

Listening to Early Modern Catholicism

Perspectives from Musicology

Edited by

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1. Early Modern Catholicism: The State of Research
John W. O'Malley
2. Music among the Disciples in Early Modern Catholicism
Robert L. Kendrick
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3. Liturgical Music and Liturgical Experience in Early Modern Catholicism
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Daniele V. Filippi



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Introduction

Daniele V. Filippi and Michael Noone

Early Modern Catholicism—a term coined by historian John W. O'Malley in the 1990s¹—has proved to be a useful, if not uncontroversial, historiographical concept. Neutral yet inclusive, it offers a welcome alternative to—or, better still, integration of—such familiar labels as 'Counter Reformation and Catholic Reform' or 'Confessional Catholicism'.² As O'Malley himself states in the contribution that opens the present volume: 'Early Modern Catholicism is a category not to replace the others but to relativize them by suggesting the greater breadth of the Catholic reality'.³ Early Modern Catholicism appropriately captures both the complexity and the 'dynamic diversity' of Catholic experience.⁴ In parallel with 'early modern era' (a concept that, in turn, has been questioned, and adopted herein divested of its teleological bias),⁵ the open arms of this category invite us to embrace a *longue durée* perspective.⁶

- 1 See O'Malley J.W., *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, MA: 2000) 6–8.
- 2 Among the many discussions concerning the historiographical problem of renaming Catholic experience in the period, see Bireley B., *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450–1700: A Reassessment of the Counter Reformation* (Washington, DC: 1999), ch. 1; Po-chia Hsia R., *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770*, 2nd ed. (New York: 2005), Introduction; Bedouelle G., *The Reform of Catholicism, 1480–1620* (Toronto: 2008), ch. 1; Clossey L., *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (New York: 2008), ch. 11; and Ditchfield S., "Tridentine Catholicism", in Bamji A. – Janssen G.H. – Laven M. (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2013) 15–31.
- 3 See also O'Malley, *Trent and All That* 140.
- 4 See Comerford K.M. – Pabel H.M. (eds.), *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honour of John W. O'Malley, S.J.* (Toronto: 2001) ix.
- 5 The shortcomings of 'early modern' are thoughtfully discussed in Cave T., "Locating the Early Modern", *Paragraph* 29, 1 (2006) 12–26. Both concepts belong primarily to anglophone scholarship; for other historiographical traditions, see O'Malley, *Trent and All That* 143 and Cave, "Locating the Early Modern" 12 and n. 2. On the relationship between 'early modern era' and 'Renaissance', see Fantoni M., "Storia di un'idea", in idem (ed.), *Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa: 1. Storia e storiografia* (Vicenza: 2005) 3–33.
- 6 Without being chronologically indeterminate, Early Modern Catholicism 'leaves the chronological question open at both ends', reaching from roughly the fifteenth to the late eighteenth century. See O'Malley, *Trent and All That* 141.

While the term has inspired fruitful and lively conversation among historians and scholars of many disciplines,⁷ musicology has yet to fully exploit its potential. True, various developments in and around the discipline seem to have prepared the ground. To begin with, recent decades have witnessed a crisis in the conventional style-based periodization, derived from art history, that elevated the year 1600 to the status of a watershed neatly separating the Renaissance and the Baroque.⁸ This crisis was precipitated, in part, by the growing consideration, within musicology as a whole, of cultural and social contexts, and of the dynamics of reception, by which the traditional over-emphasis on works and style—an approach that made music history largely coincide with the history of innovation in composition—was substantially re-balanced. At the same time, responding to stimuli from both outside and inside the discipline (most notably the rise and growth of ‘sound studies’),⁹ historical musicologists have increasingly contemplated a range of phenomena that extends beyond the borders that defined ‘art music’. In considering neglected repertoires and oral practices, and by including such factors as silence, noise, and non-musical sounds, musicologists have begun to investigate the role of a wide array of sonic phenomena in the life of past communities and to examine how these phenomena interacted with spaces, life rhythms, and mentalities. Thus, such recent studies as Robert Kendrick’s *The Sounds of Milan*, David R.M. Irving’s *Colonial Counterpoint*, and Andrew Dell’Antonio’s *Listening as Spiritual Practice in Early Modern Italy* can be said to have explored a variety of individual Catholic soundscapes of the early modern era.¹⁰ Whereas, however, a

7 The term has been criticized as a bland ‘identifier’ with no theoretical bedrock: ‘it imposes no artificial analytical divides because it attempts no analysis’ (Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* 248–249). O’Malley, however, while conceding the ‘blandness’ of the term, has emphasized its ‘scope and flexibility’ and its ready amenability to the results of ‘history from below’ (O’Malley, *Trent and All That* 141–143).

8 Haar J. (ed.), *European Music, 1520–1640* (Woodbridge – Rochester, NY: 2006) is probably the most organic attempt, to date, to explore an alternative periodization in studying the music from this period.

9 ‘Sound studies is a name for the interdisciplinary ferment in the human sciences that takes sound as its analytical point of departure or arrival’. Sterne J. “Sonic Imaginations”, in idem (ed.), *The Sound Studies Reader* (New York: 2012) 1–18, at 2.

10 Kendrick R.L., *The Sounds of Milan, 1585–1650* (New York: 2002); Irving D.R.M., *Colonial Counterpoint: Music in Early Modern Manila* (Oxford – New York: 2010); Dell’Antonio A., *Listening as Spiritual Practice in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: 2011). See also Fisher A.J., *Music, Piety, and Propaganda: The Soundscapes of Counter-Reformation Bavaria* (New York: 2014), whose first chapter contains important historiographical and methodological elucidations.