

Our Position



A Word in Reference to the Plain Chant Question

In View of the Recent Pronouncements of Pius X.
and the Congregation of Sacred Rites

By

Dom Raphael Molitor O. S. B.

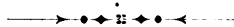
Of Beuron Abbey



(From the German)



Permissu Superiorum



Ratisbon, Rome, New York & Cincinnati

F. Pustet, Printer to the Holy See

1904

Imprimatur.

Ratisbonæ, die 30. Julii 1904.

Dr. Fr. X. Leitner, Vic. Gen.



Imprimatur.

Beuron, die 30. Julii 1904.

✦ Placidus, Archiabbas.

To the Kind Reader.

In the following pages you will find, dear reader, a brief reply to the most important questions in regard to plain chant raised by the *Motu proprio* of our Holy Father Pius X., as well as by the decree of the Congregation of Sacred Rites of the 8th Jan., 1904, and the announcement of a new edition of plain chant. In this reply learned explanations and optimistic views are avoided, for the aim is to be simple, temperate and brief. If, then, you have an hour or so to spare, peruse these pages attentively and consider within yourself how far my views appear to be correct. The booklet has been written for your enlightenment and to calm your mind.

The Author.

Beuron; Feast of St. John the Baptist,
24 June, 1904.

What will the Vatican edition give us?

What advantages are offered by one edition for general use in comparison with various diocesan editions?

Are not the ancient melodies too difficult for our choirs?

What ought to be done in the near future?

These are the four principal questions which I will endeavour to answer.



1. What will the Vatican Edition give us?



We can already answer this with certainty. The Vatican edition will give essentially what the Solesmes choral books have already given us, the Gregorian chant as contained in the best MSS. of all countries and periods.

With the same certainty we can say:

The Vatican edition will give in its essence that which we possessed in Germany as a spiritual inheritance down to the time of the great religious upheaval, but lost owing to mistaken reforms and the unfavourable circumstances of the times.

Be not disturbed, then, dear reader. In the Vatican edition we shall not receive a French version, and, still less, French melodies. The fact is, the melodies which it will contain were for centuries in use in Germany; they were at home here. Hence, when these melodies are again given us by the Holy Father we shall by no means receive imported wares. We shall only receive that which was long our own and to which for more than a thousand years we have had a well-earned right. If the reform

which the Holy Father has in view is successful with us, our grand Catholic past will receive due honour in yet another respect, and the sacred liturgy will greatly benefit thereby.

Thus the future Vatican edition is more to us than the Medicean, for which so much has been done in Germany with commendable good will. As Catholics and as Germans we are closely connected in the history of our Church and Fatherland with these venerable melodies, which was not the case as regards the reformed plain chant of the Medicean edition. Moreover, we shall have a really good version, for Pius X. will have no substitutions, no patchwork, no half measures. No; Pius X. desires that the chant shall be renewed precisely as it was in the ages of faith when the foundation was laid of our present liturgy, and it received its most beautiful forms.

To give an account of the technical means employed for the new edition would lead us too far; neither can a history of our German plain chant be attempted in a few pages, for to do so would necessitate a large and expensive work. However, to confirm what I have said we will take a glance at the earliest printed Gregorian books in Germany. To be sure, I might simply refer the reader to the splendid tables in red and black contained in the work published by Pustet for the thirteenth centenary of St. Gregory the Great.*) But as this volume is accessible only to a few and the reader may be glad of further material for the purpose of comparison, I shall here give some tables to show what was sung in Germany on the threshold of the 16th century and onwards. Of course, these early printed specimens should not be viewed as the


*) Deutsche Choral-Wiegendrucke. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Chorals und des Notendruckes in Deutschland von P. Raphael Molitor. Verlag von Fr. Pustet, Regensburg, 1904. Price 20s.


principal sources of the plain chant tradition; they are far too modern for that, and therefore the editors of the Vatican edition have studied MSS. of a much earlier date and have taken them as the basis of their labours. Nevertheless, we obtain from these early printed works a fairly correct idea of the force of our tradition, and of the defects and weak points immediately before the disturbing influences of the various plain chant reforms. In these ancient books we come across, so to speak, the last fixed points of our mediæval tradition, which to-day may become for us connecting points in our latest endeavours.

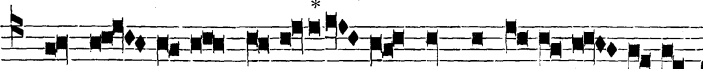
In explanation of the following examples it may be remarked that they were all originally printed in what is called the "horse-shoe nail" notation, concerning which see the festival book above referred to. The transcription is here given in the ordinary Roman notation, a brevis with an asterisk always representing the strophicus in the original.


Offertorium ex Missa B. M. V.

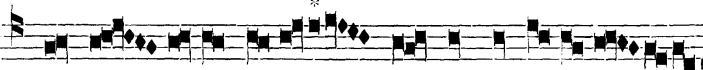
T.)* 
 Fe - lix nam - que es sa-cra

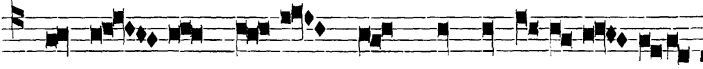
K. 
 Fe - lix nam - que es sa-cra


R. 
 Fe - lix nam - que es sa-cra

P. 
 Fe - lix nam - que es sa-cra

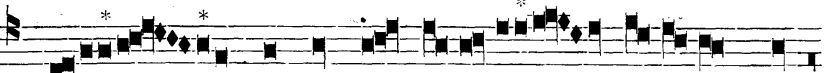
Pz. 
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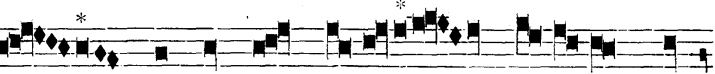
W. 
 Fe - lix nam - que es sa-cra

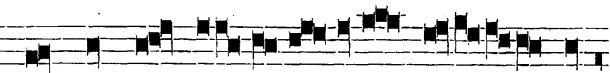
A. 
 Fe - lix nam - que es sa-cra

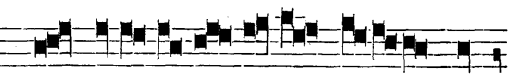
S. 
 As-súm - pta est Ma - - rí - a in cœ - -

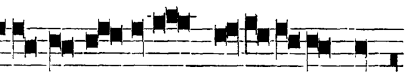
*) For details of the original sources see p. 53.


T. 
vir-go Ma - ri - - a, et

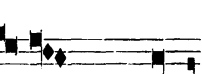
K. 
vir-go Ma - ri - - a, et


R. 
vir-go Ma - ri - - - a, et

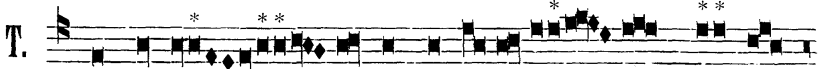
P. 
vir-go Ma - ri - - - a, et

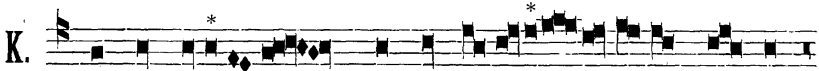
Pz. 
vir-go Ma - ri - - - a, et

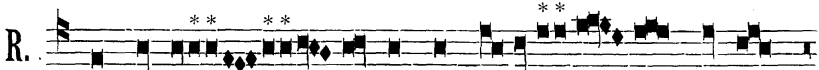
W. 
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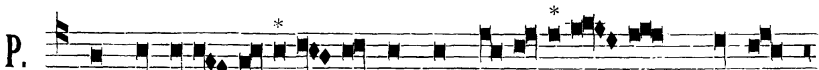
A. 
vir-go Ma - ri - - a, et

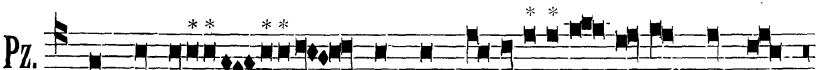
S. 
- - - lum, gau - - - dent

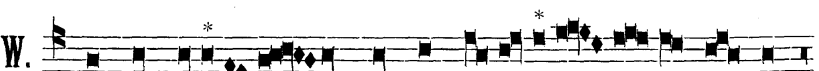
T. 
omni lau - - - de di-gnís - - - si-ma,

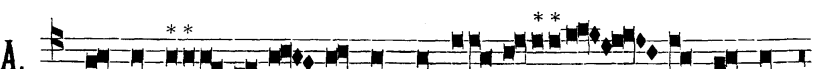
K. 
omni lau - - - de di-gnís - - - si-ma,

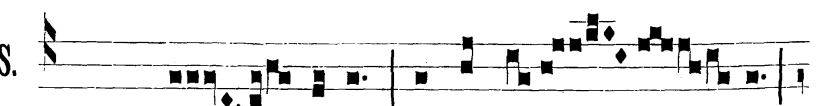
R. 
omni lau - - - de di-gnís - - - si-ma,

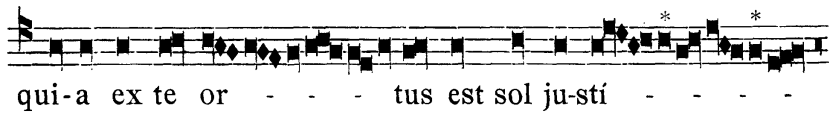
P. 
omni lau - - - de di-gnís - - - si-ma,

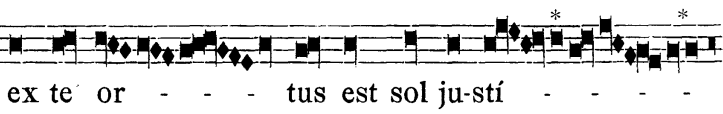
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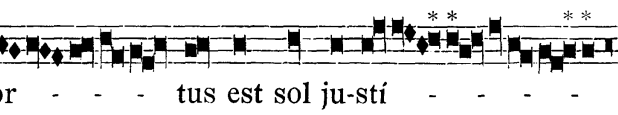
W. 
omni lau - - - de di-gnís - - - si-ma,


A. 
omni lau - - - de dignís - - - si-ma,

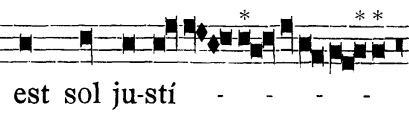
S. 
An - ge-li col-lau-dán - - - tes

T. 
qui-a ex te or - - - tus est sol ju-stí - - - -

K. 
qui-a ex te or - - - tus est sol ju-stí - - - -

R. 
qui-a ex te or - - - tus est sol ju-stí - - - -

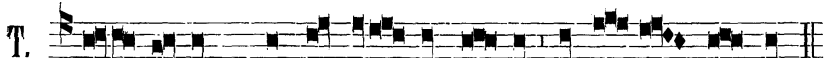
P. 
qui-a ex te or - - - tus est sol ju-stí - - - -

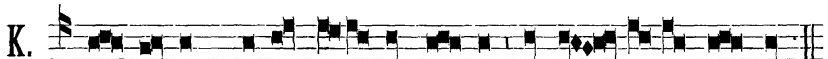
Pz. 
qui-a ex te or - - - tus est sol ju-stí - - - -

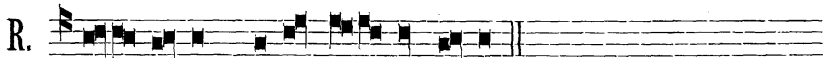
W. 
qui-a ex te or - - - tus est sol ju-stí - - - -

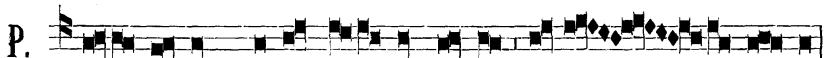
A. 
qui-a ex te or - - - tus est sol ju-stí - - - -


S. 
be-ne-dí - - - - cunt Dó - - - -

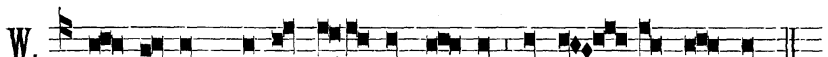
T. 
 - ti - æ Chri - stus de - us no - ster, al - le - - lú - ja.

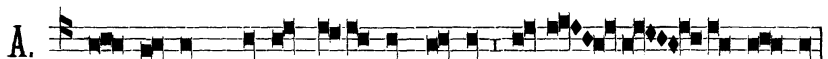
K. 
 - ti - æ Christus de - us no - ster, al - le - - lú - ja.

R. 
 - ti - æ Christus de - us noster.

P. 
 - ti - æ Christus de - us noster, al - le - - - lú - ja.


Pz. 
 - ti - æ Christus de - us noster.


W. 
 - ti - æ Christus de - us no - ster, al - le - - lú - ja.


A. 
 - ti - æ Christus de - us noster, al - le - - - lú - ja.


S. 
 - mi - num, al - le - - - lú - ja.

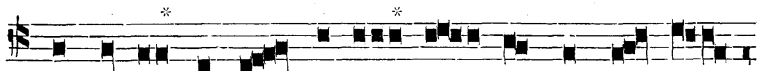
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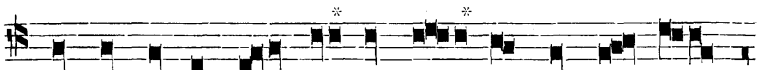
T. 
Ter-rí-bi-lis est lo-cus i - ste, hic do - mus

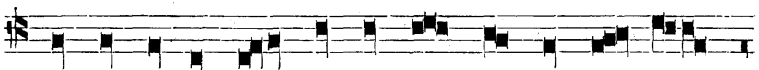
K. 
Ter-rí-bi-lis est lo-cus i - ste, hic do - mus

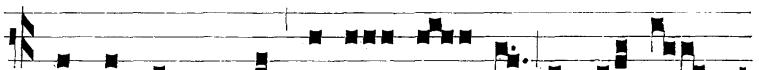
R. 
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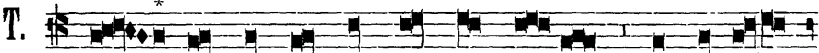
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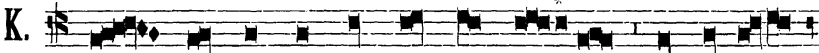
Pz. 
Ter-rí-bi-lis est lo-cus i - ste, hic do - mus

W. 
Ter-rí-bi-lis est lo-cus i - ste, hic do - mus

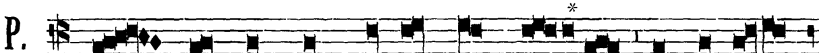
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Ter-rí-bi-lis est lo-cus i - ste, hic do - mus

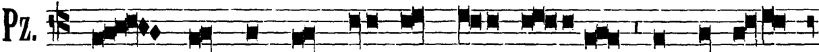
S. 
Ter-rí-bi-lis est lo-cus i - ste, hic do-mus

T.  *
de - i est et por-ta cæ - li, et vo-cá -

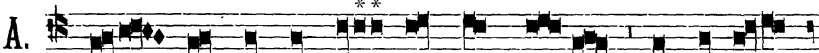
K.  *
de - i est et por-ta cæ - li, et vo-cá -

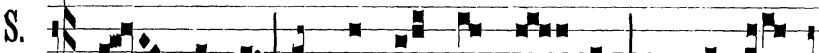
R.  * * *
de - i est et por-ta cæ - li, et vo-cá -

P.  *
de - i est et por-ta cæ - li, et vo-cá -

Pz. 
de - i est et por-ta cæ - li, et vo-cá -

W.  *
de - i est et por-ta cæ - li, et vo-cá -

A.  **
de - i est et por - ta cæ - li, et vo-cá -

S. 
de - i est et por-ta cæ - li, et vo-cá -

T. 
bi - tur au - la de - i.

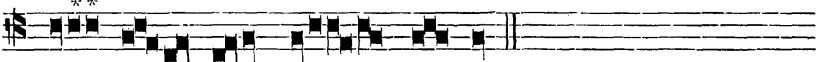
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bi - tur au - la de - i.

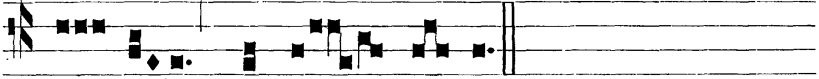
R. 
bi - tur au - la de - i.

P. 
bi - tur au - la de - i.

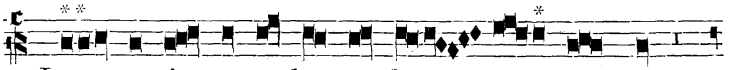
Pz. 
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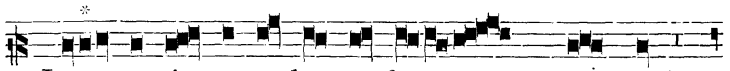
W. 
bi - tur au - la de - i.

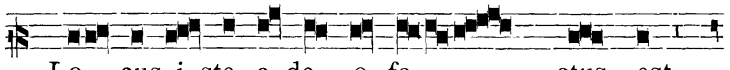
A. 
bi - tur au - la de - i.


S. 
bi - tur au - la de - i.

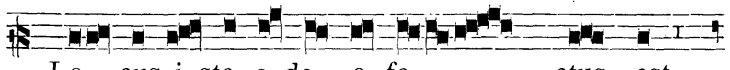
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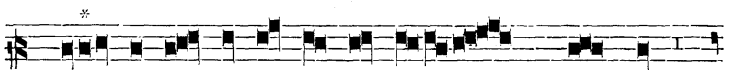
T.  ^{**}
Lo - cus i - ste a de - o fa - - - ctus est,


K.  ^{*}
Lo - cus i - ste a de - o fa - - - ctus est,

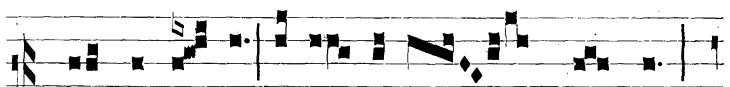
R. 
Lo - cus i - ste a de - o fa - - - ctus est,

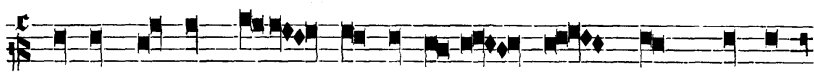
P.  ^{**}
Lo - cus i - ste a de - o fa - - - ctus est,

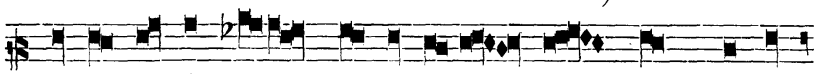
Pz. 
Lo - cus i - ste a de - o fa - - - ctus est,

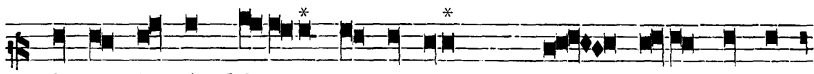
W.  ^{*}
Lo - cus i - ste a de - o fa - - - ctus est,

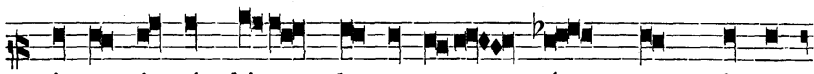
A.  ^{**} ^{**}
Lo - cus i - ste a de - o fa - - - ctus est,

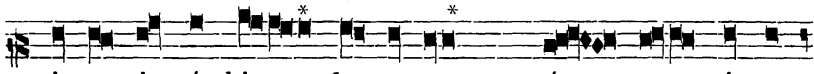
S. 
Lo - cus i - ste a de - o fa - - - ctus est,

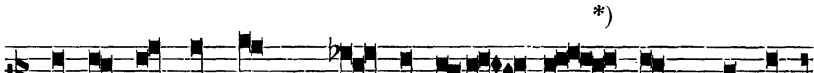
T. 
in-æ-sti-má - bi - le sa-cra - mén - tum ir-re -


K. 
in-æ-sti-má - bi - le sa-cra - mén - tum ir-re -


R. 
in-æ-sti-má - bi - le sa-cra - mén - tum ir-re -

P. 
in-æ-sti-má - bi - le sa-cra - mén - tum ir-re -

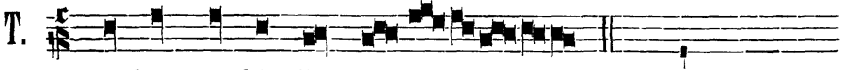
Pz. 
in-æ-sti-má - bi - le sa-cra - mén - tum ir-re -


W. 
in-æ-sti-má - bi - le sacra - mén - tum ir-re -

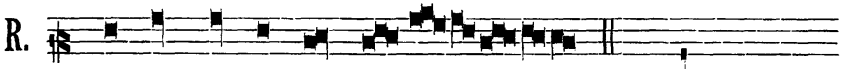
A. 
in-æ-sti-má - bi - le sa-cra - mén - tum ir-re -

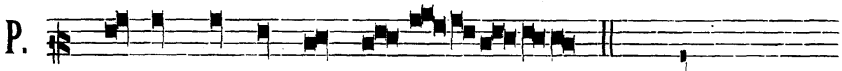
S. 
in-æ-sti - má - bi - le sa-cra - mén - tum ir-re -


*) The strophicus appears in the original as a nota liquescens.

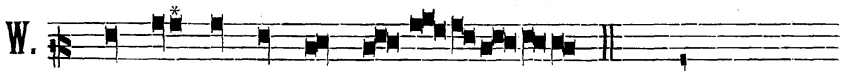
T. 
pre - hen - sí - bi - lis est.

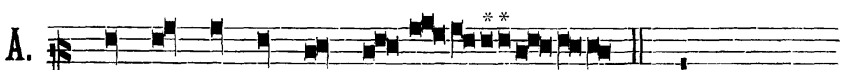
K. 
pre - hen - sí - bi - lis est.

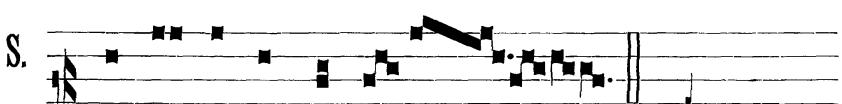
R. 
pre - hen - sí - bi - lis est.

P. 
pre - hen - sí - bi - lis est.

Pz. 
pre - hen - sí - bi - lis est.

W. 
pre - hen - sí - bi - lis est.

A. 
pre - hen - sí - bi - lis est.

S. 
pre - hen - sí - bi - lis est.

T. **

K. *

R.

P. *

Pz.

W. *

A. **

S.

T. rus, ex-áú - - di *

K. rus, ex-áú - - di *

R. rus, ex-áú - - di

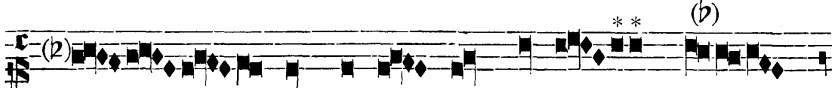
P. rus, ex-áú - - di *

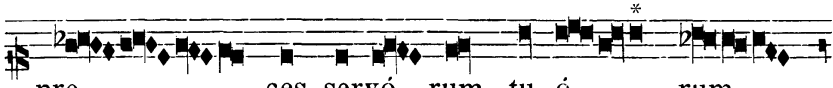
Pz. rus, ex-áú - - di

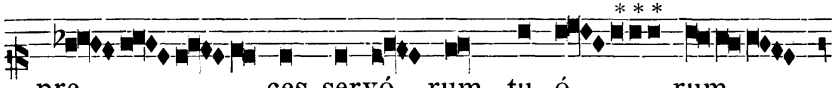
W. rus, ex-áú - - di *

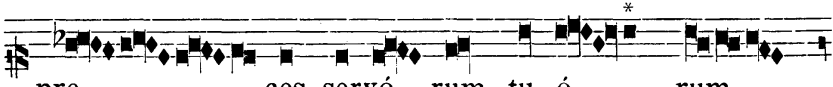
A. rus, ex-áú - - di **

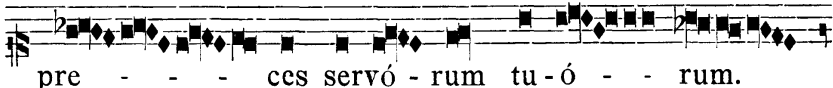
S. rus, ex-áú - - di

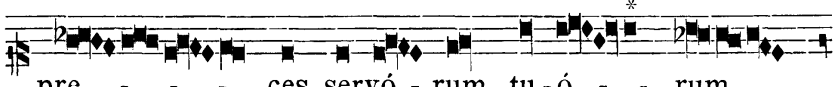
T.  *(2)* **** *(b)*
pre - - - ces servó - rum tu - ó - - rum.

K.  ***
pre - - - ces servó - rum tu - ó - - rum.


R.  *****
pre - - - ces servó - rum tu - ó - - rum.

P.  ***
pre - - - ces servó - rum tu - ó - - rum.

Pz. 
pre - - - ces servó - rum tu - ó - - rum.

W.  ***
pre - - - ces servó - rum tu - ó - - rum.

A. 
pre - - - ces servó - rum tu - ó - - rum.

S. 
pre - - - ces servó - rum tu - ó - - rum.

T.

K.

R.

P.

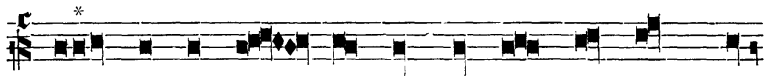
Pz.

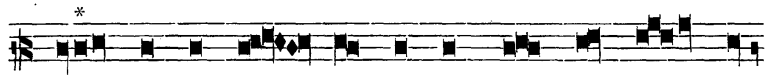
W.

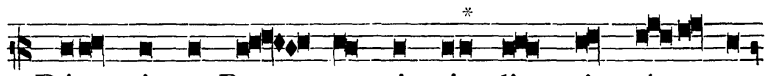
A.

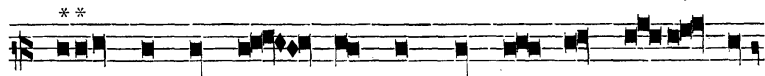
S.

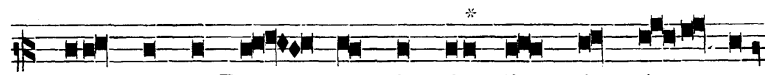
Offertorium from the Mass for the Anniv. of the Ded. of a Church.

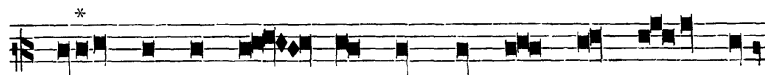
T.  ^{*}
Dó - mi - ne De - us in simpli - ci - tá - te

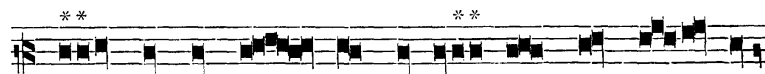
K.  ^{*}
Dó - mi - ne De - us in simpli - ci - tá - te

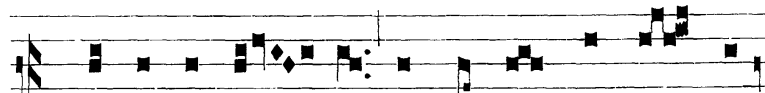
R.  ^{*}
Dó - mi - ne De - us in simpli - ci - tá - te

P.  ^{**}
Dó - mi - ne De - us in simpli - ci - tá - te

Pz.  ^{*}
Dó - mi - ne De - us in simpli - ci - tá - te

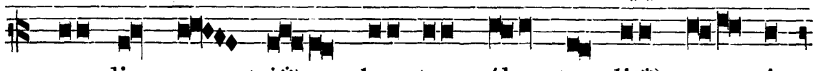
W.  ^{*}
Dó - mi - ne De - us in simpli - ci - tá - te

A.  ^{**} ^{**}
Dó - mi - ne De - us in sim - pli - ci - tá - te

S. 
Dó - mi - ne De - us in simpli - ci - tá - te

T.  * *
 cor - dis me - i læ - tus ób - tu - li u - ni -

K.  * * *
 cor - dis me - i læ - tus ób - tu - li u - ni -

R.  * * * **
 cor - dis ve - stri*) læ - tus ób - tu - lit*) u - ni -

P.  * *
 cor - dis me - i le - vis*) ób - tu - li u - ni -

Pz.  * * * **
 cor - dis ve - stri*) læ - tus ób - tu - lit*) u - ni -

W.  * * *
 cor - dis me - i læ - tus ób - tu - li u - ni -

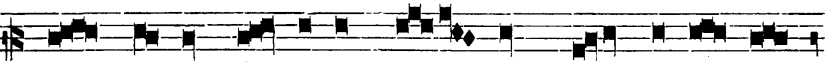
A.  **
 cor - dis me - i læ - tus ób - tu - li u - ni -

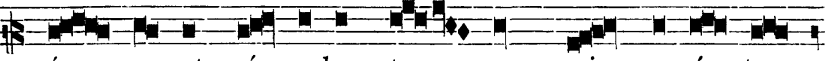
S. 
 cor - dis me - i læ - tus ób - tu - li u - ni -

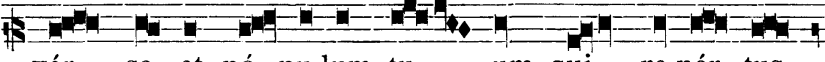
*) These variants in the text are as in the original.

T. ^{*)} ^{***)} ^{***)}

 vér - sa, et pó - pu-lum tu - um qui re-pér - tus

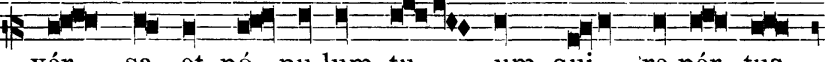
K. 
 vér - sa, et pó - pu-lum tu - um qui re-pér - tus

R. ^{*)}

 vér - sa, et pó - pu-lum tu - um qui re-pér - tus

P. 
 vér - sa, et pó - pu-lum tu - um qui re-pér - tus


Pz. ^{*)}

 vér - sa, et pó - pu-lum tu - um qui re-pér - tus

W. 
 vér - sa, et pó - pu-lum tu - um qui re-pér - tus

A. ^{*)} ^{**} ^{***)}

 vér - sa, et pó - pu-lus tu - us qui re-pér - tus

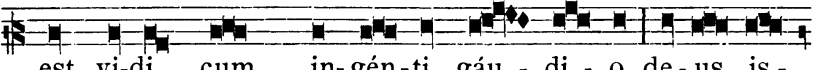
S. 
 vér - sa, et pó - pu-lum tu - um qui re-pér - tus

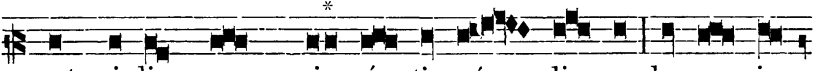
*) In the original the strophicus appears as a nota liquescens.

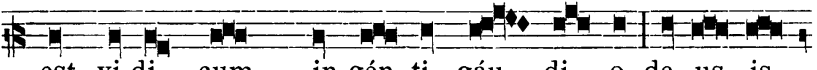
***) Original here defective.

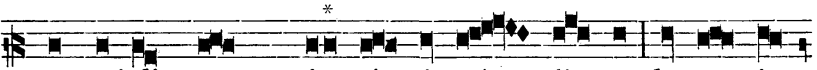
***) populus in the original.

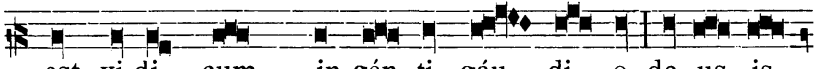
T. *)
 est vi-di cum in-gén-ti gáu - di - o, de - us is -

K. 
 est vi-di cum in-gén-ti gáu - di - o, de - us is -

R. *
 est vi-di cum in-gén-ti gáu - di - o, de - us is -

P. 
 est vi-di cum in-gén-ti gáu - di - o, de - us is -

Pz. *
 est vi-di cum in-gén-ti gáu - di - o, de - us is -

W. 
 est vi-di cum in-gén-ti gáu - di - o, de - us is -

A. **
 est vi-dit cum in-gén-ti gáu - di - o, de - us is -

S. 
 est vi-di cum in-gén-ti gáu - di - o, de - us is -

*) The original has here by mistake "domino" instead of "gaudio".

T. * *

K. *)

R. **

P. *

Pz. * **

W. *

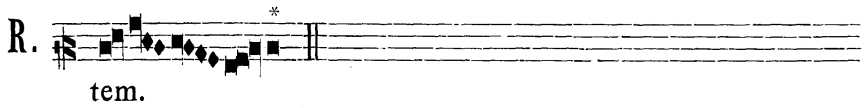
A. **

S.

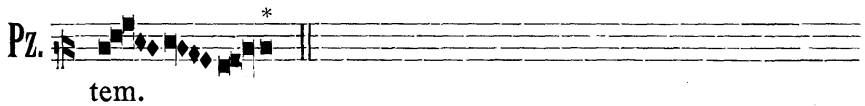
*) Melody fails in both of the defective examples before me.

T. 
 tem dó - mi - ne de - us.

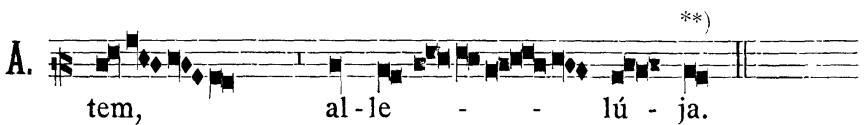
K. 
 tem dó - mi - ne de - us.

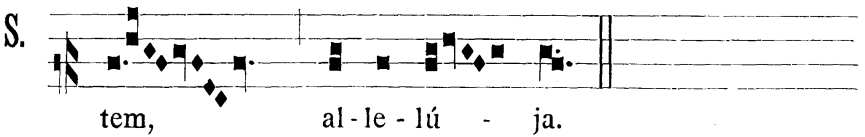
R. 
 tem.

P. 
 tem, dó - mi - ne de - us.

Pz. 
 tem.

W. 
 tem, dó - mi - ne de - us.

A. 
 tem, al - le - - lú - ja.

S. 
 tem, al - le - lú - - ja.

*) Melody fails in both of the defective examples before me.

**) The close on *re* possibly arose through a printer's error.

A glance at these tables shows us:

1. That among the melodies of the early printed works and between these and the Solesmes version of the MSS. many differences exist, that, in other words, the German tradition, as revealed in the early printed books, was not precisely the same to a note, a fact which is well known.

2. On the other hand, it is evident from the same tables that the fundamental nature of the melodies and many details have been received unaltered and that consequently

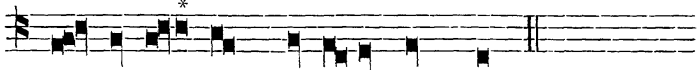
3. The Solesmes version is essentially the same as the version employed by us at the beginning of the 16th century.

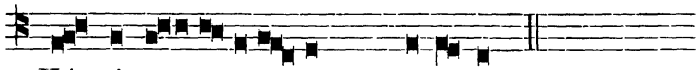
The differences of the kind referred to are more frequent among the melodies of the Ordinarium Missæ. The reason for this may naturally be that these chants being sung far more frequently and by a far larger number of singers almost every day, were more easily spoilt. Moreover, with a great deal of congregational singing, owing to the difficulty of controlling a large number of voices, much was developed that was not in accordance with the original idea and form of the melodies. Hence — and this is the only conclusion we are justified in drawing from this circumstance — the sources for the preparation of the Ordinarium Missæ must be as extensive and comprehensive as possible.

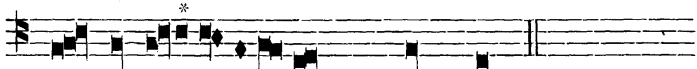
The following specimens from German early printed books will give a good idea of the version of the mass chants that were used in Germany about the year 1500.

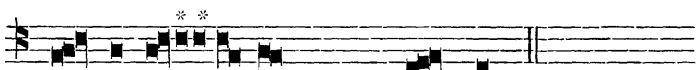
Kyrie Paschale.


C. 
 Ky - ri - e ley - son.

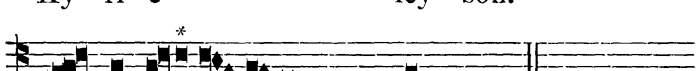
K. 
 Ký - ri - e e ley - son.

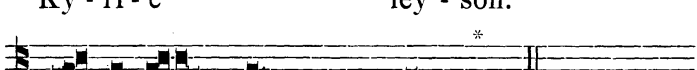
Q. 
 Ký - ri - e

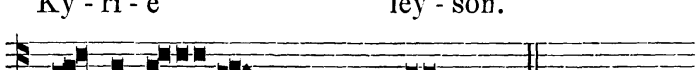
M. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.

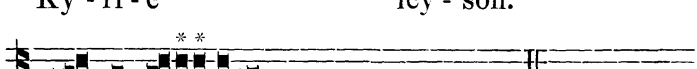
R. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.


H. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.


P. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.

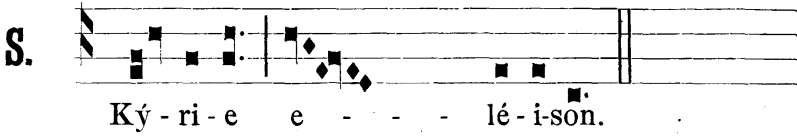
M.S. 2. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.

M.R. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.

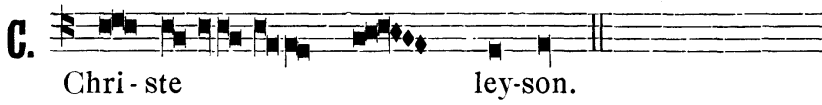
Pz. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.

W. 
 Ký - ri - e e-leyson.

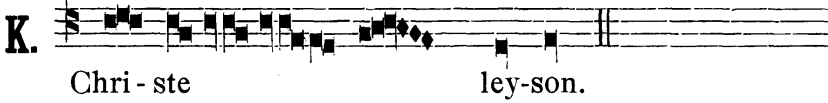
A. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.

S. 

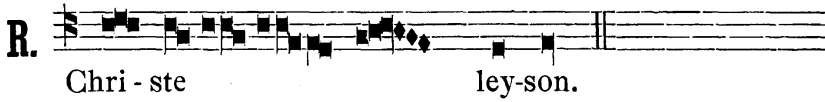
Ký - ri - e e - - - lé - i - son.

C. 


Chri - ste ley - son.

K. 

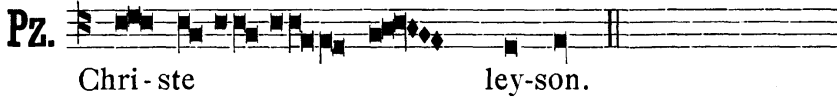
Chri - ste ley - son.

R. 

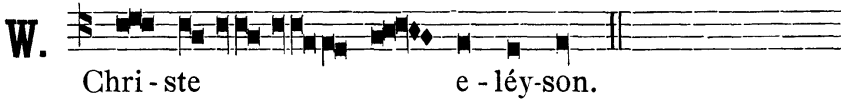
Chri - ste ley - son.

P. 

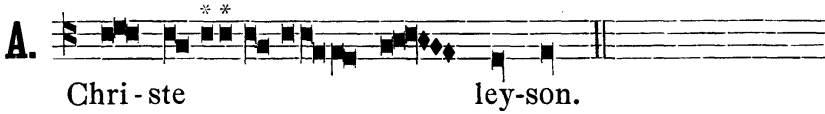
Chri - ste ley - son.

Pz. 

Chri - ste ley - son.

W. 

Chri - ste e - léy - son.

A. 

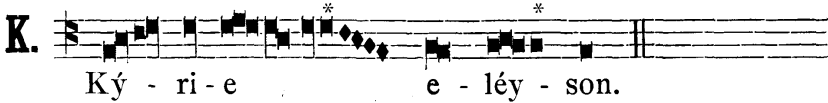
Chri - ste ley - son.

S. 

Chri - ste e - - - lé - i - son.

C. 

Ký - ri - e ley - - - son.

K. 

Ký - ri - e e - léy - son.

R. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.

P. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.

Pz. 
 Ky - ri ley - son.

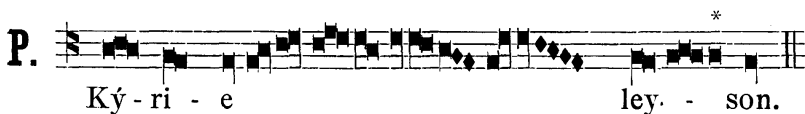
W. 
 Ký - ri - e e - léy - son.

A. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.

S. 
 Ký - ri - e e - - lé - i - son.

K. 
 Ký - ri - e e léy - son.

R. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.

P. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.

Pz. 
 Ký - ri - e ley - son.

W. 
 Ký - ri - e e - léy - son.

A. **S.**

Kyrie in Festis Semiduplicibus.

K. **M.**

M. A.

M. S. 1.

R.

H.

P.

M. S. 2.

M. S. 3.

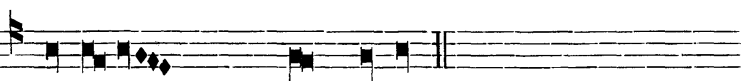
M. R. 
 Ký-ri - e ley-son.

Pz. 
 Ký-ri - e ley-son.

W. 
 Ký-ri - e e - léy - son.

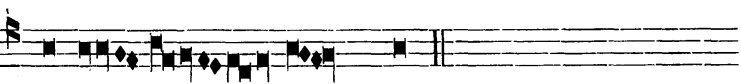
A. 
 Ký-ri - e ley-son.

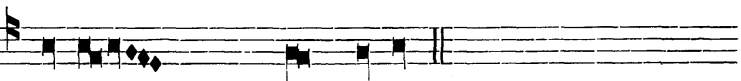
S. 
 Ký-ri - e e - lé - i - son.

K. 
 Chri-ste e - léyson.


R. 
 Chri lé - y-son.

P. 
 Chri-ste leyson.

Pz. 
 Chri-ste ley - son.

W. 
 Chri-ste e - léyson.

A. 
 Chri-ste leyson.

S. 
Chri-ste e - lé - i - son.

K. 
Ký - ri - e e - léy - son.

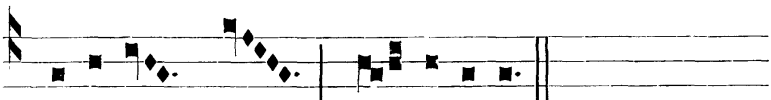
R. 
Ky - ri ley - son.

P. 
Ký - ri - e ley - son.

Pz. 
Ky - ri ley - son.

W. 
Ký - ri - e e - léy - son.

A. 
Ký - ri - - e ley - son.

S. 
Ký - ri - e e - lé - i - son.

K. 
Ký - ri - e e ley - son.

R. 
Ký - ri - e ley - son.

P. 
Ky-ri ley - son.

Pz. 
Ký-ri - e ley - son.

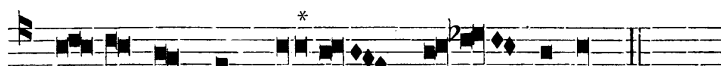
W. 
Ký-ri - e e - léy - son.

A. 
Ky - ri ley - son.

S. 
Ký-ri - e e - lé - i - son.

Kyrie infra Octavam.

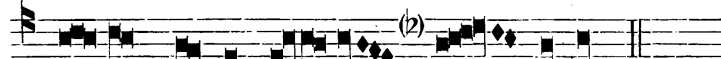
K. 
Ký - ri - e e - ley-son.

M. 
Ký - ri - e leyson.

M. A. 
Ky - ri leyson.

M. S. 1. 
Ký - ri - e ley-son.

R. 
Ký - ri - e leyson.

H. 
Ký - ri - e e - - - léyson.

M. S. 2. Ky - ri e ley-son.

M. R. Ky - ri - e leyson.

M. S. 3. Ký - ri - e lei-son.

Pz. Ký - ri - e leyson.

W. Ký - ri - e e-léyson.

A. Ký - ri - e leyson.

S. Ký - ri - e e - lé - i - son.


K. Chri - ste e - ley - son.


R. Chri - ste ley - son.

Pz. Chri - ste ley - son.

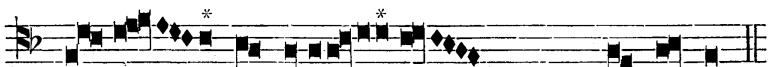
W. Chri - ste e - léyson.

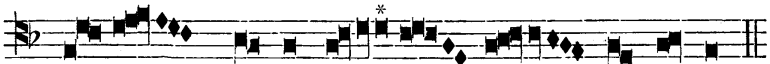
A. Chri - ste ley - son.

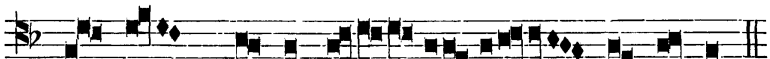
S. 
 Chri - ste e - lé - i - son.

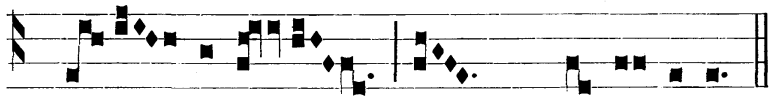
K. 
 Ky - ri - e e - leyson.

R. 
 Ký - - ri - e leyson.

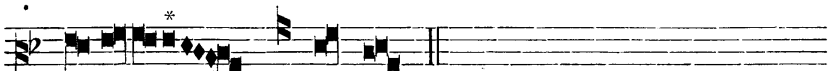
Pz. 
 Ký - - ri - e leyson.)*

W. 
 Ký - - ri - e e leyson.

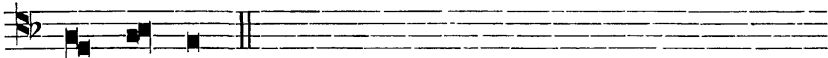
A. 
 Ký - - ri - e leyson.

S. 
 Ky - ri e lé - i - son.

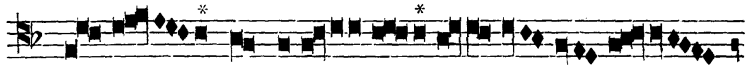
K. 
 Ky - ri - e e - ley-

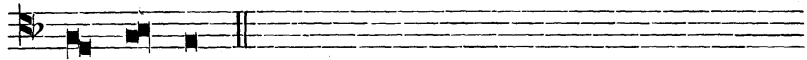

 son y-mas.

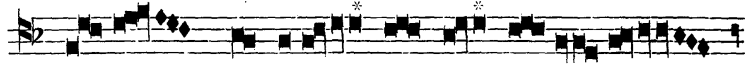
R. 
 Ký - - ri - e


 ley-son.

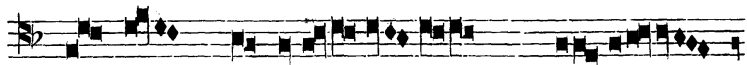
*) Pforzheim has *re la sol*.

Pz. 
 Ký - - ri - e



 ley-son.

W. 
 Ký - - ri - e


 e ley-son y-mas.

A. 
 Ký - - ri - e


 ley-son y-mas.

S. 
 Ký - - ri - e e-


 lé - i - son.

Here also the return to the more ancient forms in the MSS. has been of advantage to the chants, as clearly shown in the Solesmes version. They are more beautiful as regards rhythm and melody.



2. What Advantages are offered by one Edition for general Use in Comparison with Editions for the various Dioceses?

That is the second question to which we must reply. One may put it in this way:

Would it not have been better, instead of inaugurating an edition in Rome, to leave it to each country to satisfy its own national and local needs by the institution of national editions closely allied to the national tradition?

This question can be considered and answered from the stand-point of

the most perfect unity possible, or,
the greatest possible freedom, or,
the best result possible.

We take up the last point and say that the best result will, we think, be most easily obtained by combined labour. We shall, however, not say much in regard to unity in liturgical chant. For of what great consequence is it if in the diocese A by the Rhine a *podatus* is sung, whilst in the diocese B by the blue Danube one employs a *torculus*, and in the neighbouring diocese C perhaps a *brevis*? The priceless benefit of peace and of the unity of Christendom would not really be in any danger. On the other hand, it is difficult to understand why on the score of such trivialities there should be an objection to an edition for general use, more especially if it possess advantages which might easily be wanting in separate editions and most certainly would be wanting as regards the plain chant tradition. Yet it must not be thought that an edition is good simply because it is a general one, or intended for all according to decrees and commendations.

What freedom the Vatican edition will allow we shall ascertain in the future. The *Motu proprio* of Pius X. and the S. C. R., 8 Jan., 1904, only ordain in general terms the introduction of the ancient traditional chant, without giving binding injunctions in regard to a particular edition. How long this state of affairs may last depends solely upon the will of the Holy Father. In Rome itself it was apparently thought that a solution of the question would be possible by means of separate editions for the various countries and dioceses; but Pius X. would not give any preference to an existing edition nor to a new undertaking, neither has he given a special blessing or other direct encouragement to anyone for the preparation of an independent edition; thus there was nothing to hinder a Vatican edition. When at this year's Congress in Rome the Papal message was delivered announcing the decision in favour of a Vatican edition universal satisfaction was displayed. Everyone felt that by the Papal decision matters had taken a favourable turn, and that many troublesome questions had been avoided.

Now, if we have in view the best results that a plain chant edition can have, we shall all give the preference to an international edition which endeavours to utilise all the original sources available and all the assistance that can be obtained.

What would have happened if the Vatican edition had not been announced?

A number of separate editions, varying according to countries and dioceses and editors, would have appeared in rapid succession with the object, of course, of getting them quickly and as cheaply as possible on the market in order to obtain the custom of the public before others, and to keep out later editions. In Germany alone it is said that at least five new editions have been planned since the publication of the *Motu proprio*, and partly taken

in hand. Did those who undertook them guess what enormous labour is involved in the preparation of such an edition if it is to satisfy the requirements of the most moderate criticism? How many MSS. must be examined, estimated at their true value and then compared with other MSS.? The necessary material having thus been laboriously collected the most difficult part now begins — the editing of the melodies. This portion of the work demands, in addition to extreme conscientiousness, extensive knowledge, great experience, and the capability of forming a sound opinion on the subject after long and careful training. Looking at the two editions of the Solesmes Graduale and the latest arrangement of the Liber usualis, one is inclined to think that more reserve in this respect would have to be maintained elsewhere. Yet in Solesmes they were more than forty years at the work and during the last ten years more especially they had the aid of a sufficient number of trained men. Besides, these monks became thoroughly conversant with their chant by daily practice and they were in possession of the most valuable material for their studies. Would it be desired to ignore all this and once more begin everything afresh? That would mean increasing the burden needlessly without attaining anything of value. The apprenticeship which had to be served in Solesmes despite the most favourable circumstances could most assuredly not be dispensed with in the case of a new beginning. If the whole burden of a plain chant edition were borne everywhere by each individual, anything really good could not be expected, much less anything better than that which Solesmes has already provided. Add to this the excitement and haste there must inevitably be in all cases of competition, the limited local and national material with which the editors must needs be content, and it will be clearly seen that the Vatican edition by taking advantage of the work already done

will give better results than would be possible with these separate editions. Though in other circumstances open competition in the field of Gregorian research would no doubt have been desirable, now, the object being to meet the wishes of the Holy Father as soon as possible, it would have led to difficulties. Our choirs and publishers, to say nothing of the reform and the ancient chant, would probably long have had a painful experience of the results. We certainly do not want to rob anyone of his rights, but it is perfectly clear that an associated work which takes full advantage of the results of researches hitherto carried out and completes them, best secures for us a well-considered work, a really solid work, a comprehensive work. Thus it will comply most perfectly with the directions contained in the *Motu proprio* because it can reproduce the Gregorian chant in its purest form. Though each national or local tradition compared with some other tradition may present many advantages, on the other hand each has its defects which can only be ascertained by comparison with other traditions, and no local tradition can have the same force as the complete tradition. Finally, we must not omit to mention that an associated work, based on results already obtained, means the cheapest work. For not that which has cost the least is cheapest, but that which requires the least outlay as compared with its true value. The Solesmes fathers placed their MSS. at the disposal of the Holy Father, foregoing any compensation whatever. If each diocese or publisher, in addition to the cost of producing the book, has to give the editor a suitable fee, a good deal of money is spent that must be made up by the purchaser.

But with an associated work do we not sacrifice really justifiable peculiarities in our melodies? In a certain sense, yes. This loss, however, is counterbalanced by what we receive from others, and by the fact that we ally ourselves more

closely to the complete tradition. Besides, there is not the slightest objection to the adoption, in an appendix or otherwise, of melodies which are only found in German or English MSS., etc. For example, space might be found for several masses not contained in the Solesmes books. What we have to sacrifice concerns perhaps certain typical methods of the notation and various turns of the melody. Of these latter in the German MSS., e. g., Professor Peter Wagner rightly says on p. IV. of his publication entitled: "Kyriale sive Ordinarium Missæ cum cantu gregoriano, quem ex vetustissimis codicibus manuscriptis cisalpinis collegit et hodierno usui accommodavit",*) that they are no detriment to the universal plain chant tradition; that is to say, in other words, they are quite unimportant. On the other hand, a comparison between this new Kyriale and the Solesmes edition shows unmistakably the advantages of the latter. In general the rhythm of the varying passages in the Solesmes Ordinarium is easier and more natural. It also appears to us that the melodic form in the variants in Wagner's Kyriale has gained nothing. From another point of view it may be asked why only codices cisalpini were used as the basis of the new Kyriale, whilst, e. g., the British Museum in London possesses at least eight MSS. of German origin. Or have these also been utilised? Then the different methods of showing the same figures in the notation do not assist the singer to read the notes, and a modern edition should certainly quietly ignore the usages of the ancients in this respect. What is gained by giving the porrectus in these four forms?



We certainly do not consider that this is particularly disadvantageous. But for the sake of many singers who must first accustom themselves to the melodies and their

*) Published by the firm styled "Styria", Graz.

notation, one logically correct form is to be preferred. Then one misses in this book a clear indication of the position of the accents, especially the secondary accents, and what is said in the short preface in regard to this matter does not suffice. Further difficulties beset the singer who wishes to observe the *mora vocis*. We frankly own that in this respect the earlier Solesmes editions left much to be desired as regards clearness and consistency. But it is precisely such defects as these that are not eliminated so long as all the work is done over again. Examine in Wagner's Kyriale the first *Ite missa est* on pp. 13, 17 and 54, or the first and third *Sanctus* p. 12, and the first and third Intonation of the *Agnus Dei* pp. 12 and 13; the formula over nobis p. 17 line 1 (5 + 5 + 1 notes) with the parallel passage p. 17 line 3 (5 + 3 + 2 + 1 notes). In other places, owing to the varying width of the space between the note-groups, it remains doubtful whether the editor really desired a *mora* or not. He seems to have felt this uncertainty himself when he wrote on p. VIII: *De his omnibus rebus utile erit, transcriptionem in notas musicas modernas hujus libelli consulere.* But what singer will buy a Kyriale when he finds he must purchase a second book as a key to the first? Even a choirmaster would scarcely do so. Finally, Professor Wagner's Kyriale is not so rich in melodies as that of the Solesmes fathers.

An idea of the contents of the Wagner and of the Solesmes Kyriale can be best given by means of the following table:

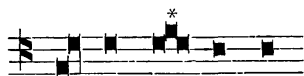
	W.	S.
Kyrie	13	18
Gloria	10	15
Sanctus	12	15
Benedictus	12	15
Agnus	12	16
Credo	5	5

Among the melodies which are wanting in Wagner's book there are many veritable pearls. Shall we renounce such melodies merely because they are not contained in the MSS. made use of by this or that editor? Allowing that the origin of many of the melodies in the Solesmes Ordinarium is distinctly French, this circumstance, or the fact that these chants were formerly less used in Germany or not at all, should not be a hindrance to their acceptance by us. By accepting them we enrich our own stock of melodies with really valuable chants, and this must always decide the matter for a practical book. The contents must be as valuable as they can be with due regard to the purpose for which the book is intended.

Meanwhile, the friendly reader should not imagine that Wagner's Kyriale is a bad little book. Still it does not provide the best that can be obtained nowadays, and we are bound to strive for the best all the more because nothing is excused in the Medicean of blessed memory, and it has been mercilessly condemned. Since an edition prepared on a comprehensive basis can provide something better, the book written by the learned and esteemed Amédée Gastouée, "Les principaux chants liturgiques"*) cannot be altogether satisfactory despite its acknowledged advantages.

The divergences mentioned by Professor Wagner in the preface to his Kyriale are also found in Gerntan early printed books.

Thus, e. g., we read in these early printed books:



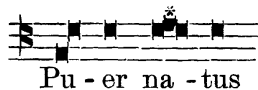
Compare Kilchen's Graduale fol.

9 v. Prüss fol. 8 r. Wolff fol. 16 v.

Pu - er na - tus est, Alopecius fol. 15. v.,

whilst others form the torculus with the second and therefore the same as the version preferred by Solesmes.

*) Published by Poussiégué, Paris, 1903.

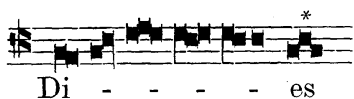


Compare Ratdolt fol. 2. v.

Pforzheim fol. 9 v.

The latter version also shows, by the way, the manuscript *Plenarium* from a German Franciscan monastery (see pp. XIII—XIV.) in the possession of Beuron Abbey, and it is not the only German MS. which follows this reading.

Similarly the early printed books, like a number of German MSS., show the ♯. of the Christmas Alleluja thus,



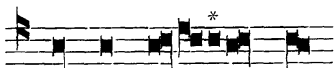
Compare Kilchen fol. 10 r.,

Ratdolt fol. 3. r., Prüss fol. 8 v.,

Pforzheim fol. 15 r., and so on.

Therefore they again use the third for the torculus on the last syllable, whilst the Solesmes edition, with which the Beuron *Plenarium* agrees, makes use of the second.

Exactly the same variant is met with in the Tract melody in the 8th tone. Compare, for example,



in Kilchen fol. 43 v., Ratdolt in

his office-book for Augsburg 1491

f. 25 a. It is the same also in

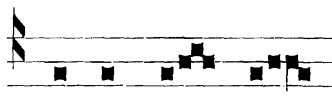
Prüss fol. 37 v., Wolff fol. 68 r.,

Alopecius fol. 91 r., whereas the

MS. already mentioned and the

Solesmes books shew this phrase

in all cases as follows:



Si-cut cer - vus.

In lieu of the semitone the German tradition prefers the third in cases like the following:

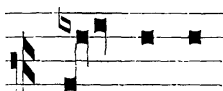


Compare Kilchen fol. 94 v., Ratdolt fol. 77 v.,

Prüss fol. 104 r., Pforzheim fol. 139 v., Wolff

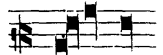
fol. 148 v., Alopecius fol. 152 r., whereas the

Solesmes books (and with them the German MS. referred to) have

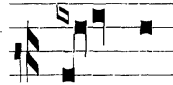


Stá - tu - it

Such cases are typical and they occur very frequently in the same form. They are therefore adhered to with a certain amount of consistency. Nevertheless the German tradition here also reveals exceptions in MSS. and printed books; and even if it invariably appeared in the versions indicated by Wagner as the German mode, the Italian and French method of notation is generally superior to the German from a musical point of view, and has been proved to be more ancient. Other phrases may be of equal musical value in both forms. Thus the figure



can be rendered in a very lively way, but it requires perhaps more force and compass of voice, especially in high parts as in the Gloria for the Easter mass. In the Solesmes books we seldom meet with this form; as examples see the Sanctus in Mass No. 2, the Ψ . Justus (Alleluja Com. Doct.), the Offertorium "Stetit Angelus" and "Justorum". The effect is excellent. However, the phrase used in lieu thereof



enables one to dispense with the other quite easily.

It will be seen therefore from what has been said that we are in no way called upon to make a great sacrifice of national history and art, and we can more readily venture to give up something since an edition on a comprehensive basis offers many advantages as a substitute, and reasonable wishes can always be complied with by means of additions.

3. Are not the ancient Melodies too difficult for our Choirs?

The ancient plain chant has melodies, some of which are more difficult, some easier than those in the Medicean version, whilst others are as easy or as difficult as those

in the said version. Where there is a moderately good choir efficiency can always be secured by means of careful training. It can be proved that in the middle ages and in the 16th century the ancient melodies were sung in village churches. The Graduals of Ratdolt, Prüss, Pforzheim and others were intended for ordinary parochial choirs; yet they contain the unabbreviated chant. Now consider: such a large number of well organised church choirs as now exist in Germany are to be found nowhere else. We have therefore made a good step in advance of others, and circumstances are more favourable than they were at the close of the middle ages. The chief thing for us to do will be to increase the number of teachers. If the choirmaster is a good plain chant chorister satisfactory progress will be made. But if he only understands it slightly or not at all, then even the abbreviated chant will be badly sung. No choir is bound to attempt anything beyond its capacity. What cannot be sung or properly recited must simply be omitted until matters can be improved. Even the Medicean required to be studied and practised. Therefore you must take the same trouble with the new book. But the main thing is, the efficient training of those who lead the choirs. Practical instruction, with just so much theory as is absolutely necessary, suffices. The object is by this means more quickly attained than by learned and elaborate explanations concerning the history and theory of the chant. May our Church Music Schools in particular take the matter in hand energetically. But in these places many changes will have to be made in order to carry out the new system in a satisfactory manner. It may happen that candidates for the degree of doctor of music are able to prepare a capital paper on plain chant and yet are unable to answer the most ordinary questions relative to the execution of the chant. For the object in view it would moreover be very desirable to have practical

courses of instruction lasting for a fortnight. Publishers, too, could facilitate the work by issuing editions of the chant in modern notation, with suitable organ accompaniments.

A short time ago I had an opportunity of hearing plain chant in five German cathedrals. In all of them the reformed books were in use, but the impression I received varied considerably. In A and B it was very poor; in C excellent; in D dignified and beautiful; in E dignified and very beautiful.

If in all these cathedrals the ancient "unimproved" melodies had been sung the effect would no doubt have been still more beautiful. But why was there so great a difference in the effect produced by the chant considering that circumstances were nearly equally favourable? Because of the different degrees of interest in the chant on the part of the choirmasters. And why were there different degrees of interest? Presumably because the comprehension of important points was different. Hence, if it be desired to produce a good effect with the ancient chant a choirmaster must first be thoroughly instructed therein. Unless this be done people will be discouraged by futile efforts, and the whole thing will be made more difficult.

The worst foes of the ancient chant are the prejudices against it. Most people form their opinion without any knowledge of the chant. Now is the time to rectify the numerous mistakes that are continually made. The German plain chant choristers have been accused of being inferior, but perhaps this complaint is an exaggerated one. Still, it is perfectly true that the majority of them are, so far, not up to the mark as regards the ancient chant. Each one must endeavour in future to perfect himself therein. A few set phrases and incorrect information ought no longer to lead people astray. Who knows but what the greater number of those who to-day

do not believe in the ancient melodies will after conscientious study openly acknowledge that *quia vetus melius est?* This is indeed true as regards the ancient chant. Old, well-matured wine is better than new wine which has not had time to come to maturity. Nevertheless, in many other things our sympathies are rightly with the new and the future.

4. What ought to be done in the near Future?

The Holy Father does not desire that only plain chant shall in future be sung. But he desires the introduction of the ancient chant and indeed he has commanded it in plain words. He has, however, not insisted upon any sudden change. Still he expects us Germans to remain true to our vocation as choristers and to comply obediently with his wishes or commands.

When the Vatican edition will appear is not known. According to various well-informed papers, we shall not have long to wait. Until then keep to the books hitherto in use, unless otherwise directed by the bishop of the diocese. Meanwhile, the choirmaster should if possible make himself acquainted with the ancient chant. Until at least the chief difficulties are surmounted the use of the old melodies during divine worship is undesirable; the beautiful chants would be spoilt, the choir would get accustomed to the unsatisfactory performance, and all sorts of defects would never be remedied. Work undertaken after careful consideration and carried on quietly, always with due regard to the forces available, will best secure good results.

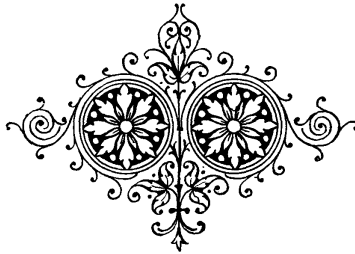
But have we then laboured in vain for thirty years? No, my dear reader; it is not in vain that so many sacrifices have been made for God's sake. Your labours have also been of advantage to church music. But now the Holy Father considers that still better results can be obtained with the ancient melodies and that should not

make you feel disheartened. On the contrary, he who till now has meant well will be glad to comply with the Holy Father's wishes and do his best.

Who will print the book? Any publisher who fulfils the conditions laid down in Rome.

The Firm of **Frederick Pustet**, of Ratisbon and Rome, has done so, and will be among the first publishers in a position to supply complete editions of Rome's new plain chant books, as well as extracts therefrom, agreeing exactly with them and therefore likewise approved by the supreme authority.

Thus, dear reader, you may be confident about the future. Let each one do what he can, and then he may safely leave the rest to God.



**Details of the Original Sources indicated by Letters
in Examples pp. 8—39.**

- T.** = Fragment of a Graduale (1480?) of South German origin now in the possession of the Royal University of Tübingen.
- C.** = Antiphonarium Constantiense 1488.
- K.** = Graduale Basileense printed by Kilchen 1488.
- O.** = Missale Olomucense 1488.
- M.** = Missale Moguntinum 1489.
- MA.** = Missale Augustanum 1491.
- MS.¹** = Salzburg Missale 1492.
- R.** = Graduale Augustanum printed by Ratdolt at Augsburg 1494 and 1498.
- H.** = Missale Herbipolense 1497.
- P.** = Strassburg Graduale 1501.
- MS.²** = Salzburg Missale 1505.
- MR.** = Missale Ratisbonense 1510.
- MS.³** = Salzburg Missale 1510.
- Pz.** = Graduale Augustanum printed by Pforzheim 1511.
- W.** = Graduale speciale printed at Basle in 1521 by Wolff.
- A.** = Graduale for the diocese of Münster printed by Alopecius 1536.
- S.** = Liber usualis, Solesmes 1903.



Sederunt principes et adversum
 me loquebantur et iniqui persecuti sunt
 me **A**diuva me domine
 de us
 me us saluum me fac propter
 misericordiam tuam
Alleluia. **Q**ui
 de o celos aper tos

Specimen of type and melodies from Kilchen's Graduale Basileense 1488.

H uic oportet vt canamus cū angelis semp gloria in
 excelsis to. **D**fer. **E**t entur ce li et exul tet
 ter ra antefa ciem do mini quo
 ni a ve nit Cōm. **I**n splendorib⁹ sanctorū
 ex vtero anteluci ferum genu i te **I**ntritus
Der nat⁹ est nobis et filius datus est
 no bis cui⁹ impe riū sup humerum
 ei⁹ us et vocabitur nomē ei⁹ us magni consili
 an gelus p̄s **C**antate dño canticū novum quia

Specimen of type and melodies from Ratdolt's Graduale Augustanum 1494.

Dñica. VII. post octavas pentē.

O nes gen tes. fol. lxx

Q uia ni te fi li j audi te me timorem
 dōmini do cebo vos. **A** ccedi
 te ad e um
 et illuminamini et facies vestre non con
 fundētur. **A** z lelu ia
 gn^o do mi nus et lau dabilis val de in ciui
 tate. Offer. **S**icut in holocau sto art e

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Specimen of type and melodies from Pforzheim's Graduale Augustanum 1511.