a result, seconds frictions and play of voices periodically converging into unison appear quite often along with the temporary stabilization of the lines. It is the primary (archetypal) sensation of vibration and friction which is the most characteristic feature of the so-called 'beat diaphony'. These features of the interaction of the voices could not be realized by the medieval theory prescribing to act "by using a counted and harmonically understood sound" for a simpler singing practice [1, p. 235].

Summing up the results of the above analysis it should be said that early organum is a specific form of Medieval



liturgical music the existence of which is connected with the opposition “unconscious *vs* conscious”. Whilst the unconscious means an unpredictable combination of voices, then the conscious, in contrast, requires the original correctness and regularity. This type of equal lines correlation represents “subject – subject” relation in musical-psychological aspect.

Polymelodics is another important feature of syllabic organum determined by intonational rhythmic patterns originating in the Gregorian chant. This feature is implemented on the basis of methods of identity, assimilation, and opposition of voices. The correspondent principles of lines coordination – identity, assimilation and opposition – are associated with the syllabic polyphony. As a form of vocal-ensemble polyphony, it is focused on the combination of elements of stripe-like unison-heterophonic singing – synchronous and asynchronous. Contrapuntal phenomena in syllabic organum exist in the framework of a moving timbre-texture form where not only splitting and merging of voices is possible, but also there are zones of their dynamic interaction.

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