

Counterpoint in casu *Kontrapunkt*

The greenhouse of Knud Jeppesen and Povel Hamburger

Thomas Holme

The Danish musicologist Knud Jeppesen (1892–1974) published two works that stand as landmarks in the study of Renaissance counterpoint: his dissertation *Palestrinastil med særligt Henblik paa Dissonansbehandlingen* (1923) and his textbook *Kontrapunkt (Vokalpolyfoni)* (1930). The former addressed the stylistic aspects of Renaissance counterpoint, while the latter focused on curricular and pedagogical approaches to teaching a specific “Palestrina style”. Both enjoyed widespread use and recognition throughout the twentieth century and became foundational points of reference – reviewed, criticized, imitated, supplemented, corrected, challenged, disregarded, or even replaced by subsequent scholars.

Among the musicologists who engaged extensively with Jeppesen’s work during the 1950s and 1960s was his compatriot Povel Hamburger (1901–1972), who published numerous studies on vocal polyphony, particularly concerning Palestrina’s style. Many of Hamburger’s observations relate directly to Jeppesen’s writings, and on several occasions Jeppesen responded to Hamburger’s critiques. In addition, their surviving correspondence offers further revealing insights into stylistic and pedagogical matters. Taken together, the varied studies and exchanges between these two Danish musicologists form a somewhat secluded greenhouse, the fruits of which might well have significantly enriched Jeppesen’s *Kontrapunkt* textbook, had they been incorporated in prospective revised editions.

Der dänische Musikwissenschaftler Knud Jeppesen (1892–1974) verfasste zwei Schriften, die Meilensteine in der Forschung zum Kontrapunkt der Spätrenaissance darstellen: seine Dissertation *Palestrinastil med særligt Henblik paa Dissonansbehandlingen* (1923) und sein 1930 erschienenes Lehrbuch *Kontrapunkt (Vokalpolyfoni)*. Befasst sich die Dissertation mit stilistischen Aspekten des Renaissance-Kontrapunkts, so konzentriert sich das Lehrbuch auf curriculare und pädagogische Ansätze zur Vermittlung eines spezifischen »Palestrina-Stils«. Im späteren 20. Jahrhundert fanden beide Publikationen weite Verbreitung und Anerkennung und entwickelten sich zu grundlegenden Referenzwerken, welche von späteren Fachleuten rezensiert, kritisiert, nachgeahmt, ergänzt, korrigiert, in Frage gestellt, ignoriert oder auch ersetzt wurden.

Zu den Musikwissenschaftlern, die sich in den 1950er und -60er Jahren intensiv mit Jeppesens Werk auseinandersetzten, gehört sein Landsmann Povel Hamburger (1901–1972), der zahlreiche Studien zur Vokalpolyphonie und insbesondere zum Palestrina-Stil veröffentlichte. Etliche Beobachtungen Hamburgers nehmen unmittelbar Bezug auf Jeppesen, welcher auf Hamburgers Kritik mehrfach reagierte. Die erhaltene Korrespondenz bietet nicht zuletzt aufschlussreiche Einblicke in stilistische und pädagogische Fragen. Zusammengekommen bilden die vielfältigen Studien und der Austausch zwischen diesen beiden dänischen Musikwissenschaftlern eine Art abgeschirmtes Gewächshaus, dessen Früchte Jeppesens Kontrapunkt-Lehrbuch erheblich hätten bereichern können, wären sie in dessen späteren Ausgaben berücksichtigt worden.

In the broad context of 16th century vocal polyphony as well as the narrower sphere of the history of teaching 16th century counterpoint, the Danish musicologist Knud Jeppe-

sen (1892–1974) occupies a prominent position. With the textbooks of Johann Joseph Fux (1660–1741), Heinrich Bellermann (1832–1903)¹ and others as the fundamental basis of his work in the years around 1920, Jeppesen undertook a minute and exhaustive analysis of the then accessible works of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. His studies resulted in a new mapping and codification of the so-called “Palestrina style”, formalised first in Jeppesen’s dissertation, *Palestrinastil med særligt Henblik paa Dissonansbehandlingen* (1923)² then later in his textbook, *Kontrapunkt (Vokalpolyfoni)* (1930).³ Both stand as landmarks, and especially the textbook – translated into nine languages – enjoyed widespread use and recognition throughout the 20th century.⁴

The following will focus on two essential aspects of Jeppesen’s published texts: firstly the stylistic view of counterpoint which resulted from his efforts to define, delineate, and codify certain repertoires of music; and secondly, a curricular and pedagogical view involving his approaches and methods to teaching. An instructive case study in terms of the national and international impact and reception of Jeppesen’s publications, is provided by his interaction with Povl Hamburger, another Danish musicologist.

The following quotes from two entries in *The New Grove Dictionary* (2001) underline the lasting importance of Jeppesen’s scholarly work. The first addresses his pioneering approach to the codification of Palestrina’s music, and the second focuses on his pedagogical approach. A third quote will round off the present exposition.

In his entry on “Analysis” and concerning the stylistic issues which are the primary focus of Jeppesen’s dissertation, Ian David Bent states that:

The most distinguished and influential example of stylistic analysis at this time [i. e. around the 1910’s-1920’s] was, however, Knud Jeppesen’s *The Style of Palestrina and the Dissonance*, [...]. In taking Palestrina as his special study Jeppesen was starting with [...] the best-known phenomenon in the field, and investigating it against a background which was in his terms virtually uncharted. He was therefore driven to the ‘inductive’ method, with no established criteria and only the possibility of comparing case with case until such criteria began to appear. [...] The aspect of Jeppesen’s work that makes it scientific is the fact that the analyst is not selecting and summarizing: he is presenting the entire data for each case and adducing laws from it objectively. [...] The preliminary work for this analysis must clearly have been an exhaustive search through every vocal part of Palestrina’s entire output (in the Leipzig collected edition of 1862–1903) in order to count and note every interval in relation to its metrical placing.⁵

The reason for highlighting this article is simple and to a degree self-evident. Jeppesen is credited with a truly pioneering effort in regard to stylistic analysis. More significantly, it seems that he established not only *his* version of the style of Palestrina, but what was regarded as *the* version of Palestrina’s style at that time, as presented in his dissertation

1 Fux 1725. Bellermann 1862.

2 Jeppesen 1923, *ibid.* 1925b, *ibid.* 1927.

3 Jeppesen 1930, *ibid.* 1935, *ibid.* 1939.

4 Hansen 2011, 28, *ibid.* 2000, *ibid.* 2008, and Holme 2017. In the following translations of Danish titles and quotes are by the author.

5 Bent 2001, 547.

and textbook. Of course, the concept of “strict style” was not Jeppesen’s invention, but it is reasonable to assume that, in the context of Palestrina scholarship, it actually was Jeppesen who documented – in a manner later phrased by Thomas Christensen – “[...] the consistency and [...] the simplicity of sixteenth-century polyphony that allows it, above all other repertoires, to be systematized and imitated [...] – this with a precision unthinkable with any other musical style.”⁶

For the rest of the 20th century Jeppesen’s “configuration” became a bedrock for others to review, criticise, imitate, supplement, correct, challenge, disregard, or – in some instances – literally replace. And as to the assumption of an exhaustive search Bent (and Anthony Pople) are indeed right. Examples of Jeppesen’s systematic counting for each “case” in nearly the entire of Palestrina’s output are well preserved.⁷

In addressing the pedagogical aspects of Jeppesen’s textbook, Carl Dahlhaus’s entry on “Counterpoint” in *New Grove* concludes that:

In the 20th century, [...], strict style became petrified into musical mental exercises in a dead language – the Latin of musical instruction. The apparently indispensable didactic considerations cannot always be wholly reconciled with historical endeavours to give a precise description of Palestrina’s style: even Jeppesen’s textbook (1930), a paragon of pedagogic exposition by a historian, results from an (unacknowledged) compromise.⁸

Even though Dahlhaus cuts to the bone in his own familiar way, it is obvious that he also points to the milestone status of Jeppesen’s textbook. There is no doubt that Jeppesen’s *Kontrapunkt* is sort of a compromise – is the same not true of all textbooks? – but whether his so-called “compromise” were unacknowledged can indeed be challenged. This compromise is implied by the *New Grove*’s entry on “Palestrina”, quoted at the end of this article, and in his own words Jeppesen was fully aware that [in *Kontrapunkt*] “[...] practical and purely musical viewpoints [...] have come into play [...] [and] regretfully this conflict between stylistic-historical and pedagogical considerations has occasioned some uncertainties in the presentation.”⁹ But, as the following will show, Dahlhaus had no chance of being aware of this.

Within the national – and thus vernacular – context of Denmark, the prominence of Jeppesen’s works, as well as his standing in academic circles contributed to several Danish musicologists engaging with the positive international reception of the various editions of his dissertation and textbook. As a result, a number of Danish language textbooks on Palestrina style were published in the decades following 1930 – perhaps more than could be expected within such a small educational context.¹⁰

6 Christensen 1987, 108–109.

7 The Royal Library, Aarhus (DK-A), The Knud Jeppesen Collection.

8 Dahlhaus 2001, 564.

9 “[...] praktiske og rent musikalske Synspunkter [...] har spillet ind [...] [og] desværre har denne Brydning mellem stihistoriske og pædagogiske Hensyn paa visse Punkter afstedkommet nogen Uklarheder i Fremstillingen,” draft of letter from Knud Jeppesen to Povl Hamburger, not dated, written between 13 January and 25 September 1948 (cf. footnote 18).

10 E. g. Høffding 1969.

One of these musicologists was Povl Hamburger (1901–1972), whose career to a certain extent ran parallel to that of Jeppesen's. Both held positions as organists in Copenhagen, both conducted courses at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, and both obtained university positions relatively late in life. Hamburger became lecturer at the University of Copenhagen, while in 1946 Jeppesen obtained the first professorship in musicology at Aarhus University, and subsequently founded the Department of Musicology. In addition both, Jeppesen in particular, worked as composers.

Hamburger wrote several books on harmonic analysis, as well as an important book on music history (published in Danish) and a dissertation on *Subdominante und Wechseldominante*.¹¹ During the 1950–1960s he published a number of important studies on vocal polyphony, especially regarding the style of Palestrina.¹²

Like many other European musicologists, Hamburger was clearly inspired by Jeppesen's work, and several of Hamburger's publications relate directly to his books and articles. In the specific field of study of Palestrina's style, and in his particular use of analytical methods, Hamburger – actually an epigone – followed directly in the footsteps of Jeppesen. His research is carried out as systematically and thoroughly as Jeppesen did in his original studies – so much so that it almost seems as if Hamburger examined Jeppesen's dissertation and textbook with a fine-tooth comb in order to put to the test many of the findings and rules detailed there since he frequently points out instances of pages, paragraphs, wording, music examples or single notes in Jeppesen's texts, questioning stylistic details and presenting his own painstaking countings in the works of Palestrina, and to a lesser degree in the works of other contemporaneous composers. Despite Hamburger's unquestionable awe for Jeppesen's work, actually, this once in a while gets the character of a sort of personal crusade against Jeppesen.

It seems that Hamburger's *de facto* challenges forced Jeppesen to come out into the open and substantiate his original research. To some degree, he commented on Hamburger's comments, and actually, the interchange with Hamburger represents Jeppesen's most extensive reprocessing of "the entire data for each case." In a way this interaction represents a somewhat secluded "greenhouse," in which observations on stylistic and pedagogical matters were cultivated, and from which valuable insight and information can be harvested. It divides into a published part and a private correspondence.

The published part of the Jeppesen-Hamburger discussion was initiated by Hamburger in 1950 when he published an article on "The Ornamentations in the Works of Palestrina" in *Acta Musicologica*.¹³ This was followed in 1956 and 1965 by two further studies on "Vokalpolyphonie", both in German.¹⁴ Finally, in 1966 Hamburger published

11 Hamburger 1955. When the dissertation was defended at the University of Copenhagen in January 1955, Jeppesen acted as one of the opponents.

12 Another of Hamburger's publications (Hamburger 1970) represents an eminent introduction to the counterpoint of J. S. Bach. Regrettably, the book has never been translated into German or English.

13 Hamburger 1950.

14 Hamburger 1956, *ibid.* 1964–65. Hamburger's final statement in regard to the stylistic issues in 16th century vocal polyphony appeared in a small article, "Über die Vorbereitung und die Auflösung der

a small work, *Supplerende bemærkninger til den vokale kontrapunktlære*. This relates directly to Jeppesen's textbook, and despite a modest length of only 14 pages (in Danish), it plays a major role in the following exposition.¹⁵

Jeppesen commented on the studies of Hamburger on two occasions. The first was in the aforementioned volume of *Acta Musicologica*, where Jeppesen provided some remarks on Hamburger's article. The second was Jeppesen's article on notational problems in the 16th century, published in Danish, in *Svensk Tidskrift för Musikforskning* 1961.¹⁶ In both of these, Jeppesen acknowledges a number of Hamburger's findings, and, most importantly, his remarks in *Acta* stand as the only instance of Jeppesen commenting directly on the Palestrina style in an international language, other than that of his textbook.¹⁷

Archival materials relating to Jeppesen's career, in all several thousand items, include working papers, manuscripts, lectures and compositions as well as extensive correspondence with many important musicologists during the middle decades of the 20th century, including Pöhl Hamburger.

In contrast to the limited range of their published exchange, the private correspondence between the two musicologists began already in 1932 and continued until 1961, a period of almost 30 years. It consists of approximately 45 letters of different kinds, and a considerable part of the correspondence involves discussion of stylistic and contrapuntal issues.¹⁸

All in all, these letters are instructive in revealing how the two scholars conducted separate and renewed in-depth studies, especially into the musical corpus of Palestrina. They search, for example, for instances of melodic leaps and treatment of dissonances, comparing the resulting numbers with the total numbers of movements, bars, note-val-

Synkopardissonanz im 16. Jahrhundert" (Hamburger 1968–72). In addition to these publications, Hamburger reviewed two of Jeppesen's books and the Jeppesen-Festschrift, presented to Jeppesen in 1962 (Hamburger 1963).

15 Hamburger 1966.

16 Jeppesen 1950, *ibid.* 1961. In 1952 Hamburger submitted a critique of Jeppesen's paper "Zur Kritik der klassischen Harmonielehre" (presented at the IGM Congress in Basel, 1949, published in Danish in 1952) to *Dansk Musiktidskrift*, but for yet unknown reasons another potential dispute between Jeppesen and Hamburger did not make it to the press.

17 In Jeppesen's literally encyclopaedic article on "Palestrina" in: *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, he provides a "short characterisation" of the "*Stile alla Palestrina*, der weitreichende, nicht zuletzt pädagogische Folgen, hatte [...]" Jeppesen 1962, cols. 700–701. It is interesting, to say the least, that Peter Ackermann in his article on Palestrina in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Zweite, neubearbeitete Ausgabe) totally overlooks Knud Jeppesen in his paragraph on "[*Stil*] *alla Palestrina* als sakralem Stilideal" and hence its "Lehrtradition," Ackermann (2005), col. 41.

18 The letter exchange is somewhat uneven in that while Jeppesen meticulously saved his correspondences, nearly all the original letters that Jeppesen wrote to Hamburger are lost. Nevertheless, due to the fact that Jeppesen kept drafts or carbons of many of his letters, valuable insight into some of Jeppesen's letters to Hamburger is made possible. The letters cited in this presentation all stem from the collection The Royal Danish Library, Aarhus (DK-A), The Knud Jeppesen Collection, except the letter from Jeppesen to Hamburger, 22 July 1956 (cf. footnote 49) which is from the collection The Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (DK-Kk), Acc. 1979/47.

ues, and so forth. Often, they submerge into an abyss of details, discussing if a stylistic component is representative or marginal, or something in between. In other words, they sought to determine where lines could be drawn, boundaries be set, and the width of the no man's land in between. The common desire to establish a matrix of a composer's, or group of composer's style, sufficient to determine whether a composition is genuine or not, whether it is early or late, and so forth, lies as an undercurrent below their analyses. It is telling that both refer to Palestrina's *early, mature, classic, valid* and *authentic* works, regularly, and not always with any necessary additional qualification.

Central in this correspondence is a draft of a letter that Jeppesen mailed to Hamburger in January 1948. The length of the letter alone, ten densely handwritten pages, indicates the importance Jeppesen attributed to the issue in question. Moreover, the text makes it clear that the questions regarding Palestrina's style were by no means settled, even 25–30 years after Jeppesen's initial efforts.

In no way my work on the Palestrina style is finished and completed. Quite the contrary, it is only a beginning [...]. [...] regarding melodic problems I hope to treat them far more exhaustive [...] than before, and for some time I have been occupied with methodological ideas hereto. In a way you are right to assume, that I have ceased my work on the "codification of melodic leaps" prematurely; this, however, does not only include this single issue, but it goes for all the problems of the Palestrina style.¹⁹

Likewise, with regard to the species approach, Jeppesen is not convinced of the necessity to maintain these exercises rigidly. He draws a clear distinction between the first four species and the fifth, because:

[...] [the first four species] are abstractions, that are not to be found as models in [so-called] free compositions by 16th century composers. The value of these preliminary exercises is due to their ability to qualify the student for the fifth species.²⁰

However, Jeppesen dismisses the possibility of cancelling the species approach completely, retaining the exercises in the absence of any more convincing pedagogical system.

Many examples could be provided to give an impression of the detailed discussions between Jeppesen and Hamburger. The following, however, will focus on the "melodic problems," mentioned by Jeppesen in the quote above. Moreover, in view of the vast number of specific occurrences under discussion, the focus will be narrowed down

19 "Jeg [føler] paa ingen Maade at mit Arbejde med Palestrinastilen er færdigt og fuldendt. Tværtimod er det kun en Begyndelse, og især de melodiske problemer haaber jeg, medens Tid endnu er der, at kunne behandle langt mere indgaaende og paa en bredere Basis end hidtil, og [jeg] har allerede i nogen Tid beskæftiget mig med metodiske Idéer hertil. Forsaauidt kan De have god Ret i at mene, at jeg har sluppet Arbejdet med 'Springlovene' for tidligt; blot gælder dette ikke dette Punkt alene, men alle Palestrinastilens Problemer," draft of letter from Jeppesen to Hamburger, not dated, written between 13 January and 25 September 1948.

20 "[...] her drejer [det] sig om Abstraktioner, Situationer man ikke finder direkte Forbilleder for i frie Kompositioner af det 16. Aarhundredes komponister. Disse Forøvelsers Værdi beror paa deres Evne til at dygtiggøre Eleven til 5te Art [...]," *ibid*.

to one particular problem, namely the “codification of melodic leaps” in consecutive crotchets, the essence of the contrapuntal exercises in the third species.

In 1925 Jeppesen published an article, “Das ‘Sprunggesetz’ des Palestrinastils bei betonten Viertelnoten” that represents an important supplement to his dissertation. Jeppesen pronounced that “[...] eine nähere Untersuchung mir es erwiesen hat, hier [bei Palestrina] als Gesetz gilt: Es wird von betonter Viertelnote niemals oder nur ganz ausnahmsweise nach oben gesprungen,”²¹ and subsequently underlines the significance of this as an “[...] astonishing fact, not previously observed, [...]”²² The article, along with the dissertation, forms the bedrock of a considerable part of the discussion between Jeppesen and Hamburger.

Even though Jeppesen’s main point, that of the ascending leap from an accented crotchet, is discussed *in extenso*, Hamburger does not question this important discovery.

Quite the opposite is the case regarding the descending leap from both the accented and the unaccented crotchet, the ascending leap from the unaccented crotchet and two consecutive leaps in different directions.

In *Kontrapunkt* a considerable number of such ornaments are recommended, with few or no reservations.²³ In Hamburger’s *Supplerende Bemærkninger* the proposed replacements and corrections of these ornaments are therefore of great significance. The following discussion will focus primarily on this aspect of Jeppesen’s and Hamburger’s exchange – in both print and private correspondence – namely, whether such ornaments are entirely absent, occur only rarely, or appear in large numbers.

As an illustrative example, the following ornaments from Hamburger’s *Supplerende Bemærkninger*, in which they are considered as not belonging to the style of Palestrina, will be discussed.²⁴

21 Jeppesen 1925a, 211. Except from his dissertation, his contribution on “Dänen” to Guido Adlers *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte* (Jeppesen 1924) and some contributions to Danish newspapers and journals, Jeppesen’s contribution to this congress report was his first internationally published article; cf. Hansen 2011. The article occasioned a new paragraph on melody in the subsequent German and English editions of Jeppesen’s dissertation (cf. footnote 2).

22 Jeppesen 1946b, 61.

23 Jeppesen 1946a, 85–86 et passim. The subsequent 3rd (1962) and 4th (1968) editions are identical with the 2nd edition.

24 Hamburger 1966, 6. For the purpose of distinguishing between the ornaments in no. 7 the author has inserted the supplementary “a-b-c-d-e”. The text reads: “On the contrary, you have to be extremely cautious when using figures as the following [nos. 7a–e], – forms that only exist as rare exceptions in Palestrina’s music [...] / In that connection it must be noted that a phrase like the following [no. 8] is nowhere to be found in Palestrina’s music; [...]”. In Jeppesen’s “Das ‘Sprunggesetz’” (Jeppesen 1925a, 212) the ornaments are not numbered, but in the first German edition of *Kontrapunkt* they are provided with the numbers 1–50 (Jeppesen 1925b, 48–49 and 56). The second English edition adds yet a number, 6b, bringing the total to 51 numbers (Jeppesen 1946b, 61–62 and 70), and it is these numbers that Jeppesen and Hamburger use throughout their exchange. The selected examples from *Supplerende Bemærkninger* (Hamburger 1966), nos. 7a–7e, correspond to nos. 37, 38, 6, 6b and 7 in this numbering, while no. 8 stands outside of the original numbering.

Derimod bør man være yderst varsom med brugen af figurer som de følgende



— former, som kun findes som sjældne undtagelser i Palestrinamusikken (~~med spring stønne end kvart praktisk taget ikke~~), og som, hvor de optræder, for det meste har karakter af lirsens.

Det bør i denne forbindelse bemærkes, at en vending som følgende (~~anvendt som led i mønsterskemaet p. 177~~)



intet sted er at træffe i Palestrinamusikken; ~~derimod med spring til~~

Example 1: Povl Hamburger, Supplerende bemærkninger til den vokale kontrapunktlære (1966), p. 6

In several of his early letters to Jeppesen, Hamburger is unreservedly appreciative of *Kontrapunkt*, which he uses it in his own teaching. By 1947 though, Hamburger had begun his own thorough studies in Palestrina's works and starts to question Jeppesen "whether you in reality are as strict as you should be, if the third species as such must be in full accordance with Palestrina's own stylistic practise?" Among the ornaments that had attracted Hamburger's attention are numbers 7c and 7e, prompting him to ask "Are suchlike in reality Palestrina style?"²⁵

Jeppesen's reply is general in nature, and he does not comment on any of Hamburger's specific examples. Nevertheless he states, quite surprisingly, that regarding the third species exercises "[...] no direct connection is found in Palestrina." Since the aim of the third species is to develop "[...] the fundamental and important relation between stepwise motion and leaps," he has "[...] only precluded cases that for certain do not belong to the style [...]; but all examples, that I actually have been able to locate, [...]" are in my opinion allowed."²⁶ In this way, Jeppesen appears to have no reservations concerning any of the ornamentations in question.

It is therefore not surprising that in an ensuing letter, Hamburger repeats his statement that "[...] to me it strongly looks as if you have left your work on the 'leap laws'

25 "[...] om De i Virkeligheden er helt saa streng, som De burde være, hvis Trediearten som saadan skal være i fuld Overensstemmelse med Palestrinas egen Stilpraksis [...] Er sligt i Virkeligheden Palestrinastil?" letter from Hamburger to Jeppesen, 7 December 1947.

26 "[...] ingen direkte Forbindelse for dem findes hos Palestrina. / [...] det fundamentalt vigtige Forhold mellem trinvis Bevægelse og Spring / [...] derfor kun udelukket den Slags Forhold, som man med Vished kan se ikke hører Stilen til [...]; men alt, hvad jeg har kunnet finde Expl. paa [...] har jeg ment burde tillades," draft of letter from Jeppesen to Hamburger, 13 December 1947.

a bit too soon,” and he continues more stridently with his critique now: “Therefore, I have come to realise that a revision on these points will be suitable.”²⁷ In this letter, 20 years before the publication of his *Supplerende Bemærkninger*, he subsequently points to problematic passages in Jeppesen’s *Kontrapunkt* and suggests changes to exact page numbers.

In respect of p. 85, where Jeppesen lists more than 20 “[...] ornaments, all derived from Palestrina’s works and all of general validity therein,”²⁸ Hamburger points out that, amongst other ornaments, numbers 7c and 7e can only be identified eight and two times respectively, characterising them as “mere licenses.” In respect of another ornament in crotchets [-4+2+2, that is, a fourth downwards followed by two seconds upwards], designated by Jeppesen as “excellent,”²⁹ Hamburger states that “the ‘excellence’ of the figure [...] shows itself therein that it is registered one time only in P. [Palestrina].” As to yet other figures, designated by Jeppesen as “common,” Hamburger states that “these figures in continuous crotchets do not exist at all in P. [Palestrina]!”³⁰ The most unambiguous correction by far in *Supplerende Bemærkninger*, that ornament number 8 “is nowhere to be found in Palestrina’s music,”³¹ is also first mentioned in this letter.

It is certainly the case that Jeppesen makes use of this ornament in his text and in several of his model examples in *Kontrapunkt*,³² without any reservations or comments. Hamburger’s critique is heavily intensified in his subsequent letter: “[it is] [...] a melodic turn for which I have the deepest distrust. Does it occur at all in consecutive crotchets in P. [Palestrina] [...]? Does it not, in fact, only appear in your work as a direct inheritance from Fux-Bellermann?”³³ In this way, Hamburger questions whether Jeppesen’s *Kontrapunkt* truly departs from the older textbooks by Fux and Bellermann – a rather provocative claim.

Jeppesen’s answer to these allegations is interesting. On the one hand he agrees with Hamburger’s comments: “In this way you are completely right in your comment on p. 85. The fact that the figures to my judgement are all applicable in the 3rd species

27 “[...] ser det for mig stærkt ud, som om De har sluppet Arbejdet med ‘Springlovene’ en Kende for tidligt / Jeg kan derfor ikke se andet, end at en Revision paa disse Punkter vil være hensigtsmæssig,” letter from Hamburger to Jeppesen, January 1948.

28 “[...] Ornamenten, der alle stammer fra Palestrina’s Værker og alle har almindelig Gyldighed dér,” Jeppesen 1946a, 85. For the sake of clarity the references to the page numbering in the Danish edition are maintained in the following.

29 Ibid., 114.

30 “‘Fortræffeligheden’ af Figuren med Kvart ned viser sig deri, at den hos P. træffes en eneste Gang! / Figuren findes overhovedet ikke i ren Fjerdedelsbevægelse hos P.!” letter from Hamburger to Jeppesen, January 1948.

31 “[...] intet sted er at træffe i Palestrinamusikken,” Hamburger 1966, 6.

32 Jeppesen 1946a, 93 and 177, and in model examples on pp. 124, 126, 173, 175, 180, 184 and 259.

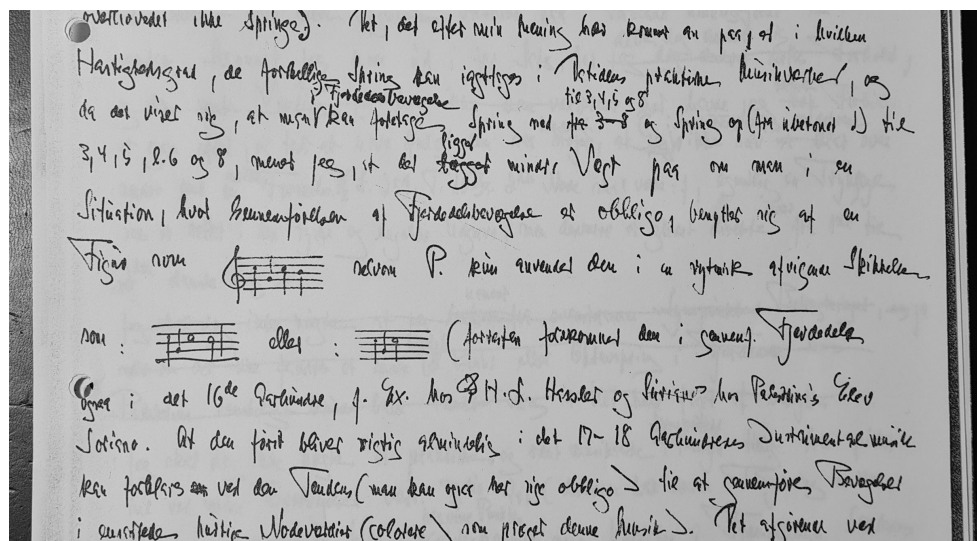
33 “[...] en melodisk vending, som jeg har den dybeste Mistro til. Forekommer den overhovedet i rene fjerdedele hos P. [...]? Optræder den i Virkeligheden ikke kun hos Dem som direkte Fux-Bellermannsk Arvegode?” letter from Hamburger to Jeppesen, 13 January 1948.

naturally should not have induced, that I neglected to distinguish between the more or less common among them.”³⁴

But on the other hand, regarding ornament 8 (and others), he appears to dislocate the whole framework of Hamburger’s points, and thereby their communal discussion:

What it depends on is – in my view – the pace of the various leaps that can be observed in the practical musical works of the time. When it appears that – in crotchet movement – it is possible to leap downwards to 3, 4, 5 and 8, and leap upwards (from an unaccented ) to 3, 4, 5, minor 6 and 8, I believe that it is of lesser importance, whether one – in a situation in which the implementation of crotchets is obligo – makes use of a figure like , even though P. [Palestrina] only makes use of it in a rhythmic diverging form like:  or  [...].³⁵

All in all, instead of acknowledging Hamburger’s critique including the quite obvious faults and inaccuracies occurring in *Kontrapunkt*, Jeppesen in this way deviates completely from the otherwise severe strictness of the rules established in his book.



Example 2: Excerpt from draft of letter from Knud Jeppesen to Povl Hamburger (not dated), written between 13 January and 25 September 1948

- 34 “Saaledes har De fuldstændig Ret i Deres Bemærkning vedr. S. 85. Dette at de anførte Figurer efter mit Skøn alle frit kan anvendes i 3die Art, burde naturligvis ikke have medført, at jeg undlod at skælné mellem de mere eller mindre almindelige af dem,” draft of letter from Jeppesen to Hamburger, not dated, written between 13 January and 25 September 1948.
- 35 “Det, det efter min Mening her kommer an paa, er i hvilken Hastighedsgrad, de forskellige Spring kan iagttages i Datidens praktiske Musikværker, og da det viser sig, at man i Fjerdedelsbevægelse kan foretage Spring ned til 3, 4, 5 og 8 og Spring op (fra ubetonet ) til 3, 4, 5, l. 6 og 8, mener jeg, at der ligger mindre Vægt paa om man i en Situation, hvor Gennemførelsen af Fjerdedelsbevægelsen er obligo, benytter sig af en Figur som  selvom P. kun anvender den i en rytmisk afvigende Skikkelse som:  eller  [...]” *ibid*.

In 1950, Hamburger's and Jeppesen's interaction appeared in print for the first time in "The Ornamentations in the Works of Palestrina" and "Some Remarks to 'The Ornamentations in the Works of Palestrina'" respectively, which were published side by side in *Acta Musicologica*.³⁶

Evidently, Hamburger's article is directed at Jeppesen. He begins with the necessary references to Jeppesen's dissertation and "Das 'Sprunggesetz' des Palestrinastils", declaring that he is in agreement with Jeppesen's views on the ascending leap from an accented crotchet. However, in regard to the rules concerning "the descending leap from both the accented and the unaccented crotchet and the ascending leap from the unaccented crotchet," Hamburger states that "[...] the formulation [by Jeppesen] seems in itself to a certain extent to be too summary and liberal with respect to the three last mentioned categories of leaps by giving full legitimacy[,] and so to be more exact the formulation must be restricted in some way. To prove this assertion, the following examinations are being published."³⁷

Subsequently, Hamburger provides a thorough and convincing presentation of the results of his detailed studies. He includes his views on ornaments numbers 7a-e, and in respect of ornament 8 Hamburger states, not surprisingly, that "This figure [...] is to my knowledge nowhere employed in Palestrina."³⁸

In his "Remarks", Jeppesen acknowledges that "[...] Mr. Hamburger builds up some rules, which supplement mine fixing their limits more closely, and I think that at various points they are right." But, of course, Jeppesen's acknowledgement does not come without reservations: "[...] I must admit that his interpretations do not always convince me, and that I am not invariably in accordance with his views."³⁹

The article could have been the perfect opportunity to reveal and publish, in general as well as in detail, his disagreements with Hamburger's "interpretations". But strikingly, Jeppesen, with few exceptions, refrains from commenting on either the fundamental premises or the detailed arguments presented by Hamburger.

In one of his footnotes, Hamburger refers to his "private correspondence" with Jeppesen and states that Jeppesen's "[...] argument [regarding 'textual distribution'] does not seem quite convincing."⁴⁰ While it is unsurprising that Jeppesen reacts to Hamburger's claim, it is certainly surprising that, with the exception of two specific music examples (numbers 17 and 18), he uses half of this short article (only four and a half page long) to comment on this rather insignificant footnote.

In the remainder of his text, Jeppesen only comments on a couple of Hamburger's examples, and at the end he hands out a mere trifle. Regarding five ornaments (including

36 The fact that Jeppesen at that time was editor of *Acta musicologica* resulted in yet a couple of letters exchanged with Hamburger; these are not relevant in the present context.

37 Hamburger 1950, 129.

38 Ibid., 138.

39 Jeppesen 1950, 148.

40 Hamburger 1950, 134–35.

ornament no. 8), that according to Hamburger “[...] are nowhere employed in the entire works of Palestrina,”⁴¹ Jeppesen documents two known cases of one of the ornaments (ex. 55e). But otherwise, that is all. At the end of his article, though, Jeppesen states:

However, I should not at all be surprised if some day, when we know Palestrina’s entire works and those of his school better as [sic] now, we would also come across this [sic] sort of ornaments.⁴² They belong, I think, to the immanent stylistic possibilities of this music, all their movements *per se* being in accordance with its realized possibilities, as yet known, or, at any rate, being so akin to those that a really inner difference between them does not seem likely.⁴³

While Jeppesen’s contribution to *Acta* became his final publication concerning “The Ornamentations in the Works of Palestrina”. Hamburger republished a German version of his article in 1956 in his *Studien zur Vokalpolyphonie*, giving it the new title “Neues zum ‘Sprunggesetz’”. Even though this was an “erweiterte Neuauflage”,⁴⁴ nothing substantially new concerning the ornamentations was communicated.

Throughout the exchange between Hamburger and Jeppesen, whether by private letter or in print, the total number of ornaments Nos. 7a–e was around 20. In “Neues zum ‘Sprunggesetz’”, Hamburger’s final summation amounts to 22 (4+9+6+1+2) cases “in Palestrinas authentischen Werken”. Nonetheless, he adds that the total number might reach 50 if a number of variations is taken into account – “dies wurde mir von Prof. Jeppesen freudlichst mitgeteilt.”⁴⁵

Ten years later, and twenty years after Hamburger and Jeppesen began their dialogue on these matters, Hamburger concludes in his *Supplerende Bemærkninger* that “you have to be extremely cautious when using figures as the following [nos. 7a–e], – forms that only exist as rare exceptions in Palestrina’s music,” while [no. 8] “is nowhere to be found in Palestrina’s music.”⁴⁶ (cf. Example 1)

The foregoing discussion of only a few of the ornaments in Palestrina serves as just one example of the long-standing debates between Hamburger and Jeppesen. Similar discoveries could be made regarding other subjects under discussion, for instance the occurrences of crotchets in pairs, the syncopated dissonance or the use of rests in Palestrina’s music.

With respect to occurrences of crotchets in pairs, in *Supplerende Bemærkninger* Hamburger provides a substantial addendum that is based on his *Studien zur Vokalpolyphonie II* (1964–65).⁴⁷

41 Ibid., 147.

42 That is, including no. 8.

43 Jeppesen 1950, 152.

44 Among other things the number of music examples was increased from 55 in the *Acta* article to 96.

45 Hamburger 1956, 13.

46 Hamburger 1966, 6 (cf. footnote 24).

47 Hamburger *ibid.*, 7–9, and *ibid.* 1964–65, 74–89.

Likewise, and also based on his *Studien zur Vokalpolyphonie II* together with his exchange of letters with Jeppesen during the period 1951–61, a substantial addendum is provided regarding the syncopated dissonance.⁴⁸

In relation to the use of rests, Jeppesen thanks Hamburger in a 1956 letter for sending him a copy of the *Studien zur Vokalpolyphonie* (1956), adding that he hopes to elaborate on the issue of rests shortly in a small article.⁴⁹ This issue is discussed again in a couple of later letters, and Jeppesen eventually published his article, which was not at all small, on “notational problems in 16th century music” five years later.⁵⁰ The article contains Jeppesen’s substantial research on rests and includes a couple of references to Hamburger’s *Studien*.

In the last surviving letter from their correspondence, dated August 1961, Hamburger thanks Jeppesen for sending him two articles, one of which “relates to me,” that is Jeppesen’s “notational problems”, and continues in the same unstoppable manner that characterized their letter exchange starting in 1947! Hamburger continues with prolonged accounts regarding the rules on rests, and related matters.⁵¹ Based on his exchange of letters with Jeppesen and the chapter on “Die Anwendung der Pause” in his *Studien zur Vokalpolyphonie*, Hamburger finally provides, in *Supplerende Bemærkninger*, a few lines regarding the use of rests in Palestrina.⁵²

The exposition above cannot provide an exhaustive account of the written exchanges between Knud Jeppesen and Povl Hamburger, either in terms of different subject areas discussed, or the detail they went into. It has provided only a glimpse of their detailed discussions, exchanges that, in this case regarding the “codification of melodic leaps”, were sometimes conducted at an atomic, even subatomic level in proportion to Palestrina’s overall style. Nevertheless, this meagre “harvest” from their greenhouse gives rise to a number of reflections especially regarding the stylistic view of counterpoint and to a lesser degree the didactic methods relating to it.

In terms of the latter – whether to uphold, revise or entirely do away with the species approach to counterpoint exercises – Jeppesen’s and Hamburger’s discussions are almost entirely confined to their written exchanges. Hamburger appears the most critical of the ‘old system’. However, although Jeppesen to a certain extent concurs with Hamburger’s views – in that he designates the first four species as “abstractions” intended only to “qualify the student for the fifth species” (as previously quoted) – their arguments are taken no further. Although at no point in the correspondence do specific ideas or suggestions appear in regard to a revision of the species approach, it is

48 Hamburger 1964–65, 63–76, and *ibid.* 1966, 9–12. Hamburger’s research on minim dissonance was published with the title “Die Halbnotendissonanz in der Vokalpolyphonie. Beiträge zum Verständnis der Klangauffassung im 16. Jahrhundert” in Hamburger 1956 (41–73). A number of Hamburger’s results – once again based on exhaustive registrations in the works of Palestrina – is included in Hansen 2004.

49 Letter from Jeppesen to Hamburger, 22 July 1956 (cf. footnote 18).

50 Jeppesen 1961.

51 Letter from Hamburger to Jeppesen, 10 August 1961.

52 Hamburger 1956, 73–93, and *ibid.* 1966, 13.

important to note the extent to which they agree on the problems and weaknesses in the age-old system.

A number of Jeppesen's statements concerning *the* rules of *the* specific Palestrina style that *must* be communicated to a student, in reality the credibility of stylistic accuracy, are indeed interesting and surprising.

On the one hand he acknowledges – indeed had to acknowledge! – several of Hamburger's findings and resulting proposals in regard to the rules laid down in *Kontrapunkt*. Without doubt, Hamburger's *Supplerende Bemærkninger* – as well as several of the other issues discussed in his letters – could have improved Jeppesen's *Kontrapunkt* textbook significantly, had they been incorporated into prospective revised editions.

On the other hand, Jeppesen widens his lens quite remarkably, and, as previously mentioned, thereby distorts the light passing through it.

At the detailed level, it is of great importance that Jeppesen pronounces that “it is of lesser importance, whether one [...] makes use of a figure [...], even though P. [Palestrina] only makes use of it in a rhythmic diverging form,” and in the wider context it is crucial that – in the very final sentence in his “remarks” to Hamburger – Jeppesen refers to “the immanent stylistic possibilities of this music [Palestrina's entire works and those of his school]” (underlining by the author). In this way, Jeppesen dissociates himself from his predominant obligation to the stylistic strictness proclaimed in his textbook, and by and large also from the ‘image of Jeppesen’ as the quintessence of ‘no compromises’.

Even though neither Hamburger's corrections and additions to ‘Jeppesen's Palestrina style’ nor Jeppesen's admissions in that respect are included in the subsequent editions of Jeppesen's textbook, either in Danish or in translation into other languages,⁵³ their correspondence provides a rare look over the shoulder of two important scholars. The letters demonstrate that valuable knowledge often emerges in such microcosms, and indeed that it often remains there. Although Jeppesen's contact with Povl Hamburger did not result in revisions to his textbook, there is no doubt that Hamburger's ‘crusade’ urged Jeppesen to return to his laboratory bench and publish his last contributions regarding the Palestrina style.

Dahlhaus' conclusion that “didactic considerations” always clash with “precise descriptions” of a certain style, makes sense, but the negative ring to his statement, namely that “strict style became petrified into musical mental exercises in a dead language,” might just as well be turned into a more positive, and indeed more nuanced one. It is not unimportant whether the degree of strictness and the degree of petrification are substantiated by a high degree of authenticity. Even more crucially, it is of paramount importance to be able to decipher and understand the “language” before one pronounces it dead. A debt is therefore owed to Knud Jeppesen's research, which

53 In the German and English editions minor changes were carried out. In this presentation, though, these changes are not accounted for.

ensured that the prerequisites for understanding and teaching 16th century counterpoint obtained a much more qualified level than ever before. It must also be noted that the idea of music as a “language” was placed at the very forefront in his dissertation, whose opening sentence reads: “Die Musik ist in ihrer Weise eine Sprache.”⁵⁴

The contents of Jeppesen’s books would of course have benefitted greatly from the knowledge of 16th century music and music theory which grew throughout the 20th century. Furthermore, a great number of studies, including Hamburger’s, have remedied some of the shortcomings in Jeppesen’s textbook. We can only guess as to the reason why Jeppesen did not publish a fully – or at least somewhat – revised edition of his *Kontrapunkt* textbook taking into account his own as well as other researcher’s findings. In one of his letters to Hamburger, though, he admits that “when you reach my age you are inclined to settle for what you once have yielded – not least when others appear to be contented with the effort.”⁵⁵

So, in a way, he rested on his laurels, confident that – on the basis of what he had brought to light in his dissertation and in his article on “Das ‘Sprunggesetz’” – the “compromise” he had settled on in 1930 remained the best compromise. Jeppesen’s correspondence with Hamburger clearly documents that almost nothing remained “unacknowledged”.

Finally – and appropriately – a quote from the the entry on “Palestrina” in *New Grove Dictionary*, written by Lewis Lockwood, Noel O’Regan and Jessie Ann Owens, combines the two areas of musical style and counterpoint instruction:

Stylistically, there is a world of difference between these pieces [the polychoral masses, litanies and Marian antiphon settings] and, for example, the masses of 1555 or the 1563 motets. Attempts by critics down the ages, culminating in Jeppesen and Andrews, to abstract a single Palestrina style which could be easily reproduced by students, have ignored differences such as these which are heavily related to the function of each particular work or genre. They have also tended to play down the often innovative nature of Palestrina’s work, preferring to concentrate on the classic style of many of the masses or the early motets.⁵⁶

One of the crucial aspects regarding any kind of style mapping is pinpointed here, that even though certain rules of counterpoint are widely accepted as the most authentic, comprehensive and accurate, questions regarding how large a part of Palestrina’s works that actually falls within the limitations of these rules, can – and must – be asked. Knud Jeppesen was well aware, perhaps more so than most of his fellow musicologists at the time, of the differences between various kinds of pieces, but naturally he had to settle for a so-called ‘classic style’.

To “abstract a single Palestrina style” – not necessarily *the* Palestrina style, or the *only*, or the most *authentic* Palestrina style, but *a* (!) Palestrina style – which “easily [could

54 Jeppesen, 1925b, 1, “Einleitende Bemerkung”.

55 “Naar man kommer i min Alder bliver man let tilbøjelig til at slaa sig til Ro med hvad man engang har ydet – ikke mindst naar andre synes veltilfreds med det,” draft of letter from Jeppesen to Hamburger, not dated, written between 13 January and 25 September 1948.

56 Lockwood / O’Regan / Owens 2001, 946–47.

be] reproduced by students,” is the crux of these matters. Any textbook on musical style represents a Procrustean bed of the musical style in question – a compromise. And in this respect it is striking that following Jeppesen’s mapping and codification of the so called Palestrina-style, scholars for the past 100 years have been occupied with the uncharted areas, the white spots, and the ‘density’ of the whole field of 16th century vocal polyphony, that were not covered entirely by Jeppesen.

Povl Hamburger’s various addenda to Jeppesen’s books became a valuable part of instruction in ‘Jeppesen’s Palestrina Style’, at least in Denmark. Presumably they were unknown elsewhere, or perhaps they were ‘discovered’ internationally at the same time or later, but outside of the greenhouse of Jeppesen and Hamburger.

No doubt, different *versions* of the style(s) of 16th century vocal polyphony have been ‘executed’ elsewhere, and the same goes for so-called Bach counterpoint. Unfortunately, nowadays these languages are becoming dead in more ways than the one originally expressed by Dahlhaus. It is no longer a question of whether it is at all desirable, or possible, for students to learn to write in some historical musical language – for example in the style of Palestrina, the ‘Latin of musical instruction’ – but whether it is relevant to ask the question at all.

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