

When The Congregation Learned to Sing: German Hymnody in the Wake of the Reformation

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Week #1 (September 10): Latin Liturgical Sequences and the Roots of German Congregational Singing

- Introduction
- Music-historical context: “congregational singing” before the Reformation; Renaissance sacred music;

Samples

- The Oxyrhynchus hymn (Greek-Third century)
- *Dies irae* (Day of Judgment) from the Requiem Mass
- *Veni Sancte Spiritus* (Come, Holy Spirit) – Pentecost sequence
- **Victimae paschali laudes* (To the Paschal Victim Offer Sacrifice and Praise) – Easter sequence

Victimae paschali laudes immolent Christiani.	<i>Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer sacrifice and praise.</i>	Angelicos testes, sudarium, et vestes.	<i>The angels there attesting; shroud with grave-clothes resting.</i>
Agnus redemit oves: Christus innocens Patri reconciliavit peccatores.	<i>The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb; and Christ, the undefiled, hath sinners to his Father reconciled.</i>	Surrexit Christus spes mea: praecedet suos [vos] in Galilaeam.	<i>Christ, my hope, has risen: He goes before you into Galilee.</i>
Mors et vita duello confluxere mirando: dux vitae mortuus, regnat vivus.	<i>Death with life contended: combat strangely ended! Life's own Champion, slain, yet lives to reign.</i>	[Credendum est magis soli Mariae veraci Quam Judaeorum Turbae fallaci.]	<i>[More to be believed is truthful Mary by herself than the deceitful crowd of the Jews.]</i>
Dic nobis Maria, quid vidisti in via?	<i>Tell us, Mary: say what thou didst see upon the way?</i>	Scimus Christum surrexisse a mortuis vere: tu nobis, victor Rex, miserere. [Amen.] [Alleluia.]	<i>That Christ is truly risen from the dead we know. Victorious King, Thy mercy show! Amen. Alleluia.</i>
Sepulcrum Christi viventis, et gloriam vidi resurgentis	<i>The tomb the Living did enclose; I saw Christ's glory as He rose!</i>		

- *Christ ist erstanden / Christ is arisen*: “The first German hymn” (12th-15th c.)

Christ ist erstanden von der Marter alle. Des solln wir alle froh sein; Christ will unser Trost sein. Kyrieleis.	<i>Christ is risen from all the torments (sufferings; agonies; ordeals: etc.). Therefore we should all rejoice; Christ wants to be our comfort. Kyrie eleison.</i>
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Wär er nicht erstanden, so wär die Welt vergangen; seit daß er erstanden ist, so freut sich alles, was da ist [so lobn wir den Vater Jesu Christ!] Kyrieleis.	<i>If he had not risen, the world would have perished; because he has risen all that exists rejoices [we praise the Father of Jesus Christ!] Kyrie eleison.</i>
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Hallelujah, hallelujah
Hallelujah!
Des solln wir alle froh sein;
Christ will unser Trost sein.

Kyrieleis.

- Trinity #279: *Christ lag in Todesbanden / Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands* (1524) [Martin Luther, 1483-1546]

2. Den Tod niemand zwingen konnt
bei allen Menschenkindern;
das macht alles unsre Sünd,
kein Unschuld war zu finden.
Davon kam der Tod so bald
und nahm über uns Gewalt,
hielt uns in seim Reich gefangen.
Halleluja.

LSB:

*2. No son of man could conquer death,
such ruin sin had wrought us.
No innocence was found on earth,
and therefore death had brought us
into bondage from of old
and ever grew more strong and bold
and held us as its captive. Hallelujah*

Literal:

*2. No one could subdue death
among all the children of men;
our sin caused all this,
no innocence could be found.
Hence death came so swiftly
and seized power over us,
holding us captive in its kingdom.
Hallelujah*

3. Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn,
an unser Statt ist kommen
und hat die Sünd abgetan,
damit dem Tod genommen
all sein Recht und sein Gewalt;
da bleibt nichts denn Tods Gestalt,
den Stachel hat er verloren.
Halleluja

*3. Christ Jesus, God's own Son, came down
His people to deliver.*

*Destroying sin, he took the crown
from death's pale brow forever.
Stripped of power, no more it reigns;
an empty form alone remains;
its sting is lost forever. Hallelujah*

*3. Jesus Christ, God's Son,
came in our stead
and did away with sin,
thus taking from death
all its rights and power;
now nothing remains but the form of death,
it has lost its sting. Hallelujah*

- Trinity #102: *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr' / All Glory Be To Thee, Most High* (1522) [Nicolaus Decius, 1483-1546]

Christ Is Arisen

Christ is a - ris - en From the grave's dark

pris - on. So let our song ex - ult - ing rise:

Christ with com - fort lights our eyes. Al - le - lu - ia!

All our hopes were end - ed Had Je - sus not as - cend - ed

From the grave tri - um - phant - ly Our nev - er - end - ing life to be.

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia! So let our song ex - ult - ing rise:

Christ, our com - fort, fills the skies. Al - le - lu - ia!

© Text: German hymn, c. 1100; tr. F. Samuel Jancov, b. 1913
Tune: J. Klug, Geistliche Lieder, 1533