

Theses for DLA doctoral dissertation

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**Variations of the Te Deum Melody**

New Data from Latin Resources

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## I. Groundwork for the research

The history of the Te Deum has a considerable literature. Firstly three works by the scholars Julian,<sup>8</sup> Cagin<sup>9</sup> és Kähler<sup>10</sup> each count as seminal historical and analytical works dealing comprehensively with the subject. Looking for textual sources, parallels between the Te Deum and various ancient rites were discovered, the later composition and addition of certain verses was exposed – as stands taken in opposition to certain heretical teachings, for example – and an attempt at outlining the actual circumstances of the creation of these lines and unmasking the legends was made through explanation and interpretation of the text.

There are also studies dealing with the melody of the Te Deum, with two scholars leading the way in finding and analysing the variants, Peter Wagner in Germany, and Janka Szendrei in Hungary. Their works provide an overview of how rich in variants the melody is, while their comparative analyses

## V. Documentation of activities more broadly related to the subject of this study

### Publication and presentation:

– László Dobszay– Judit Takáts: „A sequentia”.

In: *Egyházzenei Füzetek II/9.* (Budapest, 2006).

– 11 March 2010. Zsoltárkonferencia (Országos Rabbiképző Zsidó Egyetem): Zsoltározás, és a 95/94. zsoltár előadásmódja a zsidó és a nyugati kereszteny liturgiában. Conference on Psalms (Budapest University of Jewish Studies): Psalms singing and performance practice of Psalm no. 95/94 in the Jewish and the Western Christian liturgy.

### Concert:

– 7 May 2008. Budapest, Aeila Sabina Zeneiskola: Charles Tournemire: Improvisation sur le “Te Deum”

– 20 February 2009. Budapest, Szt. Teréz templom: Louis Marchand: Te Deum

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<sup>8</sup> *A Dictionary of Hymnology.* Edited by John Julian: Volume II. P-Z. (New York, 1957): 1119-1134.

<sup>9</sup> Cagin, Paul: *Te Deum ou Illatio? Contribution a l'Historie de l'Euchologie Latine.* (Solesmes, 1906)

<sup>10</sup> Kähler, Ernst: *Studien zum Te Deum und zur Geschichte des 24. Psalms in der alten Kirche.* (Göttingen, 1958)

#### IV. Findings

The objective set, as the subject of the study was intended, was to present the variants of the melody of the Te Deum – after supplementing the transcriptions from already available sources with new ones – in a systematic fashion. A significant finding and new discovery in this field of research – supported by two new transcriptions from my own research and one clarified interpretation of an existing one – is that the melodic variant based on four forms of the melody is not only a tradition found in Hungary, a variant that had probably spread in various parts of Europe.

It could be counted as another result of the research if current Church practice would give place to this melodic variant – proven to have been a part of earlier Hungarian Church practice – with the appropriate Hungarian text. Janka Szendrei and László Dobcsay had proposed a concrete solution for this in the course of their work.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Janka Szendrei: „A Te Deum mint ökumenikus örökségünk” (The Te Deum as our ecumenical heritage). *Magyar Egyházzene* X/2-3 (2002/2003): 231-233.

focus on particular traditions of one or another kind. The studies I found most useful were the following:

- Wagner, Peter: “Das Te Deum”. *Gregorianischen Rundschau* 6 (1907): 49-55. 65-70. 81-85. 98-104. 114-118.
- Wagner, Peter: *Einführung in die Gregorianischen Melodien III*. Gregorianische Formenlehre. Leipzig, 1921. 224-264. o.
- Janka, Szendrei: “Első hangjegyes népénekünk. A Te Deum-dallam magyarországi története”. In: Vargyas Lajos (szerk.): *Népzene és zenetörténet III*. Budapest: Editio Musica, 1977. 102-133. 262-277.
- Janka, Szendrei: „A Te Deum mint ökumenikus örökségünk” (The Te Deum as our ecumenical heritage). *Magyar Egyházzene* X/2-3 (2002/2003): 221-233.
- Szendrei Janka: „Altius canuntur? Durandus on the Performance of the Te Deum”. In: Edited by Terence Bailey and László Dobcsay: *Studies in Medieval Chant and Liturgy in Honour of David Hiley*. Budapest, 2007. 413-424.
- The Polish sources were compiled by Jerzy Morawski<sup>11</sup>, and his study was also of great help in comparing melodic variants.

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<sup>11</sup> Morawski, Jerzy: „The Te Deum laudamus in Polish Manuscripts”. In: Edited by David Hiley and Gábor Kiss: *Dies est leticie. Essays on chant in Honour of Janka Szendrei*. (Ottawa, Canada: The Institute of Mediaeval Music, 2008), 393-412.

The melodic variants of the A Te Deum are only available for research in small numbers and their distribution is geographically wide, which means that no comprehensive, systematising work has yet been completed in the field.

## **II. Sources**

The sources for my work are manuscript books of the Latin liturgy in formats ranging from codices, through microfilm, to digitized materials. Ready sources – which had already been transcribed and prepared – were used only after comparison with the original, or (in cases where the transcription was not equivocal) along with the original. My own research also included a few libraries in Prague<sup>13</sup> and Paris<sup>14</sup>. The research conducted in Prague was guided by a catalogue, which helped me to trace complete musically notated Te Deums in twelve sources. In Paris –lacking a catalogue – I found, in the course of sifting through 107 sources (codex and microfilm) five notated items, one segment, as well as four scored incipits and five signals placed in rubrics.

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<sup>13</sup> Prague, Národní Knihovna České Republiky.

<sup>14</sup> Paris, Bibliothéque Nationale de France.

## **III. Methodology**

To begin with, my research was dedicated to a study of the origins of the Te Deum, its liturgical history, assisted by the books and studies analysing the text. I approached the musical aspect by only following this, reading the literature in parallel, and observing the variety of propositions and the melodic transformations in individual melodic variants. The next step was a mapping of the melodic variants, including the transcription of the new sources and the comparison of the already transcribed material with their originals, and then the preparation of the variants through analyses, grouping and evaluation.

The structure of the study also follows the above order: following a presentation of the origins, text and melody of the Te Deum, a central chapter dealing with the comparative analysis in which the variants of the Te Deum melody are introduced in three broad groups. In the appendix attached, the material that forms the subject of the study can be found, the melodic variants – those already prepared, as well as those found in new sources – in a modern transcription.