

Theses of a DLA doctoral dissertation

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A REPERTOIRE WITHIN THE REPERTOIRE
– THE TRACES OF AN ARCHAIC CHANT STYLE
IN OLD ROMAN GRADUALS

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I.

Scholarly work on Old Roman chant has begun as recently as on the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The first and, to date, only truly comprehensive work on the topic is Bruno Stäblein's 1970 tome entitled *Die Gesänge der altrömischen Graduale*, which appeared as Vol. II of the *Monumenta Monodica* series. In addition to offering detailed historic analysis, it also conveys transcribed chants sorted by type.

All of the other noteworthy and comprehensive works are focused not on the topic of Old Roman, but on that of Gregorian chant. It is in the process of tracing the origins of the latter that they refer to the former. James McKinnon's work, *The Advent Project*, which examines the entire Mass repertory, and Rebecca Maloy's study titled *Inside the Offertory*, which only considers the offertory genre, base all of their references on *Joseph Dyer's* findings and, as a rule, uphold them.

The contingent nature of Bruno Stäblein's work is due to the fact that he is a scholar of one source. Of all the Old Roman manuscripts, he only examines the *Lateran Gradual*, and excludes from his consideration the chants or structural specificities that were conserved only by the *St. Cecilia Gradual* or the *St. Peter's Basilica Gradual*.

The key weakness of *Maloy's* work is the lack of insights beyond the limits of the offertory genre. Although she does make excursions into Ambrosian sources in her analysis, she does not examine the traits of chant technique, published in reference to *Dyer's* work, in other genres of the Mass.

Joseph Dyer's study *The Schola Cantorum and Its Roman Milieu in the Early Middle Age*, published in 1998, contains the most comprehensive overview of the subject this present work is dedicated to. He enlists the alleluia melodies of Easter Week Vespers for his analysis of the offertory. In this work, as in most others, *Dyer* concentrates his remarks on the offertory genre and refrains from extending them to other genres of the Mass.

II.

Apart from some fragments, there are three complete Gradual sources that allow us to examine the chants of the Old Roman Mass. Two of them can be found in the Vatican Apostolic Library. The Gradual of St. John Lateran Archbasilica contains, in addition to its proper that encompasses the entire liturgical year, a supple Kyriale and even an *Officium gloriosum* for the weekdays of Easter Week, under the signature. The St. Peter Gradual, under the signature *Arch.Cap.S.Pietro F. 22*, enriches the Old Roman repertory with a late Mass of Holy Mary in addition to a complete *proprium de tempore*. A Kyriale, however, is absent from this source. It is indicative of the relatively late, 13th-

century origin of the *St. Peter Gradual* that it contains the Sundays after Pentecost in a Frankish numerical order. The presumably oldest Gradual can be dated to the 11th century, specifically to 1071 as per the data given in the manuscript itself. It was in use at the St. Cecilia in Trastevere Basilica. It is currently held in the collection of the Bodmer Foundation in Switzerland under the signature *Cod. Bodmer 74*. The *St. Cecilia Gradual* contains both the chants of the liturgical year and the sanctoral feasts from the first Sunday of Advent to the Pentecost Octave, with sequences embedded in Mass liturgy and an abundantly tropized Kyriale at the end of the volume. Its clean notation and precise language raise it above the other extant sources.

III.

The scholarly method applied in this present work builds onto the method developed by the Solesmes Benedictines in the 19th century, wherein the texts and notated melodies of the same chant in different sources are transferred to one large folio in full vertical alignment with as few line breaks as possible. This ensures that accurate comparison of melodies and texts is possible for every chants, making differences easy to demonstrate.

The weakness of the Solesmes Benedictines' folios is that they transferred too many sources onto the same surface on the one hand and accurately preserved the exact notation style of their sources on the other hand. The large number of sources and their often wildly

divergent notations hindered the comparison of sources to such a great extent that by the end of the 20th century, their meticulously prepared scholarly work was effectively stalled.

The production of the folios used for this present work started in 2016 with a unified notation style and clef system, using a total of four sources. In addition to the melodies of the Solesmes editions, the 13th-century Gradual of the Cluny Abbey was used as a representative diatonic source, with the Klosterneuburg Gradual under the signature Ms. 807 serving as a representative pentatonic source on the folios in addition to the notation found in the *St. Cecilia Gradual*. As the latter source only contains Mass chants until the Pentecost Octave, Masses after the Octave were transcribed from the *Lateran Gradual*. Considerable differences in melody or text between the sources were noted in appropriately sized auxiliary lines.

The comparison of melodic variants started with the Gregorian sources and concentrated primarily on the melodic differences that could not be ascribed to the pentatonic or diatonic nature of the respective sources. The differences thus observed, which resulted from the different mutations of each notation in accordance with the *Guidonic solmization*, were color-coded according to their nature.

The analysis of Old Roman chants commenced with the separation of chants that followed the organic segmentation of psalmody and those that were compiled from microstructures

containing four to six syllables. The repetitive motifs of the microstructures were consequently color-coded in order to achieve the transparency of their order, which was consequent in some cases and freely assembled in others. The motif chains thus revealed allowed for the structural analysis of both the microstructures themselves and the faculties that consisted of them.

The final step of the analytical work pertained to the comparison of Old Roman and Gregorian melodies and chant texts as well as the grouping of chants by melodic types. Their respective text sources, the extent to which they were centonized, the textual differences between the sources and the liturgical placement of the chants were also noted in each case.

IV.

In this present work, just like in others, the road to research on Old Roman chant passed through the analysis of Gregorian melodies, concluding in the description and presentation of a highly noteworthy group of chants within the extant Old Roman source corpus. All researchers agree that Old Roman melodic material cannot be examined without their Gregorian parallels, even though we find their stances to be vastly divergent in relation to their interdependence and especially in their order of chronological precedence. The underlying question of these dilemmas boils down to the following: Which chant tradition came earlier?

This question cannot be answered in this simplistic form as both the Gregorian and the Old Roman chant material unfolds a plethora of stylistic strata. In highlighting any aspect of these strata, we would instantly embark on a collision course with all other features.

The most important result of our present work is the description and systemization of the faculty-based chant technique. Its systemization includes, in addition to the presentation of the chants it powers, the chant repertory that only partially utilizes the motif sets of faculties and the microstructures that build onto them. Both the purely faculty-based and the latter group were presented accompanied by the role they play in the liturgical cycle and the analysis of their texts. This provides indications for the determination of the place these chants or chant groups occupy in liturgical history. In this present work, the faculty-based chant technique unfolds as the base layer of the chant material of the Old Roman graduals and the basic skill of Old Roman cantors, which was conveyed to us by the Gregorian-influenced sources in the more hidden locations of the liturgical year, in the chants of Lenten weekdays, Sundays after Pentecost, or the odd in-between Offertory verse, from the centuries that preceded the proliferation of the Vulgate.

V.

CD albums of Gregorian chants:

- SUSCEPIMUS – gregorian and italian baroque – Collegium Musicum Jaurinense, Győr, 2010.
- NOS AUTEM – tradition in move – Collegium Musicum Jaurinense, Győr, 2012.
- VIRI – gregorian from Istanbul – Collegium Musicum Jaurinense, Győr, 2013.
- EXSILIUM – The Becket Story – Collegium Musicum Jaurinense, Győr, 2014.
- EL CAMINO – James on the road – Collegium Musicum Jaurinense, Győr, 2017.

Old Roman Gradual edition:

- GRADUALE de tempore & de sanctis majore hebdomada excepta cum cantibus URBIS Romæ antiquæ luce codicum antiquorum curatum & magna cum diligentia extractum – St. Maurus Benedictine Priory, Győr, 2021.

Lectures, concerts:

- Introduction to the world of Old Roman chant – Bakonybél Benedictine Abbey – September 17, 2021.
- Old Roman chant and Guidonic solmization – Bakonybél Benedictine Abbey – November 27, 2021.