

O gloriosa (inter) cantionum... or how a simple tune of mysterious origin travelled between different confessions, languages, geographic areas and musical genres in 17th-century Central Europe

Katarzyna Spurgiasz (University of Warsaw, Warsaw)

Once upon a time (but not later than in early thirties of the 17th century), somewhere in Central Europe (more or less between the Baltic Sea and the Carpathian Mountains), an author (whose name has not been recorded by the history) composed a simple tune (suitable for a four-verse stanza with eight syllables in each verse). A story like many others, giving not too many points of reference for further research. Why bother? Why is this tune distinguished among ten thousand?

The first occasion for this melody to become an object of research was an analysis of Marcin Mielczewski's *Missa super O gloriosa Domina*, as it was used as a pre-compositional material for a mass setting. Later it was also discovered in other composition by Mielczewski – a sacred vocal concerto *Audite gentes et exsultate*. Its presence in the output of a Polish court composer, as well as the text incipit of a Marian hymn (*O gloriosa Domina*) led to a statement that it was connected to Catholic milieu in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Its reception, however, turned out to be much wider. From the thirties of the 17th century onwards this tune made a brilliant career in different confessional and linguistic contexts. It was printed in hymnbooks from Gdańsk to Trnava and from Cracow to... Amsterdam (where Jan Amos Komenský brought it). It was sung by Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists and Czech Brethren with almost a dozen of texts in different languages. The variant in triple metre seems to be more popular, but another version in duple metre also exists. In most of the sources it is notated as a monophonic song, however Mielczewski's two polyphonic settings were not unique.

All that panorama leads us to further questions about cultural exchange and paths of transmission in 17th-century Central Europe, where different lines of division coexisted with networks and communication nodes...