

Origins of Western Christian Plainchant

Hebrew cantillation, psalmody (the heart of chant)
Voice amplification, greater solemnity via expanded time; more memorable
Basic elements of Mass and Office present by c. 200 C.E.
Pope Gregory I (r. 590 – 604); Romans vs. Franks
Pepin (752 – 768), then Charlemagne – Roman usage for political unity –
confusion, resistance, then creative expansion

The Liturgical Day

Divine Office (orig. morning and evening prayers & psalms) (officium = duty; must do)
After 500, Rule of St. Benedict; all 150 psalms in one week
8 “hours” – **Matins, Lauds**, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, **Vespers**, Compline

Mass (from *Ite missa est* – dismissal formula)
Last Supper (Eucharist) re-enactment; once a day, between Terce & Sext

Liturgical Books with Music (basic)

Office: Antiphonal; Liber Responsorialis; Tonary; Hymnary
Mass: Gradual; Troper-Proser
Other: Processional; Liber Usualis (modern)

Ordinary & Proper / Temporale & Sanctorale

Tonality (“chant modes”)

Who, what, when, where, why?

FINAL	NAME	AUTHENTIC	PLAGAL
D	protus	1	2
E	deuterus	3	4
F	tritius	5	6
G	tetrardus	7	8

affinales, cofinales, transposition
many treatises, many exceptions, disagreements, ambiguities

Psalmody

Direct; Responsorial; Antiphonal
Psalm tones & Canticle tones

*ex. 1: Antiphon **Studium divinitatis** (Hildegard) and Psalm 92, Dominus regnavit, tone 4*

Chant styles

Recitation; Syllabic; Neumatic; Melismatic

Neumes

originally manual signs; mnemonic or cheironomic notation (or letter notation)
c. 9th c. – first musical notation; c. 1000 – staff lines appear (F/red and C/yellow)
Guido of Arezzo (d. 1050) also solmisation

ex 2: Hymn Ut queant laxis (after Solesmes 1912)

non-diastematic → heightened neume → (letter notation) → one or two staff lines
→ square notes on 4 line staff → Solesmes notation → modern transcriptions

ex. 3: Gloria incipit from the Winchester Troper (c. 1000)

Rhythm

Equalist vs. mensural vs. free – BIG BATTLES c. 1900

Natural (rhetorical) vs. Solesmes (equalist with indicated lengthenings and groupings)

ex, 4: Hymn Ave maris stella to sing in rhetorical and equalist rhythm

Solesmes chant revival

Mid-1800s, general revival (*Cecilia movement*) of chant and “pure” church music
(viz. Bruckner’s motets)

1880s: Dom Pothier, free rhetorical, word-driven rhythm

1890s→: Dom Mocquereau: equalist, directed lengthenings, “ictus” (groupings)

ex. 5: Marian Antiphon Regina celi letare (Solesmes 1888 and 1964)

Solesmes chant facsimiles and publications – a gigantic accomplishment

Plainchant from original sources

Why bother?

ex. 6: Introit Salve sancta parens from the Sarum Gradual (c. 1300)

Plainchant in your concerts

alternatim masses and psalm settings

Renaissance polyphony in its natural habitat

develops “unity of intent” in your choir

equalist or rhetorical – you be the judge.

ex. 7: Kyrie Cunctipotens genitor “by rote”

*Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison, Christe eleison, Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.*