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# Introduction

## The Proper Chants of the Mass

This publication contains a substantial portion of the proper chants of the Mass of the Roman rite (introits, graduals, alleluias, tracts, offertories, and communions) adapted to English words.<sup>1</sup>

The *introits* accompany the entrance of the ministers.<sup>2</sup> The *gradu-als*, *alleluias*, and *tracts* are used in the Liturgy of the Word. The *offertories* accompany the collection of the people's offerings and the preparation of the gifts. The *communions* accompany the administration of Holy Communion.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*The American Gradual 2020* is to be issued in two editions: a modern notation edition and a conventional chant (four-line staff) notation edition. Both editions will be issued in two volumes, the first containing the introits, offertories, and communions (the chants most widely used); the second containing the graduals, alleluias, and tracts.

<sup>2</sup>The choir sings the antiphon; a cantor or cantors sing whatever verses are sung with it. The antiphon may be sung alone. The psalm verse printed with it, if sung, is followed by a repetition of the antiphon. If the *Gloria Patri* is added, it is also followed by the antiphon. When protraction of the singing seems appropriate, other psalm verses—each followed by the antiphon—may be inserted between the verse provided and the *Gloria Patri*.

<sup>3</sup>The communions are sung in the same manner as the introits. Detailed instructions about performance of all the chants of the Mass in the Ordinary Form of the Roman rite are given in the preface to the *Ordo cantus Missæ*, an English translation of which is available at <https://media.musicasacra.com/pdf/ordo-cantus-missae.pdf>.)

At all these points in the liturgy the Episcopal Church's Book of Common Prayer (1979) permits the singing of hymns, psalms, or anthems.

While it is true that in the Roman Catholic Church vernacular translations of Latin liturgical texts that have not been officially authorized may not be used, and no generally authorized translations of the texts in the *Graduale Romanum* exist, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal states that other suitable songs may be used in place of the introits, offertories, and communions, and English-language adaptations of the Latin introits, offertories, and communions are certainly suitable songs. The General Instruction does not, on the other hand, authorize the use of other suitable songs in place of the graduals, alleluias, and tracts. Therefore, when these are used in place of the responsorial psalms and acclamations appointed in the Lectionary for Mass, they must usually be sung in Latin.<sup>4</sup>

## Why Sing These Chants?

Their musical merit is widely acknowledged. Most of their texts are drawn from scripture and are suitable for the occasions to which they are assigned. Although they must usually be sung by trained singers, the number required to sing them is small. When they are the only choral music sung, they provide more-than-adequate fare for churches with limited resources. When they are combined with a large and varied choral repertory, they provide significant enrichment.

The texts of the chants assigned to a particular day are often related to the assigned readings. After the revision of the Roman rite calendar and lectionary that followed Vatican II, the Vatican re-assigned the proper chants of the Mass, publishing the new assignments in the *Ordo Cantus Missæ* (1972). Because the Episcopal Church in revisions of its own calendar and lectionary has adhered quite

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<sup>4</sup>The bishop of Corpus Christi, Texas, has authorized use of the English translations of these texts given in the *Gregorian Missal*.

closely to the Roman model, the same chants may on most days be sung in both the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

## Why Sing the Chants in English?

In some churches choral music is frequently sung in Latin at services otherwise conducted entirely in English. For over four hundred years Anglican authorities were firm in their insistence that everything sung in the liturgy be “understood of the people,” and in the years immediately following Vatican II many Roman Catholic authorities were adamant in requiring that everything sung in the liturgy be sung in the vernacular. During the past forty years opposition to singing in Latin at English services has gradually yielded to recognition that the texture of some choral works makes their words aurally unintelligible, regardless of the language in which they are sung, and that much good choral music cannot be satisfactorily adapted to English words. Nevertheless, the arguments that justify the singing of some other kinds of choral music in Latin at English services do not, for the most part, apply to chant.

When chant is sung in English, listeners who understand English *can* understand the words. **To concede that special considerations may sometimes outweigh a general preference for language understood by the people is not to discredit this preference altogether.** What is called “Gregorian” chant (Romano-Frankish chant) was devised as a vehicle for meditation upon scriptural texts.<sup>5</sup> Hearing a text sung and immediately understanding its meaning is far more conducive to such meditation than is reading a translation of it from a service leaflet while it is being sung in Latin.

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<sup>5</sup>For an extended discussion of this point, see Rembert Herbert, *Entrances: Gregorian Chant in Daily Life* (New York: Church Publishing, 1999).

## Adapting Chant to English Words

No one conversant with the Latin chant repertory will argue that chant melodies cannot be satisfactorily adapted to more than one set of *Latin* words. A huge part of that repertory is the product of such adaptation. *Type melodies* like those associated with the antiphon *Lumen ad revelationem*,<sup>6</sup> the gradual *Justus ut palma*,<sup>7</sup> and the Alleluia verse *Dies sanctificatus*,<sup>8</sup> have been adapted to numerous Latin texts, undergoing significant permutations but remaining clearly recognizable in the process. Original melodies composed for particular texts have also been adapted to other Latin texts, both in the era when the authentic Gregorian repertory was developing and in more recent times. The adaptation of the melody of the offertory chant *Stetit angelus* to the text of *Justorum animae*<sup>9</sup> stands as an example from the Middle Ages. Joseph Pothier's adaptation of the melody of the introit *Vocem jucunditatis* to the text of the introit *Gaudens gaudebo* stands as an example from the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century.

Because so much of the Gregorian repertory is based on the accentual patterns of Latin texts, however, the possibility of successfully adapting Gregorian melodies to English texts has long been subject to debate. André Mocquereau, who devised the "Solesmes Method" of chant interpretation,<sup>10</sup> and whose views held wide sway throughout much of the twentieth century, taught that medieval Latin had *pitch accents* rather than *stress accents*. He maintained, in other words, that the rhythm of medieval Latin was *not based on intensity*.

<sup>6</sup>A tabular analysis of the adaptation of the melody to 22 different Latin texts appears in Paolo Ferretti, *Estetica gregoriana* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977. Originally Published: Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra, 1931), following page 12.

<sup>7</sup>A tabular analysis of the adaptation of this melody to numerous Latin texts, with commentary, appears in Ferretti, *op. cit.* 170-189.

<sup>8</sup>A tabular analysis of the adaptation of this melody to numerous Latin texts, with commentary, appears in Ferretti, *op. cit.*, 200-206.

<sup>9</sup>See J. Gajard, "L'offertoire de la Toussaint," *Revue grégorienne*, 26, no. 5 (septembre-octobre 1947), 179-185.

<sup>10</sup>The monks of Solesmes abandoned this "method" some time ago.



Since English has *stress accents*, adherents to his theories maintained that any effort to adapt Gregorian chant to English words satisfactorily was doomed to failure. Mocquereau's position on the nature of the medieval Latin accent finds no support among linguists, who generally agree that by the fourth century—long before the composition of the Gregorian repertory—the Latin accent had evolved from a pitch accent to a stress accent.<sup>11</sup>

Although making good adaptations is possible, poor ones abound. These have usually resulted from simply stringing English words under melodies built around Latin words, without regard to the basic principles of chant composition. **Satisfactory adaptations result only from employment of the techniques used by the medieval adapters, who altered melodies wherever necessary to preserve in their adaptations the relationship between text and music that obtained in their sources.**

Certain characteristics of English require special accommodation. "Accents of isolation" are widely used in Latin chant: An accented syllable is set to a single note, and the following unstressed syllable is set to a melisma. When the chant is sung in Latin, these unstressed syllables can be sung beautifully because every Latin syllable, stressed or unstressed, has a full vowel sound. Unstressed English syllables often do not. They have in place of a pure vowel a *schwa* or *vowel murmur*, represented in most dictionaries by the symbol "ə" and pronounced like "uh." The vowel murmur cannot tolerably bear the musical weight of a melisma. In many cases where an accent of isolation is employed, the melisma must be moved to the accented syllable, and a note must be added for the following unstressed syllable.

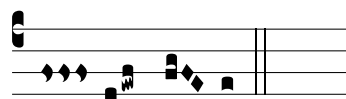
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<sup>11</sup>See, for example, L. R. Palmer, *The Latin Language*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), who wrote, "For the period after 300 A.D. there is general agreement among scholars that a stress accent characterized Latin." (page 214) Whether Latin *ever had a pitch accent* remains open to question. See W. Sidney Allen, *Vox Latina* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 83-88.

The final cadences of most of the special psalm tones used with the introits and communions are *cursive* formulas, in which the last five syllables of a text, irrespective of its accentuation, are set to the last five neumes.<sup>12</sup> To modern ears even Latin texts sound strange when set this way. When English texts are set to these formulas, and unstressed syllables lacking vowel sounds are given more musical weight than they can sustain, texts are grossly distorted. Consequently, I have altered some of these cadences, transforming those of tones 1 and 7 into accentual formulas and shortening the first neume in the cadences of tones 3 and 8.

### Choice of Melodic Readings on Which to Base Adaptations

The production of the Vatican edition of the *Graduale Romanum* was an extraordinary achievement. In many respects the melodic readings adopted in it have stood the test of time. Regrettably, its editor, Dom Joseph Pothier,<sup>13</sup> failed to reverse certain changes in the melodies that had been introduced with the advent of polyphony in the late Middle Ages. To forestall the incidence of the augmented fourth,<sup>14</sup> medieval editors had raised certain E's to F's and raised certain B's to C's. In some cases such changes obscured the tonality of the chants. In others they led to conflict between textual and musical accents. For example, in the introit *Resurrexi* the original melody for "manum tuam" accords with the accentuation of the text:



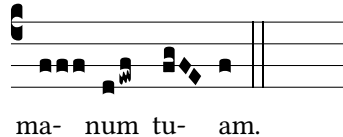
ma- num tu- am.

<sup>12</sup>For an explanation of why these cadences were composed this way, see Eugène Cardine, *Beginning Studies in Gregorian Chant*. tr. William Torcolano (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1988), 57-59.

<sup>13</sup>Although Pius X appointed a commission to produce the Vatican edition of the chant, this commission met only a few times. Pothier did most of the work single-handedly. See John Boe, *The Ordinary in English*. (Thesis. Ph.D. Northwestern University, 1969), vol. 1, 274ff.

<sup>14</sup>The augmented fourth was called the "diabolus in musica."

In the Vatican edition, however, Pothier adopted the altered version of the phrase, in which the melody and the accentuation of the text are in conflict.



Examples like this are numerous,<sup>15</sup> and I have restored the earlier form wherever I have encountered this corruption in the Vatican edition.<sup>16</sup>

I nevertheless reject the idea that the earliest form of a chant is always to be preferred to later forms. This idea rests on the assumption that the earliest versions of chants were never patient of improvement. I have, therefore, not always adopted the editorially-restored versions of the melodies presented in the *Graduale novum*.<sup>17</sup>

## Choice of Translations

I have drawn psalm texts largely from the psalter of the Episcopal Church's 1979 Book of Common Prayer and have drawn other scriptural texts from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, but I have occasionally altered them when small changes facilitated adaptation of the music to them, and also when their meaning differed significantly from that of corresponding Latin texts that had special liturgical relevance.

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<sup>15</sup>For other examples see Paolo Ferretti, *op. cit.*, 53-56.

<sup>16</sup>Because polyphony was late in coming to southern Italy, the unchanged notes survive in Benevento VI.34, to which I have referred.

<sup>17</sup>[Rome?]: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2011).

## Semiology and Interpretation

Eugène Cardine's comparative study of the neumes found in oldest adiastematic<sup>18</sup> manuscripts led him to an evidence-based understanding about the way in which these neumes were to be interpreted.<sup>19</sup> His close associate Jean Claire, the man to whom he dictated his final testament, stated, however, that the prevailing interpretation of Cardine's teaching was erroneous. He wrote that Cardine had never heard a chant recording purportedly based on his teaching that he found satisfactory because in them all his differentiation of note values had been exaggerated. Claire wrote:

Practically everyone has wished to be a disciple of Dom Cardine. Everyone has wished to “do” the cuts—all the cuts; to sing according to the “three values”—all the “values”; to execute each neume—every neume—according to its proper nature, revised and corrected;<sup>20</sup> to observe the repercussions completely—all the repercussions, etc. And this has resulted most often only in a dryness, a coldness, an indescribable inexpressiveness...<sup>21</sup>

It will also be good to take a dispassionate account of the of the difference between the value of an average syllable and that of a note within a melisma, **which corresponds exactly to the difference between the time required to pronounce correctly an average syllable (consonant plus vowel) and the time required to**

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<sup>18</sup>These manuscripts lacked staff lines, and their neumes did not show exact pitches. They did, however, convey interpretative nuances missing in the later manuscripts that did show exact pitches.

<sup>19</sup>For these interpretations see Eugène Cardine, *Gregorian semiology*, tr. Robert M. Fowells (Sablé-sur-Sarthe, France: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1982).

<sup>20</sup>Cardine used the word “neume” in reference to the notes (or single note) to which a syllable is set. He distinguished neumes from the neumatic elements composing a compound neume.

<sup>21</sup>Jean Claire, “Dom Eugène Cardine (1905-1988), *Revue grégorienne* XXIII, (1989), 20. My translation.

**pronounce a syllable consisting of a vowel alone.** If an electronic technician is available in one's group, one should ask him to calculate the difference, that is, to give in fractions of a second, the time it takes to articulate an average syllable, and then try to listen to recordings—it matters not how many—with semiological pretensions “according to the works of D. Cardine” without smiling a little. All this is said in his testament.<sup>22</sup>

Claire went on to write about Cardine's ideas concerning the execution of repercussions.

Finally, the repercussions. This is the domain where it is easiest, with the best intentions in the world, to compromise everything. The repercussion must not interrupt the sound but instead modulate it delicately. It must not chop up the word or interrupt the line of the phrase. Such an execution is undoubtedly beyond the ability of all the voices in the choir, but it is not necessary that such a nuance should be rendered by the voices that are insufficiently supple. Those who are able should add a discreet vibrato over the sound of the ensemble, and the desired effect will be produced.<sup>23</sup>

In editing the new *Liber hymnarius* the monks of Solesmes made extensive use of the horizontal episema. They discovered that choirs were exaggerating what was supposed to be a nuance. Consequently, in editing the new *Antiphonale monasticum* and the new *Antiphonale romanum* they abandoned its use altogether. In his introduction to the *Antiphonale monasticum* Daniel Saulnier wrote,<sup>24</sup>

It has become customary to use this term [“rhythmic signs”] for three signs added by the Solesmes editions to

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<sup>22</sup>Claire, *op.cit.*, 23. Boldface added.

<sup>23</sup>Claire, *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup><http://www.chantcafe.com/2010/07/a-translation-of-saulniers-introduction-to-the-new-antiphonale-monasticum/>. Viewed September 10, 2019.

XX century books of chant: the dot, the vertical episema and the horizontal episema. These three signs have been abandoned in our edition for the following reasons: The dot and the vertical episema do not correspond to any traditional information about Gregorian chant. They do not appear in any medieval manuscripts and have only been introduced into Solesmes editions in order to promote a rhythmic theory of Gregorian chant (based on the views propounded in *Le Nombre musical grégorien*), which has long since been demonstrated to be obsolete. Moreover, they have shown themselves to be in contradiction with the elementary principles of reading medieval neumes. More precisely, this rhythmic theory, to the extent that it inflicts a rhythmic distortion on the words and phrases that are chanted, appears in contradiction to the elementary principles of liturgical music composition, which must be set fundamentally at the service of the sacred text. The horizontal episema only appears in two or three medieval manuscripts of the office out of several hundred documents which have come down to us.<sup>25</sup> It is not a rhythmic sign, but an expressive one. It does not inform the singer about basic rhythm, it only indicates—and that in a way very ambiguous for XX century singers—a minute nuance of rhythm (called *agogic* by musicians for the last century). **Most amateur choirs are incapable of producing such subtle nuances,**<sup>26</sup> which are the preserve of experienced soloists, and the exaggerated interpretation they give to them leads them in the end to distort the underlying rhythm of such simple Gregorian pieces as antiphons, a rhythm based on the declamation of the text and the flow of the melody.

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<sup>25</sup>The horizontal episema does appear frequently in manuscripts of the Mass propers, but is not reproduced in the conventional chant notation edition because it is generally misinterpreted.

<sup>26</sup>Boldface added. Experience has convinced me that professional church choirs having little time to rehearse the chant cannot do so, either.

## **The Conventional Chant Notation (Four-line Staff Notation) Edition of This Work**

Since the publication of the first edition of this work in 2001, several church musicians have expressed their desire for a conventional chant notation edition. With the *Illuminare Score Editor* I have been able to typeset the chants in this notation without expending an unreasonable amount of time. Arranging my files for publication in a book was, however, a challenge that I could not meet. Felipe Gasper of Toronto, Ontario, volunteered to undertake the task and has arranged these files in a beautiful format. To him I am immeasurably grateful.


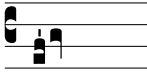
I have tried to make this conventional chant edition useful to choirs that endeavor to render all the nuances shown in the adiastematic manuscripts as well as to choirs that follow prevalent performance practice with little or no change based on semiology.

I have used the following note forms not found in the Vatican edition: The oriscus, the salicus, the pes quassus, the bivirga and trivirga, and the stropa. With these note forms in use singers who attempt to execute all the nuances shown in the Laon and St. Gall manuscripts will need only to add the horizontal episema to the clivis-with-episema and the long torculus. Marking these may even prove unnecessary at cadences because a normal retard achieves their intended effect.

I have not used signs of liquescence. These were not used consistently in the manuscripts—only at points where the scribes believed singers needed reminders to pronounce the consonants carefully. The high incidence of consonantal “pileups” in English would have required such extensive use of them as would have made them pointless.

Choirs that adhere to prevailing performance practice, with few changes based on semiology, will continue to ignore most differences

in note shapes. I urge them, however, to depart from past practice by executing the repercussions as Claire suggests, (*v.s.*) and by giving added weight to the note *following* the *quilisma*, to the *top* note of

the *salicus*:  formerly 

and to the top note of the newly-differentiated *pes quassus*: 