

Introduction

Iniquissimam pacem justissimo bello antefero.

I prefer, says the sagacious and humane Cicero, the most impolitic and disadvantageous peace, to the justest war; and yet with what precipitancy and on what trifling occasions do countries often rush into war with each another!

– Erasmus, *Adagia*, 1508¹

By 1530 Europe had tired of war. For decades the respective rulers of France and the Habsburg Empire had squabbled over control of the wealth and power of the Italian city-republics and the Papal States. Open warfare broke out in 1494; the next sixty years were marked by both diplomatic intrigue and armed conflict.

Alliances were formed, broken, and reformed. The Sforza family of Milan were the first to manipulate the foreign powers; in forging an alliance with the French they hoped to secure Milan's position against the rising influence of Venice. The results were disastrous. Both Naples and Milan fell under Habsburg control after the French were comprehensively defeated in 1526. In Rome, Pope Julius II first aligned himself with the French against the Venetians, then reversed course and backed the Venetians against the French; such outrageous diplomatic manoeuvres were designed to maintain the delicate position of the Papal States, but Julius's duplicity and corruption, coupled with that shown by his successor Clement VII against the Habsburgs, led to the Sack of Rome by Habsburg troops in 1527.

The elevation of Charles V to the title of Holy Roman Emperor in 1521 inflamed tensions with France still further, for many of those who had supported Charles had been bribed to ensure the title of Emperor remained out of France's grasp. The capture of Francis I at the Battle of Pavia in 1525 prompted the French to forge an unprecedented alliance between Catholic France and the

¹ Translated in "Proverbs, Chiefly Taken from the Adagia of Erasmus with Explanations", Egerton, 1814.

Muslim Ottomans that scandalised the Christian world. The emboldened Turks invaded Hungary in 1526 and threatened to expand further into Europe before being held back at the Siege of Vienna.

With France agitating in the West and the Ottomans in the East, Charles could ill afford social discord within his own territories. Yet domestically, too, he faced serious challenges. In 1517 Martin Luther began his protests against ecclesiastical indulgences; the rise of the printing press ensured that his complaints spread rapidly through the Habsburg territories. The problem was serious: Luther had challenged the infallibility of the Pope, and if the Pope could be fallible then the Pope's Emperor could be also. The 1521 Imperial Diet in the city of Worms was convened to debate the matter, with Charles himself presiding; Luther was summoned to appear, and declared by imperial decree to be a heretic:

"... We [Charles V] forbid anyone from this time forward to dare, either by words or by deeds, to receive, defend, sustain, or favour the said Martin Luther. On the contrary, We want him to be apprehended and punished as a notorious heretic, as he deserves ..."

It was too late. Luther had already been safely spirited away from Worms by Frederick III of Saxony, and when he emerged from a period of enforced solitude – the first translation of the Bible in German the product of his exile – Charles failed to press for his capture, being by now too distracted by war and diplomacy. The teachings of Luther spread. The Reformation had begun.

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Augsburg was by this time one of the richest cities in the Empire. The mining profits of the Fugger family had financed both the massive bribery necessary to guarantee the elevation of Charles to Holy Roman Emperor as well as the state of continual war that had by now lasted for decades. On the back of huge loans to the Imperial Treasury the Fugger family had become immensely rich, and, as generous patrons, their home city of Augsburg had also prospered. Neither were they the only wealthy citizens. Charles' grandfather, Maximilian I, had made Augsburg, Innsbruck and Vienna his three principal courts, and these cities rapidly became important cultural centres during the Germanic and Austrian Renaissance, with Maximilian's Kapelle attracting German speaking musicians of international renown such as Heinrich Isaac, Ludwig Senfl and Paul Hofhaimer.

The Franciscan monk Sigmund Salblinger² (ca. 1500 – ?1563) had been so greatly affected by Luther's teachings that he renounced his membership of the Franciscan order in Munich in 1526 and moved to Augsburg to join the Reformist Anabaptist movement there. Soon he was elected its leader. Imperial disapproval of Reformists resulted in Salblinger's imprisonment in 1527; he was ordered to leave the city in 1531. Somehow, perhaps with the support of patrons, he successfully petitioned to remain in Augsburg; by 1537 he had been reinstated to full citizenship, and by 1539 he had secured imperial assent for the publication of a new collection of music. This was a notable achievement given his public history of Reformist sympathies.

Until this point Salblinger had collaborated with the printer Philipp Ulhart on his pamphlets and publications, but for this new project (perhaps due to the specialist demands associated with printing music) he selected a new printer, Melchior Kriesstein (ca. 1500 – ?1572), who had moved to Augsburg from Basel sometime before 1525 to continue the family printing business.

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The Ottoman attack on Vienna in 1529 had been a particular shock to Charles' brother, Ferdinand I, for it was in Vienna that he held his court; the Siege had forced him to flee to Bohemia. That Hungary was now a protectorate of the Muslim Suleiman the Magnificent was not only a significant diplomatic embarrassment to the Habsburg Empire but also a measure of the steadily increasing military power of the Ottomans.

It was essential that the Empire show a united front against this Eastern threat, but the ongoing religious controversies in imperial Germany, Austria and Switzerland made this impossible. Charles called for a new Imperial Diet to be held in Augsburg in the spring of 1530 tasked with finding a solution to the ongoing religious schism. Luther was ordered to attend but declined to do so, having received no guarantee of safe passage to and from Augsburg. Other Reformist leaders attended in his stead, presenting their articles of faith – drafted diplomatically so as to avoid strident language or abuse of the papacy – in the Confession of Augsburg.

Their care was in vain. The Diet rejected the Confession in September 1530 and demanded the Reformists renounce their heresy. Entrenched positions on both sides of the schism led inexorably to civil war between Catholic Imperials and an alliance of Lutheran princes. The

2 The surname is spelt "Salminger" in some modern publications, including *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. This Edition follows the spelling in the source.

Imperial forces would ultimately prevail, but it was not until 1555 that Ferdinand could negotiate a lasting peace between the two sides; by this time Protestantism was so firmly entrenched in the culture of central Europe that Ferdinand had to choose between enforcing Catholicism across the Empire through the application of military force or accepting the demands of state princes to freely determine which religion would be practised within their territories. Recognising that the former would mean widespread revolt across core Habsburg territories, Ferdinand chose the latter. This Settlement of Augsburg of 1555 was a major victory for Protestantism.

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It is against this background of incipient religious schism that Salblinger and Kriesstein published the *Selectissimae Necnon Familiarissimae*. Ferdinand himself had granted royal approval in October of 1539, deeming the publication “nihil obscoeni habeant inque Ecclesia Christinana receptae sint, atque adeo Catholicae Fidei Religionique nostrum convenient” (“containing nothing objectionable, [therefore being] acceptable in the Church of Christ, even the Catholic Faith of Our Religion”) and granting Salblinger a license of copyright for a period of five years.³ It seems remarkable that the brother of the Holy Roman Emperor should grant such an assent to a known Reformist.

By the standards of its day *Selectissimae Necnon Familiarissimae* is a large publication. It includes 104 items by 42 composers and one anonymous item.⁴ Five languages are represented; in his introductory letter to the publication, Salblinger hopes that, by presenting Latin (Catholic) and German (Protestant) works together, the music in the publication can have a unifying effect.⁵ One of the few areas in which Catholics and Protestants found any agreement was the importance of music in the liturgy. Luther himself had referred to music as “*Dei donum optimi*” (“the gift of the supreme God”) and lauded Josquin as the world’s greatest composer. Salblinger tends towards the poetic rather than the explicit in his hope that music might be a unifying force for good between Catholics and Reformists, perhaps exhibiting care in his choice of language due to the tensions

3 Translated in Appendix iii.

4 Catalogued in Appendix iv.

5 Translated in Appendix iii.

between the two schools of theology.⁶ However, it is surely no accident that the final item in the collection is a setting of *Musica Dei donum optimi*.

Nearly half of the collection is in Latin (42 items), with the bulk of the remainder in French and German (34 and 19 items respectively). Dutch and Italian items are also represented, although only a few of each. We are clearly still in the age of the French chanson; the madrigal is yet to assert its dominance, with just one example by Philippe Verdelot included. A handful of the canonic works are untexted, possibly suggesting a role for instruments; unfortunately the source contains no rubrics that might reveal the intention of these canons.

The items in the collection employ a wide variety of vocal dispositions. The canonic works show particular flexibility, offering examples ranging from three to eight voices. The most common vocal scoring is four voices (41 items), then five voices (25 items), then six voices (21 items).

The collection is ordered by language and then by voice disposition. The sacred Latin works are presented at the front of the collection; the works for six voices appear first, then those for five, then those for four voices. (The sole Latin work for eight voices, Jean Mouton's *Nesciens Mater*, appears between the last of the five voiced works and the first of the four voiced works; there are only four parts of music printed in the part-books, since the remaining four parts are canonic derivations of the four printed.)⁷ After the Latin works come the French chansons, again in order of descending number of voices, followed by the handful of Italian and Dutch works. The substantial body of German works rounds out the collection. The final item is a secular Latin work by Tylman Susato, *Musica Dei donum optimi*.

Many of the composers represented in the collection would have been familiar to the musical intelligentsia of Augsburg. Ludwig Senfl and Heinrich Isaac, two of the most prominent composers in Maximilian I's court, are represented; thirteen items of the items are attributed to Senfl, giving him the largest representation of any composer in the collection. That the Franco-Flemish school of composition was dominant during this period is apparent through the

6 The idea that music could serve as a unifying force was not new; Ludwig Senfl's motet *Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres* was composed for the opening of the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 specifically as "an exhortation to unity between the church factions" ("Senfl, Ludwig", *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*).

7 *Nesciens Mater* is one of three Marian motets included in the Latin corpus. These three motets offer praise to Mary as the virgin mother of Christ but do not venerate Mary as a saint or otherwise make reference to Catholic Marian doctrine; as such, they would have been compatible with Reformist beliefs of the period.