The Strasbourg Cantiones of 1539

Protestant City, Catholic Music
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The Strasbourg *Cantiones* of 1539

Protestant City, Catholic Music

Daniel Trocmé-Latter

THE BOYDELL PRESS
To Julia – and also Edward, Christopher, and Thomas, who are still young enough always to have known me to be working on the Cantiones
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To say that the scope of this project exceeded my expectations would be a vast understatement. The task has involved a labour of love over the past decade, dominating my research time. Polyphonic music was only of secondary importance in my first monograph, *The Singing of the Strasbourg Protestants, 1523–1541*, which instead concentrated on the singing of ordinary people at the dawn of the Protestant Reformation in that city. However, the idea of a Protestant publisher choosing Strasbourg for his first and only book of Latin motets intrigued me, so I decided to investigate further. This officially began with a paper at the 2013 Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference in Certaldo, Italy – and the rest, as they say, is history.

Of course, the point of this project is about much more than just the history. My book tells the story of Peter Schöffer’s anthology, but it also delves into the music itself. This monograph is intended to be read with reference to the scores, available online as transcriptions but also published separately as performing editions. Twelve of the motets – including the lesser-known ones – have recently been recorded, and I am grateful to Patrick Allies and the singers of Siglo de Oro for undertaking that task with such enthusiasm and for their support of the project more broadly. A vote of thanks must also go to Richard Shakeshaft of imprimis.uk, not only for his willingness to publish the performing editions of the motets, but also for the considerable time and effort he put into helping me prepare the scores for publication.

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Abbreviations


A key to the RISM abbreviations used throughout this volume is found in appendix 3.
Note on Language, Numbering, and Dating

Original spellings (as found in the sources used) have been retained throughout, although publication and motet titles in Latin have generally been standardised.

Place names and personal names have been standardised, according to generally accepted modern-day spellings in English scholarship.

1 January has been assumed to be the first day of each calendar year.

Apart from examples 4.10, 5.6, 5.7, 5.10, and 6.1, music examples are my own.

Unless otherwise specified, translations are my own, although I am indebted to the many individuals who offered help—especially with Latin (see acknowledgements).

Unless otherwise specified, the Vulgate system of numbering the Psalms has been used.

Specific musical pitches are indicated using the Helmholtz system.
Introduction: Catholic Music in a Protestant City?

Peter Schöffer… has shown us of his singular learning and care, which he devoted to bringing from Italy a selection of some harmonies and musical songs, praised for their gravity and sweetness, which were composed by masters most outstanding in this art.¹

Thus reads the imperial privilege from King Ferdinand² for this anthology of motets, published in Strasbourg in August 1539 by Peter Schöffer the Younger. The Cantiones quinque vocum selectissimæ were Schöffer’s first motet anthology; they would also be his last ever musical publication. The five in-quarto partbooks, as the title suggests, comprise a collection of 28 motets, overwhelmingly by French or Flemish composers including Arcadelt, Cadéac, Gombert, Jacquet of Mantua, Maistre Jhan, Verdelot, and Willaert, a number of whom worked exclusively in Italy. The texts are all in Latin, of sacred subject matter, and with frequent Marian references. On the face of it, the pieces seem well suited to sixteenth-century Catholic devotional music-making.

However, it is as much the collection’s content as its context which makes it a remarkable publication. The music may not be considered particularly unusual for the mid sixteenth century until one realises that Strasbourg was a Protestant city that precisely one decade earlier had abolished the Roman Mass and effectively eradicated choral singing – and choirs – in the process. Strasbourg had, in musical terms, undergone one of the harshest reformations on the continent, more akin to the Swiss reforms than anything which Martin Luther had been advocating. The new liturgy had no place for Latin choral singing, and no formal adult choirs are known to have survived into the 1530s. Yet, in the midst of this Reformation, Schöffer, one of the foremost Protestant printers in the region, published a set of partbooks containing music which was suited to exactly the sort of ritual that the reformers had sought to abolish. Schöffer is understood to have had unabashed Protestant leanings, and had spent much of his career publishing anti-Catholic material.³ Yet in his


2  Ferdinand I, later Holy Roman Emperor, acted as Emperor Charles V’s representative in Germany from 1531 onwards.

3  See the full (and mostly accurate) catalogue of his works in the appendix to Alejandro Zorzin, ‘Peter Schöffer d. J. und die Täufer’, in Ulman Weiss, ed., Buchwesen in
own preface to the Cantiones he also states his connection with Hermann Matthias Werrecore, the Flemish choirmaster of the Duomo of Milan. Furthermore, neither the title page, contents page, nor any of the Cantiones’ other paratexts mention religion, let alone Reformation: instead, the whole issue of faith and reform is entirely absent from this anthology.

The collection is a significant musical treasure – and anomaly – which has remained in partial musical and academic obscurity since its publication. That is not to say that it has been ignored completely; indeed, numerous publications list the Cantiones as an important reference or example of further reading, but almost none has studied their musical or historical context in any detail. Among the exceptions are two studies from the 1990s: Raimund Redeker’s essay on Schöffer, which provides considerable insight into the prefatory material of the Cantiones (especially the dedication to Ulrich Varnbüler, an imperial jurist and diplomat in Speyer); and Christine Getz, who mentions Schöffer’s anthology in the context of research on Werrecore.

Taking the composers’ names in isolation (notwithstanding Josquin’s absence), one could easily be forgiven for imagining that the anthology came off the Scotto or Gardano presses, or perhaps that of Pierre Attaingnant or Jacques Moderne, rather than a moderately known music publisher from the fringe of the Holy Roman Empire – and furthermore from a city little known at this time for its music-printing trade. The motet anthology market had been dominated by Ottaviano Petrucci in Italy during the first two decades of the sixteenth century; Andrea Antico emerged as a competitor in Italy, while Attaingnant and Moderne entered the scene in France, producing anthologies during the 1520s and early 1530s. An appetite in Germany for such Latin polyphonic anthologies, however, did not emerge until the late 1530s. Most notably, a handful of such publications had appeared in Nuremberg and Wittenberg during the two years before the Cantiones, each containing comparable...
numbers of pieces by a not dissimilar selection of composers. It is clear, therefore, that Schöffer was keen to leave his mark in this growing domain of the printing market.

**From Strasbourg, But Not For Strasbourg**

To begin, then, let us consider the confessional question. While I do not wish to claim that there was a strict or clear-cut musical divide down confessional lines in Europe (quite the opposite, in fact), there are nevertheless several reasons for us to be surprised that a publication such as this would be published somewhere like Strasbourg in 1539. Put in simplistic terms, Strasbourg was a Protestant city (very much between the Reformed and the Lutheran ends of the theological spectrum at this time – though more at the Reformed end from a musical perspective), with a growing repertory of monophonic vernacular hymns and psalms designed for congregational participation. On the other hand, Schöffer’s publication comprises an anthology of Latin motets, many of which are Marian in nature, and therefore not suited to Reformed-style worship on several grounds – their language, their musical genre, and their subject matter – all of which are intertwined to a certain extent. Although, as demonstrated in the following few paragraphs, the bigger picture is ultimately more nuanced, this is a fundamental summary worth remembering.

Strasbourg was one of the first cities within the Holy Roman Empire to convert to Protestantism. The reformers had made early efforts to abolish feast days (no liturgical feasts were celebrated in Strasbourg between 1524 and 1537, except perhaps some that fell on Sundays\(^8\)) and to replace the Roman Mass with the simpler service of the Lord’s Supper (called *das Herrn Nachtmahl* in Strasbourg), a form of worship that received city-wide implementation by 1529.\(^9\) The Mass had first been celebrated in the vernacular in Strasbourg in one of the cathedral chapels in 1524.\(^10\) Later that same year, the city’s principal reformer, Martin Bucer, accused the Roman clergy of delivering ‘prayers and songs in Latin, which the layman does not understand at

\(^{8}\) René Bornert, *La Réforme protestante du culte à Strasbourg au XVI\textsuperscript{e} siècle (1523–1598)* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), p. 491. This disappearance of feasts is alluded to in several contemporary sources. For example, in 1531 the Anabaptist leader in Strasbourg, Pilgram Marpeck, wrote a letter to the reformers, requesting that they abolish infant baptism as they had the Mass, feast days, and other Roman excesses (see Archives de la Ville et de l’Eurométropole de Strasbourg (hereafter ‘Archives de Strasbourg’), 1 AST 75, 50, pp. 746–7; reproduced in Martin Bucer, ed. Robert Stupperich and Gottfried Seebass, *Opera Omnia: Deutsche Schriften*, 17 vols (Gütersloh: Gütersloh Verlagshaus G. Mohn, 1960–), vol. 14, p. 39). Also, the 1534 preface to Katharina Schütz Zell’s hymnbook of the Bohemian Brethren notes that therein are found ‘many attractive songs’ (*vil hibscher gsang*) pertaining to feast days including Christmas, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost, even though they could not be legitimately celebrated liturgically at this time; see Elsie A. McKee, *Church Mother: The Writings of a Protestant Reformer in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 94–5.


all, and which they themselves often barely understand ... and because everything carried out by the congregation of God should serve for the communal edification of all people, we [will] pray and sing nothing that is not in the common German language." Likewise, his colleague Wolfgang Capito listed 'monks, nuns, priests, crockery, bell ringing, [and] singing' among the signs that the Antichrist had taken command of Christendom. The reformers’ priority was to enable widespread understanding, and this meant – at least to Bucer – removing Latin from the liturgy. However, certain other figures in Strasbourg took a more liberal stance on language, insisting on maintaining the tradition of using Latin at particular points in worship. At certain services, then, the use of Latin persisted; when, in the spring of 1529, the Strasbourg city council bowed to pressure from the reformers and agreed to abolish the Roman Mass in all churches throughout the city, the new liturgies were still not entirely free of Latin. Although the Sunday morning Lord’s Supper service was now celebrated entirely in the vernacular (including congregational monodic settings of the Psalms and other hymns), the daily morning and evening services (effectively reformed versions of the monastic offices of Matins and Vespers) would begin with the words of the traditional responses (Domine labia mea aperies, etc.), and the readings were to take place in Latin, although an interpreter was to be on hand to translate for the congregation. Nevertheless, the lack of evidence of any polyphony in Strasbourg’s churches at this time makes it most likely that the reciting of such responses occurred as plainchant – if not spoken – probably by a single priest.

Indeed, over the course of the Reformation, choir singers often bore the brunt of the reformers’ verbal attacks on medieval church practice. For example, Jean Calvin, who resided in Strasbourg between 1538 and 1541 before becoming the leader of the Protestant reforms in Geneva, is later known to have protested that the music of the Roman Church had been corrupted, complicated, and over-ornamented, with melodies written only for the pleasure of the ear, and all polyphonic music being unsuited to the majesty of the church. As for the Strasbourg reformers themselves, although they did not speak out explicitly against polyphony in specific technical musical
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terminology, they did spend the best part of the 1520s campaigning to reform and eventually abolish church choirs, primarily by taking aim at the behaviour of church singers as well as complaining about the little value that elite Latin singing had on the faith and spiritual wellbeing of the common people. Among their common complaints were that choirs, priests, and monks claimed their singing held spiritual value, whereas they instead spent their time wailing (plärren), murmuring (murmeln), and babbling (schlappern). During the mid 1520s, the choirmen (who were otherwise soon to be unemployed) were offered the chance to lead the singing of German hymns in place of singing Latin plainchant or polyphony. However, the singers – no doubt quite angry with the way the situation had unfolded – had no desire to co-operate and refused the city council’s request. The cathedral choir was officially dismissed following the abolition of the Mass in 1529; a declaration from the cathedral chapter from that year simply stated that the singers were no longer required, nor should they continue in procession through the city streets as had previously been customary.

As more areas across Europe began following suit by joining the reform movement, differences in the theology of the Protestants began to become more defined and the need to form religious and political alliances was felt increasingly strongly. At the 1530 session of the Diet of Augsburg, Charles V attempted to stem the flow of reform and claw back territories thus far ‘lost’ to the Protestants. Acknowledging safety in numbers, Wittenberg and a number of other Lutheran territories signed the Augsburg Confession, while Strasbourg and three other cities signed what became known as the Tetrapolitan Confession (eucharistically a more ‘Zwinglian’ counterpart to the Augsburg Confession, since the reformers in these cities – unlike Luther – did not subscribe to the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist). It was also in signing the Tetrapolitan Confession in 1530 that the reformers of Strasbourg officially set out their objection to the liturgical music of the Roman Church, with the Confession depicting Latin singing as unholy and unfaithful to the historical origins of liturgical music. The points of opposition were essentially three-fold: first, non-scriptural additions to the sung Word of God were generally to be condemned, since they were human creations rather than those of the divine; second, the document opposed the notion that spiritual singing (e.g. a Requiem Mass for a deceased person) was something that could enable salvation to be bought or sold; and third, 1 Corinthians 14 was invoked as scriptural support for the reformers’ claim that foreign tongues were not to be used in church if the people could not understand them, but rather that the vernacular should be employed wherever singing took place.

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Confession was published in 1531\textsuperscript{21} along with a corresponding Apologia,\textsuperscript{22} the latter of which stated that God alone, and not the saints, is capable of redeeming the sins of humanity, providing protection from the devil, and bestowing righteousness on his people, and therefore that he alone should be praised in song accordingly.\textsuperscript{23} In this document the reformers also reiterated their objection to Latin by accusing the Roman clergy of climbing up high, shouting loudly in order to be heard far and wide, but doing so ‘in a language which the congregation cannot understand at all’.\textsuperscript{24}

Following a synod in 1533, however, a new church order was published that was designed to bring Strasbourg into line with the more Lutheran approach thus far being adhered to by most other reforming German cities.\textsuperscript{25} Strasbourg then went a step further by signing the Concord of Wittenberg in 1536, one notable effect of which was the reintroduction of certain feasts and seasons into Strasbourg’s church calendar. Christmas began to be celebrated again from 1537, and this was followed by the reinstatement of the Feast of the Circumcision, Passiontide, Easter, and Ascension in 1538.\textsuperscript{26} Liturgical orders from 1537 began printing material (including hymns) suitable for the celebration of some of these feasts.\textsuperscript{27} The city continued down the path of Lutheran conformity throughout the remainder of the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{21} Bucer et al., Bekantnuß der vier frey vn[nd] Reichstatt / Straßburg / Costanz / Memminger / vnd Lindaw (Strasbourg: Schweintzer, 1531); reprinted in Bucer, Deutsche Schriften, vol. 3, pp. 37–185 (music is discussed on pp. 146–51).

\textsuperscript{22} Bucer et al., Schriftliche Beschirmung vnd vertheidigung der selbigen Bekantnusz / gegen der Conffutation vnd Widerlegung (Strasbourg: Schweintzer, 1531); reprinted in Bucer, Deutsche Schriften, vol. 3, pp. 194–318.

\textsuperscript{23} Bucer, Deutsche Schriften, vol. 3, pp. 194–318, at p. 295. This position was also consistent with Martin Bucer’s general views on the veneration of saints, namely that it was to be avoided; see Martin Greschat, trans. Stephen E. Buckwalter, Martin Bucer: A Reformer and His Times (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), pp. 62, 169–70, and 189.

\textsuperscript{24} ‘Nun sind aber disse unsere geystlichen noch seltazamer, schreyen uberlaut, keren sich zum volck und sprechens besonders an, steigen uff erhöchte ort, damit sie weit und breyt gehört werden, und stellen sich in alle weg, alß wolten sie die sach gantzner gemeyn gleich wol zu verstohn geben und einbilden und thun denn solchs in der sprachen dar, wolche die gmeyn gar nicht verstohn kan und offt sie selb auch nicht’. Bucer et al., Schriftliche Beschirmung vnd vertheidigung, sig. Q4v; Bucer, Deutsche Schriften, vol. 3, pp. 296–7.

\textsuperscript{25} Bucer et al., Ordnung vnd Kirchengebreuch für die Pfarrern vnd Kirchendienern zů Straßburg vnd der selbigen angehörigen vff gehabtem Synodo fürgenommen (Strasbourg: Prüss, 1534); reprinted in Bucer, Deutsche Schriften, vol. 5, pp. 22–41.

\textsuperscript{26} Bornert, Réforme protestante du culte, pp. 491–2.

\textsuperscript{27} Psalmen vnd geystliche Lieder (Strasbourg: Prüss & Köpfel, 1537), for example, contains a series of congregational songs specifically intended for Christmas and Easter.

\textsuperscript{28} Musically, the momentous Gesangbuch (Strasbourg: Köpfel & Messerschmidt, 1541) had a part to play in this development; see Trocmé-Latter, The Singing of the Strasbourg Protestants, pp. 201–18.
Based on this, it may be tempting to view the publication of polyphonic Latin motets as part of this process of realignment with the Lutherans.\textsuperscript{29} It is well known that Luther was an advocate not only of the Latin language but also of polyphonic music.\textsuperscript{30} Although direct references to music in the Strasbourg church orders are negligible, it would not, on the face of it, be unreasonable to assume that the 1536 alliance with the Lutherans theoretically opened the door to Latin choral polyphony. However, there are several reasons to discount this view. Although there is evidence of the foundation of children’s choirs in the city,\textsuperscript{31} there is crucially no evidence of the refounding of any adult choirs in Strasbourg. Imagining, for one moment, that Strasbourg’s church choirs had somehow managed to re-establish themselves by stealth (i.e. without leaving a historical record) between the final abolition of the Mass in 1529 and the publication of Schöffer’s \textit{Cantiones} in 1539, and taking into consideration the fact that Latin language continued to be acceptable in certain liturgical situations, it remains difficult to see how the Strasbourg reformers could have endorsed the liturgical use of a collection such as the \textit{Cantiones} – containing Marian, non-scriptural, and apocryphal texts\textsuperscript{32} – as early as 1539. For a start, the inclusion of the royal privilege by Ferdinand I, a Catholic, could in fact be a sign of the lack of official endorsement by Strasbourg’s city and church authorities.\textsuperscript{33}

Aside from this, in light of the statements by Bucer and others against the singing of Latin, it seems that the type of music permitted in church was closely monitored and that although simple chanted Latin responses may have been permissible alongside German versified psalms, anything more complex would have been a step too far at that time. Moreover, although some of the \textit{Cantiones} texts are suited to certain feasts, they do not always correspond to those celebrated in Strasbourg. For example, although Lupi’s \textit{Apparens Christus} is derived from a text for Ascension, a

\textsuperscript{29} Indeed, the \textit{Cantiones} were not the first Latin polyphonic works to be published in Strasbourg during the Reformation: Schöffer was also responsible for several other polyphonic collections of music (see chapter 2).

\textsuperscript{30} His \textit{Formula Missae et Communionis pro Ecclesia Vuittembergensi} (Wittenberg: Schirlentz, 1523) permitted a choir to sing the Lutheran Mass in Latin, whereas the \textit{Deutsche Messe vnd Ordnu[n]g Gotes diensts / zů Wittemberg / fürgenom[m]en} (Augsburg: Steiner, 1526) encouraged congregational song in the vernacular, but was designed as an alternative to, rather than a replacement for, the \textit{Formula missae}.

\textsuperscript{31} There had been Latin schools in the city since before the Reformation, at which music formed part of the curriculum. Several new private schools emerged in the city during the 1520s and 1530s. From the early 1530s, evidence shows that school pupils began leading the congregational singing during worship. In 1538, Johann Sturm’s Gymnasium opened, providing a classical education for the boys of Strasbourg’s aristocracy and guildsmen, with music tuition on Saturday afternoons, and psalms in German and Latin several times per day. See Trocmé-Latter, \textit{The Singing of the Strasbourg Protestants}, pp. 150–4; also Marcel Fournier and Charles Engel, eds, ‘Gymnase, académie, université de Strasbourg, 1525–1621’, in Fournier, ed., \textit{Les Statuts et privilèges des universités françaises depuis leur fondation jusqu’ en 1789}, 4 vols (Paris: Larose & Forcel, 1890–4), vol. 4, p. 6, n. 2.

\textsuperscript{32} See appendix 2.

\textsuperscript{33} Nevertheless, Ferdinand’s Catholicism was not enough to prevent Hans Ott in Protestant Nuremberg from making a dedication to him in the \textit{Novum et insigne opus musicum} (1537) and \textit{Secundus tomus novi operis musici} (1538); see chapter 2, p. 52.
feast which was reintroduced in Strasbourg in 1537, \^{34} Billon’s *Postquam impleti sunt* relates to the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which played no part in the city’s Protestant calendar. There is, in particular, a large quantity of Marian devotion present in the collection which looks distinctly out of place in the Strasbourg of the 1530s and 40s. \^{35} Bucer and his colleague Wolfgang Capito had spoken out against the cult of saints, in particular that of Mary; \^{36} this alone would have rendered motets such as Gombert’s *Inviolata, integra et casta es Maria*, Willaert’s *Lætare sancta mater ecclesia*, and Ferrariensis’s *Ave gaude et gloriosa virgo Maria* theologically unusable in the Strasbourg liturgy, despite closer Lutheran ties. Of the Roman traditional Marian feasts, only the celebration of the Annunciation was at first permitted in Strasbourg following the publication of the 1534 church order. \^{37} Despite this, there is no suggestion that the early Strasbourg reformers ever advocated the use of the Hail Mary as a prayer (Luther, on the other hand, did so \^{38}). Had the collection been destined for Strasbourg’s churches, this would make Maistre Jhan’s setting of the *Pater noster–Ave Maria* a rather odd choice. Finally, there is no evidence in any of the surviving *Cantiones* exemplars of the texts being substituted for ones that might be more acceptable to Protestant ears. \^{39}

In summary, then, it seems implausible that this anthology was designed for ecclesiastical use in Strasbourg in 1539 \^{40} – nor that it received any official civic or religious endorsement. Although closer ties with Luther’s Wittenberg, where choral polyphony still flourished, were pursued, the Strasbourg reformers ultimately remained in control of the contents of their city’s liturgy and musical practices. There is no

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\^{34} Bornert, *Réforme protestante du culte*, p. 491.

\^{35} This includes settings of texts such as *Nigra sum sed formosa* which, although from the Old Testament, are often in their traditional Christian reading considered to refer to the Virgin Mary. Other saints that feature include Mary Magdalene (Willaert, *Congratulamini mihi omnes*) and John the Evangelist (Gombert, *Hic est discipulus ille*).


\^{37} *Ibid.*, p. 126. N.B.: Mary was closely associated with the Dominican order, in which Bucer had started his religious training; see Greschat, *Martin Bucer: A Reformer and His Times*, p. 15.


\^{39} Cross-confessional *contrafacta* were not uncommon during the sixteenth century, in all sorts of genres. Take, for example, Montanus and Neuber’s 1559 adaptations of Josquin’s Marian motets for Protestant eyes and ears – and their reappropriation by the Catholic side. Christian T. Leitmeir discusses this and several other examples in ‘Beyond the Denominational Paradigm: The motet as confessional(ising) practice in the later sixteenth century’, in Daniele V. Filippi and Esperanza Rodriguez-Garcia, eds, *Mapping the Motet in the Post-Tridentine Era* (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 154–92. See also below – chapter 2, pp. 52–3.

\^{40} The picture is admittedly complicated by the uncertain nature of the motet in Catholic worship during the sixteenth century; see Anthony M. Cummings, ‘Toward an Interpretation of the Sixteenth Century Motet’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 34 (1981), pp. 43–59.
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evidence that the appearance of the Cantiones was intended to complement either the church order of 1534 or the Concord of Wittenberg of 1536 – or indeed that it was a celebration of the reintroduction of certain church feasts. The use of a collection like Schöffer’s Cantiones was therefore impractical in Strasbourg on many levels, relating not only to the apparent lack of a formal choir in the city but also to the (un)suitability of the texts set to music in the collection. This leaves only two plausible possibilities: that the collection was destined primarily for ecclesiastical use in other areas of Europe, or else for domestic settings, either in Strasbourg or further afield. After the abolition of the choirs, there would of course still have been musicians in Strasbourg who were capable of singing such repertory, and no doubt many who would have been willing to do so in the privacy of their own homes. There is no evidence of residents of Strasbourg being punished for performing this sort of music,⁴¹ although nor do we have evidence of such activities occurring at all. This is not to say, however, that such pastimes did not take place.

Outline

This monograph seeks to address the following issues. Firstly, as a Protestant publisher based in Strasbourg, why would Schöffer have chosen to publish the Cantiones? The tone of Schöffer’s dedicatory preface is more concerned with the prospect of bringing these works to light, for the benefit of the public, than anything to do with the Reformation. Indeed, it makes no mention of the pope, Luther, any of the Strasbourg reformers – nor Strasbourg at all, for that matter. Not only that, but a brief glance at the Cantiones contents pages might lead one to conclude that Schöffer was actually attempting to conceal the nature of some of the texts, especially as the text incipit for the secunda pars of each motet is never provided on those pages.⁴² Thus, a cursory glance through these contents pages by a prospective – albeit slightly naïve – Protestant buyer would provide no reason to dismiss the collection on the grounds of being too ‘päpstlich’.

Secondly, what was the nature of Schöffer’s connection with Werrecore in Milan? As Bonnie Blackburn has asserted, the mention of Werrecore in the collection’s introductory matter ‘is a precious and exceedingly rare personal testimony of the musical exchange between North and South’.⁴³ For this reason alone this anthology deserves a closer look: what can be learnt about the reception and movement of music across the continent at this time?


⁴² See chapter 2, figure 2.4, and pp. 54–5. In the case of Maistre Jhan’s Pater noster–Ave Maria, for example, the contents page makes no mention of the Ave Maria part of the piece; Gombert’s Inviolata, integra et casta es Maria–O benigna o Maria is presented simply as ‘Inviolata’; Ferrariensis’s Ave et gaude gloriosa virgo appears just as ‘Aue & gaude’; Billon’s Postquam impleti sunt des purgationis Marie omits everything in the title after ‘sunt’.

The anthology also requires our attention for the third aspect, namely the repertoire itself. Although a number of the composers featured in the Cantiones are familiar names, some remain in relative obscurity, while others are barely known and remain today in scholarly oblivion. Schön’s anthology, therefore, is of significant historical value in enhancing our knowledge both of these composers’ repertoire and their working lives. The anthology also contains a small number of unica works, some of which until now have never been published in modern scholarly editions.

In order to address these questions, this book comprises an investigation of the Cantiones anthology, including the circumstances leading to its creation as well as the music itself. The first part of the monograph is concerned primarily with the history of the Cantiones, and a variety of sources (written archival documents, modern secondary sources, music manuscripts, as well as the anthology itself) are used in combination to form a more complete picture. Chapter 1 provides a brief profile of Peter Schön’s the Younger, for whom no substantial modern English-language biography exists. Chapter 2 explores the history of the German motet anthology genre, as well as the function and design of the Cantiones, building on the idea that Schön’s collection would have been aimed primarily at performers and bibliophiles outside Strasbourg, in certain Lutheran parts of Europe (especially Germany) as well as in Catholic areas. Schön’s potential connections with Milan – specifically to Werrecore, choirmaster of Milan Cathedral – are explored in chapter 3, which attempts to untangle the complex network between early modern performers, composers, and publishers in order to establish how the Cantiones came into existence. The second part of the monograph is concerned with the music itself, dealing with all 28 works grouped by composer. Special attention is given to works which were published for the first time in the Cantiones, or which are unique to this collection. First, the motets by Nicolas Gombert are considered in chapter 4. Gombert, as a prime example of the late Franco-Flemish style, features eight or nine times in this anthology, comprising almost a third of the total number of motets; his significance is therefore not to be underestimated. Chapter 5 deals with the second most popular composers in the Cantiones, Adrian Willaert and Jacquet of Mantua, both of whom were born in northern Europe but who spent most of their lives in Italy. The works of the remaining composers, some of whom are quite obscure – including the mysterious ‘Sarton’, attributed in a handwritten addition to the Munich exemplar as the author of Hæc dies quam fecit Dominus – are discussed in chapter 6. Finally, diplomatic transcriptions of the motets are hosted on the Boydell & Brewer website, while a performing edition has been published separately and can be downloaded for free. Meanwhile, professional recordings of most of the motets are also readily available.

This monograph, therefore, helps inform our understanding of early modern composition, transmission, performing, publishing, and collecting, and in doing so forms part of a project consisting of the result of historical research, musical critical editorial work, and performance: a truly interactive experience of interest both to the academic and the performer, whether student, professional, or amateur.

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45 www.imprimis.uk/cantiones1539.
46 See appendix 4 for a full list.
Part I
The Story
Peter Schöffer the Younger

The Schöffer family name has long been a source of intrigue for researchers of the early modern era. The family provides a linear connection between the legendary Johannes Gutenberg – the so-called ‘father’ of the printing press in Europe – and the Protestant Reformation, with a dose of Anabaptist mystique thrown in for good measure. Peter Schöffer the Younger seems to have been proud of his family’s trade and heritage, and, for scholars of Strasbourg in particular, his period of employment in the city also provides a satisfying link back to Gutenberg, who had lived there a century earlier. Schöffer, a very skilled die-cutter and typefounder, supplied his own type to other printers at various stages throughout his career, and evidently took great satisfaction in his own printing work. His interest in music manifested itself early in his life, and he continued to print music using a multiple-impression technique – where the staves and notes are printed separately – even after single-impression printing had become the industry standard.


The Strasbourg Cantiones of 1539

Although relatively abundant, biographical references to Peter Schöffer the Younger have tended to be brief, often forming parts of wider historical studies of printing or printers. Some contain confused, misleading, or false statements about his life and works. Furthermore, little of the literature is available in English. This chapter is therefore an attempt to provide an accurate bibliographical overview of Schöffer, while providing context for the events that led him to publish his Cantiones in Strasbourg in 1539, before he abandoned music publishing – and eventually all publishing – entirely.

Peter was the third of four sons born into the Schöffer household, and the grandson of the printer Johannes Fust. Peter’s father, Peter Schöffer the Elder, was born around 1430 in Gernsheim, near Darmstadt. He began his career as a scribe in Paris, before moving to Mainz sometime around the middle of the fifteenth century, where he began working for Fust. At that time, Fust was the business partner of Johannes Gutenberg, whose operation was revolutionising the process of book production. However, shortly after their earliest publications came off the press, the business fell apart, and Gutenberg lost to Fust in the ensuing court proceedings. This resulted in Fust acquiring the workshop, most of its contents, and its operation, leaving Gutenberg effectively bankrupt. Fust continued to run the press with Peter Schöffer the Elder, and shortly afterwards, on 14 August 1457, they produced the Mainz Psalter in their two names (and notably omitting any reference to Gutenberg). Around a decade later, following the death of Fust in 1466, Schöffer married Fust’s daughter, Christina, thereby inheriting the business that Gutenberg himself had founded several decades earlier. By 1490, the press’s output included

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5 There are exceptions: the best general and up-to-date biography is a detailed (albeit imperfect) chapter by Zorzin, ‘Peter Schöffer d. J. und die Täufer’. From a musical standpoint, Schöffer’s MGG entry is a reliable summary (Royston Gustavson, ‘Schöffer, Schoeffer, Peter d.J.’, in Laurenz Lütteken, ed., MGG Online (www.mgg-online.com; accessed 30 March 2022)), and Lindmayr-Brandl’s 2010 essay is also a very important contribution to the field, though focuses mainly on his early life and career (Lindmayr-Brandl, ‘Peter Schöffer der Jüngere, das Erbe Gutenbergs und die “wahre Kunst des Druckens”’, in Birgit Lodes, ed., NiveauNischeNimbus: Die Anfänge des Musikdrucks nördlich der Alpen (Tutzing: Schneider, 2010), pp. 283–312).


7 See Füssel, Gutenberg, pp. 41–6.

8 [Psalterium] (Mainz: Fust & Schöffer, 1457). The publication details are given on the final page of text. See also Füssel, Gutenberg, pp. 85–9.