



Singing Chant: Latin and English

•The key to singing Gregorian chant lies in its source, the text. Essentially, it is the chanting of a text whose melody was created in an oral tradition. However, the oral memory of how this chant was sung has been lost for several centuries. Today, the interpretation must rely on the musical notation that was developed in the Middle Ages. This notation, especially that of Laon 239, the Cantatorium of St. Gall 359 and the Codex 121 of Einsiedeln, have given us a window that opens onto that interpretation. Therefore, the fundamental elements to be taken into account are the following:

- 1. the **word** as the primary source of the interpretation;
- 2. the **melody** as conditioned by the text and by the modal laws;
- 3. the **neume** design as the symbolic representation of the musical form received by the text. The musical gesture, frozen on parchment.

The four basic (authentic) Gregorian chant modes:

D	E	F	G
C	D	E	F
B	C	D	E
A	B	C	D
G	A+	B	C+
<i>F</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>
E	F	G	A
<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>
PROTUS	DEUTERUS	TRITUS	TETRARDUS
<i>DORIAN</i>	<i>PHRYGIAN</i>	<i>LYDIAN</i>	<i>MIXOLYDIAN</i>
(Mode I & II)	(Mode III & IV)	(Mode V & VI)	(Mode VII & VIII)

The letters in bold at the fifth above the Finals, indicate the Dominant of each of the authentic modes (I, III, V and VII).

The letters in bold italic at the third above the Finals, indicate the ancient Dominants of the Plagal modes (II, IV, VI and VIII). Modes IV and VIII have moved their Dominants to the fourth above their Finals as indicated by the plus sign (+).

The Hierarchy of the Scale Degrees:

their function

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•The declamation degree

•The primary degree of the scale has the function of declamation, the proclamation.

We call it the Dominant, the Tenor, that on which one sings out the word. This scale degree became of interest in chant studies only in the 20th century when scholars (cf. Charles Atkinson) reached a consensus that the Latin of chant used a **stress** accent!

The punctuation degree

The second function of a scale degree is that of punctuation. When one arrives at the end of a word, an incise, or a phrase in the language, one usually lets the voice descend. The Gregorian composers respected this procedure. When one arrives at the end of a phrase one descends in pitch.

In a particular piece there can be a number of recitation pitches, a number of dominants of various kinds and a number punctuations. The same scale degree can at different times be either the dominant or a punctuation.

The Modes and the Melody

- The F and the C clefs always indicate structure pitches in every piece of chant.
- Along with the universal structure pitches F and C, each of the eight modes have their **Final**, their **Dominant** and the **Cadential Third** above that Final as their principal structure pitches. Word accents are built on them as well as climaxes.

- Gregorian pieces terminate with **only four** possible notes, the **Finals** of the pieces:
- D, E, F, or G.

Gregorian Chant is “Sung Speech”

Its Vertical Dimension

- 1. **The recitation pitch** (or “dominant”) corresponds to the optimum pitch level used by good speakers for the normal proclamation of a sense unit in a text.
- 2. **Intonation patterns** in chant correspond to the rising patterns used by speakers at the beginning of a sentence.
- 3. **Cadence patterns** in chant correspond to the dropping pitches used by speakers at the end of sentences and especially at the end of a major section of a text.

The Horizontal dimension

- 1. The **rhythm** and **tempo** of a phrase in chant corresponds to the rhythmic flow of speech used by a good public reader.
- 2. **Pretonic** syllables tend to flow more or less rapidly toward the tonic accent of a word or a phrase (e.g.: a-nun-ti-á-vit).
- 3. The **Tonic** accent of a word or a phrase contains all the energy and momentum for all the syllables that follow it (e.g.: Dó-mi-nus).
- 4. **Post-Tonic** syllables are carried by the energy of the preceding Tonic accent syllable (e.g.: Dó-mi-nus).
- 5. **Final** syllables dissipate the remaining energy from the Tonic accent and bring the forward momentum to a stop (e.g.: Dó-mi-nus). A common example of this phenomenon is that of letting a car coast to a stop at a stop sign.

The Last note of a Neume regains full Syllabic Value

- When there are two or more notes on a single syllable, they move rapidly to the final note over that syllable, which regains full syllabic value.
- When the horizontal episema (–) is used within a group of two or more notes, it restores that note to its syllabic value.
- When the notes are at the **unison**, practice repeating the vowel sound for each note.

- Draw the neume designs given over each syllable as you sing the word *Deus*:

Last note is not at the unison

- When the notes are **not** at the unison, practice smoothly joining the vowel sound of each note to the next note over that syllable.
- Draw the neume designs given over each syllable as you sing the word *Deus*:

Syllabic value: changing volume

- Practice smoothly joining the vowel sound of each note to the next note over that syllable while changing the volume of your voice as you sing the words:

Syllabic Value:

Although each syllable of the word *benesonantibus* has only a single square note, each syllable has a different value and function in the word:

Ps 150. 5

I N cymbalis benesonantibus laudate Dominum.

—————>< / > —> —|
 be- ne- son- an- ti- bus

As Dom Daniel Saulnier states: “... the romano-frankish chant shows an entirely new concern for the construction of phrases: the melodic curve in the form of an arch, a ... concern [that] becomes a canon of composition for the ‘gregorian’. The same holds true for the treatment of words. In the case of both the phrase and the word, the Latin accent is handled in the composition by a melodic elevation. Grammar has regained all its prerogatives over the music and finds itself elevated as the *custos recte loquendi* (the guardian of right speech).”

GREGORIAN CHANT IS SUNG SPEECH

Declamation of a Text

Using a single reciting tone (G):

A -gnus De- i, * qui tol- lis pec- ca- ta mun- di: mi- se- re- re no- bis. ij

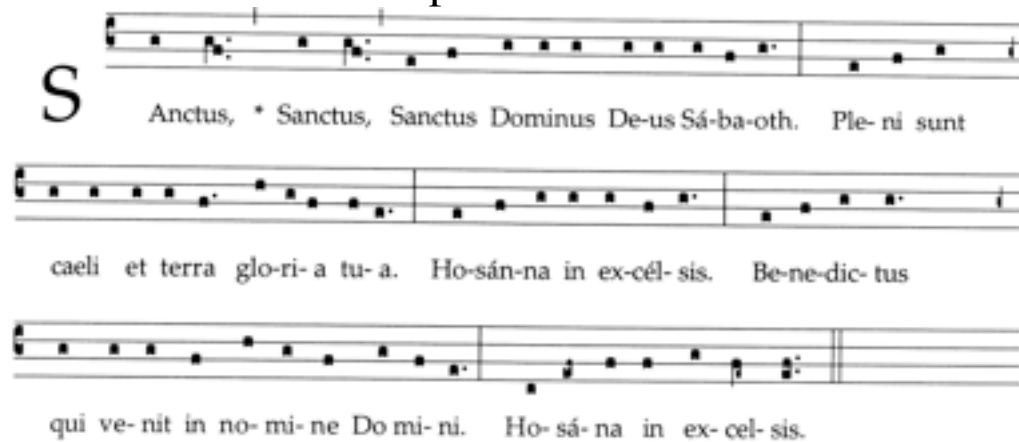
Agnus De- i, * qui tol- lis pec- ca- ta mun- di: do- na no- bis pa- cem.

in modern notation:

Lamb of God, you take a- way the sins of the world: have mer- cy on us. (2)

Lamb of God, — you take a- way the sins of the world: grant us — peace. —

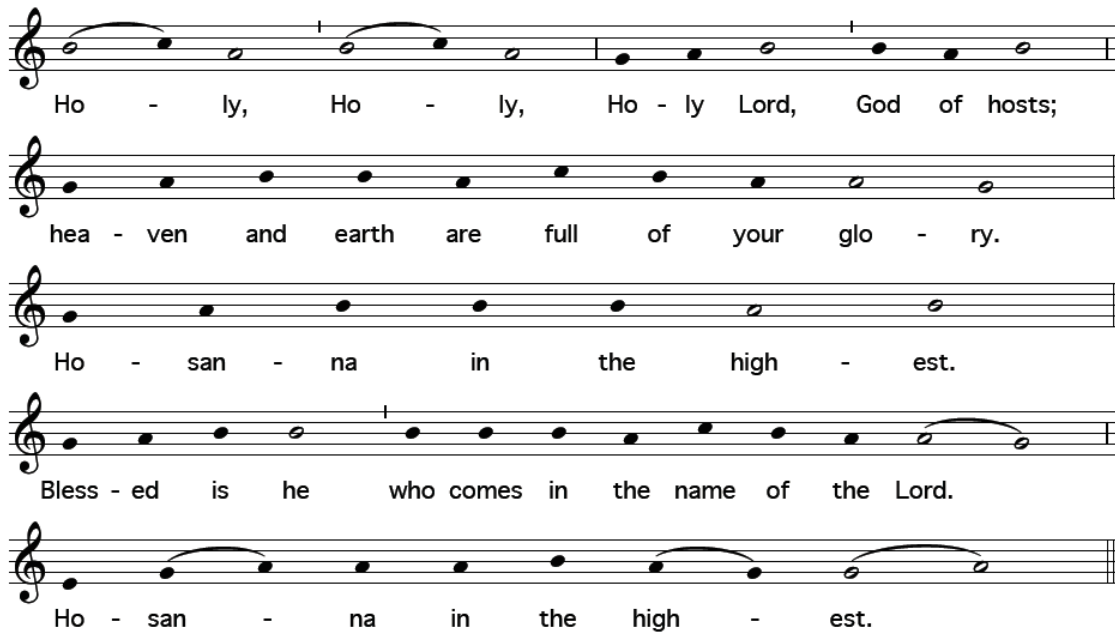
A Simple Cantillation

S  Anctus, * Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus De-us Sá-ba-oth. Ple-ri sunt
caeli et terra glo-ri-a tu-a. Ho-sán-na in ex-cél-sis. Be-ne-dic-tus
qui ve-nit in no-mi-ne Do-mi-ni. Ho-sá-na in ex-cel-sis.

A Modern setting in English

HOLY, HOLY

Based on Sanctus XVIII)



Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly Lord, God of hosts;
hea - ven and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Text: ICEL

Music: Columba Kelly, © Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 2009

From Simple Declamation to Psalmody

The original declamation used only about three to four different pitches, much as Rex Harrison used in his role in the musical *My Fair Lady*. It produced a short rise in pitch for word accents and a drop from the reciting tone to usually a whole step below. The *Agnus Dei* is an example of this. The next step was to create simple melodic patterns around the principle word accents of a phrase. The next stage was to create easily memorized patterns for these phrases: the psalm tones!

An Easter Responsory

S Urré-xit Dómi-nus ve-re, * Alle- lú- ia, alle-lú- ia.

Surré-xit. ∇. Et appá-ru- it Simó-ni. * Alle- lú- ia. ∇. Gló-ri- a

Patri, et Fí- li- o, et Spi- rí- tu- i Sancto. Surré-xit.

Responsorial Psalmody ☩

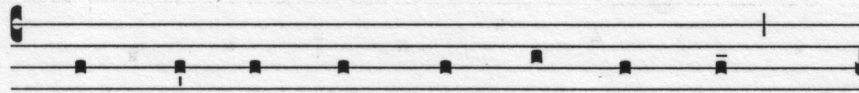
An English Language Setting ☩

The Lord has tru- ly ris- en, al- le- lu- ia! ☩

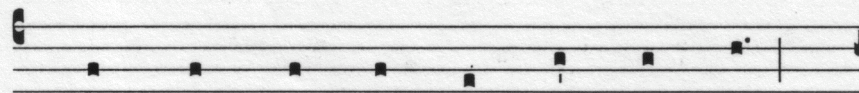
and has ap- peared to Si- mon, al- le- lu- ia, al- le- lu- ia! ☩

A Psalm Tone Pattern used for an Ambrosian Hymn

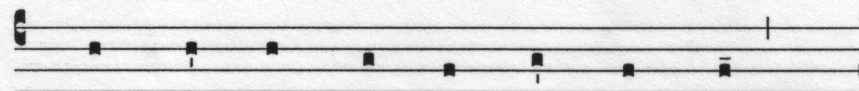
Here, the word stresses are alternated with a weak syllable to form a metric hymn tune:



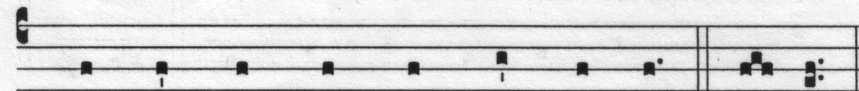
1. E- ter- nal glo- ry of the saints,
2. Help us but new- ly up from sleep
3. The ris- en morn- ing star shines forth
4. Dwell in our hearts, drive sin a- way;
5. Im- mor- tal Fa- ther, Ho- ly God,



1. Man- kind's re- lease and bless- ed hope,
2. To rec- ol- lect still dor- mant minds,
3. Pro- claims ar- ri- val of the day;
4. Un- to life's end pre- serve us pure.
5. Christ, Son of God, Em- man- u- el,



1. Bright im- age of the un- seen God,
2. And fer- vent in the praise of God,
3. The dark- ness of night dis- ap- pears
4. Root us in faith; keep bright our hope,
5. Con- sol- ing Spir- it, Font of Truth,



1. Pure off- spring of a Vir- gin chaste
2. Re- turn him thanks for truth and love.
3. O ho- ly Light, en- light- en us!
4. Let char- i- ty grow strong- er still.
5. In- dwell us while your praise we tell. A- men.

Text: Aeterna Caeli gloria, 6c, tr. St. Charles Priory (Prince of Peace Abbey), 1969

Tune: Plainsong, Mode 6

Use: Morning, Ordinary Time

A Psalm Tone setting of the Gloria (Mass XV)

III

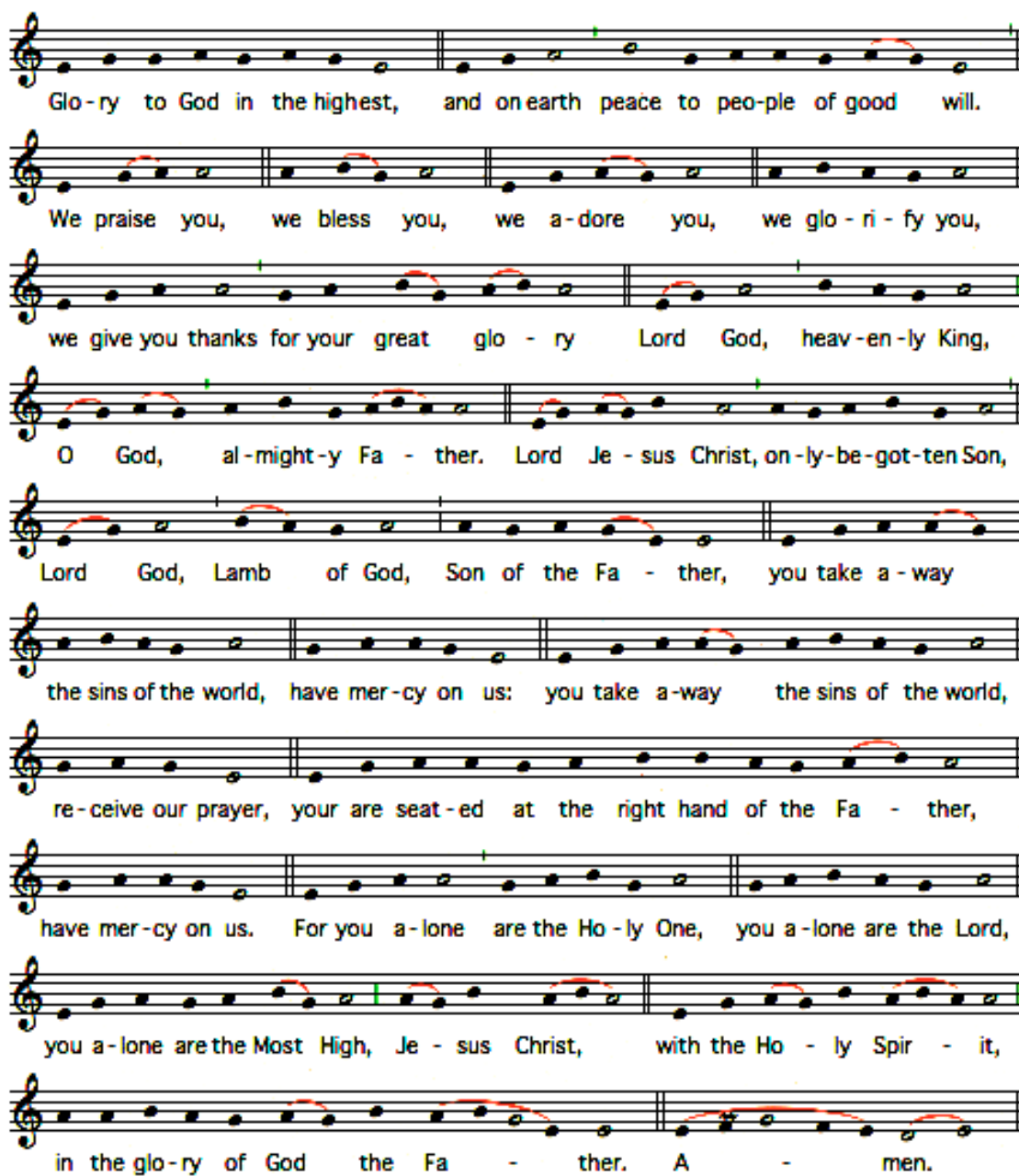
IV

G Ló-ri- a in excélsis De- o. Et in terra pax homi-
 ni- bus bonae vo- luntá- tis, Laudá- mus te. Be- ne- dí- ci- mus te.
 Ado- rá- mus te. Glo- ri- fi- cá- mus te. Grá- ti- as á- gi- mus ti- bi
 pro- pter ma- gnam gló- ri- am tu- am. Dó- mi- ne De- us, Rex cae- lé-
 stis, De- us Pa- ter omní- pot- ens. Dó- mi- ne Fi- li u- ni- gé-
 ni- te Ie- su Chri- ste. Dó- mi- ne De- us, Agnus De- i, Fi-
 li- us Pa- tris. Qui tol- lis pec- cá- ta mun- di, mi- se- ré- re no- bis.
 Qui tol- lis pec- cá- ta mun- di, sú- sci- pe de- pre- ca- ti- ó- nem no-

stram. Qui se- des ad déxte- ram Pa- tris, mi- se- ré- re no- bis.
 Quo- ni- am tu so- lus san- ctus. Tu so- lus Dó- mi- nus. Tu so- lus
 Altí- ssimus, Ie- su Chri- ste. Cum San- cto Spi- ri- tu, in gló-
 ri- a De- i Pa- tris. A- men.

II

An Adaptation in English (Cf. Gloria XV)



Glo-ry to God in the highest, and on earth peace to peo-ple of good will.

We praise you, we bless you, we a-dore you, we glo - ri - fy you,

we give you thanks for your great glo - ry Lord God, heav-en-ly King,

O God, al-might-y Fa - ther. Lord Je - sus Christ, on-ly-be-got-ten Son,

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Fa - ther, you take a-way

the sins of the world, have mer-cy on us: you take a-way the sins of the world,

re-ceive our prayer, your are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther,

have mer-cy on us. For you a-lone are the Ho - ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,

you a-lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,

in the glo-ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

The singing of chant is that of an “**intelligent** declamation, with the rhythm of **speech**, and **well-phrased ...**” (The Solesmes Method, since 1983).

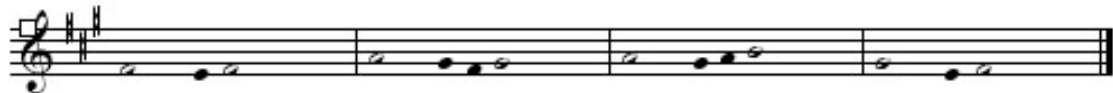
Psalm Tones Set Moods

Mode 1: (Ps.144/145: 10-11) solemnity



All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord,
and your friends shall re-peat their blessing
They shall speak of the glory of your reign
and declare your might, O God.

Mode2: (Ps.129/130: 3-4) reverence and awe



If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would sur-vive?
But with you is found for-giveness;
for this we re-vere you.

Mode 3: (Ps.129/130:1-2) intense feeling, either sadness or joy



Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be at-tentive
to the voice of my pleading.

Mode 4: (Ps.118/119:97-98) reflective, meditative



Lord, how I love your law!
It is ever in my mind.
Your command make me wiser than my foes;
for it is mine for-ever.

Mode 5: (Ps.95/96:11-12) joyful, happy



Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,
let the sea and all within it thun-der praise,
let the land and all it bears re-joyce,
all the trees of the wood shout for joy.

Mode 6: (Ps.115/116:12-13) calm, relaxed, contented



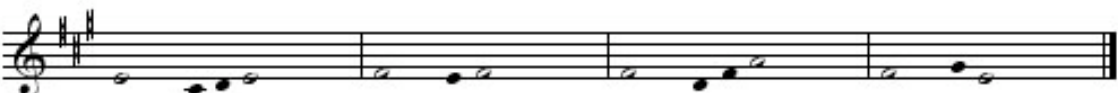
How can I re-pay the Lord
for his good-ness to me?
The cup of salvation I will raise:
I will call on the name of the Lord.

Mode 7: (Ps.148:1-2) joyful, triumphant



Praise the Lord from the heavens,
praise him in the heights.
Praise him, all his angels,
praise him, all his host.

Mode 8: (Ps.129/130:7-8) authoritative, a narrator's voice

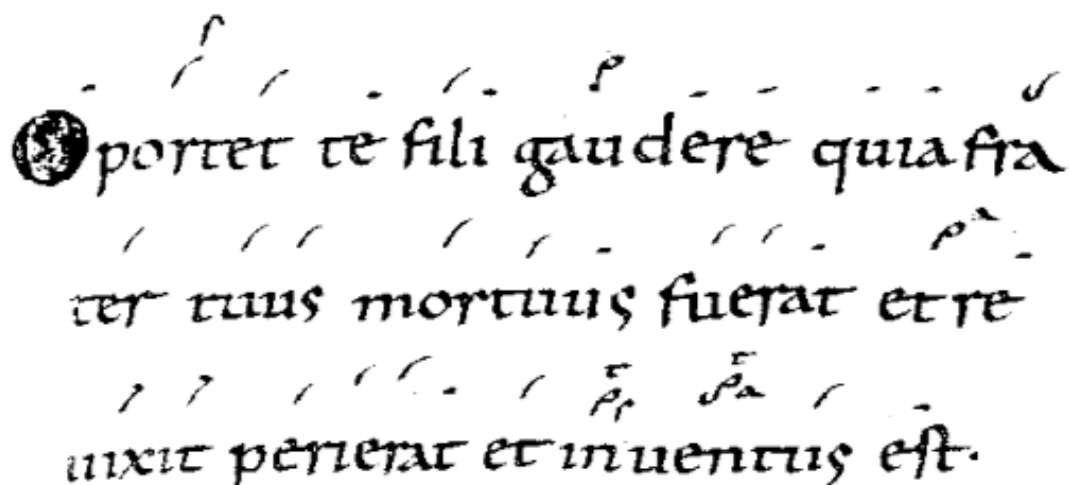


Because with the lord there is mercy
and fullness of re-demption,
Israel indeed he will re-deem
from all its in-iquity.

From Psalmody to Antiphon

The 8th mode psalm becomes an antiphon

The 8th mode psalm tone is reworked into an A-B, statement and response, musical form by the use of the repeated final cadence. Each of these together form a three-part structure: “Oportet ...” + “quia ...” + “perierat ...”, with the largest in the middle!



The singers knew the melody by heart and could concentrate on the meaning of the words and bring that meaning to life in the sound of the music.

The *Graduale Triplex* with its three different musical notations is a good illustration of Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle. The more we know about **where** a thing is, the less we know about its **speed** and **momentum** and vice versa! The square notation shows us

the exact pitches and the groupings of the pitches of the melody, but can tell almost nothing about the relative value and duration of each of the notes. The early neumes given above and below the staff, tell us much about the speed and relative value of each note, but very little about their actual pitches. By combining the two kinds of notation one can get a very good knowledge of **both** of these dimensions of the music.

An English Language Setting:

Lk 15:32

T was fitting my son, to make merry and be glad,
for this your brother was dead, and is a-live; he was lost,
and now he is found.

Christmas Midnight Mass: the Introit

Ps. 2, 7. V. 1. 2. 8

DŌ- MI- NŪS *di- xit ad mē:
Fī- li- us mē- us es tū, e-
go hó- di- ē gé- nu- i tē. *Ps. Quā-re fremu- ē-*

Christmas Day Mass: the Introit the structure pitches

Intr. 

Pu-er na-tus est no-bis, et fi-li-us da-tus est no-bis



cu-ius im-pe-ri-um su-per hu-me-rum e-ius: et vo-ca-bi-tur



no-men e-ius, mag-ni con-si-li-i An-ge-lus.

Puer natus est (GT 47-48)

P  *Is. 9, 6; Ps. 97*

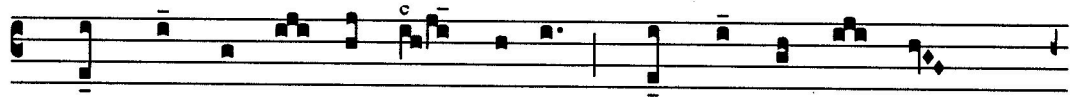
U-ER na-tus est no-bis, et fi-li-us

da-tus est no-bis: cu-ius impè-ri-um su-per

hú-me-rum e-ius: et vo-cá-bi-tur nomen

e-ius, magni consí-li-i An-ge-lus. *Ps. Can-tá-te*

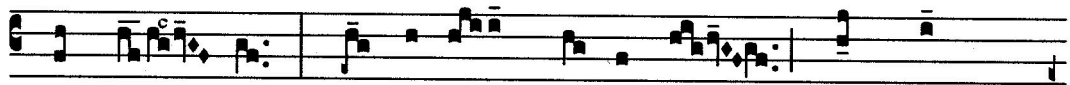
Dó-mi-no cánti-cum no-vum: qui-a mi-ra-bi-li-a fe-cit



TO- DAY, a child is born for us. To- day, a son is



giv'n to us; pow- er and au- tho- ri- ty now rest u- pon



his should- ers and his name shall be called: Won- der



Coun- se- lor and Prince of Peace.

A Special Communion Antiphon

Each line ends in a different mode to produce a different mood and interpretation of the text. The ornaments work like the speech inflections of a good speaker:

L157
E330

CO. VIII
BAKS

2 Esdr. 8, 10

C Omé- di- te pín- gui- a, * et bí- bi- te mul- sūm,
 et mí- tti- te partes e- is qui non praepa- ravé- runt sí- bi :
 sanctus e- nim di- es Dómi- ni est, fío- lí- te con- tri- stá- ri :
 gáudi- um ét- e- nim Dómi- ni est forti- tú- do no- strá.

The Structure Pitches in *Comedite* (A kind of Schenker analysis!)

Co - me - di - te ping - ui - a, et bi - bi - te mul - sum,
 et mit - ti - te par - tes e - is qui non pre - pa - ra - ve - runt si - bi:
 sanc - tus e - nim di - es do - mi - ni est, no - li - te con - tri - sta - ri:
 gau - di - um et - e nim Do - mi ni est for - ti - tu - do no - stra.

An English Language Setting of *Comedite*

Cf. GT p. 268

CO.
viii

O come and eat rich foods and drink sweet wine,
 and send a share to those who have pre-pared nothing for them-selves.
 For this day is sac-red to the Lord our God, do not give way to sad-ness,
 for the joy of the Lord is our strength.

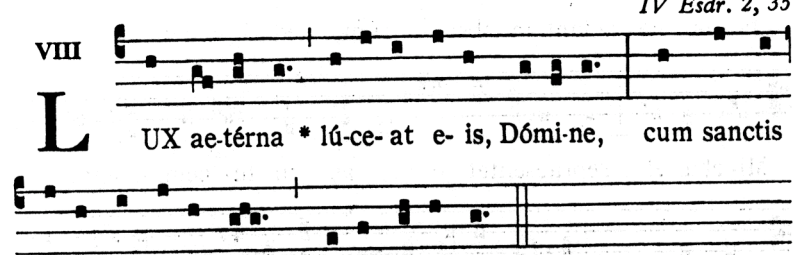
Latin Communion Antiphon for Funerals

(*Graduale Triplex*, page 676)

(*Liber Usualis*, page 1815)

IV Esdr. 2, 35

VIII

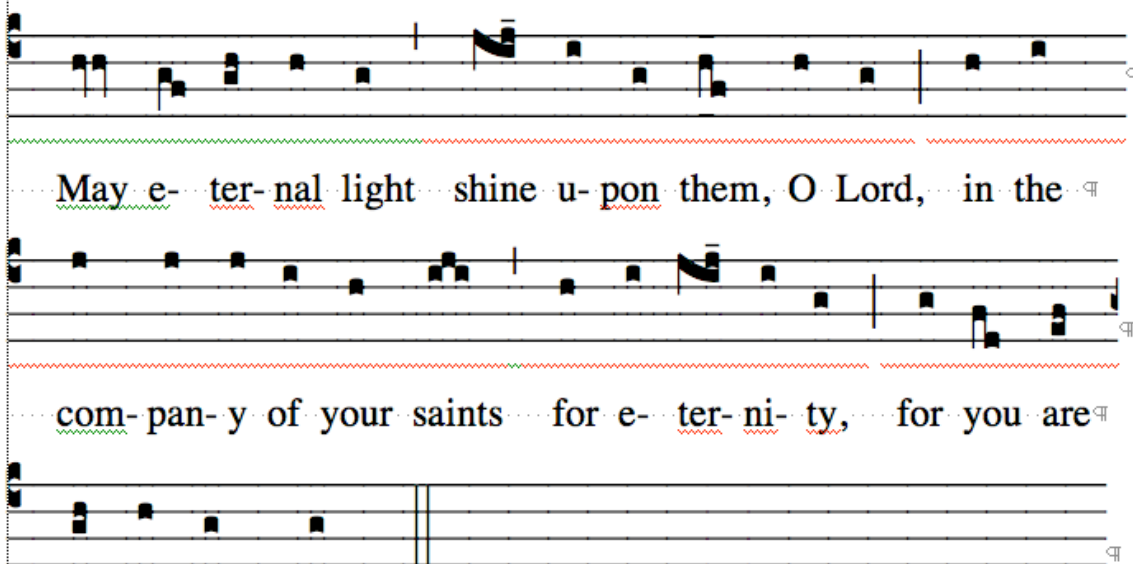


L UX ae-térna * lú-ce-at e- is, Dómi-ne, cum sanctis
tu- is in aetérnum, qui- a pi- us es.

Verses from Psalm 129/130 are used between repetitions of the antiphon

An English adaptation

Mode 8[☩]



May e- ter- nal light shine u- pon them, O Lord, in the
com- pan- y of your saints for e- ter- ni- ty, for you are
full of good- ness.☩

☩
Text: ICEL[☩]

Music: Columba Kelly[☩]

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In paradisum (Latin & English)

7.
I N pa-ra-dí-sum * dedú-cant te Ange-li : in tu-o
advéntu suscí-pi-ant te Márty-res, et perdú-cant te in
ci-vi-tá-tem sanctam Je-rú-sa-lem. Cho-rus Ange-ló-rum te
sus-cí-pi-at, et cum Lá-za-ro quondam páupe-re aetér-
nam há-be-as réqui-em.

VII
MAY the an-gels take you in-to par-a-dise;
may the mar-tyrs come to wel-come you on your way,
and lead you in-to the ho-ly cit-y, Je-ru-sa-lem. May
the choir of an-gels wel-come you, and with La-za-rus
who once was poor, may you have ev-er-last-ing rest.

Bibliography and Web sites

Basic texts:

Graduale Triplex

Liber Cantualis

Beginning Studies in Gregorian Chant by Dom Eugene Cardine, translated by William Tortolano, G.I.A. Publications, Inc. 1988.

Gregorian Chant a guide by Dom Daniel Saulnier, Paraclete Press, 2009, ISBN 1-55725-554-9

Recommended texts:

Chant Made Simple by Robert M. Fowells, Paraclete Press, 2007, ISBN: 978-1-55725-529-7

Gregorian Chant Intonations and the Role of Rhetoric by Columba Kelly, Edwin Mellen Press, 2003, ISBN 0-7734-6872-2

An Introduction to the Interpretation of Gregorian Chant by Luigi Agustoni and Johannes Berchmans Göschl, Volume I, translated with notes by Columba Kelly, Edwin Mellen Press, 2006, ISBN 0-7734-5993-6

Web sites:

<http://sacredmusicproject.com/>

This site contains free downloadable chants in pdf format and instructions on singing chant by the monks of Solesmes:

Preface to the Liber Hymnarius, 1983

In the Beginning Was the Word (Dom Saulnier)

On the New Antiphonale Monasticum (Dom Saulnier)

<http://stores.lulu.com/saintmeinradmusic>

this site contains St. Meinrad chant in English

<http://www.saintmeinradmusic.org/index.html>

an alternate site for St. Meinrad music