

From the northern to southern Holy Roman Empire

*Michael Praetorius's earliest Latin Magnificat
in Bishop Hren's choirbook*

MICHAEL PRAETORIUS (1571–1621) was a polymath and polyglot scholar who published, for example, now lost theological writings. He is today remembered, especially among musicologists, primarily as an important music theorist, his most important achievement being *Syn-tagma Musicum*—the most encyclopaedic source of the period on performance practices and numerous other musical subjects.¹ Nevertheless, he was also one of the most versatile and prolific German Lutheran composers of his generation. Praetorius's music is known to us almost exclusively from his printed music. This chapter is dedicated to Praetorius's early music preserved in manuscript originating from his own time and will reveal how his early repertory migrated to the southern, Catholic part of the Holy Roman Empire. In the early 17th century, Italian music permeated European lands, including Protestant ones, crossing national and confessional boundaries. Although much of this dissemination was clearly from south to north, this direction was not exclusive, as the case of Praetorius's earliest Latin Magnificat shows. I will attempt here to examine when, how and why his Magnificat setting found its way into an Inner Austrian choirbook.

With the death of Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I in 1564, the Habsburg lands were divided between his three sons: Maximilian II,

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¹ It was published in three volumes between 1615 and 1619. Several facsimile editions of this monumental work are available, as well as English translations of all three parts.

who became emperor, was granted Upper and Lower Austria; Ferdinand II got the county of Tyrol and Further Austria; and Karl II inherited Inner Austria and established his seat at Graz. Inner Austria included the archduchies of Styria and Carinthia, the county of Gorizia, the free city of Trieste, and finally Carniola, with its capital Ljubljana, a duchy extending over the territory of much of the modern Republic of Slovenia.² Inner Austria, especially its capital Graz, soon became one of the prime musical centres in Europe, due to the special care for music of both its rulers Karl II and Ferdinand III.

Archduke Karl (1540–1590) was known for his fondness for music. His musical patronage is attested to by the large number of works dedicated to him.³ His spouse, Maria of Bavaria, was a great music lover herself; she is believed to have received musical instruction from Orlando di Lasso at the court of Munich and showed continuing interest in his works even after her move to Graz. The preference of Archduke Karl for Italian, mainly Venetian, music is apparent not only from the repertory performed at the Archducal Chapel in Graz but also from his choice of musicians for employment in the chapel. The most distinguished Italians during this period were undoubtedly Annibale Padovano, organist and subsequently court chapel master and Francesco Rovigo, organist and music teacher to the archduke's children.⁴

With the arrival of many musicians from the territory of Veneto, the artistic links that had existed between Graz and Munich, stemming mainly from Maria's interest in music, were gradually replaced with ties to Venice, which strengthened under the rule of Karl and Maria's son, Archduke Ferdinand III, later Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II. Ferdinand was the dedicatee of many musical works, several of which originated from Italy.⁵

Music performed at the court in Graz also spread to other important musical institutions in Inner Austria. It was through the agency of the

² For an introduction to the history of Inner Austria, see, for example, Novotny & Sutter 1968.

³ See, for example, Lindell 1990, p. 257.

⁴ On the interest in Italian music at the Graz court, see the fundamental study by Federhofer 1967.

⁵ Federhofer 1967, pp. 46–47.

Prince-Bishop of Ljubljana, Tomaž Hren (Thomas Chrön), that repertory from Graz found its way to Carniola. Hren, Bishop of Ljubljana from 1597 to 1630, was closely connected with the court in Graz, especially from 1614 to 1621, when he served as Governor of Inner Austria and was residing at Ferdinand's court (see *Figure 1*). Hren was a great music lover and personally provided repertory for his musical establishments at both the cathedral of Ljubljana and the co-cathedral of Gornji Grad.⁶

The Hren choirbooks

The most important musical sources connected with Bishop Hren are the so-called Hren choirbooks,⁷ which were compiled by the Graz court singer Georg Kuglmann in the first decade of the 17th century. Nowadays they form part of the Manuscript Collection at the National and University Library in Ljubljana.⁸ Hren was unquestionably the former owner of at least two of the choirbooks, but very likely of all six. In MS 341 we find a flyleaf with his coat of arms and his motto plus name written at the top and bottom of the page, respectively. The other volume once indubitably in his possession is MS 344, which contains a dedication stating that the volume was presented to Hren in 1616 by Karl Kuglmann, son of the Graz court bass singer and court music scribe Georg Kuglmann, who had written out the choirbook.

These manuscripts contain a large repertory of exclusively liturgical music for vespers and mass. A strong Italian ascendancy is evident not only from the names of composers but also from the Italianate musical style of the included non-Italian composers. As is well known, the early 17th-century repertory in Inner Austria was significantly characterized by a preponderance of Italian Catholic Church music.⁹

The primacy of Italian music is especially evident in MS 343. This is a large codex in two volumes, one for each of the two choirs. The codex

⁶ Basic information about Hren is available, for example, in Dolinar 1996, and about his activities in connection with music in Škulj 2001.

⁷ For more on the Hren choirbooks, see Škulj 2001; Kokole 2012; Grabnar 2015.

⁸ They are shelfmarked MSS 339–344.

⁹ Federhofer 1967.



Figure 1. Tomaž Hren, Prince-Bishop of Ljubljana (c. 1625–1630; Archbishop's Palace, Ljubljana).

retains its original leather-over-wood binding in white, blind-tooled leather. Since the choirbooks of Graz originate from the same period, those preserved in the Graz University Library display similar blind-tooled bindings, and since there were bookbinders active in Graz, MS 343 and all the other Hren codices were probably bound in that city. Although we do not know who actually bound the Hren choirbooks, they may well have been the work of Georg Wagner, who in 1610, for instance, received payment for binding Kuglmann's choirbooks.¹⁰

According to its original order, MS 343 contains 38 psalms, 17 Magnificat settings, 31 hymns and two masses (see *Appendix 1*). All the pieces are for eight voices distributed between two choirs, except for the last two Magnificats, one for 9 and the other for 10 voices, and the last mass for 14 voices. Thirty-six unica are present in this manuscript: three psalms by Bartolomeo Spontone, active in northern Italy, a complete cycle of 31 vesper hymns for the liturgical year by the Graz court organist Francesco Stivori, and the *Magnificat secundi toni* and *Missa Exaudi Deus* by Lambert de Sayve, active in the Habsburg lands and for a while also in Graz. Praetorius held de Sayve in high esteem: he mentioned him approvingly in his *Syntagma Musicum*,¹¹ and even reissued his collection of *Teutsche Liedlein*.¹²

The only non-Italian composers represented in this manuscript are Orlando di Lasso, Paul Sartorius, Lambert de Sayve, and finally Michael Praetorius. The last is the only composer from the Protestant north, so the presence of his music in this codex is somewhat surprising. In fact, MS 343 is the single known Inner Austrian manuscript source that transmits Michael Praetorius's music.

¹⁰ Grabnar 2015, pp. 45, 55.

¹¹ See Praetorius 2004, pp. 23, 101.

¹² The collection was printed in Wolfenbüttel in 1611.



Figure 2. Title page of Michael Praetorius's *Musarum Sioniarum: Motectae et Psalmi Latini* (Nürnberg, 1607).

SERENISSIMO.

POTENTISSIMO, AC

SAPIENTISSIMO PRINCIPI

AC HEROI, D^{NO} CHRI.

STIANO. IV. REGI DANIE, NORUE-
GIE, VANDALORUM, & GOTHO-
RUM DUCI SCHLESWIGE, HOL-
SATIE, STORMARIE, & DITH-
MARSIE, COMITI IN OLDEN-
BURG & DELMENHORST.

CLEMENTISSIMO MEO REGI AC DOMINO.

hacce Muscarum
compositionum

meas
primitias

humilima animi
deuotione offero

Michael Praetorius C.

Figure 3. Michael Praetorius's dedication of *Musarum Sioniarum: Motectae et Psalmi Latini* to Christian IV.

Michael Praetorius's *Magnificat quinti toni a 8*

The composition by Praetorius in question is the *Magnificat* [*quinti toni*] for eight voices. It was published in Praetorius's *Musarum Sioniarum: Motectae et Psalmi Latini* of 1607 printed in Nürnberg by Abraham Wagenmann (see *Figure 2*). The preface to this edition was, however, dated January 1605.¹³ In his dedication to Christian IV, King of Denmark and Norway and Duke of Holstein and Schleswig, Praetorius described these compositions as his *primitiae* (see *Figure 3*). Furthermore, the two introductory poems included in the edition indicate that Praetorius made his public debut with these compositions before the Reichstag delegates.¹⁴ As is known from the archival documents, in 1603 Praetorius was a scribe and negotiator in the Wolfenbüttel Reichstag delegation at the Imperial Diet in Regensburg.¹⁵ These facts indicate that at least some of the music presented in this print must have been written before that year.¹⁶

By comparing the printed and manuscript sources of the Magnificat, one quickly notices some differences between them: examples include (1) the text underlay is sometimes different and, for example, the manuscript source makes greater use of the *idem* sign (see *Figure 4*); (2) a few of the words have different endings (see *Figure 5*); (3) there are more *diesis* signs in the printed version (see *Figure 6*); (4) the proportional signature for triple meter is different (the printed version uses the signature 3, whereas the manuscript uses 3/2); and (5) there is a slight discrepancy in the notation of the plainchant intonation (see *Figure 7*). However, the most interesting difference between the printed and

¹³ It is believed there existed an earlier edition printed in 1606 that has not been preserved. Blume 1963, pp. 251–252.

¹⁴ Blume 1963, p. 248; Forchert 1986, p. 111. The relevant excerpts from both texts are reproduced and commented on in Elsner 2017, pp. 63–68, 76–79.

¹⁵ Deeters 1971, p. 120.

¹⁶ Notwithstanding the date of the preface, it should not simply be concluded that all the music must have been written before January 1605. One must bear in mind that Praetorius on several occasions discussed works that were not yet composed, for instance, in the third part of his *Syntagma Musicum*. See Praetorius 2004, ch. 8, pp. 195–213.



Figure 4. The beginning of the “Et exultavit” section, upper part of the first choir, printed (above) and manuscript version (below).



Figure 5. The words “in progeniem/in progenies”, upper part of the first choir, printed (left) and manuscript version (right).



Figure 6. The words “in brachio”, upper part of the first choir, printed (left) and manuscript version (right).



Figure 7. A plainchant intonation, printed (left) and manuscript version (right).

manuscript sources is the use of different signatures: the **c** signature in the manuscript and **c** in the printed version.

The use of signatures

Praetorius was equally composer and theorist, so he provides us with a unique opportunity to explore the implications of the usage of these two signatures. In the third volume of *Syntagma Musicum*, he wrote:

Duple meter [*Æqualis*], or spondaic, is either slower or faster according to the variation of the signatures. The signature indicating slower [motion] is **c**, with which madrigals are marked; the signature for a faster [motion] is **c**, with which motets are marked. [...] Earlier musicians called the meter signature **c** *tempus perfectum minus* or *signum minoris tactus* in which one semibreve or two minims occur per beat and which the Italians referred to as *alla semibreve*. However, the **c** was called *perfectum majus* or *signum majoris vel totalis tactus*. They occurred in compositions in which the **c** meter signature indicated two semibreves or two smaller beats [*tactus minores*] at a rather slow tempo [*Tact*], called *alla breve* by the Italians. One semibreve or two minims are sung on the downbeat [*depressione*], the other semibreve or two minims on the upbeat [*elevatione*]. This was common in Orlando's day and is used even now in various excellent chapels and schools [...].¹⁷

According to this statement, the manuscript version—using the same note durations—should be about twice as fast as the one above. So, does this mean that musicians using the manuscript source took a much faster tempo than the musicians using the printed version? This is not likely. Later in the chapter he wrote:

When I examine the compositions by contemporary Italians that in just a few years have been arranged in a completely unique and new style, I find very great discrepancies and diversity in the way in

¹⁷ Praetorius 2004, pp. 68–69.

which the duple and triple signatures are used. Giovanni Gabrieli, for instance, has used the ϕ signature throughout all of his concertos, sinfonias, canzonas, and sonatas with and without texts. [...] A number of composers, however, only use the **c** signature. Claudio Monteverdi prefers the ϕ signature in motet-style works that can be performed alla breve. But in all works that have more black notes than white, he prefers the **c** signature. Lodovico Viadana uses the ϕ signature in all of his texted works, but in the sinfonias without texts he has retained the **c** signature. Several composers make no distinction in their use of signatures, employing ϕ in one work and **c** in the next, and no distinction can be ascertained from the notes or the entire composition.¹⁸

As the case of this *Magnificat* shows, Praetorius also saw no significance in his choice of signatures. As Gordon Paine noted, the decision between using **c** and ϕ appears to have been primarily driven by the desire for consistency within a particular collection, regardless of the music it contained. By comparing the note values employed in book 1 of the *Musae sioniae* with those in books 2–4, he concluded that there is no significant difference. However, book 1 exclusively bears the signature ϕ , while the others are solely marked with **c**. The *Motectae et Psalmi Latini* of 1607 includes several pieces by Palestrina, Handl, Aichinger and others, all written in the 16th-century, long-note notation, yet each composition is marked with the signature **c**.¹⁹ Indeed, these compositions—*Laudate Dominum in sanctis eius* by Gregor Aichinger,²⁰ *O quam metuendus est locus iste* by Jacobus Handl-Gallus,²¹ and *Laudate Dominum in sanctis eius*, which is actually not by Palestrina but

¹⁸ Praetorius 2004, p. 71. A similar observation can be discerned in other theoretical writings from around 1600. See, for example, DeFord 1996, p. 156; see also Bank 1972, pp. 250–255.

¹⁹ Paine 1988, p. 188.

²⁰ It was published in his collection *Liber tertius sacrarum cantionum* (Nürnberg: Paul Kauffmann, 1597).

²¹ This composition was printed in his *Tertius tomus musici operis* (Prague: Georg Nigrinus, 1587). Marko Motnik has already noted the use of the **c** signature in Praetorius's print. See Motnik 2012, p. 116.

Ruggiero Giovannelli²²—are, in fact, in printed and/or manuscript sources all signed with ϕ .²³ Given the Habsburg–Italian style around 1600 of Praetorius’s Magnificat and his own words—“I would almost prefer the use of the ϕ signature for motets set in the style of Orlando di Lasso”²⁴—it would seem that he originally used ϕ for this Magnificat and later used c for the sake of consistency within the collection of *Motectae et Psalmi Latini*. In any case, pieces contained in MS 343 display the same notational practice as in the concordances (mostly the signature ϕ is employed), which strengthens this hypothesis.

Based on these facts, it appears that the Magnificat of MS 343 was not copied from the print but from an earlier manuscript source that in all likelihood originated from the circle close to the composer. Yet, how would this manuscript source have found its way to Inner Austria?

The Regensburg Diet of 1603

The perfect venue for Praetorius to disseminate his music at the start of his career as a composer was unquestionably the Regensburg Diet of 1603.²⁵ All the important rulers of the Empire and many of their musicians were present there. Praetorius must have been fully aware of the potential of this event to broaden the recognition of his compositional abilities. Although we do not know whether Archduke Ferdinand III was present during the performance of Praetorius’s music, he was indeed interested in current trends in music and was thoroughly familiar with them. By around 1600, Magnificat settings in *alternatim* technique had gone out of fashion. Instead, double-choir, through-composed settings that are not based on any previous polyphonic composition became the norm, as is also apparent from the settings contained

²² This motet was first published in Giovannelli’s *Sacrarum modulationum [...] liber primus* (Rome: Francesco Coattino, 1593). See Motnik 2012, p. 152.

²³ The notation of two other pieces not by Praetorius—*Jubilate Deo* by an unknown composer and *Ecce nunc benedicite* by one Gedeon Lebon—could not be compared to other manuscript or printed sources, as they seem not to have survived. For the extant sources of the pieces by other composers contained in this collection of Praetorius, see, for example, the RISM database.

²⁴ Praetorius 2004, p. 71.

²⁵ Schmidt 2016, p. 69.

in the same choirbook in which Praetorius's Magnificat is found. Although this piece could have reached Inner Austria by means of *musicalia* exchange between the Inner Austrian and one of the other Habsburg courts present at the Diet, the person responsible for its inclusion in the Inner Austrian repertory may well have been Archduke Ferdinand himself, who might have heard and been attracted to this composition in Regensburg in 1603. Nevertheless, it appears that the Regensburg Reichstag of 1603 was indeed the place where Praetorius's music reached the southern fringes of the Holy Roman Empire, Graz being among the first cities to receive it, followed by Carniola. It is interesting to observe that Praetorius's parody Magnificats connected with the Regensburg Diet of 1608 that were published in his *Megalynodia Sionia* of 1611 did not find their way into the Graz repertory.²⁶ The reason for this likely must be sought in the use of parody technique, which was already outmoded in Magnificat settings by the early 17th century. Parody Magnificats had flourished in Graz in the late 16th century.

The Magnificat is clearly one of the genres that could quite easily cross confessional boundaries. Many Lutheran churches continued to use music with Latin texts, and Lutheran cantors often drew on Catholic repertory. It has to be said that the whole collection of Praetorius's *Motectae et Psalmi Latini* likely reflects musical practice in the Gröninger Schlosskapelle, where Praetorius's employer Heinrich Julius resided and where worship, as regards language and other characteristics as well, in some ways closely resembled Catholic practice.²⁷ On the other hand, music by Protestant composers could also become part of the Catholic repertory of Counter-Reformation courts, as long as it fitted the current Catholic taste. This is shown by the example of Praetorius's Magnificat, with which he reached a broad music market, even in the Catholic south.

The Imperial Diets were an important venue for cultural exchanges, including the circulation of musical works and ideas, between different

²⁶ Praetorius also included in this collection a reworking of the discussed Magnificat.

²⁷ Heinrich Julius was a close advisor to Emperor Rudolf II, and it was in his political interest to mitigate the differences between Catholics and Protestants. Forchert 1981, pp. 625–633.

territories within the Holy Roman Empire. Although as regards music the direction of these exchanges was predominantly from south to north, the example of Praetorius's *Magnificat* indicates that they could also move in the other direction. Routes from Regensburg can therefore be seen as yet another pathway by which musical works were disseminated and shared across the confessional divide at the beginning of the 17th century.

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Appendix I

The contents of SI-Lnr, MS 343

Giulio Belli, <i>Deus in adiutorium</i> a 8	Camillo Cortellini, <i>In convertendo</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Dixit Dominus</i> a 8	Camillo Cortellini, <i>Domine probasti me</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Confitebor</i> a 8	Camillo Cortellini, <i>Beati omnes</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Beatus vir</i> a 8	Camillo Cortellini, <i>De profundis</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Laudate pueri</i> a 8	Camillo Cortellini, <i>Memento Domine</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Laudate Dominum</i> a 8	Camillo Cortellini, <i>Confitebor tibi Domine</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>In exitu Israel</i> a 8	Giovanni Gabrieli, <i>Magnificat</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Laetatus sum</i> a 8	Claudio Merulo, <i>Magnificat [primi toni]</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Nisi Dominus</i> a 8	Claudio Merulo, <i>Magnificat [quinti toni]</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Lauda Ierusalem</i> a 8	Claudio Merulo, <i>Magnificat [sexti toni]</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Credidi</i> a 8	Francesco Stivori, <i>Magnificat primi toni</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>In convertendo</i> a 8	Francesco Stivori, <i>Magnificat</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Domine probasti me</i> a 8	Orlando di Lasso, <i>Magnificat sexti toni</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>De profundis</i> a 8	Lambert de Sayve, <i>Magnificat secundi toni</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Memento Domine</i> a 8	Asprilio Pacelli, <i>Magnificat [sexti toni]</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Beati omnes</i> a 8	Serafino Cantone, <i>Magnificat quarti toni</i> a 8
Giulio Belli, <i>Confitebor</i> a 8	Luca Marenzio, <i>Magnificat</i> [short version] a 8
Bartolomeo Spontone, <i>Dixit Dominus</i> a 8	Michael Praetorius, <i>Magnificat [quinti toni]</i> a 8
Bartolomeo Spontone, <i>Confitebor tibi Domine</i> a 8	Simone Molinaro, <i>Magnificat [primi toni]</i> a 8
Bartolomeo Spontone, <i>Beatus vir</i> a 8	Camillo Cortellini, <i>Magnificat octavi toni</i> a 8
Andrea Feliciani, <i>Laudate pueri</i> a 8	Tiburzio Massaino, <i>Magnificat quarti toni</i> ‘In ecco’ a 8
Andrea Feliciani, <i>Laudate Dominum</i> a 8	Oratio Colombani, <i>Magnificat secondi toni</i> a 9
Camillo Cortellini, <i>Dixit Dominus</i> a 8	Paul Sartorius, <i>Magnificat</i> a 10
Camillo Cortellini, <i>Confitebor tibi</i> a 8	Francesco Stivori, <i>[Conditor alme siderum]</i> a 8
Camillo Cortellini, <i>Beatus vir</i> a 8	Francesco Stivori, <i>[Christe redemptor omnium ex Patre]</i> a 8
Camillo Cortellini, <i>Laudate pueri</i> a 8	Francesco Stivori, <i>[Salvete flores martyrum]</i> a 8
Camillo Cortellini, <i>Laudate Dominum</i> a 8	Francesco Stivori, <i>[Hostis herodes impie]</i> a 8
Camillo Cortellini, <i>[In exitu Israel]</i> a 8	Francesco Stivori, <i>[Lucis creator optime]</i> a 8
Camillo Cortellini, <i>Laetatus sum</i> a 8	Francesco Stivori, <i>[Ad preces nostras]</i> a 8
Camillo Cortellini, <i>Nisi Dominus</i> a 8	Francesco Stivori, <i>[Vexilla regis prodeunt]</i> a 8
Camillo Cortellini, <i>Lauda Ierusalem</i> a 8	Francesco Stivori, <i>[Ad coenam agni providi]</i> a 8
Camillo Cortellini, <i>Credidi propter quod</i> a 8	

Francesco Stivori, [*Jesu nostra redemptio*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Veni creator spiritus*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*O lux beata trinitas*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Pange lingua gloriosi*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Quodcunque vиндis*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Doctor egregie*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Ave maris Stella*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Ut queant laxis*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Aurea luce*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Lauda mater Ecclesia*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Petrus beatus*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Quicunque Christum quaeritis*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Tibi Christe splendor patris*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Christe redemptor omnium conserva*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Exultet coelum laudibus*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Tristes erant apostoli*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Deus tuorum militum*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Sanctorum meritis*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Rex gloriose martyrum*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Iste confessor*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Jesu corona virginum*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Huius obtentu*] a 8

Francesco Stivori, [*Urbs beata Jerusalem*] a 8

Pietro Lappi, *Missa super Iubilate Deo* a 8

Lambert de Sayve, *Missa super Exaudi Deus* a 14