

2017

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Recommended Citation

Lundberg, Mattias O. (2017) "Liturgical Singing in the Lutheran Mass in Early Modern Sweden and its Implications for Clerical Ritual Performance and Lay Literacy," *Yale Journal of Music & Religion*: Vol. 3: No. 1, Article 4.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17132/2377-231X.1066>

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Liturgical Singing in the Lutheran Mass in Early Modern Sweden and Its Implications for Clerical Ritual Performance and Lay Literacy

Mattias Lundberg

If ever there was a category of music in Swedish history that perfectly illustrated the relevance of the scholarly dictum “normaliter non in actis”—that whatever is normal and expected in a given context is naturally absent from its written documents—it is that of liturgical chant in the early modern Lutheran Church of Sweden. In fact, the spirit of the opposing sentence from Roman law, “quod non est in actis, non est in mundo” (whatever is absent from the documents is also absent from the world), may in itself account for the slanted historiographical view of liturgical music in Sweden that the discipline of musicology has often presented. Music that was performed only once or twice for a limited circle of listeners has frequently been highlighted because the sources so readily allow it. However, in order to understand the liturgical music that was most widely sung and heard in Sweden for hundreds of years, we must direct our attention to the fringe cases and anomalies, where something did not function as expected.

This article will show how scholarly attempts to trace Lutheran chant traditions in Sweden are relevant to the study of historical literacy and learning by rote, since the musical inflections in question were the main means of relaying biblical texts to laypersons of varying degrees of literacy and nonliteracy. Early modern Swedes rarely heard the Bible read; instead, as we will see, it was chanted according to a set of melodic formulas known as *accentus formulae*, a practice that seems to have made a strong impression on the laity. Priests relied on such chanting in fulfilling their obligation to teach biblical passages to the laity, much like the poets or narrators in the predominantly oral cultures described by Eric Havelock. The message, according to Havelock, “could not be published or communicated except in performance, and here he [the poet or narrator] was very conscious of his virtuosity. While he may not always have recognized the cultural meaning of what he was preserving, he was very vividly aware of the techniques that he wielded to make it stick.”¹ What Havelock calls “the psychology of the poetic performance” similarly informed the musical performance that enabled illiterate laity to partake in the texts conveyed by liturgical chant. This process became more complicated as different degrees of literacy emerged in the broader strata of Swedish society.

The Concept of Clerical Singing in the Mass

Musically and liturgically speaking, Sweden experienced a slow and cautious Reformation. Although concrete evidence for congregational singing is conspicuously lacking before the early seventeenth century,² initial impulses emanating from the Hanseatic city of Stockholm in the late

¹ Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 145.

² On the protests against sixteenth-century reforms in Swedish liturgy, see Martin Berntson, *Mässan och armborstet: Uppror och reformation i Sverige 1525–1544* (Skellefteå: Artos, 2010); and Folke Bohlin, “Till frågan

1520s met with resistance in many parts of the kingdom. What remained resilient from pre-Reformation times was the singing of the lectionary (from the prophets, the Gospels, and the Pauline epistles) and the eucharistic sections of the Mass, from the late sixteenth century onward exclusively in the Swedish vernacular. This liturgical practice was generally described as a special ritual act by the priest: *att mässa* (“to chant the Mass”). In the period 1531–1811, from the first liturgical order for the Mass in the vernacular published by the Stockholm reformer Olaus Petri to its equivalent in 1811, roughly 35 million Sunday Masses are likely to have been celebrated in the Lutheran Church of Sweden, effectively involving every individual in the population on a regular basis.³ The melodic formulas that were sung at the vast majority, if not all, of these services are little known today, to musicians as well as musicologists and church historians. They are the subject of a forthcoming study by the author. This article focuses on the contextual factors of such singing in relation to laypersons.

In early modern Swedish (analogous to other Germanic languages), the verb *att mässa* means “to chant” (literally, “to Mass”). Today this expression must be used with caution, partly because it has undergone a pejorative shift in the last 100 years and now connotes a monotonous, unreflective, or doggedly insistent mode of speech. Moreover, there is very little free recitation in the present Mass of the Swedish Church; the only text that is still chanted to fixed recitation formulas is the preface, that is, the beginning of the eucharistic prayer.⁴

In early modern times, the infinitive form *att mässa* was predominantly used in the sense of free cantillation, especially of biblical readings and other parts of the Mass that were sung to accentus formulae. An instance can be cited from the Växjö Consistory Records of 1713: “When he [the priest] came from the pulpit before the altar, he chanted some of the text and read the words of institution” (När han war kommen utaf Predike-Stohlen för altaret, så mässade han sombdt och läste instichtelse orden).⁵ As late as 1898, the word is still used positively with reference to a chaplain in Strängnäs: “Pladecius was a master singer and thus held as the greatest chanter in the diocese” (Pladecius var storsångare och såsom sådan stiftets förnämste messare).⁶ The musical dictionary of Carl Envallsson states that “the Swedish Mass in general one hardly dares to mention [due to what was at the time perceived as a poor state of practice]. A priest who chants well is, however, an ornament for the service” (den Svenska mässan i allmänhet vågar man numera knappt omtala. En präst, som mässar väl, är likväl en prydnad til gudstjensten).⁷

om församlingssång före reformationen,” *Upptakter i den svenska vokalmusikens historia* (Gothenburg: Ejeby, 2014), 85–99.

³ See Olaus Petri, *Then swenska messan . . . med orsaker till var före hon nu så hållen warder* (Stockholm: Kungl. Tryckeriet, 1531) and *Kyrko-handbok* (Stockholm: Nordström, 1811). My estimate is based on the number of Sundays and observed feast days in the Swedish church calendar, matched against the number and distribution of church buildings. It should not be taken as an empirical dataset and serves only to give some idea of the frequency of this ritual in early modern Sweden. The country’s population grew from fewer than 900,000 in 1531 to 2,411,382 in 1811.

⁴ Den svenska kyrkohandboken 1986 (Stockholm: Petra, 1987) and Förslag till Kyrkohandbok för Svenska Kyrkan (Svenska kyrkans utredningar, 2012:2).

⁵ Växjö domkapitels akter (Växjö Consistory Records), 1713, no. 258, Landsarkivet, Vadstena.

⁶ *Strengnäs stifts herdaminne*, ed. Klaës Alfred Hagström (Strängnäs, 1897–1901), vol. 2 (1898), 257.

⁷ Carl Envallsson, *Svenskt musikaliskt lexikon* (Stockholm: Maquard, 1802), s.v. “Psalmodier.”

Accentus singing (in Swedish, *mässning*) is a distinct system in which a fixed melody has inflections that reflect the inherent clause structure of the text. Andreas Ornithoparcus defines it thus:

Concentus can be the leader and director of all that is sung: that is, hymns, sequences, antiphons, responsories, introits, tropes, and so forth; accentus, of all that is read: that is, gospels, readings, epistles, orations, and verses from the prophets. (Ita ut concentussunt hymni, sequentie, antiphone, responsoria, introitus, tropi et huiusmodi; accentus vero eorum que leguntur: ut sunt evangelia, lectiones, epistole, orationes, prophetie, dux atque moderator existeret.)⁸

Accentus singing was generally taught according to sets of rules attached to different punctuation signs and clause endings (the most important source for Swedish practice being Laurentius Petri's *De punctis distinctionum et accentu ecclesiastico* [On the Punctuations and Accents of Church Readings], dating from the 1560s). It is also exemplified in documents such as the *Allmänt bruk at siunga bönerna* (Common Practice of Prayer Singing; published in several editions, the largest probably being that of 1701), which tells the priest how to chant in a "grammatically correct" manner, using different melodies for questions, full clauses, half clauses, and so on. This type of source is descriptive rather than prescriptive—that is, it purports to reflect actual practice rather than an ideal or desirable situation. Accentus singing also reflects a reverence for scripture in that the audible result is not seen as consisting of two separate elements (a melody connected to a passage of text). Rather, the chant is a unified utterance in which the text governs the melody and the melody enhances the grammatical, narrative, and dramatic contents of the scriptural passage for each Sunday (providing a conceptual link between the "narrated event" of the biblical texts and the "narrative event" of chanting).

In public understanding, accentus singing seems to have remained an *officium*, or task, carried out by the ordained priest or chorister on behalf of the king's subjects and the priest's listeners. (These are the terms used in the Lutheran *hustavla*, a document describing the social order and responsibilities of masters and subjects that was printed and issued together with Luther's small catechism.)⁹ Thus, it is a type of reading that comes by definition "from above." The accentus melodies and their principles of punctuation were memorized, so the singers could apply them to any text at sight. But *Allmänt bruk at siunga bönerna* also provided ready-made examples to learn from. In Example 1 we can see how the epistle text was recited on the so-called *subsemitonium* (B-natural), a semitone below the final note (C). As can be deduced from the example, a half clause simply rises—in the version given here, from B-natural to C—while a full clause has the closing figure D, C, B-natural, C. If several half clauses precede a final clause, they are simply "piled up" until a phrase has a full stop. A colon is followed by a start from A, while a clause following a full stop commences on G.

⁸ Andreas Ornithoparcus, *Musicae activae micrologus* (Leipzig, 1517), fol. F. iii r.

⁹ See Berntson, *Mässan och armborstet*.

(o)

Pingesdag.

För Epistelen Apost. G. 2: 1-13.

The following text is set to a single melodic line with various inflections and clause markers (trapezoidal shapes) above the notes. The text is in Swedish and describes the events of Pentecost.

Thesse efterföljande ord äro beskrefne i Apostlagierningarna.

Da Pingesdagen fullkomnad war / woro the alle endrächteliga
tillsammans. Och wardt hastigt en dån af himmelen / såsom ett
mägtigt stort wäder kommit hade; och upfylte alt huset the the
såto. Och them syntes sönderdelada tungor såsom af eld; och
blef sittandes på hwar och en af them. Och the wordo alle up-
fylte af then Helga Anda: och begynte tala medh annor tungo-
mål / efter som Anden gaf them at tala. Så woro i Jerusalem
boende Judar / gudfruchtige män / af allahanda folk / som under
him

Ex. 1: The inflections and clauses of the Swedish epistle tone, exemplified by a reading from Acts 2:1–13 for Pentecost. From *Allmänt bruk at siunga bönerna* (1701).

In Example 1, we can also see the typical introduction to an epistle passage: “The following words are related in the book of Acts” (Thesse efterföljande ord äro beskrefne i Apostlagierningarna). This phrase at once asserts the role of the ordained priest and signals the

start of his performance. Thus, it is an example of what Barbara Babcock calls “metanarrative,” which she defines as “any element of communication which calls attention to the speech event [in our case, singing event] as a performance and to the relationship which obtains between the narrator and his audience vis-à-vis the narrative message.”¹⁰ The introduction frames the performance of something that could only be sung by the ordained person *for* the laity. The solemnity of this proclamation may partly account for the lay popularity of *mässning*, since it is often mentioned in reports of “hearing the Mass.”

It could be argued that the societal role of a priest in early modern Sweden depended in no small measure on his ability to sing the biblical readings. The records of the riksdag, or diet, of Västerås in 1527 contain an early instance of the verb *mässa*, stating that a priest who does not “chant the Mass” should be reported to the bishop of his diocese.¹¹ One must be careful, since the verb is sometimes used in a way that implies “to celebrate Mass” in a more general sense. In most recorded instances, however, it is clear whether the broader or narrower meaning is intended.

The link between a priest’s societal authority and his ability to sing the *accentus formulae* is clearly illustrated by the fact that clerical appointments were often made after trials of *mässning*. Instances are found throughout the period under discussion. In the Växjö Consistory Records for 1790, for example, we find that the highest-rated applicants for a position had undergone “preaching and chanting trials” (*prediko- och mässa-prof*).¹² This was also the way in which organists were regularly appointed—by public trials within the public liturgy. We also know that at the seminars (pastors’ colleges) in Uppsala and Åbo, great stress was laid on practicing *mässning* as a professional requisite. That the word is so commonly found outside ecclesiastical contexts testifies to the widespread practice of recitation on the fixed melodies covered in this study. As noted above, before the eighteenth century illiterate Swedes rarely heard the Bible read; the rule was that it was “Massed.” That this category of singing was often seen as part of the social contract—as the priest’s work for the community—is implied in a verse from an anonymous tragedy printed in 1647 (see Fig. 1), in which a conceited maid turns down marriage proposals from a number of gentlemen, among them a priest. The passage can be rendered in prose as follows (and see below for translation):

¹⁰ Barbara Babcock, “The Story in the Story: Metanarration in Folk Narrative,” in Richard Bauman, ed., *Verbal Art as Performance* (Rowley, MA.: Newbury House Publishers, 1977), 66.

¹¹ Anders von Stiernman, ed., *Alla riksdagars och mötens beslut, samt arfföreningar, regementsformer, försäkringar och bewillningar, som på allmenna riksdagar och möten, ifrån år 1521 intill år 1731 gjorde, stadgade och bewiljade äro*, vol. 1 (Stockholm, 1728), 91.

¹² Växjö domkapitels akter (Växjö Consistory Records), 1790, no. 338, Landsarkivet, Vadstena.

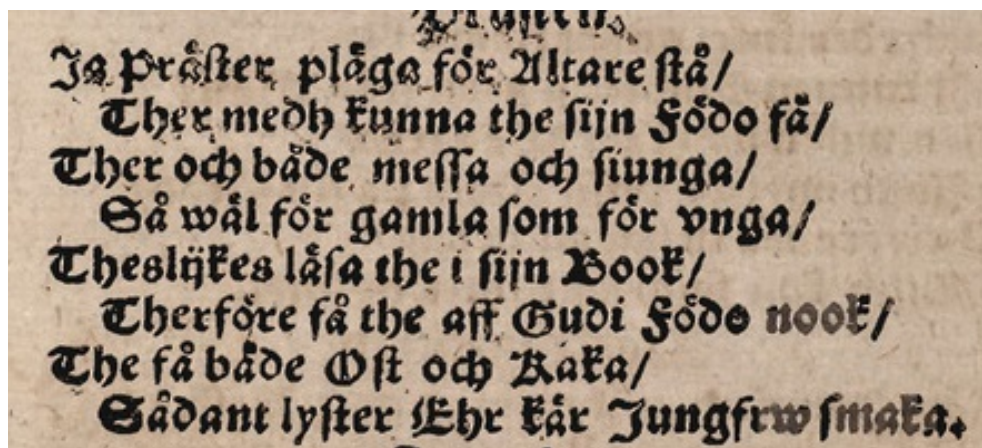


Fig. 1: Verse from *Alle bedlegrannas spegel* (A Mirror for All the Vainglorious)¹³

Yes, priests are accustomed to stand in front of the altar,
 thereby they may earn their daily bread.
 There they also chant and sing
 as well for the old as for the young.
 Likewise they read in their book,
 are thus granted by God all the food they need.
 They are given both cheese and cake,
 such things the fair maid desires to taste.

Another instance of the word is in the proverbial phrase “Prästen mässar intet destе mehr, at kyrkian är högh” (The priest does not chant [Mass] more even if the church [vault] is lofty), which seems to equate the act of chanting the Mass in lowly parish churches to that in great cathedrals and city churches.¹⁴ The pairing of “messa och siunga” (or “mässa och sjunga,” chant and sing) in the verse quoted above is so common in Swedish sources that it resembles “sånger och visor” (songs and airs), “psalmer och hymner” (psalms and hymns), and other terms used so often together as to imply parallelism.

Lay Intrusion in Clerical Singing: “Chanting After”

Chanting ability was, as we have seen, important to the individual priest. But *accentus formulae* melodies seem to have played an equally important role in the laity’s memorization and understanding of scriptural passages. This is manifest in the practice of *eftermässning* (chanting after), where the laity followed the recitation of the priest, either on the same melody or on other pitch degrees. In spite of attempts to abolish the practice, it lived on in some places well into the nineteenth century. Folke Bohlin has suggested that *eftermässning* was spontaneous and largely

¹³ *Alle bedlegrannas spegel, eller En ynkeligh och bedröfweligh tragædia om en stält och hög- färdigh Jungfrw, som heet Margaretha* (1647), 6.

¹⁴ Christopher Larsson Grubb, *Penu proverbiale dhet är ett ymnigt förråd aff allehanda gamla och nya svenska ordseeder* (Linköping: Kämpe, 1665), 425.

undeliberate.¹⁵ As more and more laypeople acquired their own hymnals, the books were often bound together with books containing the epistle and Gospel passages for each Sunday. Since the practice of silent reading marks a very advanced stage of literacy,¹⁶ the laity would simply follow the priest's recitations aloud, or mimic readings they had heard hundreds (or thousands) of times, in their attempts to follow the written texts. The roots of this practice are obscure. It may have originated as a form of call-and-response that was sanctioned and even encouraged by priests and cantors. There seems to be no evidence for such singing of the lectionary texts before the first mention of *eftermässning*, but since alternatim-style performance is known to have been practiced between cantor/choir and congregation, and sometimes also between different groups in the congregation, such as men and women,¹⁷ *eftermässning* may have similar origins.

The phenomenon of *eftermässning* must be understood in the context of rising literacy in early modern Sweden. By the late sixteenth century, some laypeople already possessed four church books: a hymnal, a catechism, a prayer book, and a Gospel reading cycle (*Evangeliebok*).¹⁸ These were the main media through which literacy of the laity in Sweden emerged (church and state being two sides of the same institution). Literacy increased in the second half of the seventeenth century, when print and manuscript copies of such books became more widely available. Indeed, the first three types of book (hymnal, catechism, and prayer book) were expressly intended for the act of lay reading, in line with the Lutheran concept of the “universal priesthood of all believers” (*sacerdotium commune*). It is only with the *Evangeliebok* that a conflict arises between lay and clerical literacy—that is, between full literacy, as manifested performatively in chanting from a text, and the “religious reading” of laypeople, based on recognizing in text form what has previously only been heard and memorized. This distinction suggests that the ritual act of chanting the lectionary was seen as exclusive to the special priesthood of the ordained (*sacerdotium ecclesiasticum*).

In some places, *eftermässning* became such a problem that it was decided that the hymnals were to be collected by the church warden and only to be given out when it was time for hymn singing. In other cases, parishioners who “chanted after” were fined a fixed penalty.¹⁹ Complaints that priests were drowned out by the cacophonous clamor of congregations “chanting after” can be put into perspective by noting attempts to discipline the reading, such as the following statement from one Allmundsryd in the diocese of Växjö in 1728: “Now, as it is quite good and highly commendable to have the books opened, it is still to be strongly advised to silently listen and read after what is chanted before the altar” (Nu som det är ganska wäl och

¹⁵ Folke Bohlin, “Bibeln i kyrkosång och konstmusik under 1700- och 1800-talen,” in *Den gamla översättningen: Karl XII:s Bibel och dess receptionshistoria*, ed. Tord Larsson and Birger Olsson, Acta Regiae Societatis humaniorum litterarum Lundensis 84 (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 2005), 249–61.

¹⁶ See Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).

¹⁷ Sven Kjällström, “Sång till skiftes,” *Svensk teologisk kvartalsskrift* 45 (1969): 209–19.

¹⁸ See Natanael Fransén, “Fragmenten av den Svenska psalmboken 1543,” *Kyrkohistorisk årskrift* 42 (1942): 194–216.

¹⁹ Bohlin, “Bibeln i kyrkosång och konstmusik under 1700- och 1800-talen.”

högel. berömwärdt, at hafwa böckerne öpne, så förmanas likwäl, at med stilla andacht afhöra och i tyshet efterläsa hwad som för altaret mässas).²⁰

In the early eighteenth century, such discipline came easily to a person who had attended gymnasium and university, and acquired the skill of silent reading and abstract literacy. But it was another matter to demand the same level of literacy from laypeople who had just learned to read texts that they had previously only heard. This musical evidence highlights possible lacunae in previous research into literacy in early modern Sweden. The fragmentary nature of the available material relating to the recitation of scripture, of which I have given brief examples, makes it necessary for musicologists to adopt a pluralistic methodology that includes ethnographical perspectives. (For instance, the Pleijel collection at the Lund University Library contains information about nineteenth-century remnants of earlier liturgical singing traditions as reported by Swedish laypersons.)²¹ Lexicographical work can also prove fruitful in understanding the social and cultural ramification of accentus singing. In searching the archive of the *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok*²² and the Språkbanken (Swedish Language Bank) database²³ for the words *mässning*, *eftermässning*, *kantillation*, *epistelton*, and related terms, I have collected hundreds of instances that testify to the importance in Swedish cultural history of this well-known type of singing in a range of literatures and archival records. Future cross-disciplinary collaborative scholarship will need to engage with corresponding material in German and in all the Scandinavian languages.

The two earliest records of “chanting after” the priest that I have found date from 1642 and 1643, but since both appear to assume an understanding of the concept, it must have been rather common by that point.²⁴ Surprisingly, both of these early accounts present the concept in the form of a noun, *eftermessan* (“after-Mass”), which seems to suggest an assertive and socially disruptive function—an *event*—even graver than the *act* of chanting along with the priest. The most likely interpretation is that the latter function is being described even when the word appears in noun form. The two passages read as follows in my deliberately overliteral translations:

1642: It was commanded and promised that the after-Mass, which the laity practice when the minister officiates at the Mass, should be put to an end. (Befaltes och låffuades bortläggias then efter messan, som almogen brukar, tå minister celebrera missam.)

1643: The after-Mass that the peasants keep alongside the priest must be refrained from. (Eftermessan som bönderna hafua jempte presten moste åfstås med.)

²⁰ Karl Herbert Johansson, *Kyrkobruk och gudstjänstliv under 1700-talet* (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelsens förlag, 1938), 81.

²¹ The Hilding Pleijel collection is part of the Archive for Church History (LUKA) at Lund University Library.

²² The excerpt collection of the *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok* is housed in Lund at Dalbyvägen 3 and is open to scholars by appointment. The author wishes to express his gratitude to Antti Sivén and Alexandra Hibolin of the SAOB staff for their kind assistance.

²³ <https://spraakbanken.gu.se/eng>.

²⁴ Boëthius Murenus, *Acta visitationis*, Finska kyrkohistoriska samfundets handlingar 6 (Borgå, 1905–08 [1638–66]), 77, 125.

In both instances, it is stressed that *eftermessan* is something that the laity do *against*, rather than in conjunction with, the ritual chanting of the priest.

The same vigilant dean who recorded those instances, Boëthius Murenus of the Åland Islands, also noted (in canonical visitations from 1650) the grounds for abolishing the “after-Mass”—namely, “because the service cannot tolerate that many chanting priests.”²⁵ This sardonic statement reflects the tension between the *sacerdotium commune* and the *sacerdotium ecclesiasticum*, and clearly shows that Murenus is referring to the same phenomenon as the later “chanting after.”

Questions of performativity are clearly at issue here. We must take into account two distinguishing characteristics of the accentus formulae, which *eftermässning* must have mimicked: first, accentus singing adds something to the text that is clearly audible for an illiterate listener; second, accentus singing relates to textual structure—punctuation, clauses, and so on. These two factors are closely related to lay literacy, since the sung texts were also those to which an individual could have access through the four types of lay church books mentioned above. In the next section, we will examine the social implications of such seemingly spontaneous incursion into the liturgical chanting of the priest.

Three Categories of Musical Performativity in the Swedish Mass

Three special categories of musical performance, or performativity, can be seen in the Mass in early modern Sweden:

1. *One person singing to a formally gathered group of others with the expectation of directed active listening.* The chanting of the allocated biblical readings of epistle and Gospel for each Sunday to the accentus formulae was performed, as we have seen, by the priest before the congregation. In the same category we also have the chanting of the eucharistic section of the Mass (preface, words of institution, and the Lord’s Prayer).
2. *Collective and regulated ritual singing.* This type of performative projection constitutes congregational participation in the ritual around which social and civic life revolved, by lay singing of paraphrases of the Mass Ordinary (notably those by Prussian reformer and hymnodist Nicolaus Decius [ca.1485–1541]). Other hymns, such as the Lutheran chorales disseminated throughout the Nordic and Baltic regions since the early sixteenth century, served distinctly weaker ritual functions, even though some were prescribed in place of the Mass introit or gradual.
3. *Institutional singing in the Mass and in the public sphere of society.* In lesser parishes, the cantor took on the role of the choir in larger city churches. In diocese cities and cities with trivial schools (which prepared students for more advanced studies at the gymnasia), the gymnasia and schools formed the choir responsible for singing the Ordinary (and parts of the Propers, such as introit and sequences) of the Mass.

²⁵ Ibid., 225.

The culturally and contextually unifying melodies associated with these three performative situations are the most performed melodies of any kind to be found in Swedish musical history. Yet their significance for the laity has attracted scant attention from modern scholars, despite the melodies' importance in a formative phase of the Swedish Church, state, and nation.²⁶ In relation to category 1, it is again important to note that before 1811 read—that is, spoken—biblical readings were, according to the evidence of liturgical orders (and the degree to which they were observed), exceptional in Swedish Church services. Normally, the epistle (passages from Acts or St. Paul's letters, or more rarely from the prophetic books of the Old Testament) and Gospel passages for each week were sung to *accentus* formulae. The Church Law passed in 1686 stipulated that the epistle and Gospel be sung in front of the altar at Mass. The *Church Manual* (*Kyrkohandbok*) of 1693 stated that the epistle should always be sung, while the Gospel should be sung only when eucharist was celebrated (as in the Mass). The manual of 1811 sanctioned the reading of the epistle as well, although many priests persisted in singing the passages until the manual of 1894 formally removed that option.²⁷ The Swedish and Finnish words for “reading” and “singing” were sometimes used interchangeably during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries (Swed. *läsa* and Fin. *lukea* for “read”; Sw. *sjunga* and Fin. *laulaa* for “sing”). This is of course related to the linguistic complications of sung *lectiones* (Latin, “readings”). At any rate, the wordings of official liturgical orders surprisingly often manage to make the distinction clear in cases that otherwise could have been obscure.

If we apply the taxonomy of event, act, role, and genre to the Swedish Mass in early modern times, we can arrive at the definitions and distinctions in Table 1.²⁸

Table 1. Taxonomy of the Three Performative Categories of the Swedish Mass

Event	Act	Role	Genre
Mass	Recitation (<i>accentus</i>)	Ordained priest	Epistle and Gospel tones, preface, salutations
Mass	Singing	Clergy, choir, and/or laity	Chorales (notably Decius's rhythmic paraphrases of the Mass Ordinary)
Mass	Chanting (<i>concentus</i>)	Cantor, choir (specialist, nonordained persons)	Mass Ordinary, introit, sequences, gradual

The *concentus* singing of the Mass Ordinary could, in the case of limited resources in smaller parishes, be performed by the priest rather than by the specialized cantor or choir. Table 1 reveals

²⁶ See Bohlin, “Bibeln i kyrkosång och konstmusik under 1700- och 1800-talen” and Lundberg, “Prefationstonen tonus solemnus som helhetsgestaltande element i den svenska reformationstidens Mässa,” *Svenskt Gudstjänstliv* 92 (forthcoming 2017).

²⁷ Bohlin, “Bibeln i kyrkosång och konstmusik under 1700- och 1800-talen,” 249.

²⁸ For different applications of this taxonomy in performativity, see Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance*, 31–33.

a social stratification in the category of *role*, with the ordained priest clearly representing the highest social rank; his *performance*, however, requires a proficiency that falls somewhere between the level needed for performance by the laity, on the one hand, and by the cantor or choir, on the other. It is significant that according to the *hustavla*, the aforementioned document describing the social order and responsibilities of masters and subjects, the priest was *subject* to the king in the realm of politics, while the king (along with all laity) was *listener* (equivalent to subject) to the priest in the spiritual realm. The *hustavla* assigns the priest the role of teacher (equivalent to ruler), so the act of listening to the priest (as all subjects should do) is at the core of the clergyman's spiritual and societal authority. Thus, in a very precise sense, the singing of those sections of the Mass that were exclusively allocated to the ordained priest continuously asserted the clerical role as outlined by Havelock: "Their use was an experience which had immediacy for him but was not uniquely his; it had to become equally personal to those who listened to him."²⁹

The peculiar societal order of the *hustavla* in relation to the priest's singing of the Gospel and epistle texts invokes Raymond Firth's distinction between social structure (the abstract conception of ideal patterns of group relations) and social organization ("the systematic ordering of social relationships by acts of choice and decision"). Firth describes social organization as "variation from what has happened in apparently similar circumstances in the past."³⁰ The performative category of chanting the epistle and Gospel texts for each Sunday to the given accentus melodies—*mässning*—was in this respect an *act* that was strongly expected as fulfillment of the *role* of the ordained priest in the *event* of the Mass. The laity's strong expectation of the ceremonies of *mässning* deviates from the concept of the "divine service" (*Gudz tjänest*) as expressed by the Swedish theologians Peder Galle (Roman Catholic archdeacon of Uppsala) and Olaus Petri. A number of questions concerning the religious controversy of Lutheranism were posed to the two churchmen, as Gustav Vasa wished to examine the consequences of the new doctrine. Both men responded negatively to the king's question about whether the divine service consisted of any outward ceremonies, and both claimed that love of one's neighbor was the only true "divine service." Galle, however, reserved a category of "outer divine service," which included such tasks as liturgical singing.³¹

Although musicologists have not explored the concept of "push" and "pull" factors in liturgy, historians have stressed how the Swedish Church attempted to push different elements, modes of thought, and texts onto the laity. *Eftermässning* can be seen as a pull factor, something that the laity embraced (seemingly spontaneously) and that was apparently considered highly desirable within their social group, although the ecclesiastical authorities took a different view from the seventeenth century onward. The visual and cognitive recognition of scriptural passages heard chanted many times certainly pulled the laity in the direction of acquiring literacy. It is clear that the popularity of such singing also depended on its solemnity. Accentus singing was a pull factor

²⁹ Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, 145.

³⁰ Raymond Firth, *Elements of Social Organization: Josiah Mason Lectures Delivered at the University of Birmingham*, 3rd ed. (London: Watts, 1961), 40. See also Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance*, 42.

³¹ See Berntson, *Mässan och armborstet*, 333–43.

in the sense of elevating the text of the Bible, but it can also be seen as a push factor in the sense of encouraging the laity to memorize the texts (a clearly and repeatedly stated end of these means).

Liturgical Adaptations for Non-Swedish-Speaking Laity

The difference between the above-mentioned push and pull factors extended to rote memorization, “religious reading” (the recognition of texts learned by rote), and full literacy, all of which were related to specific liturgical melodies. Some aspects of this relationship are illustrated by the translation of the text of the Mass, as it appeared in the *Church Manual*, into the Sami language in 1619.³² In such adaptations, the melodies often remained unchanged. This rather peculiar case of adapting the Gregorian melodic repertoire to a minority language has been overlooked in most research into Sami-Swedish musical encounters in the early modern period, in spite of the many insights it offers into both cultures. A two-way process of acquiring literacy in a new language is unambiguously outlined in the preface to the Sami manual (*Messan på lappesko*):

. . . and it is profitable for the Sami, for they now get to read in their native tongue and with understanding, in the same way that some of them, both old and young, hitherto have read only in Swedish, and hence not understood what they have read. It is moreover profitable for the clergymen who are interacting with the Sami, since here they soon learn to understand that tongue, as they know best what is covered in the *Church Manual*.³³

Two distinct types of learning are involved here. One is semantically charged, presupposing that the clergy have already memorized and fully comprehended the liturgical readings, songs, and ritual movements of the *Church Manual*, and that they are therefore now able to learn the Sami language from *Messan på lappesko* (this may incidentally strike one as an astonishingly naïve prospect). The other type of learning, by rote, implies that texts and melodies from the *Church Manual* have been memorized *without* understanding: the Sami are reading and singing texts just as before, but are now adding the semantic layer of understanding them. This duality provides insight into the “religious reading” and “religious singing” of early modern Sweden, where texts were memorized without the reflection and comprehension associated with active literacy.³⁴ This level of literacy is not comparable to what musicians call sight-reading; rather, it is a type of reading that is predominantly aimed at memorizing and internalizing a corpus of already familiar texts. That the singing of texts in uncomprehended foreign languages could also be highly charged, emotionally and culturally, is illustrated by Jesper Swedberg’s *Schibboleth*,

³² Nicolaus Andrea Rehn, ed., *En lijten sångebook, huruledes messan skal hållas, läsas, eller siungas på lappesko* (Stockholm: Meurer, 1619).

³³ *Ibid.*, [16]: “. . . och ware Lappomen nyttigt / ty the få thet [n]u läsa / på sitt eghit tungomål / med förstånd / såsom the eliest någre af them både stora och små här til haffua läsit på swensko / och doch icke förstått / hwadh the läsit haffua. Så är thet och Prestomen / som medh Lapperna haffua til att bestella nyttigt / ty här aff lära the snart förstå tungomålet / medhan the och bäst weta hwad i handboken förhandlas.”

³⁴ See Daniel Lindmark, “Four Decades of Research,” in *Understanding Literacy in Its Historical Contexts: Socio-Cultural History and the Legacy of Egil Johansson*, ed. Alison Mackinnon, Harvey J. Graff, Bengt Sandin, and Ian Winchester (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2009), 65.

which describes the solemn, elevated singing by laypersons of passages in Latin that they did not understand.³⁵

Du fölier / Du helge
Ande kom / etc.

Edon ailes whonge pote / tief

uuta tdu Christ olman baimo /

ia tdu poldelinen rackas sniugul
B iij sijn

Fig. 2: *Veni sancte spiritus* translated into the Sami language. From Nicolaus Andrea Rehn's *En lijten sångebook* of 1619.

The example in Figure 2, from Nicolaus Andrea Rehn's Sami-language *Church Manual*, highlights how the printed Mass order is also important for understanding music and liturgy *outside* its regional and cultural context: the melody of *Veni sancte spiritus* is not included in the Swedish *Church Manual* of 1614, the “original” on which Rehn based his translation. Apparently, it belonged to a self-evident performative and ritual practice that did not need to be

³⁵ Jesper Swedberg, *Schibboleth: Svenska språketz rycht och richtighet* (Skara: Kiellberg, 1716), 221.

acknowledged in the Swedish order (“normaliter non in actis”) but was included in the translation, where fewer details could be taken for granted. The tenth-century monastic author of this text and melody could hardly have imagined that they would be sung in the Sami language half a millennium later. In fact, they were among the first words written and printed in this language, with a phonetically adapted alphabetical system made to order for that purpose.³⁶ Coeval parallels to Rehn’s liturgical adaptations can be observed in the attempts to convert a predominantly illiterate Russian Orthodox laity in Ingermanland (in present-day Russia and eastern Estonia), where the Swedish clergy published ecclesiastical texts in Finnish, but using the Cyrillic alphabet; and in Johannes Campanius’s translation of Luther’s catechism into a pidgin form of the Lenape language in the Delaware province of New Sweden (Nova Svecia).³⁷

Directing the Listening of Illiterate Laity by Melodic Structure

Two cases have been discussed above in which the music of the Mass interacts with early modern literacy. In the first, the ritual at the center of Swedish society seems to have interplayed with nascent lay literacy in a manner that could not easily have been foreseen (since *eftermässning* arose, I argue, from pull factors among laypersons and led to an intrusion on the priest’s ritual lectionary). In the other case, Sami adaptations of liturgical chant, regional vernacular paraphrases were produced in great quantities (push factors, indeed), but with little societal effect.

However, the history of the early modern Mass in Sweden goes beyond adding vernacular paraphrases or translating the texts of the liturgy. The brothers Olaus and Laurentius Petri, the two main agents of the Reformation in the western part of the kingdom that comprises present-day Sweden, recognized the growing importance of the pre-Reformation Mass preface (*praefatio*) melody for nonliterate laity. They did something remarkable when they (and the clergy who used Olaus Petri’s earliest printed Mass order) transferred the melody from the most solemn moment that the medieval Christian was allowed to hear in the Mass—the preface at the beginning of the eucharistic prayer—to a part of the Mass that few or none had heard before: the

³⁶ The vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of Rehn’s text have been called into question. For overviews, see Karl Bernhard Wiklund, “De första lapska böckerna,” *Nordisk tidskrift för bok- och biblioteksväsen* 9 (1922): 12–28; Tuuli Forsgren, “. . . först att inhämta språket, och sedan att deruppå lära sin Christendom”: *Om finska böcker och sameundervisning i Torne och Kemi lappmarker före 1850*,” *Scriptum: Rapportserie utgiven av Forskningsarkivet i Umeå* 26 (Umeå: Forskningsarkivet, Umeå universitet, 1990), 16; Forsgren, *Samisk kyrko- och undervisningslitteratur i Sverige 1619–1850*, *Arbetsrapporter från Pedagogiska institutionen* 36 (Umeå: Umeå universitet, 1987), 10–11; and Gunlög Fur, “Cultural Confrontations on Two Fronts: Swedes Meet Lenapes and Saamis in the Seventeenth Century” (Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1993), 79. For an overview of early Finnish translations of the medieval chant repertoire in the sixteenth century, see the articles by Erkki Tuppurainen and Jorma Hannikainen (“Vernacular Gregorian Chant and Lutheran Hymn-Singing in Reformation-Era Finland”) and by Kati Kallio (“Changes in the Poetics of Song during the Finnish Reformation”) in *Re-forming the Early Modern North: Text, Music and Church Art*, ed. Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen and Linda Kaljundi (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming).

³⁷ See Mika Sivonen, “Sprache und Religion als Instrumente des Grenzgangs in Ingermanland im 17. Jahrhundert,” *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 23 (2010–11): 158–79; and Fur, “Cultural Confrontations on Two Fronts,” 187–89.

words of institution. Before the Reformation, this passage had been read silently by the priest in front of the altar, often while the choir or cantor sang the Sanctus and Benedictus. For reformers like Luther, it was important that everyone hear the words of institution and that they be read to the laity aloud, not silently over the wine and bread.³⁸ The elevation of these words by the Swedish and Finnish reformers, by way of the melody that the layperson would have heard as the solemn climax of the Mass, is a distinctive trait of the Swedish liturgical tradition. In some respects, it is more Lutheran than Luther himself could have anticipated.

This is the extreme example of a pull factor of enforced reading and singing “from below, by the above,” so to speak, since the melody continued after the Sanctus into the Lord’s Prayer, which the laity were expected to memorize. In short, this change encouraged, and eventually (albeit much later) forced, Swedish illiterate individuals to participate in texts that previously they had not even been allowed to hear. Clearly, the reformers deliberately facilitated this participation by employing the melody that to the laity must have epitomized the concept of the “priesthood of all believers,” due to its prior associations with the clerical role. This seems also to be one of very few such reforms that were actually well received, without lay protests.

We have seen how certain categories of ecclesiastical singing signaled certain societal roles, and how this process interacted with the development of lay literacy in Sweden. It would, however, be a mistake to assume that this nascent literacy corresponded to societal emancipation, since the acts and events of singing in the Lutheran Church remained powerful agents of ecclesiastical authority. Indeed, some contemporary observers argued that such push factors played too large a role in early modern Swedish liturgical music. The English sea captain Matthew Consett, who traveled through Sweden in the late eighteenth century, noted that the clergy chanted according to many ancient customs (which he mistakenly associated with “popish” practice). He wrote that “the Church music of the Swedes inspires the mind with great religious awe. It operates, however, often too powerfully on weak minds and produces more the shew than the true spirit of religion.”³⁹ Consett may have been reacting to the “religious singing” described above, in which key religious texts are conveyed to what he saw as a passive laity.

This study has shown how the dissemination, use, and development of certain melodic formulas played an important, but hitherto largely overlooked, role in the evolution of Swedish reading and literacy in the early modern period. (The school reform act of 1842, as a result of which the educational system became more formalized, marked a new phase in this process.) We have explored the crucial tension between lay literacy and rote memorization of biblical texts (a strong ideal of Swedish Lutheranism), on the one hand, and, on the other, the priest’s highly esteemed ritual public chanting of the same texts in the Mass. Proverbs, anecdotes, and ecclesiastical visitation records can help us distinguish between what was normal practice and

³⁸ Robin Leaver, *Luther’s Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 177–78.

³⁹ Matthew Consett, *A Tour through Sweden, Swedish Lapland, Finland and Denmark, in a Series of Letters* (London: Johnson, 1789), 25.

what was unexpected or atypical. It is clear, however, that the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Swedish Church was characterized by distinct categories of sung practices. Lay participation in the recitation of the lectionary texts and the eucharistic prayer was seen as problematic, while lay singing of chorales and alternatim additions to sequences otherwise sung by the cantor or choir was regarded as highly desirable. A predilection for pre-Reformation chant traditions regarding scriptural pericopes thus continued to challenge one of the central ideas of the Swedish Reformation: increasing lay awareness of and interaction with the New Testament.