

Małgorzata Grajter – ukończyła studia magisterskie z teorii muzyki i gry na fortepianie w Akademii Muzycznej im. Grażyny i Kiejstuta Bacewiczów w Łodzi. Od 2007 roku pracuje w macierzystej uczelni, prowadząc m.in. zajęcia z kształcenia słuchu, analizy muzycznej i historii muzyki. W 2014 roku obroniła rozprawę doktorską pt. *Relacje słowno-muzyczne w twórczości Ludwiga van Beethovena* (wyd. Akademia Muzyczna w Łodzi, 2015; wersja niemieckojęzyczna: Peter Lang, 2019). Obecnie współpracuje także z Wydziałem Filologicznym Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego jako członek zespołu badawczego, zajmującego się problematyką intertekstualności w teledyskach muzycznych. Brała aktywny udział w cyklu seminariów poświęconych muzyce Ludwiga van Beethovena „Beethoven-Studienkolleg”, organizowanych przez Beethoven-Haus w Bonn (Niemcy) oraz szeregu międzynarodowych konferencji, sympozjów i kongresów muzykologicznych. Jest członkiem międzynarodowego stowarzyszenia muzykologów z Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej z siedzibą w Uniwersytecie w Lipsku.

Małgorzata Grajter

Akademia Muzyczna im Grażyny i Kiejstuta Bacewiczów w Łodzi

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5174-3504>

From Authenticity to Stylization: Processing Modality in the Late Works of Ludwig van Beethoven

The Greek scholar Ilias Chrissochoidis, in his study on the middle movement of Beethoven's *String quartet* Op. 132, writes: "In the light of the *Heiliger Dankgesang*, the *Incarnatus* section from the *Missa Solemnis* as well as other less significant occurrences, modality becomes a central concern in the discussion of Beethoven's later works."¹ What the author understands under the term "less significant occurrences," implying a somewhat inferior value or quality of the music, is left to our speculations; most likely it refers to Beethoven's folksong arrangements, still overlooked as minor works, or even described by his contemporaries as symptoms of a creative burnout.² As the in-depth study of Nicole Biamonte proves, a significant number of these melodies is based on

1 Ilias Chrissochoidis, *Beethoven's Heiliger Dankgesang (String Quartet op. 132 in A minor, III movement)* [https://www.academia.edu/2429028/Beethoven_s_Heiliger_Dankgesang, access: 26.01.2019].

2 George R. Marek, *Beethoven*, Polish transl. E. Życieńska, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1976, p. 567.

various kinds of modal scales.³ Certainly, these are not the composer's finest masterpieces, nor his original works, which is not to say that they are unworthy of attention in the general debate about Beethoven and modality; the conclusion of Biamonte's article, suggests otherwise:

A close reading of this analytically neglected yet worthwhile repertoire and its history demonstrates that Beethoven valued the folksong settings both aesthetically and compositionally; his creative solutions to the problems they presented remain of interest to us today.⁴

Yet, although the examples of modality in Beethoven's late masterpieces, like the *Missa solemnis* or *String quartet in A minor* op. 132 are commonly known and acknowledged, most scholars seem reluctant to include folksongs settings into the mainstream discussion on the composer's approach to modality. Hence, the main idea of this paper is to examine the musical and aesthetical context of Beethoven's interest in modality more thoroughly and to find possible connections between the experience of adapting original folk music based on modal scales and the composer's interest in the use of the elements of modality, almost extinct in the artistic music of his day, in his own works.

Background

A glance on the imaginary shelves of the composer's library, the content of which is very well preserved, and upon sketches from his formative years offer an invaluable insight into the musical and aesthetical context that could potentially stimulate Beethoven's interest in modality. It is known that the last of the Viennese Classics was a passionate reader of philosophical, literary, and music theory works, which largely inspired his creative process. A study of these works gives us the image of Beethoven's knowledge of history and aesthetics of music of his day. Among books, dealing with modality, which were in Beethoven's possession, Plato's *Republic* stands out. The Greek philosopher, discussing the impact of music in specific modes or meters on human beings, points to the Dorian

3 Nicole Biamonte, *Modality in Beethoven's Folk-song Settings*, "Beethoven Forum", 2006, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 28-63.

4 Ibidem, p. 63.

and the Phrygian, as the most appropriate for shaping noble characters of citizens: one is warlike and resistant, the other – peacefully kind:

[Dorian]

Give me a mode whose notes and metre are appropriate to one who exhibits valour in war and strength in all conflict and who, when things go against him, when he is wounded or overtaken by death or any other misfortune, meets his fate with courage and endurance;

[Phrygian]

And then there is the mode for the man who leads a peaceful life, not of violence but of quiet pursuit, whether because he has prevailed upon and convinced another – either God by supplication or man by precept and admonition – or, on the contrary, because he has quietly submitted to the requests, teachings, and persuasions of another showing no conceit but behaving in a cheerful and temperate manner, and is finally satisfied with the outcome of his docile bearing.⁵

Anton Schindler, while citing these excerpts from Friedrich Schleiermacher's translation of Plato's *Republic*⁶ in his Beethoven monograph, seems to be confused by the default meaning of modal scales as indicating church modes. For example, when he writes of the Lydian mode, he has "our F, but without a flattened B" in mind, etc. His understanding of this term might provide a basis for assertion that Beethoven's image of Greek modes described by Plato could have been distorted, too. Although the issue of transition from the ancient to medieval scale system is present in the discourse of musical historiography in the age of – or shortly before – Beethoven, the main point of reference for the majority of authors was a system of modes preserved in the ecclesiastical tradition, which dates back to the Middle Ages.⁷ On the other hand, the fact that Beethoven had his own copy of Charles Burney's *A General History of music of 1776*, which offers a summary of eighteen-century interpretations of Ptolemaeus' octave

5 Quoted after: Anton Schindler, Donald McArdle, *Beethoven as I Knew Him*, Dover Publications, New York 1996, pp. 113-114.

6 The same edition which was in Beethoven's possession.

7 For more detailed discussion on this subject see: Marek Nahajowski, *Od Printza do Forkela. Wizje dziejów muzyki europejskiej w historiografii XVIII wieku*, Akademia Muzyczna im. G. i K. Bacewiczów, Łódź 2019, pp. 207-210.

species,⁸ makes it possible to claim that the composer was aware of the misinterpretation of the Greek scale system in the Medieval theory of music. Philosophy and aesthetics of music aside, the best opportunity for the young composer to acquire knowledge about modality was through his own keyboard, through playing and compositional practice. According to an anecdote given by his friend and early biographer, Franz Wegeler, Beethoven became famous for his outlandish keyboard improvisations on *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, already as a young boy in Bonn.⁹ These improvisations partly survived in a manuscript source: a sketch containing Beethoven's harmonization of *Lamentations* from ca 1791 was found in the Kafka sketchbook.¹⁰

Around 1809, when Beethoven himself became a teacher of composition for Archduke Rudolph Habsburg, he turned to the fundamental textbook on counterpoint: the German edition of Johann Joseph Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, in order to prepare a program of study for his pupil. The archduke was a clergyman and a future archbishop, therefore sacral music and modality must have been an interesting subject to him. The discussion about modality in the historical perspective found in the work of Fux is rather superficial, though: the author limits himself to the statement that Greek names of modes were related not as much to the octave species, as to the names of specific manners of composing, characteristic to different folks – and gave a parallel contemporary example of Italian, French and English aria. According to him, the only system applicable to present-day composition was that consisting of twelve church modes (six authentic and six plagal).¹¹ Incidentally, an interesting statement of Beethoven, found by Georg Kinsky in the Louis Koch collection of Beethoven's manuscripts, comes from about the time he started his lessons with Archduke: "In the old church modes the devotion is divine, I exclaimed, and God let me express it someday."¹²

8 Ibidem, p. 209.

9 Franz Wegeler, Ferdinand Ries, *Biographische Notizen über Ludwig van Beethoven*, Bädeler, Koblenz 1838, p. 14. See also: A. Schindler, *Beethoven as I Knew Him...*, op. cit., p. 41, Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *Ludwig van Beethovens Leben*, Bd X, Olms, Hildesheim 2001.

10 Joseph Schmidt-Görg, *Ein neuer Fund in den Skizzenbüchern Beethovens: Die Lamentationen des Propheten Jeremias*, "Beethoven-Jahrbuch", 1959, III, pp. 107-110.

11 Johann Joseph Fux, *Gradus ad Parnassum*, German transl. Lorenz Mizler, Mizler, Leipzig 1742, p. 160.

12 Georg Kinsky, *Manuskripte, Briefe, Dokumente. Von Scarlatti bis Stravinsky. Katalog der Musikautographen-Sammlung Louis Koch*, Hoffmannsche Buchdruckerei Felix Kraus, Stuttgart 1953, p. 57.

All these experiences and readings had shaped Beethoven's awareness of modality, before he attempted to use it in his compositions.

Folksongs: a compositional path to modality

I think a folksong hunt is better than a manhunt of the heroes who are so highly praised.¹³

Parallel to the mainstream of his activity as a composer, from 1809 on, Beethoven produced a bulk of 179 folksong arrangements for voices and piano trio, commissioned by George Thomson. Particularly in the years 1816-1820, apparently facing a crisis in his creative productivity, Beethoven devoted most of his time to this – relatively insignificant – activity. In 1816, after receiving a few sets of Beethoven's settings of Irish, Welsh and Scottish songs (WoO 152, 153, 154, 155 and 156), Thomson challenged the composer to find two or three folk tunes of each of the major European nations, to which the composer responded eagerly. In WoO 157 two songs with Latin and Italian texts were included, but the goal of bringing together songs from various countries was fully achieved only in WoO 158. The result of Beethoven's ethnomusicological "hunt" is quite impressive: a multi-coloured, diverse selection of continental melodies, collected from manifold sources. Thus, Barry Cooper calls it "a remarkable collection for its date – the first truly international one of its kind."¹⁴ According to various studies, some of the tunes used by Beethoven underwent a complex adjustment to the language of contemporary artistic music, through harmonic, rhythmic and structural adaptations introduced by Beethoven. One of the issues to resolve was how to harmonize some of the modally-flavoured tunes, using tonal chords and harmonic relations. An example of this is found in an Irish song *Save me from the grave and wise* from WoO 154, also known as *Nora Creina* (Ex. 1).

13 "...ich denke eine Volkslieder Jagd ist beßer als eine Menschen Jagd der so gepriesenen Helden". From the letter to Nikolaus Simrock from March 18th, 1820 (BGA No. 1372). English transl. after: Barry Cooper, *Beethoven*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2000, p. 250.

14 B. Cooper, op. cit., p. 250.

11
Save me from the grave and wise, for vain - ly would I tax my spi - rit,

F: I V6 V
5

15
be the thing that I des-pise, and ri - val all their stu-pid me - rit.

I bVII6 v̄r̄6 (I) V
cresc. p

Example 1. L. van Beethoven, *Save me from the grave and wise* WoO 154, No. 8, bars 11-18; after: N. Biamonte, *Modality in Beethoven's Folk-song settings...*, p. 59

The original melody here is Mixolydian (written in F major); the flat VII is preceded with a sixth leap and highlighted with E flat major chord before a major dominant; these chords together make a false relation. Beethoven's comment on this tune was as follows: "Behold how one must not be afraid of the expression of the strangest sounds in melody, because one will surely find a natural harmony for it."¹⁵

Another example is the melody of one of the two Polish songs, *Poszła baba po popiół*, which was identified by Biamonte as B Phrygian/Aeolian (with variation of sharp and natural II), but harmonized as G major/Lydian; with melody starting from III and variation of sharp and natural IV (Ex. 2).¹⁶

15 "Voilà com[m]e on ne doit pas avoir peur pour l'expression les sons le plus étrangers dans melodie, puisque on trouvera un harmonie naturelle pour cela". English transl. after N. Biamonte, op. cit., p. 60. See also: Petra Weber, *Natürlichkeit als kompositorisches Problem* [in:] *Beethoven 5. Studien und Interpretationen*, M. Tomaszewski, M. Chrenkoff (eds.), Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie, Kraków 2012, p. 64.

16 For more examples see: N. Biamonte, op. cit., p. 36.

Example 2. L. van Beethoven, *Poszła baba po popiół*, WoO 158 No. 10, bars 9-16; after: N. Biamonte, *Modality in Beethoven's Folk-song settings...*, p. 50

<i>Poszła baba po popiół</i>	The old woman went to fetch some ashes
<i>I diabeł ją utopił</i>	The Devil came and drowned her
<i>Ni popiołu ni baby</i>	No more old woman, no more ashes
<i>Tylko z baby dwa szaby.</i>	All that was left of her were two smoked hams.

Although church music and folksongs are of utterly different aesthetic ambience, there seems to be little doubt that in his attempt to resolve the conflict between “horizontal” (melodic) modality vs “vertical” (harmonic) tonality, Beethoven remembered his early attempts to harmonize church melodies.

Church music

In these years of increased interest in folksong settings, Beethoven continued his further research on modal scales. It is possible that the issues which he tried to resolve while arranging folk tunes intrigued him enough to broaden his knowledge on this subject. But it certainly has as much to do with his first sketches to the great solemn mass on

the occasion of Archduke Rudolph's ingress as archbishop of Olmütz. In 1816 he first jotted down the authentic and plagal forms of the Dorian scale, which he later used in the *Incarnatus* section of *Missa solemnis*.¹⁷ Two years later, he went on to study Gregorian chant¹⁸ and considered composing "a pious song in a symphony, in the old modes, *Lord God we praise Thee – Hallelujah* [probably *Te Deum*]"¹⁹ At the turn of 1819-20, two entries in conversation books reveal Beethoven's search for Renaissance musical theory sources, particularly for Gioseffo Zarlino's *Istitutioni harmoniche*.²⁰ This evidence has led the scholars to the assumption that the Italian treatise was a main point of reference for Beethoven, when he was considering using old church modes in his Mass. Yet before his *opus magnum* was completed, in 1820 Beethoven harmonized the Phrygian hymn *Pange lingua*, which was first discovered by Joseph Schmidt-Görg²¹ and recently reconstructed by Barry Cooper.²² It is possible that he was considering the use of a quotation from Gregorian chant, in a similar way that Michael Haydn employed a harmonized passage from Credo IV, *Liber usualis* for the *Incarnatus* section of his *Missa in tempore Quadragesimae* (Ex. 3):²³

17 Warren Kirkendale, *New Roads to Old Ideas in Beethoven's „Missa Solemnis“*, „The Musical Quarterly“, 1970, Vol. 56, No. 4, pp. 676-7.

18 "In order to write true church music, go through all the Gregorian chants [Kirchenchoräle der Mönche], etc". Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven's Tagebuch* [in:] *Beethoven Essays*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1988, p. 294.

19 W. Kirkendale, op. cit., p. 676, see also: Gustav Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*, Rieter-Biedermann, Leipzig 1887, p. 163.

20 *Ludwig van Beethovens Konversationshefte*, ed. G. Schünemann, Hesse, Berlin 1941, Vol. 1, pp. 100, 193.

21 Joseph Schmidt-Görg, *Das gregorianische Pange-lingua bei Beethoven* [in:] *Der kultische Gesang der abendländischen Kirche*, F. Tack, J.P. Bachem (eds.), Köln 1950, pp. 109-111.

22 *Lost Beethoven's Hymn is premiered* [<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/lost-beethoven-hymn-is-premiered>, access: 25.02.2019].

23 W. Kirkendale, op. cit., p. 676.

Corale.
Adagio.

Et in-car-natus est de Spi-ri-tu san-cto ex Ma-ri-a vir-gi-ne et ho-mo fa-ctus est.
Et in-car-natus est de Spi-ri-tu san-cto ex Ma-ri-a vir-gi-ne et ho-mo fa-ctus est.
Et in-car-natus est de Spi-ri-tu san-cto ex Ma-ri-a vir-gi-ne et ho-mo fa-ctus est.
Et in-car-natus est de Spi-ri-tu san-cto ex Ma-ri-a vir-gi-ne et ho-mo fa-ctus est.

Adagio.

Cru-ci-fi-xus e-ti-am pro no-bis sub Pon-ti-o Pi-la-to pas-sus et no-pul-tus est.
Cru-ci-fi-xus e-ti-am pro no-bis sub Pon-ti-o Pi-la-to pas-sus et se-pul-tus est.
Cru-ci-fi-xus e-ti-am pro no-bis sub Pon-ti-o Pi-la-to pas-sus et se-pul-tus est.
Cru-ci-fi-xus e-ti-am pro no-bis sub Pon-ti-o Pi-la-to pas-sus et se-pul-tus est.

Example 3. M. Haydn, *Missa tempore quadragesimae* MH 553, *Credo*, bars 60-67; after: Artaria & Co – Breitkopf & Härtel, Wien and Leipzig 1915, p. 130 (Web source: IMSLP)

However, in *Missa solemnis* we won't find any direct quotation of a Gregorian melody. The music, to which Beethoven set the words *Et incarnatus est*, is his own, although Warren Kirkendale noted that two Marian hymns in Dorian mode begin with a similar opening motif (D-A-B): *Ave maris stella* and Perotin's *Beata viscera* (Ex. 4):²⁴

24 Ibidem, p. 677 (see footnote 56).



Example 4. Anonym, *Ave maris stella*, opening motif (Source: Wikimedia Commons)



Example 5. Perotin, *Beata viscera*, opening (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Its archaic character is obvious, though: already the reviewer of the first performance of *Missa solennis* interpreted this passage as a kind of plainchant;²⁵ indeed, it can be described as a *quasi*-Gregorian melody

25 Anonymous, "Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung", 1824, Vol. XXVI, p. 439 („von schauvolle Wirkung ist der pathetische, eintönige Choral auf die Glaubensworte: et incarnatus est“).

in the Dorian mode sung by tenors (and doubled by violas), to which the accompanying cellos and basses add a flavour of two-part organum, with traces of contrapuntal and occasionally *discantus* style. Together with the short *Et resurrexit* intersection in Mixolydian scale, which is heard as unaccompanied vocal polyphony,²⁶ the *Incarnatus* forms a frame which secludes the story of human life and death of the Saviour in D major/D minor from the rest of the *Credo*. It is noteworthy that both Incarnation and Resurrection – the events driven by supernatural force – are represented by modal scales. Their selection remains in compliance with the characteristics of expressive values of these modes, found in Zarlino's *Istitutioni*: his description of Dorian, quoted after Cassiodorus, says that it "induces modesty and preserves chastity,"²⁷ which corresponds with the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. The Mixolydian scale, on the other hand, which according to Cassiodorus "had the nature of inciting the spirit and restoring it,"²⁸ seems appropriate for expressing the joy of the Resurrection.

In lydischer Tonart? The middle movement of Op. 132

The central movement of *String Quartet in A minor* Op. 132, in which Beethoven's compositional interest in modality has reached its climax, is primarily based on a principle of contrast. Anton Schindler once summed up Beethoven's general manner of composing as based on "two contrasting ideas": (*Zwei Principe*), usually put together, one immediately after another²⁹ (Ex. 5).

Homogeneity and democracy of the motet-like,³⁰ polyphonic introduction, followed by (and contrasting with) homophony and virtuosic aristocracy of the passage played by the first violin, already anticipates the two contrasting sections of the middle movement, which is the expressive climax of the five-part cycle (Ex. 6).

26 William Kinderman, *Beethoven*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1995, p. 240.

27 Gioseffo Zarlino, *On the modes* [Part four of *Le Institutioni harmoniche*, 1558], transl. V. Cohen, ed. C.V. Palisca, Yale University Press, New Haven–London 1983, p. 20.

28 Ibidem, p. 25.

29 Anton Schindler, *Biographie von Ludwig van Beethoven*, Aschendorff, Münster 1840, pp. 224-232.

30 Robert Hatten observed a motet-like texture in his analysis of the first movement; see: idem, *Interpretacja pierwszej części Beethovena opusu 132. Ku granicom analogii do modernizmu i postmodernizmu* [in:] *Beethoven 2. Studia i Interpretacje*, M. Tomaszewski, M. Chrenkoff (eds.), Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie, Kraków 2003, p. 141.

Beethovens Werke.

QUARTETT
für 2 Violinen, Bratsche und Violoncell
VON
L. VAN BEETHOVEN.

Serie 6. N^o 51.

Dem Fürsten Nicolaus von Galitzin gewidmet.

Op. 132.

Quartett N^o 15.

Componirt im Jahre 1825.

Assai sostenuto. Allegro.

Example 6. L. van Beethoven, *String Quartet in A minor* Op. 132, 1st movement, bars 1-16, after: *Ludwig van Beethovens Werke, Serie 6: Quartette für 2 Violinen, Bratsche und Violoncell, Band 2, Nr.51*, Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig [1863], reprinted: Dover Publications, New York 1970, p. 1 (159) (Web source: IMSLP)

Here, the “chorale melody in five phrases,”³¹ separated by polyphonic interludes – the *Heiliger Dankgesang* – and its two subsequent variations maintained in the style of vocal polyphony, alternate with the fragments marked as *Neue Kraft fühlend*, in which the violin again plays a prominent role (Ex. 7). The contrast between these sections can be observed on multiple levels, as shown in the table below:

Heiliger Dankgesang	Neue Kraft fühlend
Modal (F Lydian)	Tonal (D-major)
Hymn	Dance-like
<i>Cantabile</i>	<i>Sonabile</i> ³²
Polyphony	Homophony
Double	Triple

31 Lewis Lockwood, *Beethoven*, Norton, New York 2003, p. 456.

32 Danuta Gwizdalanka, *Brzmienie kwartetów smyczkowych Ludwika van Beethovena*, Wydawnictwo Nakom, Poznań 1991, p. 96.

(173) 15

Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart.
 (Canzona di ringraziamento offerta alla divinità da un guarito, in modo lidico.)
 Molto adagio.

p Neue Kraft fühlend.
 (Sentito più nuova forza)
 Andante. *tr.* *cresc.*

10. Die deutschen Überschriften sind von Beethovens Hand, die italienischen von fremder Hand im Originalmanuskript geschrieben.
 B. 51.

Example 7. L. van Beethoven, *String Quartet in A minor Op. 132*, 3rd movement, bars 1-59, after: *Ludwig van Beethovens Werke, Serie 6: Quartette für 2 Violinen, Bratsche und Violoncell, Band 2, Nr.51*, Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig [1863], reprinted: Dover Publications, New York 1970, p. 15 (173) (Web source: IMSLP)

Sieghard Brandenburg argues that Beethoven took his inspiration for composing his *Dankgesang* from organ improvisation techniques rather than immediately from the Renaissance vocal polyphony. At least, a hypothesis that Beethoven took Palestrina's music as his model, was generally rejected by the German scholar. Brandenburg points primarily to the organist Daniel Gottlob Türk and his instructions of chorale settings in his book *Von den wichtigsten Pflichten eines Organisten* (1787). Surprisingly, Beethoven's *Dankgesang* fulfils his instructions quite accurately, both in general outline and details of voice distribution:

The interlude must preserve the unity of the chorale's character and express the sentiments contained in it;³³

It should briefly and with little display or virtuosity prepare the first note of the following chorale line and lead directly into it;³⁴

All the interludes should be of similar lengths, so that no disproportion results;³⁵

The *cantus firmus* can be played on another keyboard, while the organist weaves small contrapuntal subject into the other, accompanying parts and develops them etc., but in the process the melody must continue its simple pace quite undisturbed and be spared from any additions.³⁶

As Brandenburg comments, these instructions are clearly followed by the composer in the second strophe of *Heiliger Dankgesang*, where "the three lower parts proceed in a kind of stylized, very free counterpoint of the fourth species, while the *cantus firmus* [...] is displaced an octave higher as if to another register, another 'manual.'³⁷ The other argument that speaks for instrumental provenance of Beethoven's *Dankgesang* is that it is indeed an "instrumental chant:" the ambit of each part reaches far beyond the confines of vocal range; it employs the lowest open

33 Daniel Gottlob Türk, *Von den wichtigsten Pflichten eines Organisten. Ein Beytrag zur Verbesserung der Musikalischen Liturgie*, Hemmerde, Halle 1787, pp. 107-108 (English transl. of excerpts from Türk's treatise are given after: Sieghard Brandenburg, *The Historical Background to the 'Heiliger Dankgesang' in Beethoven's A-minor Quartet Op. 132* [in:] *Beethoven Studies 3*, ed. A. Tyson, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1982, pp. 161-191).

34 *Ibidem*, pp. 17-18.

35 *Ibidem*, pp. 14-18.

36 *Ibidem*, pp. 103-104.

37 S. Brandenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

strings of cello and viola and extreme registers of the first violin. However, the linear thinking and the kinship between the four instruments that form a string quartet and a traditional four-part (CATB) choral setting, (characteristic, for example, of Josquin's masses) and the evident influence of syntactic imitation, combined with the *cantus firmus* technique, still reveal a vocal polyphonic model at its source, even if acquired by the composer via more recent examples from instrumental music. The question if Beethoven was interested at all in the Renaissance polyphony before Palestrina, is difficult to answer. Nevertheless, he could have seen the examples of Josquin's masses in Zarlino's *Istitutioni harmoniche*³⁸ or in Burney's *A General History of Music*.³⁹ The composer's grandfather Lodewijk van Beethoven, who was born in Mechelen, and performed as a choirboy at the St. Rombold's Cathedral,⁴⁰ where Jean Richafort, Josquin's pupil and author of *Requiem in memoriam Josquin Desprez* had once been a choir master, could be a very remote, but still possible connection of the Beethoven family to the tradition of Franco-Flemish polyphony.

As the autograph note "NB: dieses Stück hat immer h, nie wie gewöhnlich b" confirms, the piece was conceived on an F major foundation that has no B \flat ; that is, in a Lydian mode as it was perceived by his contemporaries.⁴¹ Ironically then, Beethoven uses the Lydian mode in the strict form, that was regarded as extinct since the days of Luther, except as a purely theoretical construct.⁴² One of the possible explanations to this is that Beethoven may have wanted the movement to "oscillate between the feeling of F as tonic and a feeling of C not as dominant but as alternate tonic."⁴³ For, as Daniel Chua observed, "the augmented fourth-diminished fifth F-B-F displaces the tonal centre from F to C."⁴⁴ On the other hand, Chrissochoidis speculated that the ambiguity of *Dankgesang* "could be somewhat smoothed out with the evocation of the Hypolydian mode,

38 Cristle Collins Judd, *Reading Renaissance Music Theory: Hearing with the Eyes*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000, pp. 202-205.

39 M. Nahajowski, op. cit., pp. 274-275.

40 Peter Clive, *Beethoven and His World. A Biographical Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001, p. 23.

41 See footnote XX, cf also: Justin Heinrich Knecht, *Vollständige Orgelschule für Anfänger und Geübtere*, Vol. 3 [*Choralspiele auf der Orgel*], Breitkopf, Leipzig 1795, pp. 134-136.

42 L. Lockwood, op. cit., p. 457; cf. S. Brandenburg, op. cit., p. 177.

43 Ibidem.

44 Daniel K. Chua, *The "Galitzin" Quartets of Beethoven, Opp. 127, 132, 130*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1995, p. 321.

whose scale starts a fourth below F."⁴⁵ Let us test his case against the descriptions in Zarlino's treatise, were they relevant for Beethoven:

"The Lydian mode was a remedy for the toils of the mind, and, similarly, for those of the body."⁴⁶

"Therefore, they adapted it [Hypolydian] to subjects which were tame, civilized, and grave, and which contained profound, speculative, and divine things, such as those dealing with the glory of God and with eternal happiness, and those suited to entreating Divine Grace."⁴⁷

Indeed, these two modes represent the main subjects of the work: the convalescence (Lydian) and the Divine (Hypolydian). At any rate, for Beethoven symbolic value seems to take priority over historical accuracy and proper understanding of the mode as an octave species; his label *in der lydischen Tonart* simply refers to the contemporary associations with the term.⁴⁸

Conclusions

Although there is still not enough evidence in sketches or written documents, the chronology of events listed below speaks volumes about increased interest in modality, developed by Beethoven within, or immediately after the period, when he devoted himself to the practice of arranging folksongs. Our hypothesis could be such: the experience with folksong settings may have been a trigger, rekindling Beethoven's interest in modality in his later years.

Ca 1791 – *Lamentations of Jeremiah*

1809 – Beethoven writes: "In the old church modes the devotion is divine, I exclaimed, and God let me express it someday"

1809-1820 – Folksong arrangements; majority between 1816-1820.

1816 – Beethoven notes down the authentic and plagal forms of the Dorian scale

⁴⁵ I. Chrissochoidis, op. cit., p. 20.

⁴⁶ G. Zarlino, op. cit., p. 24.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 25.

⁴⁸ L. Lockwood, op. cit., p. 456.

1818 – Beethoven plans to compose “a pious song in a symphony, in the old modes, *Lord God we praise Thee – hallelujah*”

1818 – “In order to write true church music, go through all the Gregorian chants” [Kirchenchoräle der Mönche], etc” (Tagebuch entry)

1820 – *Pange lingua* (reconstructed by Cooper, 2012)

1823 – *Missa solemnis* op. 123

1825 – *String quartet in A minor* Op. 132 (*Heiliger Dankgesang*)

Another important observation is that Beethoven’s journey took him from harmonizing modal tunes to processed, “dissolved” modality – which permeates all the layers of the musical work and corresponds with old compositional techniques as one of the ingredients of archaic stylization. After having worked with authentic Gregorian or folk tunes, he does not quote them anymore, but goes on to write his own melodies. The conflict between modality and tonality is no longer a simultaneous clash of different layers of the work, but it is extended to the separate regions of a musical piece, designated for each system. At the same time, the composer creates his own imaginary world of modality, perceived from modern perspective, with merely an illusion of historical reconstruction. It is no doubt that the experience of harmonizing modal tunes and composing *quasi*-modal music is different in nature. However, both of them display technical and expressive tension between tonality as a default, universal system and modality as a substitute for music distant in place and time: outlandish, strange, transcendent, from beyond or foreign, as in the case of archaic or ethnic music.

Tonality	Modality
Secular	Sacred
Artistic	Folk
Contemporary	Archaic

Towards the end of his life, Beethoven seems to embrace modality more and more and consequently undermines his perception of it as “strange:” in the final movement of his last *String Quartet* Op. 135, the second theme is composed in pentatonic scale. The ultimate message from Beethoven – the great postmodernist of the Classical era – to posterity is clear: tonality is no more, or has never actually been, a *nec plus ultra*; there is plenty of other systems and scales to be discovered.

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Od autentyczności do stylizacji: przetwarzanie modalności w późnych dziełach Ludwiga van Beethovena

Streszczenie

Równoległe do głównego nurtu swojej twórczości kompozytorskiej, na przestrzeni lat 1809-1820, Beethoven opracował łącznie 179 pieśni ludowych na głosy i trio fortepianowe. Szczególnie w latach 1815-1818, najwyraźniej w obliczu kryzysu twórczego, Beethoven poświęcił dużo czasu tej stosunkowo mało znaczącej działalności. Jak dowodzi Nicole Biamonte, znaczna część opracowanych przez kompozytora melodii opartych jest na skalach modalnych.

Co ciekawe, w dzienniku Beethovena (Tagebuch) odnaleźć można następujące słowa, pochodzące z tego samego okresu: „Aby napisać prawdziwą muzykę kościelną, przejrzyj wszystkie śpiewy gregoriańskie itp.”. W późniejszych latach twórca włączył elementy skal modalnych do swoich oryginalnych dzieł, głównie o charakterze religijnym lub uduchowionym do *Credo* z *Missa solemnis* op. 123 i środkowej części *Kwartetu smyczkowego a-moll* op. 132 (*Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit in der lydischen Tonart*).

Chociaż wspomniane przykłady użycia modalności w dziełach Beethovena są powszechnie znane i opisane w literaturze naukowej, niewiele badań uwzględnia złożoność podejścia kompozytora do modalności. Główną ideą niniejszego artykułu jest dokładniejsze przedstawienie kontekstu historycznego i estetycznego, który mógł wpłynąć na ukształtowanie się stosunku Beethovena do modalności, a także wskazanie na związki pomiędzy doświadczeniem adaptacji oryginalnej muzyki ludowej opartej

na skalach modalnych a wykorzystaniem elementów modalności w twórczości własnej. Doświadczenia te, choć odmienne w swej naturze, jednocześnie wydają się ze sobą ściśle powiązane: oba ukazują bowiem napięcie techniczne i ekspresyjne pomiędzy tonalnością jako domyślnym, uniwersalnym systemem i modalnością jako substytutem muzyki „obcej”; w tym przypadku archaicznej lub etnicznej.

Słowa-klucze: Beethoven, modalność, muzyka religijna, muzyka ludowa, estetyka muzyczna

Key-words: Beethoven, modality, sacral music, folksongs, musical aesthetics