

## **Alfred Einstein's »Das italienische Madrigal« Histories and Biographies of Music(ology)**

*Conference concept, Munich, March 16–18, 2022*

The English translation of Alfred Einstein's three-volume study on secular vocal music of the 16th century was published in 1949 as »The Italian Madrigal«. A largely unrivalled attempt to present the development and history of the genre and its literary and cultural-historical contexts, Einstein's study is still considered a standard work today. An edition that Sebastian Bolz is preparing for 2022 on the basis of Einstein's hitherto unexplored typescripts now makes the extensive text available for the first time in its original German form. The publication allows a fresh look at Einstein's work, which has become as influential as it has become historical, and thus invites readers to explore its afterlife. In the context of an international conference, which will accompany the publication of the primary text and take place around the 70th anniversary of the author's death in March 2022, we want to approach Einstein's text, its meaning and influence from several perspectives. We are pleased that the conference can take place in Munich and thus at the site of Einstein's academic socialization – precisely because the Jewish musicologist was denied a career as an academic in early-twentieth-century Munich.

Three approaches will guide the re-reading: From the perspective of the histories of humanities and of musicology, questions arise as to the place of Einstein's studies in the research landscape of the first half of the 20th century: To what state of research did Einstein's monograph react? What is the relationship between its form and method and comparable works within musicology, but also in an interdisciplinary context? In addition, the question of which historical-theoretical and narrative premises structure Einstein's large-scale account comes into focus. Directly related to this is the long-term significance of the work's focus areas: In what way did Einstein's study shape the thematic, rhetorical and methodological style of research on 16th-century music? Finally, we will discuss the history of the reception of the work. This must also include the transfer of knowledge due to language and the question of what differences exist between the published English version and the German source text with regard to their respective academic languages.

A genuinely music-historical approach provides the second guiding perspective of the conference: After »The Italian Madrigal«, hardly any works of comparable scope appeared, which is why this ambitious attempt to present an overview of a genre can still be considered a point of reference. Since the first publication of the original German version presents an almost 80-year-old text in a new form, it is essential to classify the results, which have themselves become historical, in terms of content. In this respect, Einstein's assessments must be put in relation to current research in the field of the early modern period: Which findings were of formative importance and are likely to endure, and which limitations did and does the work encounter? In several case studies, the aim here is to examine both composers to whom Einstein devoted greater attention and cultural-historical - i.e. institutional or regional - contexts.

Finally, new questions arise with regard to Einstein's academic and personal biography, which is also a biography of »Das italienische Madrigal«: How and under what conditions did Einstein's madrigal research develop from the beginning of his preoccupation with early modern music in the context of his dissertation to the summary of his decades of research in a monumental study? What is the relationship to his other, enormously broad research interests, which, for example, included Mozart and the music of the Romantic period, but also general questions of aesthetics? His activity as a

collector and editor of music is of particular importance: The editorial work on music from the 16th to 18th centuries is linked to questions (also relevant to current discourse in the humanities) about the role of philology and of fundamental musicological research in Einstein's work and beyond.

Taking all three perspectives into account, we also want to think about possibilities of whether and how we can today redesign and rewrite a »history of Italian secular music in the 16th century« (according to Einstein's original title).

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