THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF GREGORIAN CHANT

bу

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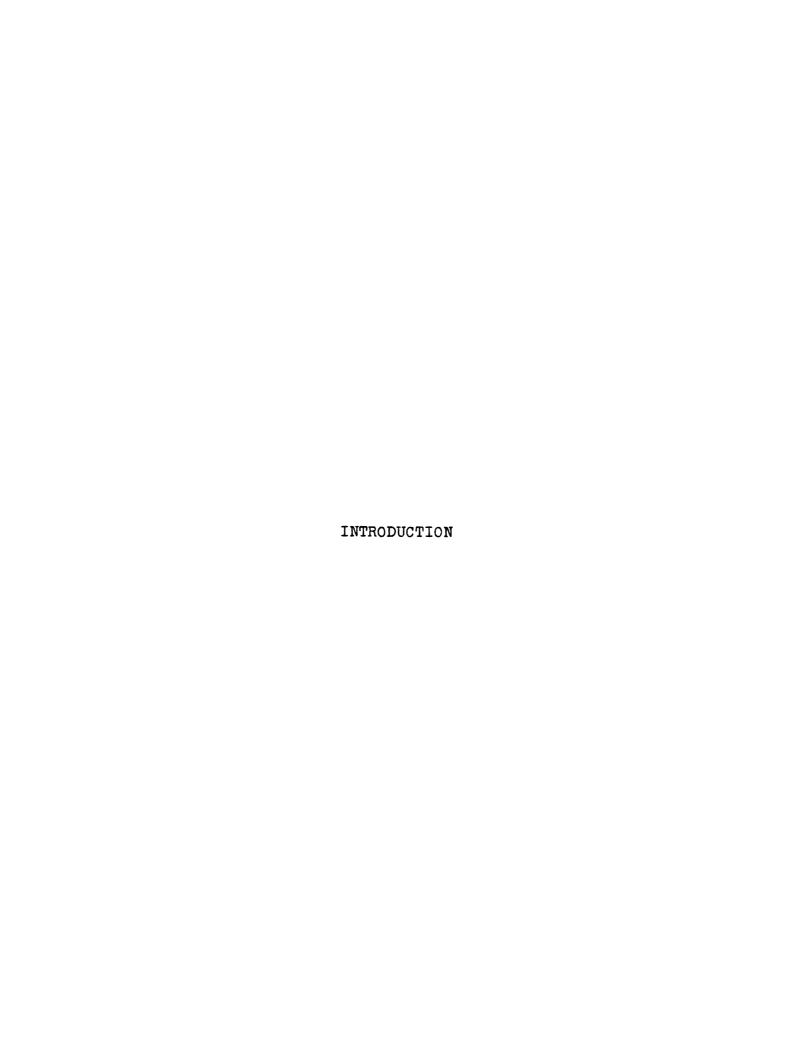
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Although Gregorian Chant is sacred monody that dates from an age in which instrumental accompaniment was not employed for liturgical music, today, particularly in the services of the Roman Catholic Church, the common practice is to use some type of organ accompaniment to the chant sung by the choir or congregation. The present thesis proposes to trace briefly the history of chant and accompaniments to chant melodies, to review the three current leading rhythmic theories, and to arrange a new set of accompaniments for a number of the melodies of the Kyriale and certain selected Mass Propers, taking special cognizance of the more recent studies on medieval harmony¹ and on rhythmic interpretation.²

The question of whether chant accompaniments should be employed at all has been debated a great deal among church musicians. But, although many state emphatically

l Joseph Yasser, "Medieval Quartal Harmony", The Musical Quarterly, XXIII(1937), 170-97, 333-66; XXIV(1938), 351-85. Republished, with slight modifications, in book form by the American Library of Musicology, New York, 1938.

²Dom Gregory Murray, "Plainsong Rhythm (The Editorial Methods of Solesmes)", <u>Caecilia</u>, LXXXIV(1957), 10-24.

³Msgr. Leo Manzetti, "Gregorian Chant Accompaniment", Catholic Choirmaster, XXXVII(1951), 35.

Inter alia, A. Madeley Richardson, Modern Organ
Accompaniment, Longmans, Green, and Co., New York, 1907,
p. 145; Henri Potiron, Treatise on the Accompaniment of
Gregorian Chant (translated by Ruth C. Gabain), Society of
St. John the Evangelist, Desclee and Co., Tournai, Belgium,
1933, p. 95; Willi Apel, Gregorian Chant, Indiana University
Press, Bloomington, 1958, p. xii.

that the practice is historically unsound, these same musicians usually do use accompaniments, either to support a weak choir, to emphasize the festivity of a special Holy Day, or to satisfy the harmonically biased modern ear. Potiron states that "Gregorian melodies were not composed with a view to being accompanied; the need of support for weak and uncertain choirs or perhaps merely the desire to satisfy our modern taste has, however, made organ accompaniment an accepted practice, whether for good or for evil."1 An accompaniment may also be considered a type of elaboration of the chant, and the early church often used elaborations of these melodies on important feasts or other occasions.² These factors serve to indicate that accompaniments to liturgical melodies, for either aesthetic or practical reasons, need not necessarily be construed as improper or contrary to the spirit of the early Christians.

Moreover, there are a number of musical scholars who are even more convinced than the above writers that the use of accompaniments is not only to be defended but highly recommended. Yasser has pointed out that the harmonic sense is one of the most powerful driving forces in the evolution

Potiron, op. cit., p. 95; cf. Rev. Johner, A New School of Gregorian Chant, (third English edition by Hermann Erpf and Max Ferrars), Fr. Pustet and Co., New York, 1925, pp. 289-90.

²Rt. Rev. Walter Howard Frere, D.D., "Plainsong", Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 17, Chicago, 1957, pp. 997-98.

of music, and that a listener can gain full appreciation of the melody to which he is listening only if his harmonic sense is "attuned" to that of the composer of this melody. From these premises he concludes that "it is wrong to assume, as many do, that we attain an adequate musical concept of Gregorian melodies when they are performed without any harmonies at all." In arriving at this conclusion, he presupposes that the overwhelming majority of modern listeners will subconsciously add a tertian background to these melodies, which thus are seriously modified from their ancient flavor and original harmonic structure. Yasser's solution to this complex problem will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

In another, and more recent, publication, Jones also comments on the problem of grasping the harmonic structure of the chant.

But if the chant is to take its proper place in the public worship of the church, and is to be sung and appreciated by parish choirs and congregations, an artistic solution will have to be found to this problem, and one which will be satisfactory to the scholar, the musician, and the layman. The organ is not only a practical necessity to support the choir and congregation, but it must also help the 'non-Gregorian' ear to grasp the structure and modality of the melodies.

¹Yasser, op. cit., Vol. XXIII (1937), p. 172.

²Ibid., p. 175.

³Loc. cit.

⁴Bernard Jones, "The Harmonic Basis of Plainchant Accompaniment", Caecilia, LXXXII(1955), 127.

As a practical solution, he advocates, in effect, the application of the theories of Dr. Yasser.

The practice of the chant being "sung" by parish congregations, as mentioned in the above quotation, is often questioned by the opponents of chant accompaniments. It is argued that the singing of chant as part of a liturgical function should belong to the choir only, since this was the usual practice in the Middle Ages, particularly the latter half. However, Wagner, speaking of another practice (that of shortening the Credo) during this era, has aptly stated the condition of the prevalent liturgical trends. "It is unnecessary to point out that such a proceeding [shortening the Credo], which moreover went far on into later centuries, bears extremely bad testimony to the liturgical instinct of that time." If one examines the writings of certain reputable scholars of the chant and the liturgy, as well as the writings of the Fathers of the Church, it is easy to find evidence that the singing of the Ordinary of the Mass was certainly a function of the congregation and was only subsequently taken over by choirs with the approach of the decadent period of chant about 1000 A.D.

When the choir of singers usurped, in addition to their own, those singing functions which till then had been performed by the congregation, this simple melody seemed too poor; other richer ones were

¹Peter Wagner, "Introduction to the Gregorian Melodies" (translated by Agnes Orme and Edward Gerald Wyatt), <u>Caecilia</u>, LXXXIV(1957), 318-19.

then composed, and the primitive melody was degraded to ordinary days and to Masses for the dead, where it is still sung.

Besides these short acclamations, the people's share in the Mass since earliest times also included a certain ever-increasing number of hymnic texts, . . . the Sanctus . . . Benedictus . . . Kyrie eleison . . . Agnus Dei . . . the chants of the so-called ordinary of the Mass which, . . . were taken over from the people by the choir of clerics and finally by the church choirs.²

. . . the people, for example, sang their own part at the Mass - the invariable chants such as the Kyrie, Sanctus, or Agnus.

Niceta of Remesiana (fourth century), in a sermon on liturgical singing, addresses his congregation:

When we sing, all should sing; 4

We should not wonder, then, if the deacon in a clear voice like a herald warns all that, whether they are praying or bowing the knees, singing hymns, or listening to the lessons, they should all act together.⁵

Peter Wagner, "Introduction to the Gregorian Melodies", (translated by Agnes Orme and Edward Gerald Wyatt), Caecilia, LXXXIV(1957), 327.

²Rev. Joseph A. Jungmann, S. J., <u>The Mass of the Roman Rite</u>, Vol. I, Benziger Bros., Inc., New York, 1951, p. 238. <u>Cf. Dom Gregory Murray</u>, "Congregational Singing at Mass", <u>Catholic Choirmaster</u>, XXXIV(1948), 155.

³Rt. Rev. W. H. Frere, D.D., "Plainsong", Oxford History of Music, Introductory Volume, edited by Percy Carter Buck, Oxford University Press, London, 1929, p. 138.

⁴Niceta of Remesiana, "Liturgical Singing (de utilitate hymnorum)", (translated by Gerald Walsh, S.J., M.A., Ph.D., S.T.D.), <u>The Fathers of the Church</u>, Vol. 7, Fathers of the Church, Inc., New York, 1949, p. 75.

⁵Ibid., p. 76.

Wagner cites another ancient directive.

Moreover, the further statement of the <u>Liber Pontificalis</u>, that the above mentioned Pope [Sixtus I, c. 120 A.D.] had the Sanctus precented by the celebrant, and continued by the whole congregation, certainly describes the original execution of the chant, . . . !

In the present century, the "Motu Proprio" of the recently canonized St. Pope Pius X brought these ideals of congregational singing to the attention of clergy and church musicians throughout the world.² It is unfortunate that the recommendations of so illustrious a leader of the Roman Church have remained unheeded in so many places. Since the average parish congregation, unaccustomed to singing modal or pentatonic melodies, would probably find it somewhat difficult to perform these chants without support and direction from the organ, it is hoped that this practice of congregational singing at liturgical functions might be considerably facilitated by the availability of an organ accompaniment which by its very nature is designed to afford the most appropriate harmonic background for the learning and execution of Gregorian melodies.

At present there are many different accompaniments that have been prepared for the use of the parish organist, but a great many church musicians who have seriously studied the problem agree that these are "in disrepute". 3

¹Wagner, op. cit., p. 326. Cf. pp. 327 and 329.

²Pope Pius X, "Motu Proprio on Sacred Music" (pamphlet), Conception Abbey Press, Conception, Missouri, 1945, p. 7.

³ Jones, op. cit., p. 127.

- . . . many collections of carefully written accompaniments have been published. But it is very generally conceded, even by some of the authors themselves, that this work has failed to create a musically satisfactory result.
- . . . for which [Gregorian melodies], admittedly, no satisfactory method of harmonization has thus far been found, despite numerous attempts.²

Yet there have been methods of accompaniment proposed³ that appear to show considerable promise of producing a truly "Gregorian" harmonic background. The main objective of this thesis is to apply the principles of certain acknowledged scholars in the field of Gregorian Chant to the problem of composing a set of accompaniments that will attempt to illustrate "a mastery that combines at one and the same time a distinct artistic variety and historic authenticity."

Since the scope of this work is so large, the research included will necessarily be limited. More detailed information can be found by reference to the bibliographical material cited.

¹Jones, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 127.

²Yasser, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 171.

³<u>Ibid</u>, Vol. XXIII(1937), 170-97, 333-66; XXIV(1938), 351-85.

Joseph Yasser, "The Traditional Roots of Jewish Harmony", Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Conference-Convention of the Cantors' Assembly and the Department of Music of the United Synogogue of America, 1951, p. 18.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF GREGORIAN CHANT

Origins

Gregorian Chant is the official liturgical music of the Roman Catholic Church, dating in fundamental form from the time of the Apostles. It is also called "plainsong", from "cantus planus", which is defined by Frere, the distinguished English liturgiologist, as "unmeasured music" or a "certain style of unisonal music, comprising chiefly the church-music called 'Gregorian' which belongs to Rome, and that called 'Ambrosian' which hails from Milan." Although the term "Gregorian" is derived from the name of the great sixth century pope, Gregory I, much of the actual music is many centuries older.

Scholars in this field are in general agreement that Gregorian Chant had its beginnings in the Jewish Synagogue and gathered various elements from the influence of Greece, Syria-Palestine, and other Mediterranean areas. Wagner and Gastoué have shown evidence to support the theories of Syro-Palestinian and Jewish origins. This Jewish heritage has been studied extensively by Yasser, who has illustrated the similarity of

¹Rt. Rev. Walter Howard Frere, D.D., "Plainsong", Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 17, Chicago, 1957, p. 997.

²Ibid.

³Egon Wellesz, "Recent Studies in Western Chant", <u>The Musical Quarterly</u>, XLI(1955), 181. <u>Cf</u>. Gustave Reese, <u>Musicin the Middle Ages</u>, W. W. Norton and Co., New York, 1940, p. 114.

christian and Hebrew chants by delineating basic identical melodic patterns from pre-Christian and early Christian times. Recent studies of Wellesz indicate that the chant may also be a mixture of Roman, Gallican, and Ambrosian elements. One of the few dissenting views is asserted by Dom Suñol, a representative of the Solesmes School, who states that "everything goes to prove that the oldest melodies were the creation of early Christianity." The statement is unsupported in his text and hence difficult to evaluate. Therefore, on the weight of the best available evidence, it may be accepted that Gregorian Chant is primarily a heritage from Hebrew liturgical music, and probably also was molded into its present form by the catholic character of early as well as modern Western Christianity.

Early Forms

There is relatively little available record of liturgical music before the time of Pope Gregory I (590-604). The

loseph Yasser, "How Can the Ancient Hebrew Melos Be Restored?", Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Conference-Convention of the Cantors' Assembly of America and the Department of Music of the United Synagogue of America, 1956, p. 30. Cf. "Dr. Yasser Lectures at a Benedictine Monastery", Seminary Progress, January, 1957, p. 8.

²Wellesz, op. cit., p. 184.

Dom Gregory Suñol, O.S.B., <u>Text Book of Gregorian</u> Chant, Desclée and Co., Tournai (Belgium), 1930, p. ix.

studies of Wagner indicate that any significant advances over Jewish cantillations must have taken place after the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D., since before that time most liturgical services were held in secret, a circumstance which may have precluded much elaborate singing or ritual. The exhortation of St. Eusebius (early fourth century) to the people to "sing psalms" probably shows that the main type of music which was connected with the early Church was antiphonal psalmody, although many of the more elaborate parts of the Office and some of the earliest sung portions of the Mass, such as the Gradual, Sanctus, and the Communion antiphons, were undoubtedly in use as well.

A few scattered references to the language used in the texts and to the codification of chants can also be located. It was during these first centuries that Latin became the official language of the Western Church. Wellesz places the change from Greek to Latin in the Roman Rite at the latter half of the fourth century and cites as evidence the Latin Canon introduced by Ambrose (374-397) and sanctioned by Pope Damasus. 3 However, he likewise concludes that bilingual

Peter Wagner, <u>Introduction to the Gregorian Melodies</u>, Part I, second edition, (translated by Agnes Orme and Edward Gerald Wyatt), The Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, London, 1901, p. 7.

²Ibid.

³Wellesz, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 178.

singing was almost certainly still in vogue¹ at least on important feasts. Some pre-Gregorian codification of chants was accomplished by the Abbots Catalenus, Maurianus, and Virbonus in the form of organized chants for the ecclesiastical year.²

These are but a few references to liturgical music which hardly clarify to any extent the actual execution of the chant of these centuries. In the next period of liturgical history the chant is usually considered to have reached its climax in execution and organization.

Medieval Period

The age of St. Gregory is often called the Golden Age of Gregorian Chant.³ Gregory I is credited with the codification of the liturgical music of the Roman Church, one important product of his labors being the <u>Cantilena Romana</u>, a compilation of vocal and ecclesiastical plainsong evolved by the Papal choir during the fifth and sixth centuries.⁴ This collection was later (in the ninth century) notated with

¹Wellesz, op. cit., p. 178.

²Pierre Batiffol, <u>Histoire</u> <u>du</u> <u>Breviaire</u> <u>Romain</u>, Paris, 1893, pp. 349-350.

³Rt. Rev. W. H. Frere, D.D., "Plainsong", Oxford History of Music, Introductory Volume, edited by Percy Carter Buck, Oxford University Press, London, 1929, p. 148.

Frere, "Plainsong", Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 17, p. 998.

neumes. 1 Contrary to popular opinion, St. Gregory is now believed to have composed little or no music himself, but was responsible for reorganizing the liturgical life of the Church at the turn of the seventh century. Such a vital figure was he in the growth and perfection of the chant that after his death the Church, deprived of his illustrious leadership, unwittingly left the way open for the gradual accumulation of abuses that ultimately caused the period of decadence which began about 1000 A.D. According to Frere "musical composition for the Mass decayed and ceased during the course of the seventh century."

The following centuries witnessed what might be called the Silver Age of Chant, 3 a time when liturgical composition was certainly less skillful though just as certainly not completely dead. This can be demonstrated by an examination of the tropes and sequences composed during the Carolingian Era (751-987) which can hardly be considered of the same quality as the earlier chant compositions. This general lack of skill was illustrated in other matters also, such as the organization of the Ordo, attributed by Andrieu to a Franconian monk of the eighth century who could have had very

¹Frere, "Plainsong", <u>Encyclopedia</u> <u>Britannica</u>, Vol. 17, p. 998.

²Rt. Rev. W. H. Frere, D.D., <u>Graduale Sarisburiense</u>, Bernard Quaritch Co., London, 1894, p. xvii.

³Frere, "Plainsong", Oxford History of Music, Introductory Volume, p. 148.

little knowledge of the liturgy in Rome, the capital of the Christian empire. Wagner and others attest to this spirit of decadence, the beginning of which is variously placed from the end of the seventh century to the beginning of the twelfth century.

In the ninth century some of the earliest known manuscripts with primitive neumes appeared, and the development of medieval musical theory commenced about this time. The writers of this age seemed to feel the need to make the chant conform to some pre-existent theoretical musical system. The most convenient systems must have appeared to be that of the eight ancient Greek modes and the Byzantine system of four double modes. Accordingly, the existing chants were classified under the headings of eight paired modes. There is considerable evidence that this was an arbitrary choice. Yasser and Hughes agree that the original scale system of early Christian music is much older than the diatonic modes and probably is built on the pentatonic framework. "And so the theoretical writings tend to support the claim made in recent years that the modal system is an

¹Wellesz, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 187.

²Rev. Dom Anselm Hughes, O.S.B., "Theoretical Writers on Music up to 1400", Oxford History of Music, Introductory Volume, p. 119.

³Wellesz, op. cit., p. 189.

Joseph Yasser, "Medieval Quartal Harmony", The Musical Quarterly, XXIII(1937), 186-197.

arbitrary Graeco-Roman thing imposed in later centuries upon a more elastic and primitive scale system of the earlier Christian centuries." This imposition was truly unfortunate, since it led to a series of relative abuses which have abounded to this day.

A few steps in this process can be illustrated. Guido of Arezzo (eleventh century) is credited with the invention of the four line staff. The increasing use of this staff heralded the beginnings of polyphony and measured music, the parallel decline of monophony and plainchant, and the subsequent change from the pentatonic to the diatonic modal system. However, in this century the transition was undoubtedly still far from complete, since Guido in his Micrologus regarded the normal consonance as the interval of a fourth, rather than the third which is more basic to true diatonic modal harmony.

Another factor in the gradual decline may have been the slowing down of the tempo of the chant by adding a type of organ accompaniment.³ Although there is no substantial proof of when organs were first used in church,⁴ there are indications that the practice arose at the time of the

Hughes, op. cit., p. 120.

²Frere, "Plainsong", Oxford History of Music, p. 133; and Encyclopedia Britannica, p. 998.

Wellesz, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 189.

¹Reese, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 124.

beginnings of polyphony, when an instrument might be needed to supply a missing part or reinforce the other vocal parts. This type of organ accompaniment only served to encourage further abuses of the original chant by the new polyphonic style.

Modern Period

The history of Gregorian Chant from this time (twelfth century) until the seventeenth century is one of a gradual but constant decline both in chant composition and execution. It was not until the seventeenth century that the first restoration of Gregorian Chant was attempted. This pioneer effort resulted in the Medicean edition of the Graduale, which, though badly garbled, was at least an attempt in the right direction in reawakening interest in the chant. In the nineteenth century the Benedictine monks of Solesmes, France, undertook the Herculean task of chant restoration based primarily on manuscript evidence, and during the course of that century succeeded in publishing a very scholarly and authoritative edition of the Graduale and Antiphonale as well as other chant collections. This work

¹Reese, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 116.

Ibid.

^{3&}lt;sub>Loc. cit.</sub>

was initiated by Dom Prosper Gueranger (1805-1875) and subsequently carried on by Dom Joseph Pothier (1835-1923) and then Dom André Mocquereau (1849-1930) who undertook the production of the voluminous Paleographie Musicale. Although the work of these men is of indisputable merit, certain aspects of it, particularly the rhythmic theories of Dom Mocquereau, have been seriously questioned by numerous musical scholars ever since their first publication. It may be pointed out that the official unedited Vatican Graduale, which otherwise follows the Solesmes restored versions of the chants, does not contain the ictus, episema, dot, and other rhythmic markings advocated by Solesmes. This may perhaps be interpreted as indicating insufficient manuscript evidence for these markings and consequent witholding of full Vatican approval or recommendation of them. However, in spite of a great amount of subsequent research, no additional authoritative editions have yet been pub-Thus it is seen that the twentieth century is an age of vigorous research and strong desire to return to the delightful simplicity and austerity of primitive Gregorian Chant. It is hoped that this spirit will prevail and reawaken in all Christian peoples an active appreciation of their musical liturgical heritage.

Chronology of the Chants

Some comments on the chronological order of composition of the various chants will be helpful in understanding their theoretical history. One type of classification has been outlined by Jones. He lists the three periods of chant composition as:

- (1) Beginnings to eighth century many of the Propers; a few parts of the Ordinary, such as Gloria XV, Mass XVIII, Kyrie XVI; the Te Deum.
- (2) Ninth to twelfth centuries most parts of the Ordinary; many sequences and hymns; (introduction of the use of the imperfect consonant, the third).
- (3) Thirteenth to fourteenth centuries the sequence "Dies Irae"; some hymns such as the "Stabat Mater"; a few anthems; (rising use of musica ficta).

Gevaert² has further subdivided the earliest era into three divisions. They are:

- (1) 440 to 540 A.D. composition of syllabic chants.
- (2) 540 to 600 A.D. composition of most melodies of the Office.
- (3) 600 A.D. and on imposition of various new and older texts on the older melodies.

These last divisions are somewhat narrow and in view of more recent studies are probably not entirely correct. Some of

Bernard Jones, "The Harmonic Basis of Plainchant Accompaniment", Caecilia, LXXXII(1955), 127-29.

²François Auguste Gevaert, <u>La Melopée Antique</u>, Librarie Générale de <u>Ad</u>. Hoste, Editeur, Gand, 1895, pp. 159-77.

the earliest melodies, such as Sanctus XVIII, the Ambrosian Gloria, etc., are undoubtedly older than the fifth century, and it is difficult to maintain that no new melodies were composed after 600 A.D. Many parts of the Ordinary, especially the Credos and the Glorias, are of much later composition as can be ascertained by a careful examination of their basic harmonic structure and scale patterns. The sequences and tropes from the Carolingian Era also were composed after the year 600, although relatively few of these have survived.

Some admirable work on dating the chants has been done by Rev. Frere in the <u>Graduale Sarisburiense</u>. He comments on the increase of chants for the Common of the Saints during the eleventh and twelfth centuries and lists many of the feasts that are descended from the old Roman Festivals.

The <u>Vatican Graduale</u> also dates most of the chants of the Ordinary of the Mass according to the dates of the oldest available manuscripts from which the chants were edited. This at least provides some type of direction for understanding various styles, although the music of many dated manuscripts is obviously of much earlier origin. This is

¹Frere, Graduale Sarisburiense, "Introduction", pp. xix.

²Ibid., p. xxi.

³<u>Ibid</u>., p. xxvii.

an area that still requires much research and careful study, especially when applied to the problem of a proper accompaniment to these old melodies.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF GREGORIAN CHANT ACCOMPANIMENT

Although "the whole corpus of Gregorian music undoubtedly familiarizes Roman Catholics of today with a music enormously more ancient in its origin than any harmony", the practice of harmonizing chant melodies has been used since the ninth century and has passed through various forms.

The earliest medieval magadizing, taken over from the ancient Greek practice, consisted of doubling in octaves, which was not actually harmony even in a primitive sense. 2 In the ninth century organum came into use, the initial forms of which were duplications of the melodic line at the intervals of the fourth, fifth, and octave. Magadizing and organum were often connected with the liturgical melodies, although organum, even in its most advanced forms in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was a style in the evolution of polyphony rather than a form of accompaniment. Accompaniment is usually considered an instrumental function, at least in relation to chant melodies. There is no proof of when instrumental or, specifically, organ accompaniment was used in church, but it may have been in the

lElliott C. Carter, "Music", Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 16, Chicago, 1957, p. 5.

²Sir Donald Francis Tovey, "Harmony", Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 11, Chicago, 1957, p. 203.

³Ibid., p. 206.

tenth century. Even as late as the sixteenth century, with its tertian harmony and fully developed polyphony, instrumental accompaniment of Gregorian Chant as such does not seem to be mentioned. Since accompaniments were undoubtedly used for secular melodies, it is probable that during these centuries the organ performed some type of service in connection with the chant, but indications are that this was primarily that of playing one or more of the polyphonic voices rather than the function of supporting the melody with a harmonic background.

Early Polyphonic Settings and Later Art Forms

Before Gregorian accompaniment was conceived as such, there were many centuries during which various modifications and additions to the chant melodies resulted in what are now called the art forms of Gregorian Chant. The earliest examples are intimately connected with the beginnings of polyphony, when a sacred melody was doubled at the octave, fourth, and/or fifth. In the thirteenth century, the School of Notre Dame performed the clausulae, which were polyphonic compositions based on fragments of Gregorian melodies. Another art form was the motet, which, in its early stages of development (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries), was almost exclusively dependent upon the

ecclesiastical chant for its <u>cantus firmus</u> or main theme. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, plainsong melodies were often used as <u>canti firmi</u> for polyphonic settings of the Mass, notably by Machaut, Dufay, Obrecht, and other prominent musicians.

As polyphony developed, so also did the art forms which employed the melodic material of the chant. Indeed, many secular compositions likewise embodied fragments of the melodic wealth of this religious music. Lassus and Palestrina are among the most important sixteenth-century composers who drew to a greater or lesser degree upon this liturgical heritage.

After the sixteenth century, with the spread of Protestantism and the decrease of the temporal powers of the Catholic Church, composers gradually looked less to the church for inspiration or commissions, and hence became less conscious of the Gregorian melodies. During the next three centuries, the chant, having been so badly garbled by the polyphonic abuses it endured, failed to attract much attention from the leading artists of the day, although with careful study a certain amount of influence can be detected in their music.

With the Solesmes edition of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries restoring the artistic respectability of Gregorian Chant, its themes again began to appear more frequently in art forms. Some few examples are Tournemire's

fifty-one volumes of L'Orgue Mystique, in which he uses Gregorian themes for compositions following the cycle of the liturgical year; Benoit's Fifty Elevations based on themes from the Gregorian "Sanctus" melodies; Demessieux's Twelve Choral Preludes on Gregorian Themes, and others. There are many sacred compositions like the above, and even a few secular ones which use Gregorian themes, such as Respighi's Concerto Gregoriano for violin and orchestra, the middle movement of which is built on the Easter sequence, "Victimae Paschali Laudes". A study of these modern art forms as well as of the earlier ones yields many interesting examples and ideas for harmonizing Gregorian Chant. However, although most of these ideas must be left to art music since they would prove unsuitable in the function of supporting the voices of a church choir or congregation, occasionally there is a chord or a short passage which "sounds right" in relation to the Gregorian theme. passages are worthy of note and further study by persons interested in chant harmonizations.

Early Tertian Harmonizations

One of the earlier harmonizations of chant melodies for use at church services was the <u>Il Canto Ecclesiastico</u> by Erculeo. ¹ In it Erculeo harmonized many hymns and

l Marzio Erculeo, <u>Il Canto Ecclesiastico</u>, Modana, Pergli Eredi Cassiani Stamp. Episc., 1686.

motets including the "Lauda Sion" sequence, which was set for three voices and notated in Gregorian style. monic scheme that he employs consists of thirds and complete triads; the final notes are often unisons, sometimes thirds There do not seem to be any accidentals added or triads. and the four-line staff and square notes are used. The harmonizations are applied to each note of the melody and appear to be for voices rather than an instrumental accompaniment, although this could not be accurately determined. Other examples of early harmonizations can be found in Söhner, who lists a comprehensive bibliography of manuscripts of early accompaniments and includes in his presentation many examples of chant accompaniments, a number of which distort the melodies in order to adapt them to polyphonic-type harmonizations, and all of which employ "Palestrinian" harmony written out or in figured bass notation.

Modern Tertian Harmonizations

With the "Renaissance" of Gregorian Chant in the nineteenth century and the subsequent desire for more modern accompaniments, the harmonization of chant, mostly under

lp. Leo Söhner, O.S.B., <u>Die Geschichte der Begleitung</u> des <u>Gregorianischen Chorals in Deutschland</u>, <u>Dr. Benno Felser Verlag G.m.b.H.</u>, Augsburg, 1931.

the impetus of the Solesmes method, became common. In 1905 Goodrich translated a book of Neidermeyer and d'Ortigue¹ which was written half a century before, remarking that there had been no better work written since then.² This accompaniment in general follows the Palestrinian principles, although the dominant seventh chord is not permitted and the melody is to be always in the upper voice. The harmony is still written note for note, which would result in an extremely slow-moving execution of the melody hardly in conformity with the speech-like rhythm which characterized the early chant.³

An example of the new trend to break away from this note for note principle is found in Haberl, 4 who advocates one chord for one to three notes if the melody is extremely elaborate, 5 although the former principle is the ordinary

Louis Niedermeyer and Joseph d'Ortigue, <u>Gregorian</u>
Accompaniment: (revised and translated by Wallace Goodrich),
Novello, Ewer, and Co., New York, 1905.

²<u>Ibid.</u>, p. iii.

Jom Lucien David, O.S.B., Le rhythme verbal et musical dans le chant romain, Les éditions de l'université d'Ottawa, 1933, p. 50.

Rev. Dr. Franz Xaver Haberl, <u>Magister Choralis</u> (second English edition translated from the ninth German edition by The Most Reverend Dr. Donnelly), Fr. Pustet, New York, 1892.

⁵<u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 201-202.

rule. He permits modulations with sharps in the inner parts, uses a dominant penultimate chord, and a major third at the final. 1

One of the early twentieth century treatises is that of Richardson.² He states that the chant was "never intended for harmonization", yet goes on to recommend that the standard of harmony should be that of the latest modal composers, Palestrina and Tallis.³ According to this thesis he advocates the use of unaltered tones primarily, but permits chromatic alterations to effect the major third in the Phrygian mode and the one-half step leading tones in all modes if these do not affect the melodic line. He also permits use of the dominant seventh chord but rejects the so-called "modern chromatic harmonies". Richardson's rhythmic scheme, like that of Haberl, consists of harmonizing each note of the melody although the two or three notes of a single neume may occasionally be set to only one chord.

Rev. Dr. Franz Xaver Haberl, <u>Magister Choralis</u>, (second English edition translated from the ninth German edition by The Most Reverend Dr. Donnelly), Fr. Pustet, New York, 1892, pp. 202-203.

²A. Madeley Richardson, <u>Modern Organ Accompaniment</u>, Longmans, Green, and Co., New York, 1907, 200 pp.

^{3&}lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 145.

Gastoué, 1 in 1910, and Evans, 2 in 1911, likewise show a tendency to break away from the note for note style, and also instruct their readers to avoid the seventh chords, especially the dominant and diminished sevenths. Another set of accompaniments from this decade, published by The Plainsong and Medieval Music Society of London, 3 is similar to the above mentioned. The harmonies are entirely tertian and, although not note for note, are very heavy and thick. Free rhythm is used but a faster tempo is indicated for the florid passages than for the syllabic melodies.

A further example of chant accompaniment worthy of mention is that of Dom Johner in 1925. He first outlines the conditions necessary to a good accompaniment as the proper choice of harmony, attention to rhythmic progressions, and discreet execution. To fulfill these conditions he employs a harmony strictly diatonic and uses only the triad and its sixth chord with a rare six-four inversion. All seventh chords except the dominant seventh are permitted to be

l Amédée Gastoué, Traité d'Harmonization du Chant Grégorien sur un plan nouveau, Janin Freres, Lyon, 1910.

² Edwin Evans, The Modal Accompaniment of Plain Chant, Reeves, London, 1911.

The Ordinary of the Mass, The Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, London, 1910, 61 pp.

Rev. Dom. Johner, A New School of Gregorian Chant, (third English edition by Hermann Erpf and Max Ferrars), Fr. Pustet and Co., New York, 1925, pp. 289-309.

employed without preparation or resolution, and the auxiliary, passing, and anticipation tones are frequently used. Johner states that it is not necessary to use the strict style of Palestrinian counterpoint, although the sixteenth-century harmonies are prescribed. He employs the rhythmic principles of Dom Mocquereau, namely, having chord changes on the first note of every neume and on all sustained notes, with light harmony permitted on the grouped notes. This is the type of accompaniment in current use, with but slight modifications according to the taste of the particular arranger. It has been questioned in the last two decades by Jones and such scholars as Yasser and Reese.

The accompaniments published in the next decade are all very similar to that of Johner. Dom Suñol 4 allows the diminished triad and emphasizes the importance of the chord changes occuring on the ictus. He guided his work by the principle that "the accompaniment should rather study to express in the chords the harmonic substratum which every

¹Bernard Jones, "The Harmonic Basis of Plainchant Accompaniment", Caecilia, LXXXII (1955), 127-29.

²Yasser, "Medieval Quartal Harmony", <u>The Musical</u> Quarterly, XXIII(1937), 170-97, 333-66; XXIV(1938), 351-85.

Reese, Music in the Middle Ages, W. W. Norton and Co., New York, 1940, pp. 148, 161 (footnote 48), 162-63.

⁴Suñol, Text Book of Gregorian Chant, 1930, p. 221.

musical ear imagines and perceives when listening to the unaccompanied melody."1

Potiron² outlines the theory of the three modal groups which consist of hexachords characterized by certain recurring intervals. He states that "as the principle of our accompaniment is merely to follow the melodic outline, of which it seeks only to synthesize the elements, we cannot admit of an a priori principle for the cadences of these modes."³

Bragers, whose close connection with the Pius X School of Music has perhaps contributed to the popularity of his books of accompaniments, also emphasizes the three modal groups of Do, Fa, and Teu, demonstrating that they probably gain their function of a tonic because of the half step below each of them. He states that "only the ictus will receive the chord", but also advocates placing the chord on the Latin word accent. He permits all ornaments to be used, and in fact, uses them in profusion, yet agrees that "the

¹Suñol, <u>Text Book of Gregorian Chant</u>, 1930, p. 157. <u>Cf</u>. Yasser, "Medieval Quartal Harmony", <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., XXIII(1937), 172.

²Potiron, <u>Treatise on the Accompaniment of Gregorian</u> Chant, 1933.

³Ibid., p. x.

Achille Pierre Bragers, A Short Treatise on Gregorian Accompaniment, Carl Fischer, New York, 1934, p. 1.

⁵Ibid., p. 9.

accompaniment should, according to Dom A. Mocquereau, be 'discreet and unobtrusive', reduced to the softest minimum, consistent with the size of the choir, and the ability of the singers." There is some question whether his accompaniments actually illustrate this "discreet and unobtrusive" style.

Another accompaniment book widely used in the United States is one by Rossini. Tertian harmony according to the Solesmes principles is used throughout, with chords placed on almost every ictus. Examples from this work will be contrasted in Chapter IV with the results of quartal harmony as applied to these same melodies.

Peeters has written one of the more recent books on chant accompaniment. It follows the same general rules as Bragers, Rossini, and the other Solesmes disciples, but adds some detailed instructions for teaching chant accompaniment and composing short preludes and postludes. He especially notes that "the Latin text should be respected as much as possible."

Achille Pierre Bragers, A Short Treatise on Gregorian Accompaniment, Carl Fischer, New York, 1934, p. 56.

²Rev. Carlo Rossini, <u>The Gregorian Kyriale with Organ Accompaniment</u>, J. Fischer and Bro., New York, 1942, 178 pp.

Flor Peeters, <u>Methode pratique pour l'accompagnement du Chant Grégorien: A Practical Method of Plain-Chant Accompaniment</u>, H. Dessain Co., Malines, 1949.

⁴¹bid., p. 6.

There are many other accompaniment books, all of which adhere more or less closely to the general Solesmes method. The following section will present a radical departure from these theories of modal harmony as applied to Gregorian Chant.

The Theory of Quartal Harmony

next, comes chronologically before the last two examples mentioned, his theories on medieval harmony are obviously the newest ideas outlined since their first publication in 1937. This method remains in the theoretical stage since the demonstrated principles for chant accompaniment have not been followed up by their application to any large body of Gregorian melodies. The most lengthy illustration of medieval harmony available has been an accompaniment by Farrell applied to a few Masses and hymns. However, the method employed there is not exactly that of Dr. Yasser, although he is cited as a primary bibliographical source. The differences between the two accompaniments will be illustrated in Chapter IV.

Dr. Yasser's theories first appeared in The Musical Quarterly in a series of articles in 1937-38 under the

Gregorian Chant in Medieval Harmony, Master's Thesis, Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York, August, 1951.

title of "Medieval Quartal Harmony". 1 This series begins by tracing certain proofs that the scale basis of Gregorian melodies has a pentatonic rather than a modal framework. The six or seven note appearance of most Gregorian melodies is attributed to the gradual addition of "pien-tones", which are the filled-in notes of a quilisma. These tones were at first merely indicated by the quilisma, but later found their way into the manuscripts, first with the quilisma above the note, and then the note alone. Other reasons for the diatonic appearance of many melodies could be the adaptation of one melody to different texts, modulation within a melody which might give two different pentatonic sets appearing to be one diatonic melody, ornamentation of the original melody, and notes added because of the fluid or gliding elements of Latin speech intonation. These theories afford strong evidence that the Greek modal system was arbitrarily imposed upon these early pentatonic melodies.2

The next section in the essay proceeds to explain how the original melodies, which Dr. Yasser divides into fifteen pentatonic species, were adjusted to the framework of the seven diatonic scales.³

Finally, Dr. Yasser proposes the principles of "quartal harmony" which he feels should be applied whenever a harmonic

Yasser, op. cit.

²<u>Ibid.</u>, Vol. XXIII, pp. 170-97.

³<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 333-66.

background for pentatonic melodies is sought. These principles consist of accepting the fourth as the primary consonant interval and harmonizing a melody with "dyads" which are made up basically of the alternate notes of the scale in question. The dyad (two-note chord) is preferred to the triad because a three-note chord built by superimposed fourths in this system contains two notes which are contiguous in the scale (as A, D, G) and contiguous notes in any scale system are usually considered dissonant, demanding resolution. A more detailed discussion of different scale systems, and specifically the pentatonic scale, can be found in Dr. Yasser's A Theory of Evolving Tonality, but in this thesis it is sufficient to understand this latter scale as a series built of five tones, two intervals of the scale equalling one and one-half tones each, and the other intervals a whole tone each.



The consonant chords (dyads) of this scale would then be alternate notes as follows:

loseph Yasser, A Theory of Evolving Tonality, American Library of Musicology, New York, 1932.



It will be observed that the second chord in the above example forms a major third which is interpreted by Yasser as a diminished dyad, a dissonant interval. Three-note chords, parallel to the diatonic seventh chords, can be formed by superimposed dyads, as:



The two notes (C and F in this scale) surrounding the final or tonic note form the dominant dyad which ordinarily precedes the tonic final as in the diatonic system. Except for the formation of the chords, the rules of harmony do not differ appreciably from the diatonic system. Parallel octaves are forbidden since they are not harmonic, but parallel fourths and inverted fourths (fifths) are permitted. Chords generally progress to the chord of the nearest notes, dissonances must be resolved, and the usual ending is a dominant-tonic sequence. Just as the Tierce de Picardie was once employed to provide a more resonant ending to a

composition in a minor key, so Dr. Yasser advocates ending on a fifth rather than a fourth to provide a more resonant cadence, forming a "Quinte de Picardie".

The application of quartal harmony to Gregorian Chant melodies appears justified because of their pentatonic basis and the evidence of the medieval harmonic mentality which accepted the fourth as the smallest consonant interval. 2 Although in the twelfth century the fifth began to prevail and the fourth was largely omitted from early twelfth century treatises, this can be considered a pentatonic fauxbourdon process similar to the sixth preceding the third as a consonant interval in the current system, and the fourth was duly reinstated c. 1160 by Guy de Chalis.³ In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a tonal change (thirds and sixths regarded as consonances) occurred, but this was applied primarily to the secular melodies, since little if any composition of liturgical melodies was done at this time. This thesis can be proved by reference to the decree of Pope John XXII, "Docta Sanctorum Patrum" (1324), in which all forms of secular music and current polyphonic methods were banished from the church and the ecclesiastical chant was reinstated. This decree allowed the intervals of

¹Yasser, "Medieval Quartal Harmony", <u>The Musical Quarterly</u>, XXIV(1938), 351-85.

²<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 364-65.

³<u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 372-73.

the fourth, fifth, and octave in chant, which "are in the spirit and character of the melodies themselves." There are also other proofs that the liturgical music retained the ancient quartal basis until it became engulfed by the modal polyphony culminating in the sixteenth century. Thus it would seem reasonable to apply quartal harmony to Gregorian Chant in order to preserve its ancient and medieval character.

This method of accompaniment is strongly advocated by Jones² and aptly summarized by Reese who states:

If accompaniment is desirable at all . . . , the 'quartal' system certainly furnishes a better basis for it in connection with the many melodies showing unmistakable pentatonic traits than does . . . the 'tertian' system — . . . 3

However, other reactions to Dr. Yasser's revolutionary suggestions have been those of mixed feelings. Farrell applied the principle of using only fourths and fifths in chant accompaniments, but otherwise did not use true medieval harmony. His harmonies are built on the diatonic scale and hence employ the pien-tones which Yasser excludes from the chordal system. The result, as illustrated in Ex. 4, is the combination of one harmonic method and another scaler frame-work. To the listener familiar with correct quartal harmony,

l"White List of the Society of St. Gregory of America", New York, 1932, p. 3, quoted in Yasser, op. cit., p. 380.

²Jones, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 127.

³Reese, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 161 (footnote 48).





Gerald Farrell, op. cit., p. 30.
Quartal harmony as outlined by Yasser, op. cit.

the introduction of the two "extra" tones of the diatonic scale into the chords of the accompaniment sounds somewhat odd and fails to impart a satisfying effect.

The pentatonic origin of all ecclesiastical chant is also doubted by Cardine. He attacks Yasser's theory of the plagal modes, pien-tones, fifth as an inverted fourth, and other aspects of the treatise. Nevertheless, he agrees there is great merit in the work and states it can certainly be read with profit by all persons interested in the problem. Gastoué also has some misgivings about Yasser's conclusions, but he sets these aside in favor of the greater proof illustrated in the striking example of a harmonization of parts of Gloria XV (cf. Ex. 5).

A conclusion certainly unexpected for many of us. But the sequence [of arguments] and the examples of such accompaniments, composed by Mr. Joseph Yasser, are so sensibly attempted, that they form a demonstrative proof in favor of their use, at least eventually.

Dom Eugene Cardine, Review of Medieval Quartal Harmony by Joseph Yasser, Revue Grégorienne, XXIV(1939), p. 236.

²<u>Ibid</u>., 238-39.

^{3&}quot;Conclusion [Yasser's] certainement inattendue pour beaucoup d'entre nous. Mais les enchaînements et les exemples de tels accompagnements, composés par M. Joseph Yasser, sont si judicieusement essayés, qu'ils forment une preuve démonstrative en faveur de leur emploi, au moins éventuel." Amédée Gastoué, Review of Medieval Quartal Harmony by Joseph Yasser, Revue du Chant Grégorien, XLIII (1939), 96.



CHAPTER III

CURRENT RHYTHMIC THEORIES

The problem of rhythm in the execution of Gregorian Chant is somewhat difficult to solve. There appear to be no "sure and definitive" medieval writings or other records that can clarify with much certainty the original rhythm of the Gregorian melodies. However, various theories have been postulated upon evidence gathered from certain markings in the manuscripts, writings of the medieval theoreticians, and references to early practices connected with the music of the Church. Three of these theories are currently the most widely known and practiced. Each will be briefly described in an attempt to understand their main tenets.

The Mensuralist School

The Mensuralist theories, which are seldom put into practice today, are based on evidences from treatises of the fourth to the twelfth centuries and are supported by many notable scholars such as Jeannin, Dechevrens, Bonvin, Gietmann, and Peter Wagner. The main tenet of this school consists of the assigning of the modern time values of whole notes through eighth notes to the neumes and single notes (punctums and virgas) of Gregorian notation. This leads to the concept of the "Gregorian measure", of which Jeannin outlines the following properties:

Reese, Music in the Middle Ages, pp. 143, 145.

- (1) alternation of proportional long and short tones.
- (2) grouping of these long and short tones into groups of two to eight primary beats.
- (3) the existence of strong and weak beats. 1

 above scholar, together with Peter Wagner, advoc

The above scholar, together with Peter Wagner, advocates the more widely accepted postulate that there are only two different time-durations rather than the three durations proposed earlier by Dechevrens, Gietmann, and Bonvin. These two time values are roughly equivalent to the eighth-note and the quarter-note, the latter being applied to the accented syllables, which generally occur in connection with the ascending passages in the melody. These Latin word accents are the basis for a number of the rhythmic patterns of the Mensuralists and are always considered of great importance.

Maugin, in the "Directions for Chanters and Chorus" of his nineteenth-century <u>Kyriale</u>, indicates that there are four time values, all incorporated in the <u>Kyriale</u> melodies which are given in modern notation.

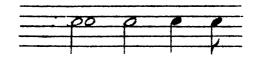
ludwig Bonvin, "The 'Measure' in Gregorian Music", The Musical Quarterly, XV(1929), 18.

²Reese, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 143.

Jom Jules Jeannin, Accent bref ou Accent long en Chant Grégorien?, H. Herelle and Cie., Paris, 1929, p. 2.

⁴Jeannin, <u>Etudes sur le Rythme Grégorien</u>, Etienne Gloppe, Lyon, 1925, p. 120.

Ex. 6



He claims that these are "faithfully translated from the Gregorian notation", and explains that each preceding note is longer than the other, but the "value is not so much of mathematical exactness as of good taste and proper training in matter of Liturgy." These examples perhaps give some idea of the divergence of theory among the Mensuralists themselves.

But in spite of this divergence, they have certain historical bases for their claims. Schmidt quotes such medieval theoreticians as Hucbald, Guido, and Berno of Reichenau (ninth through eleventh centuries). Bonvin consults Aribo (late eleventh century), and Jeannin quotes the "Ars Mensurabilis" (eleventh or twelfth century). However, probably the main criticism against these authorities is that they may be describing the rhythm of the new polyphony and decadent chant rather than the original manner of

¹Rev. C. Maugin, <u>Kyriale</u>, John Murphy and Co., Baltimore, 1857, pp. 7-8.

²J. G. Schmidt, "Principal Texts of the Gregorian Authors concerning Rhythm" (pamphlet), Buffalo Volksfreund Pr. Co., N.Y., 1928.

Bonvin, op. cit., p. 16.

⁴Jeannin, Accent bref, p. 7.

executing the old chant melodies. The fact that there is such difference of opinion concerning time values explains why the Mensuralists have not been able to set up a universal or workable system for the application of their theories. These theories cannot be applied by the ordinary church musician, but only by the individual scholars according to the respective interpretations of each. This is obviously a highly unsatisfactory arrangement which has perhaps contributed to the disrepute of the system among many twentieth-century church musicians.

The Accentualist School

The Accentualist School illustrates in a different manner the belief that the word accent was intensive from the very beginnings of Gregorian Chant¹ and that all "Gregorian melody is built on the grammatical accents of the liturgical text."² It is headed by Dom Pothier, the second of the Solesmes abbots who have lead the Gregorian reform, and numbers such illustrious followers as Dom Lucien David and Pierre Aubry.

The manner of execution of chant according to these scholars is relatively simple. The chant is treated much

Reese, op. cit., p. 141.

²Ibid., p. 166.

as oratorical poetry, with the notes of equal value and the accent falling on the natural accent of the word. Contrary to the Mensuralist views, this accent is not one of duration but one of stress.

. . . the notes are equal in duration, and unequal only in intensity.²

The old liturgical languages, . . . , have in each word one syllable affected with a tonic accent which stresses that syllable in the spoken or chanted pronunciation and which constitutes the unity of the word. At the time which interests us, this accent is always an accent of intensity which gives to the accented syllable neither more sharpness, nor a longer duration, but a greater stress.

These notes of equal value constitute free rhythm, which is essential to the basic character of Gregorian chant, the earliest examples of which were simple readings or declamations. 4

According to David, the spirit of the early oratorical chants

¹ Dom Joseph Pothier, Les Melodies Grégoriennes, Desclée and Co., Tournai, 1880, p. 191.

^{2&}quot;. . . les notes sont égales en durée, et inégales seulement en intensité." Pothier, op. cit., p. 196.

^{3&}quot;Les langues liturgiques anciennes, . . . , ont dans châque mot une syllabe affectée d'un accent tonique qui met cette syllabe en relief dans la prononciation parlée ou chantée et qui constitue l'unité du mot. A l'époque qui nous occupe, cet accent est toujours un accent d'intensité qui donne à la syllabe accentuée ni plus d'acuité, ni plus de durée, mais plus de force." Pierre Aubry, Le Rythme Tonique dans la Poésie Liturgique et dans le Chant des Eglises Chrétiennes au Moyen Age, H. Welter, Paris, 1903, p. 55.

Dom Lucien David, O.S.B., Le rythme verbal et musical dans le chant romain, Les éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1933, p. 50.

continued to influence the musical composers of the Church in later centuries.

The problem of applying these theories to examples of identical melodies with different texts has been considered by David. While he does not deny the possibility of the presence of a purely melodic accent, he maintains that this "melodic accent was inseparable from the accent of intensity and was even subordinated to it." Therefore it was concluded that these fixed melodic formulas were usually modified when used with a differently accented text in order to conform to the accents of the text.

Pothier has discussed the hymns. He places emphasis on the metrical system of Latin poetry and applies its principles especially to those hymns with poetical texts which naturally tend to be more metrical than the other chants. However, he maintains that the hymns must still be treated primarily according to the word accent and less according to the metrical accent.

Practically, let us repeat, when these hymns are syllabic, one must give them a natural movement of recitation, in stressing somewhat the metrical

lom Lucien David, O.S.B., Le rythme verbal et musical dans le chant romain, Les éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, p. 50.

^{2&}quot;accent melodique etait inseparable de l'accent d'intensité et lui était même subordonne." David, op. cit., p. 50.

³<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 55.

accent, without a great deal of concern for the tonic accent, and in leaving out completely the quantity.

The Accentualist theories appear to be fairly well supported. Aubry, in criticizing the work of the Mensuralist exponent, Dechevrens, demonstrates that all chant is of the same basic pattern of free rhythm according to the universal sign, $\times PONOS$, which is the smallest rhythmic unit. He maintains that it was from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries that the chant was altered both in tonality and rhythm and that unequal rhythm is primarily the result of the work of eighteenth and nineteenth century artists. He confirms the Benedictine free rhythm of Dom Pothier in stating

The liturgical poetry of the Christian Churches has not known any other principles of versification other than this accent, the return of which at fixed places constitutes a rhythmic element.⁵

Dom David defends the idea that there may be larger groupings than the two-and three-note groups ordinarily recognized

l"Pratiquement, nous le répétons, lorsque ces hymnes sont syllabiques, il faut leur donner un mouvement naturel de récitation, en appuyant quelque peu sur l'accent métrique, sans s'inquiéter beaucoup de l'accent tonique, et en laissant absolument de côté la quantité." Pothier, op. cit., p. 197.

²Aubry, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 11.

³Ibid., p. 82.

⁴Ibid., p. 78.

^{5&}quot;La poésie liturgique des Eglises Chrétiennes n'a pas connu d'autres principes de versification que cet accent, dont le retour à des places déterminées constitue un élément rythmique." Aubry, p. 55.

by the Mocquereau disciples, by giving examples of Latin psalm verses that fall very naturally into a four syllable pattern.

But the presence of monosyllables and the psychological and grammatical necessity of sometimes adding them as the close complement of a preceding ternary group, determine then a grouping of four indivisible syllables.

He also maintains that certain signs in the manuscripts probably represent intensity, and not elongation.²

Pothier has reconciled free rhythm with the writings of Guido³ and aptly summarized his own views on the Mensuralist proofs for their theories.

While quoting in their treatises some examples of plain-chant, the mensuralists do not intend therefore to submit the Gregorian melodies to their system of rhythm; the plain-chant of which they speak is that which ordinarily makes up the bass part in their motets. 4

The importance of the word accent is maintained by all schools of rhythmic theories, yet that of the Accentualists seems to provide the only system easily applied to achieve

l'Mais la présence de monosyllabes et la nécessité psychologique et grammaticale de les adjoindre parfois comme le complément intime d'un groupe ternaire précédent determinent alors un groupement de quatre syllabes indivisible."
David, op. cit., p. 46.

²Ibid., pp. 98-99.

³Pothier, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., pp. 182-83.

^{4&}quot;En citant dans leurs traités des exemples de plainchant, les mensuralistes n'entendent pas pour cela soumettre à leur systeme de rythme les mélodies grégoriennes; le plainchant dont ils parlent est celui dont ils font ordinairement la partie de basse dans leur motets." Pothier, p. 197.

this result in actual singing of the chant. They are indirectly supported by many writers on the chant who emphasize this word accent yet hesitate to support any particular school of rhythmic theories.

The Solesmes School

The Solesmes rhythmic theories are by far the best known and probably the object of the most diverse criticisms of all the systems. The title of "Solesmes" is not entirely accurate since the rhythmic theories which are meant are actually those of Dom Mocquereau and his disciples and do not include those of Dom Pothier and the other Solesmes leaders in Gregorian restoration. However, since this title is popularly employed, it will also be used here.

The main theories of this system are based on the premise of free rhythm, or all notes basically equal in duration. To this premise are added the theories of two-and three-note groupings of notes, the arsis and thesis, and the four signs, i.e. episema $(\bar{\bullet})$, dot (P), ictus $(\bar{\bullet})$, and the comma $(\bar{\bullet})$.

The grouping consists of dividing a melodic line into groups of two and three notes and placing an ictus on the first note of each group,² as in the following Kyrie:

¹Reese, op. cit., pp. 141-42.

²Dom J. H. Desroquettes, O.S.B., "The Rhythmic Traditions in the Manuscripts", <u>Caecilia</u>, LXXXI(1954), 51.

Ex. 7



This is accomplished by placing an ictus on the first note of every neume and on all doubled or long notes, and then counting back (right to left) by twos to place the others.

"It is an excellent practice in rhythming, therefore, to begin from the first certain ictus on the right and work back to the left to find the others."

This type of grouping is disputed by David and Murray, the latter of whom claims that "although this exclusively binary and ternary grouping is an essential element in Solesmes theory, it is unsupported by any literary evidence from the past."

This criticism seems particularly enlightening since it comes from a person who

¹ Graduale Sacrosanctae Romanae Ecclesiae de Tempore et de Sanctis, et rhythmicis signis a Solesmensibus Monachis, Society of St. John the Evangelist, Desclée and Co., Tournai, 1952, p. 4.

² Dom Gregory Suñol, O.S.B., <u>Text Book of Gregorian</u> Chant, Desclée and Co., Tournai, 1930, p. 77.

³David, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 46.

⁴Dom Gregory Murray, "Plainsong Rhythm (The Editorial Methods of Solesmes)", <u>Caecilia</u>, LXXXIV(1957), p. 11 (footnote).

was for many years in complete agreement with the Solesmes rhythmic theories.

The ictus, sometimes called a vertical episema ('), is a term and a sign evolved by Solesmes to mark the rhythm of a melodic line. Its actual function is rather elusive since the various definitions and explanations given do not appear to clarify sufficiently its proper interpretation. It has been defined as an "alighting place" or "simply a 'dip' of the voice, an alighting place sought by the rhythm at intervals of every two or three notes . . ." Other definitions include the "rhythmic fall", the "beat, sound, touch, or stroke" which "falls at the end of the rhythm, on the note of repos." Suñol compares the ictus to the first beat of a measure and goes on to say

The ictus must be divorced from any idea of force or lengthening out. It is a common fault to assimilate it to the accent of the words and

¹Murray, "Gregorian Rhythm: A Pilgrim's Progress", <u>Downside Review</u>, LII, Catholic Records Press, Exeter, 1934, pp. 13-47.

²Suñol, op. cit., p. 67.

^{3&}lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 73.

⁴Rev. Andrew F. Klarmann, <u>Gregorian Chant</u>, Gregorian Institute of America, Toledo (Ohio), 1945, p. 33.

⁵Dom Andre Mocquereau, <u>Le Nombre Musical Grégorien</u>, (translated by Aileen Tone), Soc. of St. John the Evangelist, Desclée and Co., Tournai, 1932, p. 47.

^{6&}lt;u>Ibid</u>., p. 61.

⁷Suñol, op. cit., p. 77.

give it their value. In itself it may be strong or weak; it only gains its dynamic or quantitative value from the note which happens to correspond to it . . . It can readily be understood that this must be so in order to safeguard the unity of the compound beat.

The above descriptions testify to the difficult-todefine nature of the ictus. Murray summarizes the numerous criticisms of this synthetic rhythmic sign when he states

. . . the Solesmes writers can adduce no ancient description or definition of the "ictus" in their special sense of the word, as a downbeat essentially without impulse actual or implied . . . Furthermore, there is not a single "ictus" mark as such in any ancient manuscript; all the authentic rhythmic signs concern the lengths of the notes.²

The episema and dot are two more rhythmic markings peculiar to the Solesmes method. The first usually denotes a lengthening but not a doubling of a note value, while the second occurs most often at the end of a phrase and means the note shall receive two pulses. These markings are not as widely criticized as the ictus since there appears to be some historical evidence for them in certain manuscripts such as those of St. Gall and Beneventaine.

¹Suñol, op. cit., p. 73.

²Murray, "Plainsong Rhythm", p. 11 (footnote).

Jom Gregory Suñol, O.S.B., <u>Introduction à la Paléographie Musicale Grégorienne</u>, Society of St. John the Evangelist, Desclée and Co., Paris, 1935, pp. 136-38, 157-58.

The comma, as well as the vertical double, full, half, and incise bar lines, indicate where phrases end and where breaths may be taken. Frequently they are purely editorial markings that do not appear in the manuscripts.

In view of the extensive studies of the Solesmes scholars, it is important to consider their views and historical claims very carefully. Sunol states that most manuscripts indicate rhythm by modifying the neumes or making certain additions to the notation. However, the method of interpreting these modifications appears to be somewhat arbitrary upon examination of an explanation such as this:

If indeed, in a series of notes on the unison, the copyist writes the <u>punctum planum</u> in an elongated manner, this is not in order to mark the note long, but simply for greater convenience of writing. Let us note that the <u>punctum planum</u> is a true sign of retard when it affects the neumes.²

There are also indications that many of these signs exist only in the St. Gall manuscripts and possibly were not at

l Dom Gregory Suñol, O.S.B., <u>Introduction à la Paléographie Musicale Grégorienne</u>, Society of St. John the Evangelist, Desclée and Co., Paris, 1935, p. 157.

^{2&}quot;Si en effet, dans une série de notes à l'unisson, le copiste écrit le <u>punctum planum</u> allongé, ce n'est pas pour marquer une note longue, mais simplement pour une plus grande commodité d'écriture. Notons que le <u>punctum planum</u> est un véritable signe de retard quand il affecte les neumes." Sunol, <u>Introduction à la Paléographie Musicale Grégorienne</u>, p. 140.

all indicative of universal practice at that time. 1 Suñol admits that there are justifications for the interpretation of certain manuscript rhythmic <u>letters</u> from other writings of monks, but these writings make no mention of rhythmic <u>signs</u>. 2 He concludes that

Without doubt many of the manuscripts do not define the rhythm with all the desirable clarity; but there has been found a very sufficient number which is of incontestable value — we have already studied some of them, — which enable us to clarify this question of rhythm as far as its least details.

Burge 4 has violently criticized the rhythmic theories of Dom Mocquereau, refuting one by one the various propositions outlined in Volume VII of the <u>Paléographie Musicale</u>. He refers to this volume as a "large quarto of nearly three hundred pages, written in a diffuse and exaggerated style that makes it rather trying to read", 5 and states of Dom Mocquereau that

¹ Jeannin, Etudes sur le Rythme Grégorien, p. 124.

² Suñol, <u>Introduction</u>, p. 140-50.

^{3&}quot;Sans doute beaucoup de manuscrits ne précisent pas le rythme avec toute la clarté désirable; mais il s'en trouve un nombre très suffisant et d'une valeur incontestable — nous en avons déja étudié quelques-uns, — qui nous permettent d'éclairer cette question du rythme jusque dans ses moindres détails." Suñol, p. 434.

Hev. Thomas Anselm Burge, O.S.B., An Examination of the Rhythmic Theories of Dom Mocquereau, R. & T. Washbourne, London, 1905.

⁵Ibid., p. 4.

We may also see his strong preoccupation to reduce the Gregorians to bars and measures of modern music, to place the accent on the weak beat, the thesis on the strong, the forcible adaption of text to music, the inability to understand trochee metre, and a number of other oddities that I hope to expose in the course of these pages. I

Although these criticisms are very strongly stated, similar ones have been noted by the present writer and others.² Desroquettes answers them thus:

the rhythmic signs of Solesmes, even the most criticized vertical episemas, make possible an execution not only popular, not only artistic, but also as a whole certainly based on the indications of the manuscripts, on the objective structure of the melodies that they have transmitted to us, and on the rhythmic principles constantly applied in those melodies.

Many church musicians and scholars will agree that the renditions according to this system are certainly popular and often artistic, yet the disagreement on manuscript evidence leads to the conclusion that a great deal of further study and evidence will be required before these theories can be accepted unequivocally.

large, Thomas Anselm Burge, O.S.B., An Examination of the Rhythmic Theories of Dom Mocquereau, R. & T. Washbourne, London, 1905, p. 6.

²Jeannin, <u>Etudes sur le Rhythme Grégorien</u>; and Murray, "Plainsong Rhythm", op. cit.

³Desroquettes, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 52.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD OF THE PRESENT ACCOMPANIMENT

Harmony

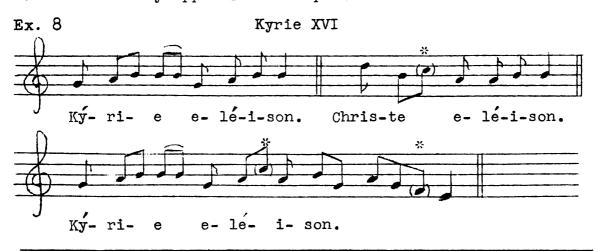
The harmonic structure employed in the following accompaniments is essentially that proposed by Dr. Yasser¹ and discussed more fully in Chapter II of this thesis. This is a quartal system based on the premise that Gregorian melodies are built on a pentatonic scale structure.

The underlying pentatonic structure has been observed in numerous instances, particularly in the earlier chants. In the psalm tones, for instance, the flexus ordinarily occurs on the note directly adjacent to and below the reciting tone. However, in the second, third, fifth and eighth tones, this flexus drops a minor third which is two notes below the reciting tone. The reason for this may well be the unconscious desire to avoid using the pien-tone as a note of repose. Other indications of support for the pientone theory also follow from a close examination of the Gregorian melodies. These pien-tones appear most often as part of a neume. When they do occur in monosyllabic chants they almost exclusively accompany a syllable unaccented in the Latin text. Sentences and word phrases, as well as melodic phrases, never end on a pien-tone. Two pien-tones are never found in succession, either set to separate syllables or to one syllable (thus causing what is executed as a note of

loseph Yasser, "Medieval Quartal Harmony", The Musical Quarterly, XXIII(1937), 170-97, 333-36; XXIV(1938), 351-85.

double time value). The only instances of pien-tones appearing as long notes are in the Solesmes editions where a dot is added to the note, probably arbitrarily. Therefore, the premise of pentatonic structure has much factual evidence and was thus accepted as a basis for the use of quartal harmony.

The first step in the application of this harmonic theory to an accompaniment for a Gregorian melody consists of classifying the melody according to one or more of the fifteen pentatonic species (Table 1). This can be done by examining the melodic figurations of the melody and determining which tones were originally pien-tones. Thus, by a process similar to "reverse restoration", the melodic structure can be reduced to five tones rather than six or seven as it ordinarily appears in the present notation.



¹Yasser, op. cit., p. 335.

²Yasser, "How Can the Ancient Hebrew Melos Be Restored?", <u>Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Conference-Convention of the Cantors' Assembly of America and the Department of Music of the United Synagogue of America, 1956, p. 31.</u>

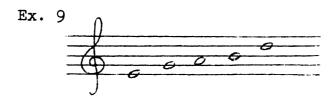
TABLE I FIFTEEN PENTATONIC SPECIES

Species	Scale with piens in ()	Mode
1	\underline{D}^* (E) F G $\underline{\underline{A}}$ (B) C D	I
2	\underline{D} E (F) G $\underline{\underline{A}}$ B (C) D	I
3	\underline{D} E (F) G $\underline{\underline{A}}$ (B) C D	I
4	\underline{D} E (F) G $\underline{\underline{A}}$ (B ^b)C D	I
5	\underline{D} (E) F G $\underline{\underline{A}}$ (B ^b)C D	I
6	A (B) C \underline{D} (E) \underline{F} G A	II
7	$\underline{\underline{E}}$ (F) G A $\underline{\underline{B}}$ (C) D E	III
8	$\underline{\mathbf{E}}$ (F) G A (B) $\underline{\underline{\mathbf{C}}}$ D E	III
9	B (C) D $\underline{\underline{E}}$ (F) G $\underline{\underline{\underline{A}}}$ B	IA
10	<u>f</u> g a (b) <u>c</u> d (e) f	v
11	\underline{F} G (A) B ^b $\underline{\underline{C}}$ D (E) F	v
12	\underline{F} G A $(B^b)\underline{\underline{C}}$ D (E) F	v
	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	VI
13	\underline{G} A (B) C $\underline{\underline{D}}$ (E) F G	VII
14	\underline{G} A B (C) $\underline{\underline{D}}$ E (F) G	VII
15	\underline{G} A (B) C $\underline{\underline{D}}$ E (F) G	VII
	$D E F \underline{G} A B \underline{C} D$	VIII

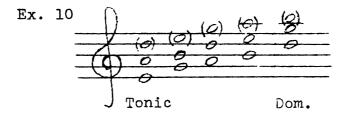
^{*} _ indicates final of mode, _ indicates dominant of mode.

It will be noted in Example 8 (p. 53) that the starred pientones (C and F) are either due to elaboration of the melody (C) or represent a part of a descending, and presumably "quilismatic", passage (F). The melody retains its general contour and melodic essence when these tones are omitted. If modulations are present, they must also be determined by this same process.

With the pentatonic scale of the Kyrie in Example 8 outlined as:



the system of quartal chords (dyads and triads) can then be constructed according to the alternate notes of the scale.



The dominant and tonic dyads are noted, as well as the threenote chords (quartal triads) and their respective resolutions.

The last step is to place these chords in a certain relationship to the melodic line. The most practical method, which consists of having the dyadic accompaniment below the

melodic line, is the one employed here, although other arrangements are certainly desirable and give an artistic variety. The accompaniment may be varied by placing it above or around the melodic line as is illustrated with the Introit of Christmas and the Easter Sequence. With a sufficiently well trained choir the melodic line may be omitted entirely and the accompaniment perhaps expanded in range and/or number of voices to accomodate this change. The individual organist may experiment with these variations according to the needs and abilities of his choir and congregation.

One of the problems encountered in classifying chants according to species is the evidence of diatonic elements in many melodies, particularly the Credos, and some of the later Ordinaries such as Masses VIII and XI. These may be harmonized in a manner mixing tertian and quartal elements according to the principle that "the harmonies used should, as far as possible, be a synthesis of the most important intervals in the melody." However, bearing in mind the fact that many of the later chants were derived from earlier melodic patterns, the basic elements of quartal harmony should not be neglected.

Henri Potiron, <u>Treatise on the Accompaniment of Gregorian Chant</u> (translated by Ruth C. Gabain), Soc. of St. John the Evangelist, Desclée and Co., Tournai, 1933, p. 141.

Quartal formations may also be applied with a persuasive effect to melodies veering away gradually from the pentatonic to the diatonic basis. And even though it would be quite normal, generally, to inject here an ever increasing amount of tertian formations, their avoidance rather than use would still be preferable in harmonizations, of at least some of such 'intermediate' melodic specimens.

Although these quartal formations are foreign to the modern ear, the experiences of the writer and others² in comparing tertian and quartal accompaniments (Ex. 11) indicate that the ear of the listener adapts quite readily to the new sounds, especially if these correctly employ the melodic elements. Therefore "conditions should be favorable now for a new approach, based upon the principle that the accompaniment should be related as closely as practicable to the times of origin of the chants."³

Rhythm

Another factor in the placing of the chords is the rhythmic movement. Since the Solesmes edition of the Vatican

loseph Yasser, "The Traditional Roots of Jewish Harmony", Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Conference-Convention of the Cantors' Assembly and the Dept. of Music of the United Synagogue of America, 1951, p. 17.

²Jones, "The Harmonic Basis of Plainchant Accompaniment", Caecilia, LXXXII(1955) 127-29; and Farrell, An Accompaniment to Gregorian Chant in Medieval Harmony, Master's Thesis, Eastman School of Music, Rochester, August, 1951.

³Jones, op. cit., p. 127.

Ex. 11



Rossini, op. cit., p. 92.
Quartal harmony by writer.

Graduale is currently the most widely used, all of the rhythmic markings, excluding the controversial ictus, will be followed. The icti and the corresponding Solesmes practice of placing a chord on almost every one of them are rejected because of the resulting conflict with the Latin word accent. "But to place chords under the theses [which have icti], and to take them by preference will make the accent seem to be in perpetual discord with that which should be its support and the result will be a kind of syncopation." Therefore, while most dots and episemas will be retained, chords will be placed only on Latin word accents or on the first notes of neumes in melismatic passages in basic accordance with the Accentualist rhythmic theories.

The frequency of chord changes is also to be considered. Since the earliest chants were simple readings or declamations, 2 it is felt that this speech-like movement should be retained in executing the chant. This should result in a movement a little faster than is often heard, although never sounding hurried. Therefore, chord changes, except for cadences, are relatively infrequent, ranging from every two or three to every six or more notes according to the passage in

Quotation of Vincent D'Indy in Burge, An Examination of the Rhythmic Theories of Dom Mocquereau, \overline{R} . & T. Washbourne, London, 1905, p. 16.

²David, <u>Le rythme verbal et musical dans le chant romain,</u> Les éditions de l'université d'Ottawa, 1933, p. 50.

question. Jones states

Constant changes of chords and intervals sound heavy and clumsy, and create rhythmic difficulties which need not exist if sustained ones are held . . . Let rhythm be the concern of the singers. The business of the organ is to furnish harmony without impeding the rhythm.1

While it is agreed that the accompaniment should not impede the rhythm, neither should it entirely neglect it since the assistance of an accompaniment with certain basic elements of movement may enable a choir or congregation that is unfamiliar with free rhythm to execute it in a more satisfactory manner.

Therefore, chord changes will be employed less frequently than in previously published accompaniments, and will preferably take place on the Latin word accent. Since occasionally a more ornate accompaniment may be desired, an illustration of parts of Mass I harmonized in this manner is included (Ex. 12).

Selection of Chants

The chants selected for harmonization were chosen for two primary reasons.

- (1) Frequency of use by choirs in the modern Catholic High Mass and relative artistic and practical value.
- (2) Date or era of probable composition with preference given to the earlier chants.

¹Jones, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 129.

Ex. 12



Four of the more common masses of the <u>Kyriale</u> are harmonized. Next the <u>Gloria Patri</u> tones and the psalm tones are included because they are so frequently employed to chant the propers at High Mass. Finally, the full Gregorian propers of the Feasts of the Nativity and Easter, as well as the Alleluia and Gradual of Holy Saturday, are harmonized. It is hoped that this will represent a sample collection which will be practical for the average parish organist.

Perhaps this small group of accompaniments will help to create, for some at least, the "musically satisfactory result" which other accompaniments have not yet accomplished.

In conformity with the style of Gregorian notation, the Latin words in the accompaniments have been arranged with the vowels beneath the first note to be sung on that syllable.

²Jones, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 127.

CHAPTER V

QUARTAL ACCOMPANIMENTS



























































































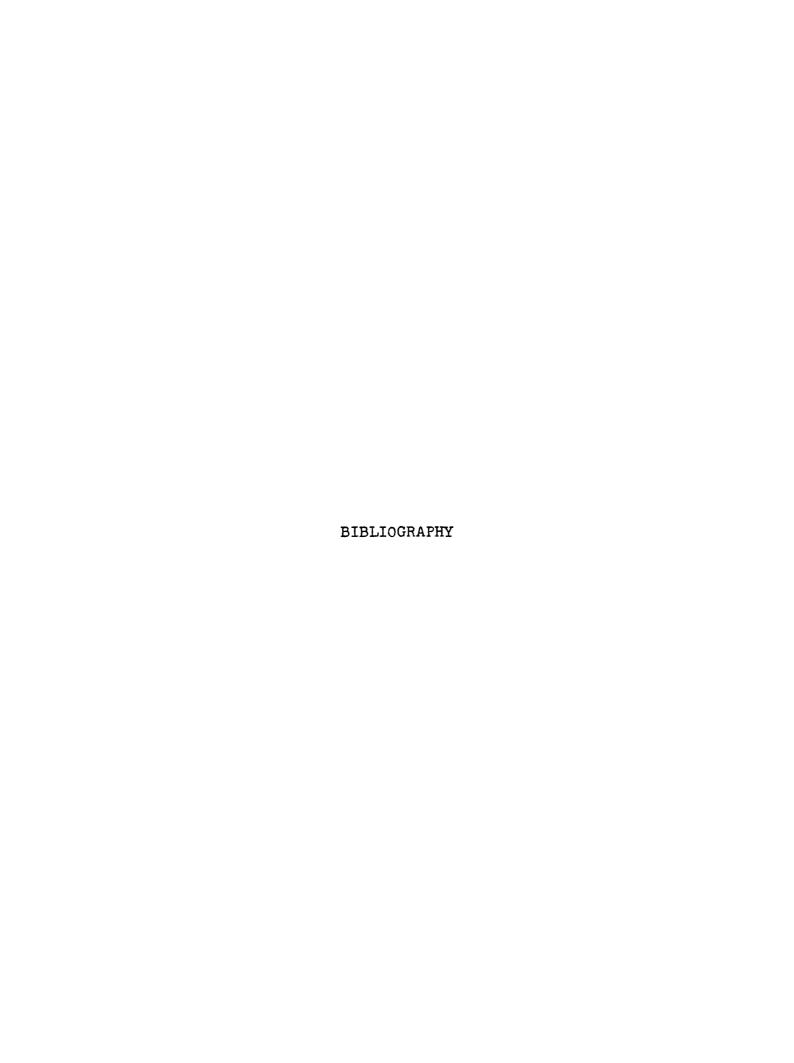












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