

PART ONE

**Repertory, styles and techniques**



# 1 Plainsong

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After the introduction of public Christian worship services in the fourth and fifth centuries, chant genres of varying styles developed gradually as the parts of the services sung by the congregation became distinguished from those performed by a soloist and choir. Already in the fourth century, responsorial psalmody, performed by a soloist with congregational responses, followed the readings in the first part of the mass. Descriptions of Western liturgical practice in the fourth and fifth centuries suggest an emerging repertory of chant along the lines of the full annual cycle that was established in the Jerusalem liturgy by the middle of the fifth century.<sup>1</sup> Patristic writings such as the sermons of Saint Augustine and Pope Leo I refer to commentary by the celebrant at mass on a psalm verse just performed, but at first the liturgical assignments of these verses were not entirely fixed.<sup>2</sup> The emphasis of early writers on the psalms in the liturgy is part of a broader intellectual movement in late antiquity that made the Book of Psalms central to Christian liturgy and exegesis; as early as Augustine and Cassiodorus, commentary traditions present the psalms as prophetic texts, and allegorical readings of the psalms profoundly shaped the choice of those psalm verses that were used as chant texts.<sup>3</sup>

The principal scriptural influence on the shape of the annual liturgical cycle was the gospel reading at mass. The Roman cycle of gospel readings for the Sundays and principal feast days of the liturgical year was established by the end of the sixth century.<sup>4</sup> The gospel reading reflected the event commemorated on that day or occupied a place in a series that emerged from the continuous reading of the gospels over the course of the year. The theme of the gospel often shaped the texts of the liturgy for the day as a whole.

Another important consideration governing the selection of chants for the liturgy was the difference between proper texts, which change according to the liturgical occasion, and common texts, which remain essentially unchanged (throughout the year, during a liturgical season, or on the same day of every week). Over the course of the Middle Ages, the number of propers increased with the introduction of new feasts and cults of saints.

Patristic writings suggest that the responsorial proper chants of the mass were already florid, virtuosic pieces. However, liturgical books from the period before 900 provide only the texts for the chant repertory, and

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even with the development of Western musical notations in the ninth and tenth centuries, the unheighted neumes of Latin chant must still be interpreted in light of sources with staff lines. Each genre of plainsong had a particular musical style and liturgical function. In the divine office, the focus of individual hours on the communal chanting of psalms and canticles seems to have fostered musical settings that are fairly unadorned except in some of the antiphons for the canticles, and in the great responsories of matins and vespers. In the mass, the ritual focus on the Eucharist and the diverse responsibilities of the ministers involved in this celebration engendered both a wider range of styles than in the office and a more complex distribution of musical roles. The liturgy included many different forms of musically heightened declamation that correspond to various points on a continuum between song and the spoken word. Readings were sung to reciting tones that varied from place to place and also by occasion, with the most elaborate tones reserved for major feasts.<sup>5</sup> The psalms pervaded the Latin liturgy both as the source for the texts of individual chants in practically all the genres of plainsong (except for the ordinary of the mass and the office hymn), and in the form of entire psalms, which comprised the foundation of the eight daily services of the divine office.

### Chant in the office

By the early Middle Ages the singing of psalms in the daily office followed a particular ordering which distributed the totality of the psalter over the hours of the day and the days of the week; the distribution employed in monastic churches, found in the Benedictine Rule, differed from that in collegiate or cathedral churches, where services employed fewer psalms.<sup>6</sup> Certain feast days had particular series of psalms, which like the ferial psalm series differed slightly in monastic and secular churches.

The psalms of the office were sung to tones consisting of melodic formulas employed in the syllabic chanting of a psalm verse on a single pitch; each formula had its own melody for the intonation and intermediary pause in the middle of the verse. The conclusion of a psalm verse was sung to a cadential termination formula known as a *differentia*; each psalm tone had several different possible *differentiae*.<sup>7</sup> The lesser doxology (*Gloria Patri et filio et spiritui sancto sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in secula seculorum amen*) was performed at the end of a psalm or a group of psalms. In many chant manuscripts the vowels of the last two words in the doxology (*e u o u a e*) are written below the melodies of the *differentiae* as a guide to singers.

The performance practice of psalms in the monastic office changed over time from responsorial singing in late antiquity to antiphonal singing in the Carolingian period.<sup>8</sup> Beginning in the ninth century, the psalm tones were linked to the modes; each mode was represented by one psalm tone, and the psalm tone and possible cadences of each mode were listed in tonaries (catalogues of chants by mode). Other texts in the divine office that were sung to recitation tones were the New Testament canticles at vespers (the Magnificat) and lauds (the Benedictus).<sup>9</sup> Over the course of the Middle Ages, the modality of chants came to be categorized in reference to the characteristics associated with these tones.<sup>10</sup>

The office genre with the largest repertory is the antiphon, a brief chant of relatively simple style sung chorally in alternation with psalms. Antiphons were performed before and after each psalm or group of psalms (and in the early Middle Ages, the antiphon seems to have been sung after each psalm verse). Antiphons for the daily office had texts drawn from the psalms with which they alternated; greater textual variety characterizes the antiphons for feast days. The mode of an office antiphon determined the choice of the psalm-tone cadence so as to ensure that the termination of the psalm was in the same mode as the melody of the antiphon. Antiphons for the psalms illustrate the relationship between mode and formulaic structure; most antiphons in mode 1 exhibit similar turns of phrase, such as a minor third from D to F and a leap of a fifth between D and A.<sup>11</sup> These gestures combine in a melodic contour that reflects the characteristics associated with the mode. Consequently, many different antiphon texts have similar or nearly identical melodies. Longer and often more complex than the psalm antiphons are those sung with the Magnificat at vespers and the Benedictus at lauds. These chants (known as gospel antiphons because the Magnificat and Benedictus originated in the gospels) usually have texts from the gospel reading of the day's mass. Still more elaborate antiphons are those sung at the beginning of matins with the invitatory psalm (Psalm 94, *Venite exultemus*), and repeated after each verse. Even antiphons that are not part of such a cohesive group draw upon similar melodic conventions. Nevertheless, the medieval repertory of office antiphons, which numbers in the thousands, exhibits enough diversity that more study is required to achieve an adequate description of the whole.

Two further antiphon types are distinct from the rest of the repertory in that they were sung independently, without psalms. Processional antiphons were performed during the processions on major feasts of the church year such as Palm Sunday, Christmas, and the Rogation Days. Another genre of independent antiphon was the Marian antiphon, which emerged in the twelfth century for use in devotions to the Virgin, including the procession

after compline that concluded with the performance of a Marian antiphon in front of an image of the Virgin.

Each hour of the divine office also included a hymn, sung to a melody (usually strophic) in strophic form.<sup>12</sup> Hymns were introduced into the office as early as the fifth century, but their melodies were rarely recorded before the eleventh.<sup>13</sup> Another syllabic genre was the brief responsory, which consisted of a respond sung by a soloist and repeated by the choir, followed by a solo verse, a choral repeat of the respond, a solo doxology, and a second choral repeat of the respond. The simplest genres of the divine office were those texts chanted to recitation tones: besides the psalms, these comprised the readings, prayers, and versicles and responses (sung in dialogue by choir and presider) that opened and closed each service.

The great responsories of matins, much lengthier and more ornate than the brief responsories, employ a wide variety of melodic formulas.<sup>14</sup> Great responsories are proper chants; their texts are often related to the lessons that precede them. The office of matins included three sets of chants organized in units called nocturns, each one comprised of antiphons and psalms followed by lessons and responsories (nine in secular uses, twelve in monastic use).<sup>15</sup> The verses of great responsories were often formulaic tones (one was associated with each mode), although newly composed verses are not unusual, especially in the later repertory. The performance practice for great responsories varied somewhat from place to place, but it essentially followed the alternation of choir and soloist just described for the brief responsory. The repeat of the respond was usually abbreviated to only its second half; many manuscripts contain cues indicating where the repeat should begin. According to the Benedictine Rule, the doxology should be sung only with the last responsory of each nocturn, and in the Middle Ages the custom was to perform only the first half of the doxology (the words *Gloria patri et filio et spiritui sancto*).<sup>16</sup> Example 1.1, a transcription of the final responsory in the monastic office of St Benedict as found in an eleventh-century antiphoner from the Parisian abbey of St-Maur-des-Fossés, demonstrates the repetition of the second half of the respond and the performance of the doxology. The verse of this responsory is newly composed, not one of the traditional responsory verse tones.

## Chant in the mass

Whereas the great responsories were the only musically elaborate element of the divine office, the liturgy of the mass included several different complex genres of plainsong (see Table 1.1).<sup>17</sup> Mass began with the introit, a proper chant composed of an antiphon with psalm sung by the choir during the

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**Example 1.1** *Gloria Christe tuo tibi personat in benedicto*, twelfth responsory for matins of St Benedict in an eleventh-century antiphoner from St-Maur-des-Fossés (*F-Pn fonds lat.* 12044, fol. 63r)

R. Glo - - - ri - a Chri - ste tu - -  
 o - ti - bi per - so - nat in be - ne - - dic - to -  
 quem fa - ci - ens te - cum - sanc - tis - reg - -  
 nan - ti - bus - ae - quum iam - qui - bus - ae -  
 qua - sti gau - - den - ti - bus as -  
 so - ci - a - - - - -  
 - - - - - sti. V. Ne - -  
 - ius nor - ma re - ge - ser - - ua -  
 ter - ge re - for - ma I - am - qui - bus -  
 ae - - qua - sti gau - - den - ti -  
 - bus as - so - ci - a - - - - -  
 - - - - - sti.

procession of the clergy into the church. The style of the introit was comparable to office psalmody, but the tones used for the psalm verses in introits were slightly more elaborate. The communion, also a proper chant, similarly included a psalm verse chanted to a formulaic tone. The length of the introit could vary according to the amount of ceremonial accompanying the





Table 1.1 *Outline of the mass in the central Middle Ages*

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introit (proper)
Kyrie (ordinary)
Gloria (proper)
epistle (first scriptural reading)
gradual (proper)
alleluia (proper; replaced by tract in penitential seasons)
sequence (proper)
gospel (second scriptural reading)
Credo (ordinary; not sung at every mass)
offertory (proper)
preface (celebrant's prayer)
Sanctus and Benedictus (ordinary)
canon of the Mass
Lord's Prayer
versicle and response (Peace)
Agnus Dei (ordinary)
rite of peace
communion (proper)
post-communion (prayer)
Ite Missa Est (ordinary)

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that seem to be original to the chants; recent research suggests that they were not interpolated as tropes into pre-existing Kyrie melodies (see also Chapter 2).<sup>19</sup>

The Kyrie was followed by the Gloria, which was introduced by Pope Symmachus (498–514) as a congregational chant for Sundays and saints' feasts, but eventually came to be performed by clergy. The repertory encompasses a range of styles from simple recitation to more ornate, through-composed melodies. After the reading of the epistle came the gradual, a responsorial chant performed by a soloist in alternation with the choir, like the great responsory. Graduals, the oldest genre in the mass proper, take their origin from the performance of a responsorial psalm in the first part of the mass; in the core repertory of 105 graduals, all but eleven have texts from the psalms. More than half the graduals in the Gregorian repertory are based on two model melodies.

The next part of the mass was the alleluia, a responsorial proper chant consisting of a melismatic vocalization on the word 'Alleluia' followed by a verse (usually taken from the psalms); the lengthy melisma (the jubilus) that concludes the initial Alleluia recurs at the conclusion of the verse. The performance practice of the alleluia was not everywhere the same in the Middle Ages, but generally outlined a three-part form. The first part (just the Alleluia, or the Alleluia and jubilus) was sung by the cantor and repeated by the choir, after which the cantor sang the verse, and finally the choir repeated the opening Alleluia with the jubilus. Example 1.2, the *Alleluia. Ascendens Christus*, illustrates the characteristic style and structure of this

Example 1.2 *Alleluia. Ascendens Christus*, in a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Parisian gradual (F-Pn fonds lat. 1337, fol. 158v)

Al - le - - - - lu - ya

V. As - cen - dens

chri - stus in - al -

tum - - - - cap - ti - uam - du -

xit - - - - cap - ti - ui - ta - - -

tem de - dit do - - - na

ho - mi - - - - ni - bus

genre; the word 'hominibus' at the conclusion of the verse is sung to the same music as the initial word 'alleluya'. Much of the melody's ornate circular movement remains within the span of a fifth from D to A; in the verse, the melisma on the penultimate syllable of 'captivatem' explores the fourth from A to D and repeats the pitch on A, both features characteristic of the first mode. The alleluia was interpreted by medieval writers as angelic song, an image explored in prosulae (see Chapter 2), sequences, and liturgical commentary.

Because of its associations with rejoicing, the Alleluia was not performed during penitential seasons such as Advent and Lent; it was replaced by the tract, a lengthy proper chant performed by a soloist. Tracts constitute one of the most formulaic genres, both in their overall structure and in their use of individual melodic gestures. The construction of tracts is closely bound to their modality; all tracts are either in mode 2 or mode 8, and those in the same mode are so similar to one another that they can be described as realizations of the same compositional template.<sup>20</sup>

The alleluia and the sequence (see Chapter 2) were followed by the chanting of the gospel reading of the day, then by the Credo, an ordinary chant with a small repertory of mostly syllabic melodies. The next proper chant was the offertory, which like the gradual is a responsorial chant with formulaic melodies set to texts mostly taken from the psalms. As it accompanied the liturgical action of carrying gifts to the altar, it originally included multiple verses, but over time the number of verses was reduced to one or at most two. Unlike the verses of the introit, which are related to office psalmody, the verses of offertories are ornate compositions.<sup>21</sup>

The Sanctus and Agnus Dei are chants of the ordinary that in the early church are thought to have been performed by the congregation (in the case of the Agnus Dei, along with the clergy); numerous melodies for these chants are preserved beginning in the eleventh century. Many feature repetitive phrases with melismas that are narrower in range than those found in the mass proper. The communion, the final chant of the mass proper, is generally less melismatic in style than the responsorial genres, and bears some resemblance to the introit in its structure of antiphon with verse.

In addition to liturgical books, valuable information on plainsong can be found in theological or homiletic writings, commentaries on the liturgy, and prescriptive texts (such as monastic rules and ordinals). For instance, the Benedictine Rule, written in the sixth century and diffused in much of Europe beginning in the ninth and tenth, states unequivocally that no activity in a monastery should ever take precedence over the divine office.<sup>22</sup> The lengthy section on the performance of the office concludes with a passage that indicates the theological significance of the liturgy: ‘therefore we should consider how one should be in the sight of the divinity and his angels, and let us stand to sing the psalms in such a way that our mind be in concord with our voice.’<sup>23</sup>

## **The origins of Gregorian chant**

Although the liturgy developed in response to the church calendar and the annual cycles of feasts, liturgical assignments were formalized or codified

at different times. In the early Middle Ages certain elements (such as the choice and number of verses in some responsorial chants) might be left to the discretion of the soloist or choirmaster, which could account for some of the differences between early manuscripts. The question of who composed the early mass proper chants and determined their liturgical assignments has no single answer. James McKinnon argues that the *schola cantorum* at Rome in the seventh century collectively composed the mass propers in cycles by genre, while Peter Jeffery maintains that the early mass proper chants instead cluster around liturgical occasion.<sup>24</sup> New feasts introduced in the seventh and eighth centuries employed chants that were borrowed from already existing feasts, suggesting that a process of new chant composition had come to an end. In the Carolingian period a legend emerged attributing to Pope Gregory I the formidable corpus that had come into existence by that time, but there is no historical basis for applying the name 'Gregorian' to a repertory that formed gradually, in the eighth and ninth centuries. Beginning with Pépin's consecration by Pope Stephen II in 754, the political relationship between the Frankish kings and the Holy See fostered the introduction of Roman chant in the Frankish kingdom. This tendency became a systematic programme of liturgical reform under Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. From a long-term process of assimilation came a new, hybrid repertory which would more accurately be called 'Romano-Frankish', although the misnomer 'Gregorian' remains standard (and is used here for that reason).

The earliest books of Gregorian chant represent the products of reception and adaptation described in ninth- and tenth-century historical narratives that recount (from both northern European and Italian points of view) the Franks' importation of chant from Rome.<sup>25</sup> Even the earliest extant manuscripts containing notated cycles of Gregorian chant for the proper of the mass, which date from the tenth century, preserve a relatively uniform melodic tradition; thereafter, chants tend to have similar contours in mass books from different places. A quite different transmission pattern appears in the manuscripts of the divine office, which attest to considerable variation in the selection, ordering, assignments, and melodies of chants. Even in the first notated office books, the repertory was much less stable than the mass and more local in character.<sup>26</sup>

The coherence of the mass repertory witnessed by the earliest notated sources is particularly remarkable given that most of the musical information had to be preserved in the oral tradition. Singers had to learn from one another rather than from books, for the early forms of neumatic notation used at this time indicated general contour and phrasing, but not pitch or intervallic content. Scholars have put forth various explanations for this phenomenon. If the earliest extant notated manuscripts are chance survivals

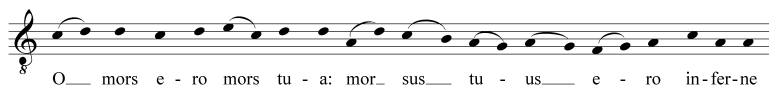
of a longer manuscript tradition, they may represent vestiges of earlier written exemplars that would have made it possible for the melodies to be widely distributed in essentially the same form. Such melodic uniformity in earlier manuscripts now lost would suggest that the melodies were precisely fixed in singers' memories for generations before they were written down. On the other hand, the relationship between notation and performance may have been more indirect; scribes copying chants could have relied primarily on what they remembered aurally instead of mechanically reproducing the neumes in the exemplar.<sup>27</sup>

Part of the mystery surrounding the origins of the Gregorian chant resides in the difficulty of recovering what came before. The Gallican chant practised in Gaul before the Carolingian importation of the Roman liturgy seems to have been almost completely effaced by the Gregorian repertory.<sup>28</sup> The earliest extant notated sources from Rome with mass and office chants were produced in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, long after the transmission of Roman chant to the north. Many scholars believe that the Roman chant repertory was preserved in the oral tradition until that time, but we cannot be certain that the earliest Roman chant manuscripts preserve what was sung in earlier centuries.<sup>29</sup> The melodies in these 'Old Roman' manuscripts exhibit a recognizable relationship to the melodies transmitted with the same texts and liturgical functions in manuscripts of Gregorian chants. In many cases the deep structures of the Old Roman and Gregorian versions are comparable, but the chants employ different melodic formulas and ways of deploying them.<sup>30</sup> Many Old Roman chant melodies are more ornamental and repetitive than their Gregorian counterparts, as can be seen from the comparison of a Gregorian melody with an Old Roman melody for the first antiphon of lauds on Holy Saturday in Example 1.3. Many Old Roman chants also exhibit an archaic tonal organization apparently predating the eight-mode system, which developed in eighth-century Jerusalem and was received in the West in the ninth century.<sup>31</sup>

Other early Latin chant traditions differ notably from both the Roman and the Gregorian chant repertoires in genre, form and style. Most of these regional traditions were largely supplanted by the Gregorian chant as a result of reforms promoted by eleventh-century popes who sought to impose the Roman rite throughout the Latin West. Practically the only corpus of Latin chant to survive this period besides the Gregorian is the Ambrosian rite, the ancient liturgy of the diocese of Milan named after Saint Ambrose (Bishop of Milan from 374 to 397). The Old Hispanic chant, which originated in the Visigothic period, was replaced in the Iberian peninsula by the Gregorian chant beginning in the late eleventh century. At the time of the suppression of the Old Spanish rite, almost none of the melodies were written down in staff notation, so the adiastematic neumes in which they are recorded

**Example 1.3** Comparison of the Gregorian and Old Roman melodies for the antiphon *O mors ero mors tua* in *F-Pn fonds lat.* 12044, fol. 99r and *I-Rvat ASP B 79*, fol. 102v

*F-Pn fonds lat.* 12044, fol. 99r



*I-Rvat ASP B 79*, fol. 102v



have not yet been deciphered (on the Iberian peninsula, see Chapter 9 by Nicolas Bell).

The native south Italian repertory known as the Beneventan chant was also suppressed, but some of it survives in manuscripts of Gregorian chant copied in the region.<sup>32</sup> One of the most widespread of these survivals is the Beneventan version of the Exultet, a lengthy late-antique text performed by the deacon to accompany the lighting of the paschal candle during the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday. The Beneventan Exultet had a distinctive text and melody and was performed from a scroll; several illuminated examples of such Exultet rolls have survived.<sup>33</sup>

In England, where the texts and chants brought from Rome in the early Middle Ages blended with local repertories, the Norman Conquest and the subsequent introduction of usages from France led to a radical transformation of liturgy and chant not unlike what had taken place in those parts of Europe where the Gregorian chant replaced earlier traditions. Comparison of the few extant pre-Conquest liturgical manuscripts with later books suggests that the Anglo-Saxon chant tradition did not entirely disappear, but the melodies are difficult to recover because they are written in unheighthed staffless neumes. Syncretism in the post-Conquest period fostered the development of local English cathedral repertories such as the Salisbury rite, as well as particularly insular usages among the religious orders.

## Notation and performance

With the widespread reception and adaptation of the Gregorian chant in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the melodies came to be written down more frequently. The development of staff notation in this period

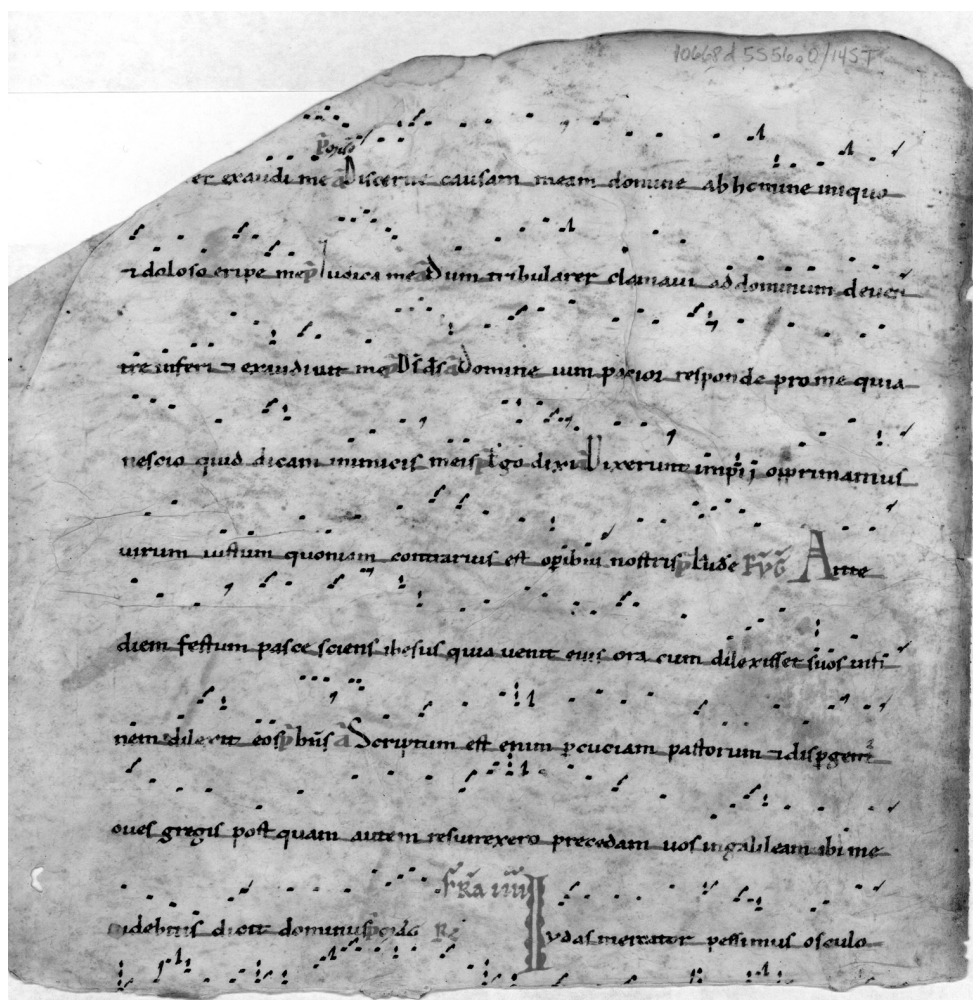


Figure 1.1 Aquitanian neumes in a late-eleventh-century antiphoner (collection of author): antiphons and psalm incipits for the office of lauds on the Tuesday of Holy Week

enables us to transcribe chant melodies and to compare them with the contours outlined less precisely by earlier unheighted staffless neumes.<sup>34</sup> Not all staffless neumes were unheighted, however: in Aquitanian notation, drypoint lines provided an axis around which pitches could be oriented with great precision (see Figure 1.1).

In the 1020s or 1030s, the north Italian monk Guido of Arezzo devised a system of staff notation with a red line indicating F and a yellow line indicating C, the type seen in Figure 1.2. In the course of the eleventh century, analogous systems using one or two lines were introduced in much of western Europe. The wide variety of neumatic notations that had existed in

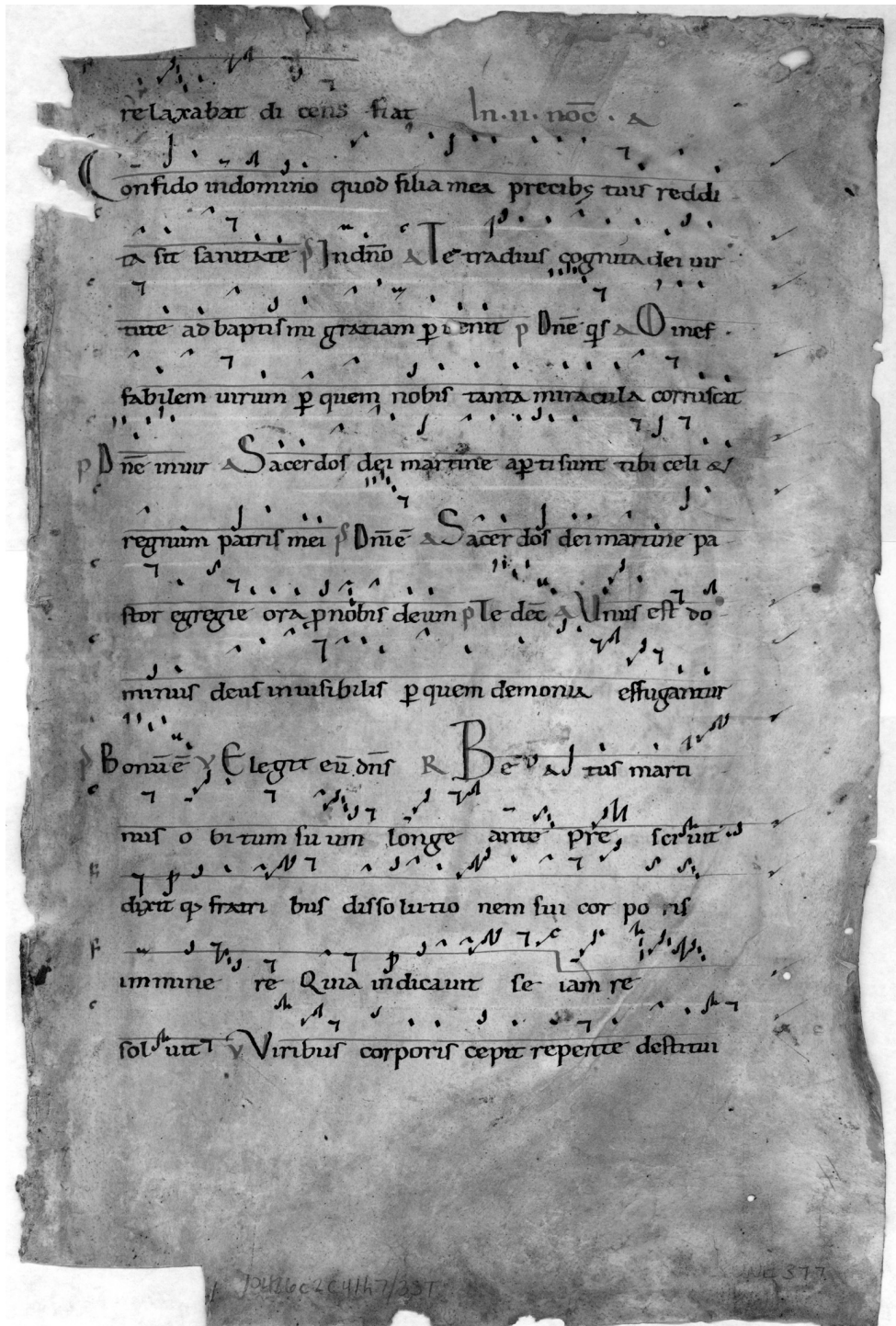


Figure 1.2 Central Italian neumes in a twelfth-century antiphoner (collection of author): responsories, antiphons and psalm incipits for matins on the feast of St Martin



chant manuscripts gradually gave way, in many places, to a more uniform type known as ‘square’ notation (based on solid black squares). Staff notation and square notation lack most of the nuances and idiosyncrasies that are such a prominent feature of the earlier neumatic notations. Some of the performance indications that gradually fell away include the significative letters in tenth- and eleventh-century manuscripts, principally from the areas that now comprise Germany and eastern France, but also Aquitaine, Winchester and the Iberian peninsula. These letters signify directions for pitch and rhythm, instructing performers to sing higher, lower, or at the same pitch, to speed up or to slow down, and so on. Such information would have been useful because the early neumes do not indicate precise pitches, intervals or durations. Other features of early notation that all but disappeared in the high Middle Ages were the distinctive neume forms signalling ornaments or changes of vocal production. Their precise meanings are not fully understood. Notational diversity was not lost altogether, however. In some regions, particularly in Germanic areas, the Netherlands and Bohemia, neumes were used well into the thirteenth century and later, often written on staff lines. Even square notation can manifest regional particularities.

### **Late chant composition**

The performance and composition of chant continued throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. Chant composition met a variety of needs, such as providing music for the celebration of new feasts, or creating a repertory of proper chants specifically tailored to a particular occasion. Although some of the most prominent manifestations of this compositional activity are tropes and sequences (see Chapter 2), the same historical context gave rise to thousands of new chants for the mass and office. Late chant resembles the earlier layers of Gregorian chant in many ways, but tends to use melodic formulas and conventions even more consistently. In a few rare cases one can study the work of individuals who created new services by composing new chants and compiling existing ones.<sup>35</sup>

Following a trend initiated in the tenth century, many new office chants had texts in verse (sometimes in quantitative metres); for a number of saints, entirely new versified offices were composed.<sup>36</sup> In late offices, the antiphons and responsories were often arranged in modal order, so that a chant in mode 1 would be followed by one in mode 2.<sup>37</sup> The earliest examples of such organization are the offices attributed to Bishop Stephen of Liège (ruled 901–20).<sup>38</sup> Modal ordering was not a universal feature of new offices, but it was common enough to indicate that from the tenth century

onwards, composers of chant consciously deployed the eight modes as they are described by theorists of the period, emphasizing the final pitch and the species of tetrachord (fourth) and pentachord (fifth) that, in combination, comprise the typical range of each mode. By the eleventh century, each mode was associated with certain melodic gestures that pervade the corpus of late chant. Both old and new office antiphons embody these features, whereas office responsories present a wider range of possibilities. For the verses of great responsories, composers employed the traditional melodic formulas associated with the modes, adapted the existing tones for the verses, or composed entirely new music for them. Each office presents its own combination of tradition and innovation.<sup>39</sup>

With the spread of new religious orders across Europe came a heightened production of offices celebrating their most important saints.<sup>40</sup> To name just a few, the cults of saints particularly venerated by the Franciscans, Dominicans and Carmelites engendered works that led to the creation of a new form of archetype: for instance, the office for Saint Francis of Assisi provided a model for later offices of the Franciscan saints Clare, Louis of Anjou and Elizabeth of Hungary. Contrafacts (settings of new texts to existing melodies) reflect the composer's coordination of the new melody with the poetic structure of the original text, but in some cases the new office entirely reworks the underlying textual and musical structure.<sup>41</sup>

Religious reformers also transformed entire chant repertoires. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, monasteries reformed by the abbey of Cluny sometimes adopted its chant repertory, in whole or in part.<sup>42</sup> The Cistercian revision aimed to produce a more authentic version of the Gregorian antiphoner.<sup>43</sup> The Carmelites introduced new feasts particular to the cults of their order.<sup>44</sup> The Dominicans diffused exemplars from which to copy liturgical books so as to ensure uniformity throughout the order.<sup>45</sup> The Franciscans shaped the late medieval liturgy of the Roman curia.<sup>46</sup>

Throughout the high and late Middle Ages, European ecclesiastical centres continually produced new chant books and new compositions. Brussels, Florence and Toledo are but three of the major cities whose long chant traditions have been explored in recent years.<sup>47</sup> In the fifteenth century, plain-song remained the central component of religious services, even as vocal polyphony flourished. The Hussite movement in Bohemia produced liturgical chants with Czech texts (both translations of Latin chants and new vernacular compositions).<sup>48</sup> Guillaume Du Fay, a composer best known today for his polyphony, created a collection of chants for feasts of the Virgin Mary that offers insight into a late medieval composer's approach to chant.<sup>49</sup> The proliferation of devotional and liturgical performances at different locations in a single church characterized the late Middle Ages,

when commemorations founded by individuals created numerous services in addition to the principal ones at the high altar.<sup>50</sup>

The performance and composition of plainsong continued to flourish in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, responding to reforms and liturgical needs.<sup>51</sup> Revised versions of plainsong can be heard in a few churches today (albeit rarely since the Second Vatican Council), but medieval chant now reaches listeners most often through concert performances and recordings. The increasing availability of such resources will enable the readers of this volume to explore the rich and varied legacy of plainsong more easily than ever before.