Some Observations on the
"Germanic" Plainchant Tradition*

By Alexander Blachly

Anyone examining the various notational systems according to which medieval scribes committed the plainchant repertory to written form must be impressed both by the obvious relatedness of the systems and by their differences. There are three main categories: the neumatic notations from the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries (written without a staff and incapable, therefore, of indicating precise pitches);1 the quadratic notation in use in Italy, Spain, France, and England—the "Romanic" lands—from the twelfth century on (this is the "traditional" plainchant notation, written usually on a four-line staff and found also in most twentieth-century printed books, e.g., Liber usualis, Antiphonale monasticum, Graduale Romanum); and the several types of Germanic notation that use a staff but retain many of the features of their neumatic ancestors. The second and third categories descended from the first.

The staffless neumatic notations that transmit the Gregorian repertory in ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-century sources, though unlike one another in some important respects, have long been recognized as transmitting the same corpus of melodies. Indeed, the high degree of concordance between manuscripts that are widely separated by time and place is one of the most remarkable aspects the plainchant tradition. As the oldest method of notating chant we know,2 neumatic notation compels detailed study; and the degree to which the neumatic manuscripts agree not only

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1 According to John A. Emerson, there are some "12 to 15 notational families [of plainchant]...each corresponding to a local geographical zone in Europe" ("Plainchant," New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians [1980] 14:807). There are also several distinct families of chant itself, including, among others, the Byzantine, the Mozarabic, the Gallic, the Ambrosian, the Old Roman, and the Gregorian. Only the last-named is considered in the present study (the term Gregorian is used here to distinguish from all other types the repertory that dominated northern Europe from the time of Charlemagne, much of which is believed to date back to before the eighth century).

2 The earliest known notated sources of the Gregorian repertory date from ca. 900; but in a recent essay, "Charlemagne's Archetype of Gregorian Chant," Journal of the American Musicological Society 40 (1987): 1-30, Kenneth Levy proposed that from indirect evidence within the early service books it can be established that chant was notated at least as early as ca. 800, despite the lack of any surviving notation until a century later.
with each other but also with the staff-notated twelfth-, thirteenth-, and fourteenth-century manuscripts makes it clear that all of these sources contain versions of the same melodies. In order to determine the pitches of the melodies from the earliest notation, scholars during the past hundred years have referred to later sources where the pitches can be read (e.g., the eleventh-century “alphabetic” manuscripts and the twelfth-, thirteenth-, and fourteenth-century staff-notated manuscripts). Thus, the apparent uniformity of the repertory suggests that we can recover music from ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-century sources that would otherwise remain indecipherable, thereby extending back in time by several centuries the earliest performable liturgical melodies.

While the relative uniformity of the chant tradition is undeniable and is undeniably impressive, there are several subsets within it that deserve independent recognition. One of these is the English “Sarum” rite, frequently identical to the chant transmitted in Romanic sources from France, Spain, and Italy, but also independent of these sources in many details. Another subset forms the subject of the present study, a branch of the plainchant tradition that Peter Wagner in 1925 termed a “Germanic dialect” of the Gregorian repertory. Here the differences from the Romanic books are both more pervasive and more systematic. In contrast, however, to the extensive research on and discussion of Romanic chant, including the Sarum rite, writings on the Germanic tradition as such have been comparatively meager, even in German-speaking lands. To date, there has been virtually nothing written about Germanic chant in English.

3 Alphabetic sources notate the melodies letter (note) by letter (note). The most famous example is Montpellier, Bibliothèque de Médecine, H 159, dually notated with letters and neumes. See Antiphonium tonale missarum Xl<sup>e</sup> siècle: Codex H. 159 de la Bibliothèque de l'École de Médecine de Montpellier, Paléographie musicale, vols. 7–8 (Tournai: Desclée, Lefebvre & Cie, 1901–5). This manuscript is transcribed in its entirety, with thorough discussion of its notation, provenance, and function in Finn Egeland Hansen, H 159 Montpellier: Tonary of St Bénigne of Dijon (Copenhagen: Dan Fog Musikforlag, 1974). A similar source is Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. 577, an eleventh-century tonary from Sens. See Bruno Stäblein, ed., Schriftbild der einstimmigen Musik, Musikgeschichte in Bildern, vol. III/4 (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1975), 219, where a portion of fol. 62 is reproduced.

The Germanic tradition of plainchant is widespread, dominating chant books throughout German-speaking lands in the later Middle Ages. It is encountered not only in hundreds—possibly thousands—of manuscript and printed graduals and antiphonaries, but also in music treatises from German-speaking areas (e.g., Lampadius, Spangenberg, Vogelsang, Glareanus, Cretz, Zanger) and in chant-based polyphonic collections from these same regions (e.g., Heinrich Isaac’s Choralis constantinus and the Nicolaus Apel Codex). Moreover, its characteristic “variants” from the

Anglés dismisses the very notion of a Germanic dialect: “It is not accurate to speak of Gregorian ‘dialects,’ for the varieties that may be found are utterly insignificant. An attempt was made in this direction by Peter Wagner in his theory of German Gregorian dialect, in spite of the fact that the few manuscripts which suggested the idea belonged to a rather late period.” Gustave Reese, in Music in the Middle Ages (New York: Norton, 1940), 122, recognized “the so-called German chant-dialect” in one sentence and one footnote, but attributed no great significance to its existence. To date, the most extensive account of the German dialect in English consists of one brief paragraph by Franz Tack in Gregorian Chant, trans. Evereth Helm, Anthology of Music, vol. 18 (Cologne: Arno Volk Verlag, 1960), 11. Even in the German literature there is not the sort of coverage one might expect: Bruno Stäblein’s article “Choral” in Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart 2 (1952): 1265–1303, for example, is virtually silent on Germanic chant, but it does make reference to another article by the same author, “Der röm. Choral im Norden,” found in the same encyclopedia under “Deutschland,” section B, “Mittelalter” (3 [1954]: 272–86). This article is an important contribution, but treats its subject as a local phenomenon without relevance to the plainchant tradition as a whole. Maria Elisabeth Heisler’s “Studien zum ostfränkischen Choraldialekt” (Ph.D. thesis, Frankfurt, 1987) came to my attention in the American Musicological Society/International Musicological Society’s Dissertations in Musicology December 1988–November 1989, ed. Cecil Adkins and Alis Dickinson (n.p.: American Musicological Society, 1990) after the present article went to press, too late to be considered here.

Examples from three different German chant manuscripts are given as figures 1, 2, and 3. For examples from printed German chant sources, see P. Raphael Molitor, Deutscher Choral-Wiegendruck: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Chorals und des Notendruckes in Deutschland (Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1904); Franz Tack, ed., Das gregorianische Choral, Das Musikwerk, vol. 18 (Cologne: Arno Volk Verlag, 1960); and Christian Vaterlein, ed., Graduale Pataviense (Wien 1511) Faksimile, Das Erbe deutscher Musik, vol. 87 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1982).

Compendium musices, tam figurati quam plani cantus, ab auctore Lampadio Luneburgensi elaborata...Bernaes Helveti MDXXXVII (see fol. Bi’); Questions musicae...Johan. Span[genberg]...Viehegrae Anno MDXLI (see fol. Dvij’); Musicae rudimenta...per Johan. Vogelsangum Lindauisen...MDXLII (see fols. Dvij, Djii’, and Dijii’); Glareani Dodecachordum...Basileae 1547 (see pp. 144–45); Compendiosa introductio in choralem musicam...Ioannem Cretz...Venetum MDLIII (see fol. Dijii); Practicae musicae praecipu...Ioannem Zangerum Oenipontanum...Lipsiae Anno 1554 (see fol. Giiij).

Romanic tradition, as well as its distinctive styles of notation, are also to be found much further afield, in chant books from the entire eastern-European region and from Scandinavia.8

The only extensive accounts of the characteristics and chronology of the Germanic tradition—all written by a single scholar, Peter Wagner—appeared in print in 19269 and 1930–32.10 Wagner's first description and discussion date back to the second edition of his Neumenkunde (1912),11 where he published photo reproductions of pages from the twelfth-century gradual-sequentiary Graz 807 (one of the earliest sources identifiably transmitting the Germanic dialect) and from manuscripts from Trier, Bamberg, and Karlsruhe. Speaking before the Musicological Congress of the German Music Society in June, 1925, Wagner first elevated the notion of a German tradition of chant transmission to the concept of an independent Germanic dialect of the chant melodies.12 He lamented that the musical phenomena involved, "like so many of my publications devoted...."
to Gregorian chant, have been ignored," but he was pleased to note the recent publication of his student Erik Abrahamsen's doctoral thesis, which recognized Germanic elements in Danish chant books. In the years since Wagner's own groundbreaking publications on this subject, there have been only minor follow-up articles. Dom Jacques Froger's 1973 introduction to the facsimile edition of Graz 807 in *Paléographie musicale*, an impressively thorough investigation of the source itself and of everything written about it, has attempted to summarize and consolidate research to date.

13 "Die musikalischen Dinge...wurden aber, wie so manches andere in meinen der gregorianischen Musik gewidmeten Veröffentlichungen, nicht beachtet" (ibid., 23). Wagner was no doubt thinking of his continuing disagreements with the Benedictines of Solesmes, whose fundamental premise was that the "best" and "purest" version of the chant was necessarily the earliest. In contrast, Wagner and other "traditionalists" maintained that the tradition as a whole was worthy of study, later as well as earlier sources.


German Notations

The most unusual and distinctive of the German notation types is known as *Hufnagelschrift* (hobnail notation) because of the shape of the virga: †. It evolved directly from the St. Gall neumes. This heavy, bulky script (also known as "gothic" notation) is well illustrated by the fourteenth-century Moosburg gradual (Munich, Universitätsbibliothek 20-156; see figure 1). A second branch of the German line of notations comes directly from the so-called German neumes, which bear many similarities to the St. Gall type. A third category of neumatic notation, adapted, like the other two, to the staff, is known as "Messine," because the neumes are derived from the notation found in manuscripts from Metz (see figures 2 and 3). More recently, Solange Corbin has recommended that the Messine script style be termed "Lorraine notation," since "paleographers now know that there was no early scriptorium in Metz. Besides, this notation was in use in the whole of medieval Lorraine" (central eastern France). Though not by any means identical in appearance to one another, or even derived from the same families of neumatic notation, the various types of German staff neumes have in common a close resemblance to their prestaff models, unlike quadratic notation, which constitutes a break or jump in notational evolution. More importantly, all types of Germanic staff notation are used to preserve the Germanic dialect of pitches (only rarely the Romanic versions), whereas square notation is used almost exclusively for the Romanic dialect.

From the twelfth century on, when the obvious advantages of Guido d'Arezzo's four-line staff had prompted most scribes throughout Europe (including those in German-speaking lands) to begin using it, German notators nevertheless refused to adopt the square notation of their neighbors to the west. Instead, they independently modified neumatic nota-

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17 An example from a thirteenth-century plenary missal from the Abbey of Stavelot with German neumes on a four-line staff is reproduced in Le Répons-Graduel Justus ut palma reproduit en fac-simile d'après plus de deux cents antiphonaires manuscrits d'origines diverses du IXe au XVIIe siècle, Paléographie musicale, vol. 3 (Solesmes: Abbeye Saint-Pierre, 1892), pl. 131.

18 Fine examples are preserved in the early fourteenth-century Thomaskirche gradual (figure 2) and in the twelfth-century Graz 807 (figure 3). Figure 4, showing fol. 10v of Laon 239, provides an example of tenth-century (prestaff) Messine notation.

19 Solange Corbin, "Neumatic notations," 137.

20 An example is London, British Library, MS Additional 27921, a gradual of German provenance from the thirteenth century, notated in German neumes but transmitting the Romanic dialect. See Paléographie musicale, vol. 3, pl. 136 (see note 17).

21 The spread of square notation seems to be connected with the Franciscans, who used it in their gradual of 1251 and prescribed its use by Franciscan scribes thereafter. See Mary Berry, "Franciscan Friars," *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980) 6:776–77.
Figure 1. Munich, Universitätsbibliothek Zutvöllg 2°156 ("Moosburg" gradual, ca. 1350), fol. 95v, showing the end of the Mass for Ascension and the beginning of the Mass for the Sunday after Ascension.
Figure 2. Leipzig, Karl-Marx-Universitätspiothek, MS St. Thomas 391 (Thomaskirche gradual, ca. 1300; formerly Codex 371 of the St. Thomas Archives, Leipzig), fol. 1, showing the opening of the Mass for Advent I.
Figure 3. Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, MS 807 (ca. 1150), fol. 127v, showing the opening of the Mass for Pentecost.
tion, adapting it to the new task of representing specific pitches on the staff, but without in the process losing many ornamental note shapes that disappeared with square notation. (The exact nature of the ornaments the ornamental neumes indicate remains unknown.)

We can only speculate on the reasons for the German retention of the older notational style. Perhaps certain archaic performance practices lived on in the German churches. Mensural or "proportional" renditions, or renditions that included characteristic ornamental notes might have been preserved or clarified by the modified neumatic notation—but no accounts of such practices from medieval Germany are known. It is equally possible that the retention of neumatic shapes simply reflects a deep-seated conservatism on the part of the German singers: in other aspects, as well, German notation is conservative. The staves of the Thomaskirche gradual, for example, still retain the practice of coloring the F line red and the C line yellow, as recommended by Guido in his *Aliae regulae* of ca. 1025. (As a careful reading of John A. Emerson's survey of early chant manuscripts reveals, Romanic sources from the thirteenth century on had mostly abandoned red F lines and yellow C lines.)

The Thomaskirche scribe, though writing in the last years of the thirteenth century or the very beginning of the fourteenth, adheres to Guido's rule with remarkable persistence, to the point of drawing a red line within a *space* when he uses a C clef on the third line of the staff or when he uses a G clef on the top line, or drawing a yellow line within a space when he uses an F clef on the second line of the staff. Colored lines in spaces are found in other German sources as well. Moreover, the Leipzig scribe retains the use of eight Latin and Greek vowels—a, e, i, o, u, Η, ι, and omegawhite in the margin of the manuscript the mode of each chant, as well as the use of Latin consonants to indicate the *differentiae*—a system recommended by John Cotton in his *De musica* of ca. 1100. As with most other aspects of

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23 For an example, see figure 2, first line.
24 For an example, see the *Gloria in excelsis deo* on fol. CXVIII. Wagner, *Einführung in das Gesangbuch*, vol. 2, pl. 238.
26 E.g., Trèves, Bibliothèque de M. Bohn, gradual in 4° (thirteenth century); photographic copy of p. 282 in Paléographie musicale vol. 3, pl. 132.
27 "One should also know that by some the *phthongi*—that is, the tones—are designated by vowels, and the *differentiae* of the tones—which some wrongly call *disfiniones* [differing endings]—by consonants, in this way: a denotes the first tone, e the second, i the third, o the fourth, u the fifth, Greek Η the sixth, y the seventh, and omegawhite the eighth. And b
German music before the fifteenth century—e.g., the apparent lack of enthusiasm for polyphony in the German churches—the chant documents show a strong inclination to preserve tradition and to resist changes to it.

**Melodic Characteristics of the Germanic Dialect**

Within the melodies themselves, as Wagner clearly showed, the Germanic sources feature numerous minor thirds in places where the Romanic manuscripts show a minor or major second. These minor thirds constitute the majority of the differences found between the Romanic and the Germanic traditions, and, though schematically they effect no major alteration in melodic shape and rarely are involved in questions of mode, they do produce a profound difference in the **quality** of the melodies. Wagner characterized the Germanic versions as "more resolute" and "masculine," the Romanic as "softer" and "feminine." Normally the notes in question are c–a (Germanic) instead of B–A or B♭–A (Romanic), or F–D (Germanic) instead of E–D (Romanic), most often when such notes occur at the peak or the close of a phrase; sometimes the Germanic variants are also found at a phrase beginning (example 1 on following pages).

The preference for the minor third in such places is not the result of a German propensity to shun the notes B, E, or A altogether; quite the contrary, the Germanic tradition uses B, E, and A as integral elements of the scale in every mode. It appears, rather, that the German sensibility favored a stronger emphasis on fa in the hexachord, especially in those passages where the Romanic tradition places mi at the peak of a turn of melody or in an exposed—usually cadential—descent into re (example 2 on page 99).

The Germanic variants are not rare, isolated phenomena, but are to be found in virtually every chant melody; indeed, a melody from a German chant book that does not contain at least one Germanic variant is highly unusual. Wagner cited the Communion for the first Mass of Christmas, *In splendoribus*, as a rare and exceptional piece for which there is no difference between the Germanic and the Romanic transmission. Interestingly, this is the very piece that Gustave Reese mentions as an example of pentatonicism in the Gregorian repertory, and, in fact, it has several

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indicates the first *differentia* of any tone, c the second, d the third, g the fourth, and so on, with the mute consonants in alphabetical order" (*Hucbald, Guido, and John on Music: Three Medieval Treatises*, trans. Warren Babb and ed., with introductions, by Claude V. Palisca [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978], 121).

28 Wagner, *Einführung in das Gesangbuch*, 2:LII.
29 Ibid., 2:XLV.
Example 1.

1a. Engelberg, Stiftsbibliothek Codex 314, fol. 18 (14th cent., Hufnagelschrift) Montpellier, H 159, fol. 13

\[ Gau-de-a-mus o-mnes \]

\[ Introit, Assumption of Mary \]

1b. New York, J. Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. 905 (Nurenburg, 1507, Hufnagelschrift)

\[ Pa-ter, cum es-sem cum e-is \]

Montpellier, H 159, fol. 33

\[ Pa-ter, cum es-sem cum e-is \]

\[ Communion, Sunday within the Octave of Ascension \]

1c. Trier, Cathedral Library (1435, Hufnagelschrift) [= PM vol. 3, pl. 146]

\[ Iu-stus ut pal-ma flo-re-bit sic-ut ce- \]

Rome, Dominican Library (1254) [= PM 1st ser., III, pl. 200]

\[ Iu-stus ut pal-ma flo-re-bit sic-ut ce- \]

\[ Gradual, Mass of a Confessor not a Bishop \]

Trier (continued)

\[ drus ly-ba-ni \]

Rome (continued)

\[ drus ly-ba-ni \]
Example 1. Continued.

1d. Graz 807, fol. 24v
(12th cent., Messine neumes)

Montpellier, H 159, fol. 21

Introit, Epiphany

1e. Rome, Bibl. Angelica T. 8.8. (German gradual, 14th cent., Hufnagelschrift) [=PM vol. 3, pl. 140b]

Gradual, St. Barnabas

1f. London, British Library Add. 24687
(German gradual, 15th cent., Hufnagelschrift) [= PM vol. 3, pl. 145]

Gradual, Mass of a Confessor

1g. Aachen, Münsterschatz 35 (Index of Mass chants, 15th cent., Hufnagelschrift) [= Adler, Handbuch der Musikgeschichte, 106]

Gradual, First Sunday of Advent
Example 1. Continued.

1h. Prague, Mus. Nat. Boh. Codex XIII.B, 17 Montpellier, H 159, fol. 113v (Messine neumes, 13th Cent.?)

[= Josephus Hutter, Notationis bohemiae antiquae (Prague 1931) p. vii]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{... in iu-di-ci-o} \\
\text{Offertory, Easter Sunday}
\end{array}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Hec di-es} \\
\text{Gradual, Easter Sunday}
\end{array}
\end{array}
\]

characteristically Germanic turns of melody.\(^{30}\) It would appear that there may indeed be some connection between pentatonicism within the Gregorian repertory and the Germanic tradition, as Riemann proposed,\(^{31}\) but an investigation of this issue lies beyond the scope of the present study.

In a remarkably comprehensive set of tables,\(^{32}\) Wagner demonstrated that the Germanic variants are by and large concentrated in German sources and that, therefore, these sources transmit a Germanic dialect that is distinct from the “Romanic dialect” of the Italian, French, Spanish, and English sources. Occasionally the Romanic tradition appears to favor the Germanic preference for the fa, with minor thirds that bypass E, B, or A (as in the Introit for the First Sunday of Advent on the words animam and inimici); in these same places, the Germanic tradition, surprisingly, may appear more Romanic, writing the very notes that it ordinarily circumvents (example 3). Moreover, not all the German sources show all the Germanic variants. This is a point that Wagner recognized but did not pursue. In fact, no two German sources seem to show exactly the same variants, but rather vary among themselves in the degree to which they manifest Germanic or Romanic elements (example 4, page 100).

\(^{30}\) Gustave Reese, Music in the Middle Ages, 160.

\(^{31}\) Hugo Riemann, Handbuch der Musikgeschichte, vol. 1, part 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1907), 62. This notion was rejected outright by Wagner, Einführung in das Gesangbuch, 2:XLVIII.

\(^{32}\) Wagner, Einführung in das Gesangbuch, 2:IX-XLIV.
Example 2.

2a. Moosburg gradual, fol. 11v
(14th cent., Hufnagelschrift)

\[
\text{(Di-)}\text{es\ sancti- fici- tus il- lu- xit (es)}\text{ sancti- fici- tus in- lu- xit}
\]

Alleluia, Christmas Day

2b. Thomaskirche gradual, fol. 148
(14th cent., Messine neumes)

\[
\text{(accende)}
\]

Alleluia, Pentecost

2c. Moosburg gradual, fol. 2v

\[
\text{Ad te do- mi- ne Ad te do- mi- ne}
\]

Offertory, First Sunday in Advent

2d. Codex Peter Bohn
(Trier, Stadtbibliothek 2254 [2197],
13th cent., Hufnagelschrift)

\[
\text{Statuit ... tes- ta- men- tum pa- cis Statu- it ... tes- ta- men- tum pa- cis,}
\]

Introit, Mass of a Confessor

Example 3.

3a. Thomaskirche, p. 2

\[
\text{a- ni- mam a- ni- mam}
\]

3b. Thomaskirche, p. 2

\[
\text{in- mi- ci me- i in- mi- ci me- i}
\]
Example 4.

4a. Thomaskirche gradual Moosburg gradual

Ver nit Ver nit

4b. Thomaskirche Moosburg

Can te Can te

Offertory, Christmas Midnight Mass

4c. Graz 807 Moosburg gradual

quid ad mi ra mini quid ad mi ra mini

4d. Thomaskirche gradual Moosburg gradual

al le l u ia al le l u ia

Introit, Ascension

Chronology of the Germanic Dialect

Throughout his writings on the Germanic tradition, Wagner makes the important assumption that the Germanic variants are a late occurrence in the evolution of the melodies. “The German chant books transmit the end-point in the line of development of medieval liturgical song: in them the tendencies at work from the beginning come to a standstill.” Indeed, the most pressing question engendered by the existence of the Germanic dialect is one of chronology. Most scholars to date have assumed that the Germanic dialect is a late development, evolving out of the older Romanic version of the melodies. It is possible, however, that the Germanic dialect preserves an older layer of chant that later became modified in the Romanic manuscripts when square notation superseded the neumatic, or even earlier. Perhaps both dialects have roots that predate the advent of notation. Uncertainty on this critical issue no doubt accounts in part for the hesitant treatment scholarship has accorded the Germanic tradition to date.

33 “Den Endpunkt der Entwicklungslinie der mittelalterlichen liturgischen Melodie liefern die germanischen Gesangbücher: in ihnen kommen die von Anfang an wirkenden Tendenzen zum Stillstand” (ibid., LXII).
Wagner was aware of the fact that Germanic variants are not wholly restricted to Germanic sources, but also appear, albeit sporadically, in the earliest Romanic manuscripts with staff notation. This led him to reject the notion that the Germanic variants represent “an artistic influence from without, from the north,” and to identify them rather as “a force already latent in the oldest version of the liturgical melodies.”

This force, according to Wagner, manifests itself in an evolutionary development, with the end of the line occurring in the Germanic tradition. Such an evolutionary theory has the advantage of accounting for all early appearances of the Germanic variants, even in Romanic sources, although it cannot by itself explain why the evolution should have continued to a later stage in the Germanic lands. To bridge this gap, Wagner posits in effect a happy coincidence: The evolving chant tradition presented the ancient singers with what amounted to a choice. The German singers, because of their native artistic inclinations, went the route of the Germanic dialect, whereas the singers in Romanic lands held tight to the earlier tradition:

The strongest and most comprehensive expression which “the way on high” of the Germanic variants achieved was in no way some inorganic appearance in the development of the old melodies but rather the fulfillment of an inherent Gregorian tendency. That the phenomenon which elsewhere appears only as a rough outline and unopened bud should here be more fully developed, could only be the result of a special, inborn disposition of the German musical sensibility. Its deepest cultural-historical expression and its legitimacy becomes manifest if one places it side by side with the German gothic.


35 “Der stärkste und umfassendste Ausdruck, den so der ‘Zug nach oben’ in den germanischen Varianten erreicht, war keine unorganische Erscheinung in der Entwicklung der alten Melodie, sondern nur die Erfüllung einer gemeingregorianischen Veranlagung. Daß aber, was anderswo nur als Anlage und Keimkraft erscheint, sich hier voller entfalten konnte, war nur möglich infolge einer besonderen, naturhaften Verfassung des
Most subsequent writers have accepted the notion that the Germanic tradition is a later “refashioning” of the Romanic version; and from this opinion it is but a small step to relegating the Germanic tradition to a lesser status. Froger’s attitude is typical:

The term “dialect” to designate the German version of the Gregorian melodies is improper, for it suggests that the German readings are authentic to the same degree as the Romanic readings. Sidler considers, with reason, that the Germanic “dialect” is an alteration; he mentions various theories and proposes his own (none is completely satisfactory) to explain its appearance. Federhofer points out that this “dialect,” according to recent views, is a refashioning (Umformung) of the Romanic version, effected in the high Middle Ages under the influence of western and eastern pentatonicism. ...

In justifying his assumption of the late evolution of the Germanic dialect, Wagner returned repeatedly to a single fact: that the practice of writing the dominant of the phrygian and hypomixolydian modes on C rather than B seems to have “achieved a systematic quality” in the German books, while it “emerges only exceptionally and in individual instances in the Romanic readings.” As he put it most emphatically in his discussion of mode 8 in the introduction to the facsimile edition of the Thomaskirche gradual, vol. 2:

germanischen Musikempfindens. Ihr tiefster, kulturgeschichtlicher Sinn und ihre Berechtigung offenbart sich sogleich, wenn man sie gegen die germanische Gotik in Parallele stellt” (ibid., LXIII).

36 Sidler, “Ein kostbarer Zeuge” (see note 15).
38 Froger, Le Manuscrit 807, 15* n. 4: “Le terme de ‘dialecte’ pour désigner la version germanique des mélodies grégoriennes est impropre, car il suggère que les leçons germaniques sont authentiques au même titre que les leçons romanes. Sidler considère avec raison que le ‘dialecte’ germanique est un altération; il mentionne diverses théories et propose la sienne (aucune n’est pleinement satisfaisante) pour expliquer son apparition. Federhofer, p. 103, signale que ce ‘dialecte’, selon des vues récentes, est une refonte (Umformung) de la version romane, effectuée dans le haut moyen âge sous l’influence du pentatonisme occidental et oriental, et cite à l’appui de cette théorie: Z. FALVY, Zur Frage von Differenzen der Psaltitöne, dans Studien zur Musikwissenschaft, vol. 25 (1962).”
39 “...die künstlerischen Strebungen, die schließlich in den germanischen Büchern zur systematischen Auswirkung gelangten, nur ausnahmsweise und vereinzelt in den romanischen Lesarten auftauchen” (Wagner, Einführung in das Gesangbuch, 1:IXn).
As is known, the archaic recitation tone in both the third and eighth modes was not c but b. Chant books from Montecassino, in proximity to Rome, show it still, for example, in the tract for Holy Saturday; our Italian source also, Cod. Vat. 6082, gives b as the recitation tone of the introit psalmody of mode 3, but c for mode 8. Here, accordingly, the first step in the migration to c has already been taken.

He saw this "migration" of the dominant in modes 3 and 8 as a "parallel phenomenon" to the pervasive appearance of Germanic variants in German books, as opposed to their merely occasional and individual appearance in the Romanic tradition. The notion of a later "migration" of the dominant is pursued further by Zoltán Falvy, whose study provides Froger with additional support for the idea of the "late" appearance of the Germanic tradition.

Froger was particularly impressed by the fact that Hugo Sidler had discovered several hundred cases in which the original neumes of Graz 807 had been corrected by a later hand, in each case the correction consisting of a change from the Romanic to the Germanic version:

The ideal would have been to publish Graz 807 in a double series of parallel photographs: on the left part of the pages images permitting the lower musical text of the palimpsest parts to be read, and opposite, on the right part of the pages, images realized by the normal photographic process, as in the present edition, where the upper text is seen. In this way one could make a systematic comparison between the "Romanic" version of the melody (doubtlessly that of the model of our gradual) and the "Germanized" version which is so to speak, superimposed on the same parchment leaves. Let us hope that this complementary publication can one day be realized.

Implicit in Froger's remarks is the notion that the Romanic version is thus demonstrated to be to the original and the Germanic version a refashioning that occurred after the initial copying of the manuscript. The corrections, however, can just as well be explained the other way around. We may easily imagine that the original scribe was not thoroughly familiar

40 Ibid., 2:LIX.
41 Ibid., 2:LII.
43 Froger, Le Manuscrit 807, 16*. 
with the Germanic dialect and, copying from a staffless neumatic source, interpreted it in the Romanic manner. The diligent corrections back to the Germanic dialect would then indicate the \textit{restoration} of a tradition that the monks of Klosterneuburg (the Augustinian community for which Graz 807 was prepared)\textsuperscript{44} were unwilling to relinquish. The evidence of the corrections, therefore, is inconclusive with regard to establishing the priority of the Romanic or the Germanic tradition.

An explanation of the evolution of the Germanic dialect that agrees in essence with Froger’s may be found in the final section of the Introduction to the facsimile edition of the Thomaskirche gradual, where Peter Wagner draws a parallel between the development of gothic architecture and that of gothic chant:

\begin{quote}
The gothic style of architecture was born in Romanic soil, but it found its peak of genius and final development of being in the German cathedrals and their pyramids of towers. Yet, long before the architectural wonders of the gothic cathedrals, German aspiration made its appearance in the musical monuments of German devotion, in the German chant books. There were only a few melodies in which [in their Romanic form] the German singer found his inclination toward characteristic melodic peaks satisfied; most of them he had to refashion himself.\textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}

That is, just as the gothic aesthetic originated in France but continued to develop and flower in Germany to a very late date, so also the plainchant tradition, likewise originating in the west, continued to develop and flower in Germany till a later time.

Despite Wagner’s and subsequent scholars’ agreement on the putative late development of the Germanic dialect, the notion of a “creative” and “progressive” German practice of refashioning the traditional melodies of the liturgy contradicts the known facts of the German attitude on this matter. For in every documentable aspect of the Germanic tradition—in the shapes of the written notes, in the preservation of archaic note types, in the use of pitch colors and modal indicators—the Germans did not show a progressive spirit at all, but rather the opposite: they \textit{resisted change}. As Wagner himself puts it very well:

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 32*: “En somme, Graz 807 présente dans son contenu liturgique quelques particularités qui désignent Klosterneuburg comme son lieu d’origine, et excluent Seckau.”
\textsuperscript{45} Wagner, \textit{Einführung in das Gesangbuch}, 2:LXIII.
The German chant books...surprise us up to the time of the first prints by their unbroken adherence to tradition; their musical notation is merely the organic end-product of the old neumatic notation, which scarcely differs from it in any essential way. The particular neume signs of strophicus, oriscus, salicus, pes quassus, and quilisma, which from the twelfth century on have as good as disappeared from the Romanic books to make place for more generalized notation, meet us still in the German printedgraduals of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This dependence on the outer appearance of the chant melodies is matched by the steadfastness of their cultivation.46

One problem with suggesting an analogy between plainchant and the gothic aesthetic arises from the fact that the two phenomena in question originated many centuries apart from one another and came to German lands under wholly dissimilar circumstances. The thirteenth-century gothic aesthetic the Germans refashioned was still new at the time of the refashioning, and especially new to Germany. The Gregorian liturgy by that time, on the other hand, had been in German-speaking lands for over five hundred years. Thus, the German transformation of the imported French gothic in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries cannot be considered a parallel phenomenon to the German reception of the Gregorian liturgy, brought to the German-speaking regions as early as the time of the Celtic missionaries St. Columban and St. Gall in the early eighth century (see note 66).

Another problem with the theory of late development concerns chronology: When, in fact, could the “late development” of German chant have occurred? The earliest German sources with decipherable notation (twelfth century) show it already in its fully developed form.47 If we compare, for a single chant melody, the twelfth-century Graz 807 with the late thirteenth-century or early fourteenth-century Thomaskirche gradual, and these with the mid-fourteenth-century Moosburg gradual, we see that, contrary to expectations raised by Wagner’s proposed dating, there is no clearcut progression from an earlier source more under the Romanic

46 Ibid., 1:VII.
47 See Wagner, Einführung in die gregorianischen Melodien, 323, 330. The Victime paschali in Einsiedeln 366, which Stäblein (Schriftdbild der einstimmigen Musik, pl. 62) dates to the twelfth century and Franz Tack (“Gregorian Chant,” p. 51) to the “11th and 12th century,” shows the fully developed Germanic dialect. This may be the earliest surviving legible notation in Germanic dialect. The folio in question is reproduced by both Stäblein and Tack, the latter showing the entire sequence.
influence to later ones that are more Germanicized (example 5 on following pages).\textsuperscript{48} Indeed, determining how and when any given chant center came to be more Germanicized or more Romanicized may not be possible. Our observations suggest that each post-eleventh-century manuscript from the eastern-European orbit represents a unique mixture of the two strains; but whether all or most of these manuscripts are the result of a common tendency to move from a Germanic origin to the more Romanicized version that comes down to us, or whether the progression worked from Romanic to Germanic, or whether there is some other explanation for the different mixtures of Romanic and Germanic elements, are questions that analysis of the chantbooks themselves may be unable to answer.

Other sorts of evidence, however, indicate that the Germanic dialect existed prior to the twelfth century—that, in fact, its origins can be demonstrated to lie in the era prior to the mid-ninth century.

Stäblein noted that a statement by Theoger, Bishop of Metz from 1117 to 1120, could be understood as a reference to the Germanic dialect: “Hoc decachordum secundi a plerisque deutonicis maxime frequentatum vitant Itali vel Romani, continentes se in b. molli; quos imitantur quidam Teutonici.”\textsuperscript{49} Stäblein reads this as a reference to “the lowering of \textit{B} up to \textit{B} by the ‘Itali vel Romani’ in contrast to the \textit{C} by the ‘Teutonici’.”\textsuperscript{50}

The treatise \textit{De musica} by John Cotton (John of Afflighem?), which dates from ca. 1100 or possibly as early as 1078,\textsuperscript{51} includes musical examples written in staff notation. Comparison of these with Romanic chant manuscripts makes it clear that John was familiar with the Germanic dialect (example 6 on page 109). The comparison also supports other sorts of evidence that Claude Palisca has assembled to demonstrate that John “can be located in the south German area between St. Gall and Bamberg.”\textsuperscript{52}

We may say, then, that the Germanic dialect was known and accepted by John before the twelfth century.

\textsuperscript{48} The excerpts in this example are typical rather than exceptional. A more detailed examination of the three German sources cited here would serve only to confirm the assertion that no clear-cut progression may be discerned from a more Romanic to a more Germanic style (or vice versa).


\textsuperscript{50} “Die Erniedrigung des \textit{h} zu \textit{b} bei den ‘Itali vel Romani’ im Gegensatz zum \textit{c} bei den \textit{Teutonici} (wo sie allerdings auch bisweilen vorkomme) bezeugt dann Theoger” (Stäblein, “Der röm. Choral im Norden,” 273).

\textsuperscript{51} The arguments regarding John’s identification and the dating of \textit{De musica} are reviewed by Palisca, \textit{Hucbald, Guido, and John}, 87–95.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 94.
A statement by the south-German Aribo Scholasticus, living in the second half of the eleventh century, confirms the existence of the Germanic tradition prior to the twelfth century: “Omnes saltatrices laudabiles, sed tamen nobis generosiores videntur quam Longobardis. Illi enim spissiori, nos rarioi cantu delectamur”\textsuperscript{53} (“We [northerners] prefer melodic leaps more than the Italians [Lombards]; they enjoy more a stepwise melody, but we are more pleased by less common [i.e., less stepwise] melody”).\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{53} Gerbert, \textit{Scriptores}, 2:212.

\textsuperscript{54} Stäblein, in the introduction to \textit{Die Gesänge des altromischen Graduale} (Vat. lat. 5319), \textit{Monumenta Monodica Medii Aevi}, vol. 2 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), 36, suggests that
Example 6.

John, *De musica*, p. 108

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{O rex glo-ri-ae do-mi-ne vir-tu-tum}
\end{align*}
\]

*L.U. 853*

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{O rex gló-ri-ae,* Dó-mi-ne vir-tú-tum,}
\end{align*}
\]

*Antiphon for Magnificat, Ascension*

*De musica*, p. 163

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Te-cum prin-ci-pi-um}
\end{align*}
\]

*L.U. 412*

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Te-cum prin-ci-pi-um}
\end{align*}
\]

*Antiphon, Christmas, Second Vespers*

*De musica*, p. 163

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{I-ste est Jo-han-nes}
\end{align*}
\]

*L.U. 420*

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{I-ste est Jo-han-nes}
\end{align*}
\]

*Antiphon, Commemoration of St. John*

*De musica*, p. 166

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Il-le ho-mo qui}
\end{align*}
\]

*L.U. 1095*

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Il-le ho-mo,* qui}
\end{align*}
\]

*Antiphon, Commemorations, Vespers*

*De musica*, p. 166

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Gau-de-te}
\end{align*}
\]

*L.U. 334*

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Gau-de-te}
\end{align*}
\]

*Introit, Third Sunday of Advent*
These witnesses to the existence of the Germanic dialect prior to the twelfth century undermine the likelihood of Wagner’s late-development theory (his writings imply a post-tenth-century origin), for they narrow the window of time available for the Germanic dialect to have “developed” to a single century.

The late-development theory becomes virtually impossible to sustain if we consider the observations by two ninth-century theorists also cited by Bruno Stäblein. Commenting on Charlemagne’s chapel singers, Aurelian of Réôme claimed that the \textit{palatini} assigned the office antiphons of Advent to the first mode rather than the second “\textit{ob excelsiorem vocis modulationem} (because of the higher vocal melody).” By suggesting that their version of the melodies extended up to \textit{c}, i.e., beyond the range of the second mode, he implies that they sang the antiphons in Germanic dialect. Thus, example 7 rather than example 8.

\begin{verbatim}
Example 7.
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
Example 8.
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
Dec. 17, Great Antiphon for the Magnificat
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
56 Aurelian of Réôme, \textit{Musica disciplina}, in Gerbert, \textit{Scriptores}, 1:45 (and see also the edition by Lawrence Gushee, Corpus scriptorum de musica, no. 21 [n.p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1975], 92).
57 “...die deutschen Quellen schreiben, falls sonst der untere der beiden benachbarten Halbtöne die Melodiespitze darstellt, den oberen, z.B. in der Adventsaltiphon jedesmal bei *, also F statt E, und beim Melisma die Erhöhung aca

\textit{D E* D E* D E* F G a G a h a} (bzw. aba)

\textit{a fi-ne us-que ad fi-nem for-ti-ter} - - - - - - - -


Stäblein also understands a remark by John the Deacon to refer to the preference for thirds that characterizes the Germanic dialect: “Germani seu Galli...nonnulla de proprio Gregorianis cantibus miscuerunt (Germans, i.e., Gauls...have mixed that which is improper into Gregorian chant).”

One final observation by Wagner himself should help persuade us that the Germanic dialect extends far back in time, perhaps to the era of the earliest layer of the Gregorian tradition:

The graduals of the ember days in Advent, which all have the same melody type—and are all transposed up a fifth—, end remarkably often, and in both their parts, even in the Romanic versions, with a final figure c a, which appears German. Hence one can conclude that the Germanic cadences involving a falling third, which are especially frequent in the second mode, do not contradict the stylistic character of the liturgical melody, especially since precisely this frequently recurring gradual melody in our oldest chant books must certainly be reckoned to belong to the oldest layer of the entire chant book.

Though Stäblein, Anglès, Froger, and others have expressed doubt as to whether the division of the chant tradition into Romanic and Germanic dialects is the best way of accounting for the Germanic variants, two concrete and undisputed aspects of the chant tradition—geography and notation—support this division. Perhaps we may never be able to prove exactly how ancient the Germanic dialect is, but the testimony of John and Aribô Scholasticus establishes its existence already at the time of the earliest decipherable Romanic sources (the eleventh-century manuscripts with alphabetic notation). From the time of the earliest sources in the Romanic tradition with decipherable pitches, therefore, contemporary witnesses recognized the differences between the Romanic and the Germanic versions of the melodies. From Aurelian and John the Deacon we can deduce the existence of the Germanic tradition already by the mid-ninth century, two hundred years earlier still.

From as far back as we can trace, therefore, there appears to be a Germanic family of the Gregorian tradition. It is identified by its heavy concentration of Germanic variants, phenomena that appear in the non-Germanic branches of the Gregorian tradition only sporadically. With

58 Ibid., 273 (with reference by Stäblein to Patr. Lat. 73, 90).
59 Wagner, Einführung in das Gesangbuch, 2:L.
60 E.g., Montpellier, Faculté de Médecine, MS H159 (see note 3, above).
only a handful of exceptions, manuscripts with square notation preserve
the versions of chant with few Germanic variants, while manuscripts with
Messine, German-neume, and Hufnagel notations preserve versions with a
heavy concentration of these elements. The manuscripts with Messine,
German-neume, and Hufnagel notations originated in the eastern part of
Europe (Scandinavia, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, and
Austria); the great majority of manuscripts in square notation originated
in the Romanic regions (Italy, western France, Spain, and England).

Significance of the Germanic Chant Tradition

The notion that the Germanic tradition may be quite ancient has
important implications. If this tradition dates back to as early as we have
suggested, it would have existed at the time the earliest surviving chant
manuscripts (the neumatic sources) were copied. It has long been recog­
nized that the Germanic notations evolved from, among others, the
Messine and St. Gall scripts, but it has not been acknowledged that the
relationship may be relevant in reverse chronology as well, that is, that
the later Germanic sources, in which the pitches are defined, may be able
to tell us something about the nature of the melodies in the earliest
neumatic sources, in which the pitches are not defined. Since these earliest
neumatic manuscripts originated in a region that includes Switzerland,
southern Germany, and parts of eastern France (St. Gall, Einsiedeln, and
Laon), it stands to reason that later manuscripts from this same region
that retain many of their notational features (i.e., the Germanic sources)
would more accurately preserve their melodies than would later manu­
scripts from the Romanic family (many of which originated from further
away and all of which use a different type of notation). It would seem

61 Among the oldest neumatic manuscripts are Leipzig, Stadtbibliothek Rep. 1.93 (olim
169), which includes scattered pieces from ca. 900, written in German neumes with
French elements; St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 359, a cantatorium from the beginning of the
tenth century, written in St. Gall neumes with litterae significatae (occasional letters written
above the neumes that, according to various medieval writers, clarify certain aspects of
rhythm); Laon, Bibliothèque municipale 239, a gradual from Laon, beginning of tenth
century, written in Messine neumes with litterae significatae; St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 339, a
gradual from the second half of the tenth century, written in St. Gall neumes without
litterae significatae; Chartres, Bibliothèque 47, a gradual from Brittany, tenth century, writ­
ten in Breton neumes with litterae significatae; Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek Lit. 6 (Ed.III.7),
a gradual and sequentiary from the Cloister of St. Emmeram in Regensburg, second half
of the tenth century, written in St. Gall neumes with litterae significatae; Einsiedeln,
Stiftsbibliothek 121, a gradual and sequentiary from ca. 1000, written in St. Gall neumes
with litterae significatae; Montpellier, Faculté de Médecine H159, a tonary from the Clois­
ter of St. Bénigne in Dijon, eleventh century, written in north-French neumes and in
alphabetic notation (dual notation). On the last named, see note 3, above.
logical, that is to say, when attempting to reconstruct the pitches of the earliest neumatic manuscripts, to take into consideration the pitches preserved in the manuscripts that are closest to them both geographically and notationally.

To date, however, no published editions of chant have done this. To Peter Wagner himself recommended against the procedure for, as noted above, he was of the opinion that the Germanic variants were a late phenomenon, postdating the tenth-century sources. The monks of Solesmes have likewise failed to take note of the Germanic tradition in their various editions "according to the earliest sources," but for reasons that have never been explained. One ardent champion of their cause, as we have seen above (note 4), denied the very existence of the Germanic dialect. Admittedly, there are at this time no clear lines of descent that would establish how the Romanic and the Germanic traditions relate to one another. Even the way the neumatic scripts themselves relate to each other is still much debated. Moreover, the German sources vary considerably among themselves in the degree to which they reflect the Germanic or the Romanic traditions. Ironically, in the dispute that broke out between the Solesmes monks and the "traditionalists" like Peter Wagner when the Kyriale seu ordinarium missae was published in 1905, the Solesmes monks (the "archaeological school") argued in favor of basing "official" editions of the chant repertory on the oldest notated sources. Yet, since they used sources from the Romanic tradition as their models for the reconstruction of the melodies, their publications reflect a version of chant that is devoid of the "Germanisms" that must lie hidden in the neumatic sources they purport to honor. The traditionalists, on the other hand, in wishing

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62 R. John Blackley, Director of the Schola Antiqua, and Barbara Katherine Jones have privately transcribed the propers for all the Sundays and major feasts from neumatic sources (primarily Laon 239, but St. Gall 359, Einsiedeln 121, St. Gall 359, and Chartres 47 where Laon 239 is incomplete) with pitches derived primarily from Graz 807, other German graduals, and Verdun 759. With the Schola Antiqua Blackley has recorded three programs based on these transcriptions for the Nonesuch and Florilegium labels, but to date none of the transcriptions has appeared in print except for isolated examples in program booklets accompanying the Schola's recordings and concerts. (Several complete transcriptions, together with a detailed explanation of their derivation from neumatic and Germanic sources, were published in Gregoriaans, the program booklet of the chant conference held during the 1984 Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht [Holland].)


64 John A. Emerson, "Plainchant," 831.
to acknowledge the historical and artistic validity of postneumatic chant, have helped make known manuscripts like the Thomaskirche gradual and other late Germanic books that may finally help us find a more reliable key to the melodic chant style of the tenth-century sources.

Certainly this key will not be easy to define. To take one specific example, we may ponder the situation with regard to the neumatic source Laon 239 (early tenth century, Messine script; fol. 10v is reproduced here as figure 4). It so happens that there are several other early manuscripts from Laon still held in the Laon Bibliothèque municipale. One of these, MS 263, dates from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, and, like MS 239, originated at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Laon. It is written in a later form of Messine neumes on a four-line staff. No better source than this could be imagined for a reconstruction of the melodies in MS 239, except that the two books have almost no melodies in common. (MS 263 contains sequences, hymns, and liturgical drama while MS 239 is a gradual containing Propers for the entire church year.) Nevertheless, in MS 263 there are at least two instances of what appears to be a Germanic variant: on fol. 22, where the opening of the Introit for Christmas day is quoted (example 9), and on fol. 178, on the last syllable of “domine” (example 10).

Example 9.

\[ \text{Example 9.} \]

\[ \text{Example 10.} \]

Elsewhere in this source, the Romanic tradition is clearly in evidence (example 11). In a study of the contents of Laon 263, David G. Hughes, taking note of the presence of several proses that are found elsewhere only in German sources, states, “My impression...is that Laon 263 is rather more German-oriented than the average French prosor of the time....

Example 11.

\[ \text{Example 11.} \]
Figure 4. Laon, Bibliotheque municipale, MS 239 (ca. 930), fol. 10v, showing the end of the second Mass and the beginning of the third Mass for Christmas.
[Hanc concordi] appears almost exclusively in German sources, and is thus another example of Laon’s curious interest in German pieces.65

If MS 263 can be taken as a guide to the nature of the melodies in Laon during the Middle Ages, we would have to conclude that this was a chant center that felt the influence of both traditions, the Romanic and the Germanic. Reconstruction of the Laon 239 melodies should therefore take this into account.

With the St. Gall manuscripts the Germanic influence is presumably an even greater factor. (St. Gall lies within the German-speaking sphere, and Hufnagelschrift evolved directly from St. Gall neumes.) Obviously, the degree to which any one source partakes of Germanic or Romanic elements may be difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, it is a falsification of history to deny the role of the Germanic tradition altogether, uncritically accepting Romanic sources as the sole keys to reconstructing the pitches in the oldest notated chant sources. Now, with interest in Carolingian and even pre-Carolingian chant on the rise, it is especially important to bring all the relevant evidence to bear in our attempts to reconstruct the ancient melodies. Otherwise these reconstructions will almost certainly be twentieth-century fictions that never existed in the past.

Conclusion

Peter Wagner assumed that the Germanic tradition evolved from the Romanic as a result of the “organic development” of a force inherent in the Gregorian melodies. It is not our purpose here to disprove his theory of organic development or to question his rejection of the notion that the Germanic tradition might have originated in the north (specifically, in the British Isles), whence it was brought into middle Europe by the Irish missionaries St. Columban and St. Gall and their disciples in the early years of the eighth century.66 These issues deserve a separate study of their own. What seems clear is that, whatever and wherever its origins, the Germanic dialect is very ancient. From the eyewitness accounts of its existence ca. 850 cited above we may also infer that already at that time it was no longer considered a new phenomenon (otherwise we would expect Aurelian and John the Deacon to have remarked on the novelty of the practices to which they refer).


66 Wagner himself, however, was the first to emphasize the role of the Irish missionaries in the early German church, citing particularly the monk Marcellus: “It is not without importance that the oldest known artist of S. Gall is of Irish origin.” He continues: “The monks from the Island kingdom who christianized Germany certainly taught in the monasteries founded by them no other order of liturgy and chant than the one which was
Thus, Germanic plainchant appears to have been a liturgical practice in eastern Europe for as many as seven centuries or more before the great decline of chant in the last years of the Renaissance. As such it merits consideration as a major branch of the Gregorian tradition. Why the Germanic dialect should have arisen, and how it traveled throughout the eastern regions of the Frankish kingdom and Scandinavia, are areas for future research. The notation of Germanic chant must also arouse our curiosity. Could its distinctive appearance be connected with performance conventions? Why did German singers resist for so many years (approximately half a millenium) the practice of writing the melodies in quadratic neumes? All these questions invite further study.

current among them" (Introduction to the Gregorian Melodies, Part 1, trans. Agnes Orme & E. G. P. Wyatt [London: Plainsong and Mediaeval Music Society, 1901; repr., New York: Da Capo Press, 1986], 221). Franz Tack also considers the Anglo-Celtic influence to be important: "Since the conversion of Germany was accomplished shortly thereafter [after the Council of Glasgow in 747] by Irish and Anglo-Saxon Benedictines, whose Continental cloisters, including St. Gall, became missionary centers and advanced schools for liturgical chant, it is impossible to deny the strong influence on the oldest German manuscripts exerted by Irish and Anglo-Saxon plainsong notation" ("Gregorian Chant," p. 10).