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Compositions responding to melodic gesture and textual pacing in the Old Hispanic

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COMPOSITIONS RESPONDING TO MELODIC GESTURE AND TEXTUAL PACING IN THE OLD HISPANIC RITE

ADAM MEEHAN-STAINES

A commentary accompanying the portfolio of compositions submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Musical Composition in the Faculty of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

This commentary accompanies a portfolio of compositions, written for set instrumental and vocal forces (SATB divisi Choir, Percussion, and Strings). Whilst each piece can be taken as a stand-alone compositional work, the collection was conceived as a unit, as a setting of Missa I (a single block of chant from the Marian dawn office in the Old Hispanic León Antiphoner). Through this commentary I will explore the compositional processes and analytical approach used to compose new music through the inspiration of melodic gesture and textual pacing found in Old Hispanic chant.

Although the original chants are titled as a Missa, I have decided to name my own compositional work as *Sit Nomen Eius Emmanuel*. This is to avoid confusion, whereby 'Missa' is traditionally used as a title to describe musical settings of the liturgical parts of a mass. As my work does not conform to this liturgical structure (from Kyrie to Agnus Dei), I have chosen a different title to evade misperception or misunderstanding.¹

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¹ Emma Hornby and Rebecca Maloy discuss the organisation of chants in *Music and Meaning in Old Hispanic Chants*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013), mentioning that in the Old Hispanic repertoire the term 'Missa' was given to a group of four chants (three antiphons or psalm verses and a responsory) that were contextually linked by a reoccurring word or liturgical theme.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: DATE: 25. vii . 22

Adam Meehan-Staines

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COMPOSITIONS IN THE PORTFOLIO

- I. Antiphon I
- II. Antiphon I VR, Listen To Me, All
- III. Antiphon II
- IV. Antiphon II VR, All The People
- V. Alleluiaticus
- VI. Alleluiaticus VR, In The Name Of The Lord
- VII. Responsorium
- VIII. Responsorium VR, The Holy Spirit Will Be Upon You

CD TRACKLIST

- 1. Antiphon I
- 2. Antiphon I VR, Listen To Me All
- 3. Antiphon II
- 4. Antiphon II VR, All The People
- 5. Alleluiaticus
- 6. Alleluiaticus VR, In The Name Of The Lord
- 7. Responsorium
- 8. Responsorium VR, The Holy Spirit Will Be Upon You

COMMENTARY

INTRODUCTION

This portfolio of compositions presents selected pieces that represent my MPhil studies. Within the portfolio the instrumentation remains the same, with instrumental forces scored as SATB Choir (divisi), Percussion, and Strings. It should be noted that *Sit Nomen Eius Emmanuel* can be performed in its entirety, or as separate pieces (if performed as individual works, each main movement of the work must always be followed by its 'responsory verse', or 'VR' counterpart). Within my compositions, I juxtapose simple vocal lines (as one would expect to encounter within medieval chant) with contemporary compositional sonorities, textures, rhythmic movements, instrumental techniques, and gestures.

The text for these works comes through direct translations from the original medieval Latin as found in León 8, a tenth-century manuscript preserving the chant of the Old Hispanic rite. Alongside the observation of melodic gesture and textual pacing as the main source of inspiration in my composition, I have also taken the contextual elements of the original chants from the Marian office into consideration (for example the praising connotations of the *Alleluiaticus*, and the use of a verse after each movement of the Missa that reflects upon the musical material of the preceding movement).

OLD HISPANIC CONTEXT

My compositional portfolio is based on a block of four chants, sung near the beginning of the Old Hispanic Marian dawn office. The León Antiphoner (L8) is regarded as the "most complete manuscript containing Old Hispanic chant", which includes within the liturgy both office and mass chants for almost the complete liturgical year.² Within L8 is the Marian office, celebrated an octave before the date of Jesus' birth: this Marian feast was established by the Tenth Council of Toledo in 656.³

Using Old Hispanic repertoire as a source of inspiration for contemporary composition was an interesting initial point of creativity for me. I have always had an awareness of engaging with early music, and having never encountered the Old Hispanic liturgy before, I was eager to work with this fresh and new material. My curiosity in this area of musical history grew as I established an understanding of how this liturgy contained such developed theology. Whilst the Roman liturgy was simplified to allow for transmissibility, the Old Hispanic repertoire is more poetic, with the music echoing this.⁴ Within my own compositions, I wanted to capture something of the subtlety, elegance, devotion, intellect, and beauty of the words. An example of this poetic devotion is a single line of text, taken from the *Sono* as part of the first Vespers in the Marian office in L8. Instead of simply stating "Let us pray", in the Old Hispanic liturgy it reads "Eructuabit cor meum verbum bonum, dico ego opera mea regi alleluia", or "My heart speaks a good word, I speak my words to the King, alleluia".

The melodic shapes and lines composed as part of the original chants in the Old Hispanic repertoire were considered mediums to paint the splendour of the text to be sung in the tenth and eleventh centuries. I wanted to see whether I could use the same contours to explore their compositional potential to express those same words as part of contemporary musical composition. Scribes and cantors crafted music to shape the pace and delivery of these texts, and in accepting the constraints of the melodic shapes and contours they had developed, I wanted to explore these melodic configurations in my own work.

² Elsa De Luca, 'Royal misattribution: monograms in the León Antiphoner', *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 9 (2017), 25-51.

³ Kati Ihnat and Rebecca Maloy, Text, Melody, and Theology in the Old Hispanic Marian Office', in Emma Hornby, Kati Ihnat, Rebecca Maloy and Raquel Rojo Carrillo, *Understanding the Old Hispanic Office*, forthcoming, 343. ⁴ Buchinger discusses the use of transmissibility through repetition as a characteristic feature of the Roman rite in: Harald Buchinger, 'On the hermeneutics and function of saints' offices: observations and questions' in *Historiae – Liturgical Chant for Offices of the Saints in the Middle Ages*, (Venezia: Fondazione Levi, 2021), 77.

Whilst the influence and inspiration provided by Old Hispanic chant to contemporary composers is certainly not a new idea, my approach in how to use such inspiration provides a novel concept which future composers may also wish to consider. There are examples of how Old Hispanic chant has inspired composers in the compositional work of Litha Efthymiou and John Pickard. To a non-specialist, approaching Old Hispanic music either as a musicologist, composer, or observer, has factors that might limit engagement. The repertoire exists only in unpitched notation, and some chants have moments where the melismatic writing is so long, single syllables of text may be decorated with 200 notes. Efthymiou's compositional ambition when using Old Hispanic chant as a source of inspiration was to "consider new modes of intellectual and creative engagement with the medieval past, pinpointing and conveying something of the essence of these chants in a contemporary musical idiom". ⁵ To achieve such a purpose, Efthymiou looked at Old Hispanic melisma, pitch centricity, macroharmony, and vertical time. Efthymiou explores the musical properties in relation to the transcendent concepts found within Old Hispanic chant, in an "unorthodox approach to creative medievalism". 6 John Pickard's Daughters of Zion is another example of how Old Hispanic chant has moved composers to write music inspired by the early medieval Christian Iberian liturgy. Commissioned by the Old Hispanic chant project, through a study of Old Hispanic music, Pickard's composition for solo mezzo-soprano and chamber ensemble sets a specially written text by Gavin D'Costa to music. In this piece, there are yet again elements of chant-like ideas in the way that Pickard sets the text, including rhythmic values that express the stress of particular words, and a linear melodic line that could be perceived to flow like chant.

In my work, by taking the constraints of the melodic outline of each chant as a starting point for my composition, and by including the original texts for the choral parts to sing, my composition work is a re-composition of the original chant material. This style of composition retains much of the medieval textual pacing, alongside an appreciation of melodic gesture, decorated with the addition of richer textures and instrumental colours, opposed to a monophonic line of chant found in the original source. To understand the direction in which these original melodic lines take, a specific form of melodic exploration must take place. NHL, standing for 'Neutral High Low', is a form of analysis used in the study of Old Hispanic music to determine the direction a melodic line moves in unpitched chant.

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⁵ Litha Efthymiou, and Emma Hornby, 'New Music Inspired by Old Hispanic Chant', *Context: Journal of Music Research*, 45 (2020), 62.

⁶ ibid, 73.

COMPOSITIONAL CONTEXT

NHL, A CONCERT PIECE, AND HOW MELODIES ARE GENERATED

The concept behind my portfolio is that of a single concert piece, and while each movement can be taken as a stand-alone compositional work, the collection was conceived as a unit: as a setting of Missa I, a single block of chant from the Marian dawn office in the Old Hispanic León Antiphoner.

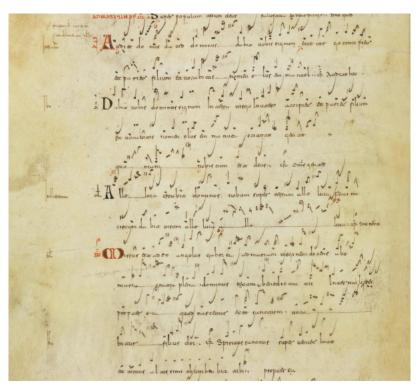


Figure 1.1 Missa I original chant, Archivo de la Catedral de León: Ms. 8, f. 57v. Missa I

As the music in Figure 1.1 appears as unpitched notation (it is impossible to know which pitches were used), it is only possible to reference the relationship of notes to one another. To analyse the connection between pitches that encompass the symbols of dots, lines, and squiggles, the system of NHL analysis is used to determine the direction pitches move in relation to one another. I immediately turned to Hornby and Maloy's chapter 'A Guide to Reading Old Hispanic Notation' and noted that each individual pen-stroke can denote a single pitch.⁷ A single punctum

⁷ Emma Hornby and Rebecca Maloy, 'Appendix 1: A Guide to Reading Old Hispanic Notation' in *Music and Meaning in Old Hispanic Chants*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013), 315-326.

would therefore mean a single note, and the combination of various gestural ink movements would represent a melodic line of more than one note (dependent on whether the quill-stroke rose or fell, and where each neume was placed above the underlaid text). Taking this concept a step further, by utilising the 'Neume List' on the *Chant and Analysis Editing Programme*, it is possible to identify each individual neume as a melodic gesture. Gestures are noted in the following categories with combinations thereof, always commencing with N: N, neutral; H, higher; L, lower; U, probably higher; D, probably lower; S, same; Q, quilisma. By translating each neume into an interpretation that represents a particular melodic gesture, it is possible to understand a shape that the chant would make through melodic gesture – it is at this point that the compositional process begins. Each neume, therefore, has a melodic property that I can utilise, creating melodies that are formed of the translation of individual neumes, as shown in Figure 1.2.

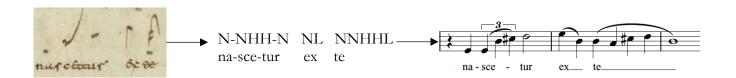


Figure 1.2 Extract of melodic line in L8, with melodic translation, and equivalent compositional material from b. 80-82 of *Responsorium*.

It is important to note that compositional material, regarding translated neumatic melodic gesture, is not intended to be a genuine representation of what each melodic line would sound like: it is instead an original musical representation of the melodic gesture found within Old Hispanic chant. Whilst it is usually possible to interpret the direction that pitches would take, it is impossible to know by what intervallic distance these notes would travel. I wanted to utilise the chant material from L8 within the choral aspects of my composition where the inspiration of melodic material directly stems from the contours of a thousand-year-old chant. Such melodies flow between different voice parts, and all other musical material is then freely composed around the translated melodies from the original chant. Similarly, all accompanying parts (through both instrumental and choral forces) are used as contextual musical representation of each movement that form respective parts of *Sit Nomen Eius Emmanuel* (two Antiphons, an Alleluiaticus, and a Responsorium).

⁸ https://neumes.org.uk/view/neumelist/1.

⁹ The term 'neume' is used to describe either single notes, or a group of notes to be sung on a particular syllable. Such notes, or neumes, are musically described on the manuscript by freeform gestural lines above the text.

MELODIC CONSTRAINTS & TEXTUAL PACING

When using melodic movements as denoted by the NHL gesture in the original chant, I was constrained by the direction in which my melodic material could move. This gave me a compositional problem to work with: the limitations of writing melodies bound by the direction of the NHL analysis forced me away from cliché, where melodies couldn't be composed based on the direction my ear took them, but instead needed to follow in the direction of thousand-year-old chant. The challenge further developed where I had to write melodic material that was interesting, yet singable: my music had to be written against the direction I heard in my head, and I had to find ways to make it sound musically convincing. Combining these melodic ideas, alongside the awareness of textual pacing, allowed me to explore compositional ideas that would make setting the text to music more exciting to both the performer and the listener. As some of the original chant contains melismas that can last up to two hundred notes (in more rare, extreme examples), consideration must be given to the argument of musical interest against choral ability. Below is an example of where I have considered musical interest by staggering each vocal entry in dividing up the original melismatic writing by syllable, whilst creating independent singable lines for the choral parts.

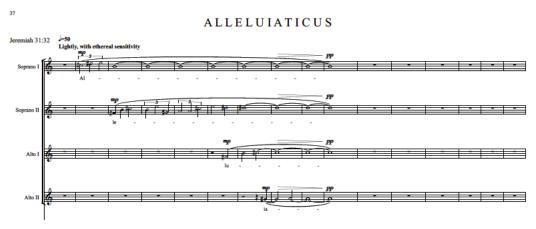


Figure 2.1 showing the opening few bars of the *Allehiaticus* movement in which vocal ability is met with musical interest

The pace of the text in the original chant is often denoted by specific cadential points, and by the number of melismatic notes placed on specific words.¹⁰ I wanted to be respectful to the original chant as much as possible, thereby creating melodic lines that were not only singable, but would

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¹⁰ Emma Hornby, 'Musical Values and Practice in Old Hispanic Chant', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 69, 3 (2016), 595-650.

honour the text they were decorating. Similarly, the premise of this portfolio of compositions is to use this work as a concert piece containing religious text: being mindful of the original source of text was important to me. Where possible, themes or threads of liturgical texts are woven into the vocal lines (as one would expect to encounter within medieval chant) with contemporary compositional sonorities, textures, rhythmic movements, instrumental techniques, and gestures in an apt and considerate manner.

To break away from the melodic constraints the NHL analysis forms, I used my accompanying ensemble to develop my own original musical ideas. An example of this is found in the Antiphon II movement, where I manipulate a contrapuntal idea three times through different tonal spaces. Whilst I could have written a strict fugue for this section, I wanted to use the idea of melodic counterpoint as a flexible tool in my writing, which allowed for a more subtle tonal manipulation each time this musical motif was explored. The theme in question appears in the first instance as an atonal figure which then becomes enveloped in a contrapuntal setting, further blurring any sense of tonality. Slowly (albeit predominantly throughout Antiphon II), I gradually manipulate this motif to become more in accordance with a sense of tonal centre and form (moving from atonality through to modality in the form of G Dorian, until the final iteration appears in B minor, as shown in Figure 2.2). Within the movement through different tonal spaces, I wanted echo the notion of transmission variants of the original chant. I was inspired by Roxanna Panufnik's Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis for Double Choir and Organ in this aural journey through tonality. Panufnik is able to disguise tonal centres through the organ accompaniment and choral lines as she manipulates the melodic lines to encompass false relations and polytonal chords, until tonal order is resumed with the tonal centre of F major bursting out for the 'Gloria'. As for my own melodic writing (as denoted by the NHL analysis), I focused on the oral practise in Old Hispanic music, where shorter and less ornate melodic lines would be more easily remembered by those singing, and thus by eliminating any awkward melodic intervals and by keeping my melodic motif brief, I remain true to the original chant.



Figure 2.2 demonstrating the manipulation of melodic counterpoint ideas, *Antiphon II*, bars 5-11, 76-83, 100 – end, respectively.

FORMAL FREEDOMS

STRUCTURE, BREAKING FREE FROM CLICHÉ, BALANCE

In my composition, I chose to adhere to further constraints of the original source, since my work follows a similar formal structure to that of the L8 manuscript. Taking the melodic gesture of the NHL notation found in Missa I of the Marian Office in the León Antiphoner, the form of my work includes two Antiphons, an Alleluiaticus, and a Responsorium. Each movement within the original manuscript also has an accompanying Verse (VR), which is a structural element employed in my own work. However, the role of the VR takes on a different function in my composition from the original. In the original manuscript, the Verses would use the text of a psalm verse where only the first word or two is signalled (and very occasionally there is an incipit). This means the familiarity of these Verses would need only the incipit to introduce the work, acting as an aide-mémoire to those singing this part of the liturgy. When looking at the original manuscript for this Missa, apart from the Responsorium VR, there are no NHL incipits, which allowed me to use the concept of response as the main stimulus for composition. Musical material already heard in the main movement of the larger work is repeated in the corresponding VR, sometimes with new material, giving the listener an illustration of repetition or reflection.



Figure 3.1 *Antiphon II* b. 41-46, where musical motifs are heard in the first instance in the piano and double bas parts

As an example, the original musical material seen in Figure 3.1 taken from *Antiphon II* has been used as motivic material found in the corresponding VR, seen in Figure 3.2. Within the Middle Ages, after the simple psalm recitation, the antiphon would then repeat. To avoid using a large ternary-based structure for each movement I used each VR as an opportunity for free composition, reflecting upon the musical material from the preceding movement. The decision not to repeat musical material, as found in the original medieval chant, is a deliberate decision to push away from the original structure: in a contemporary context, I felt the work would otherwise become too tedious and repetitive. Similarly, in the original Missa, a prayer would be said after each chant, reflecting upon the text that has just been sung. I decided to omit these prayers from the work, again moving against the original structure of the Missa, due to the context in which this piece would be performed. Whilst sacred works are not limited to performances in a religious context, within this concert work there is no need to include these prayers.



Figure 3.2 Antiphon II - VR b. 7-13, where the same musical motifs can be seen, but are now offered as a 'response' in the corresponding VR movement.

UNIFYING THE MUSIC

SHARING MUSICAL MATERIAL

In L8, we find that within different chants, cantors will use the same melodic formulas in their own vocal identity: the cantor may sing the same cadential patterns or employ similar chant material through the responsory chants. By utilising this notion in *Sit Nomen Eius Emmanuel*, I have transferred musical material from the first three movements (including their corresponding verses) and placed such motifs within the final movement of the *Responsorium*, albeit within a new musical context. However, instead of employing this concept by transferring chant material, I have used this idea for the accompanying ensemble figures. By placing previously heard musical material within this final movement, it is possible to allow a sense of narrative to appear through the work, and a suitable climactic build towards the end of the work is established. The listener finds they can recall previously heard musical motifs, just as those who sang chants found in the Old Hispanic liturgy would be able to focus on and understand particular melodic patterns or frameworks that allowed messages of reminiscent veneration. ¹²

Unity also appears in my work through the text used as found in L8, and it is important to note that the role of each movement within the Missa also has a particular liturgical motive. Kati Ihnat and Rebecca Maloy discuss ways in which it is possible to approach different analyses in the Marian Office in L8. Particular attention is drawn to ways in which the text used is selective and serves an important liturgical purpose, unifying each movement of the Missa. I wanted to reflect this idea in my music, not only as a construct I found interesting, but to give a greater sense of unity in my compositional work. Most Antiphon texts are used in a way that focuses attention on particular words or phrases, and will therefore have repetition of particular biblical expressions "thematically linking [the text] to the chants".¹³

Antiphon I: Audite domus David, **Dominus dabit vobis signum**: Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filinoum **et vocabitis nomen eius Emmanuel**

¹¹ Hornby and Maloy reference such melodic material in interchangeable contexts in 'Melodic dialects in Old Hispanic chant', *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, 25, 1 (2016), 37-72.

¹² Rebecca Maloy, Songs of Sacrifice: Chant, Identity, and Christian Formation in Early Medieval Iberia, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 5.

¹³ Although the Marian Office in L8 falls towards Christmastide, the principles of text use within chants remains the same in L8. Further discussion on this matter is found in Hornby and Maloy, *Music and Meaning in Old Hispanic Lenten Chants*, 37, and further in Ihnat and Maloy, 'Text, Melody, and Theology in the Old Hispanic Marian Office'.

Antiphon II: Dabit vobis Dominus signum in terra: virgo in utero accipiet et pariet filium et vocavitis nomen eius Emmanuel, scitote gentes quoniam nobiscum est Deus

It is also important to note that in the case of some Antiphons "[...] the biblical text was altered, augmenting both the repetition of key words and phrases and the cohesion with other chants sung in close proximity".¹⁴

As an example, when analysing the melodic gesture of the word *Emmanuel* in both Antiphons, it is interesting to note that even though the notation is written differently through the selection of neumes used by the scribe, the melodic gesture is the same for both settings of the word *Emmanuel*, save for one melodic movement in the 'nu' syllable.

Antiphon I:	Antiphon II:
Em- N	Em - N
ma – NHHL	ma – NHHL
nu – NHL	nu – NHH
el - N	el - N

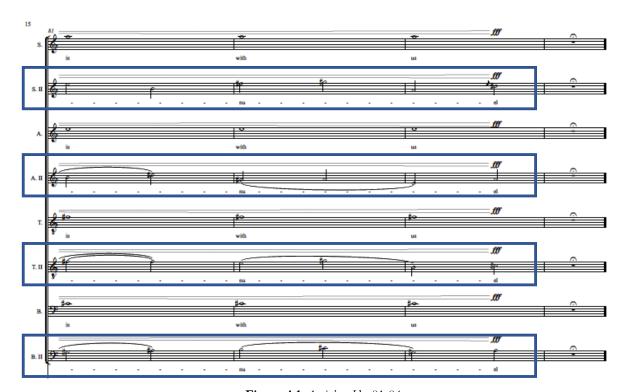


Figure 4.1 *Antiphon I* b. 81-84

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¹⁴ ibid, p. 38.

In both Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2, the cadential pattern for these chants is highlighted. I wanted to differentiate between these two melodic gestures within my compositional work, drawing attention to these different cadential styles from the Old Hispanic chant repertory. The NHL cadence is typical of a Rioja cadence (Figure 4.1), and the NHH cadence is an example of a León cadence (Figure 4.2). Hornby and Maloy note that the second Antiphon in this Missa demonstrates a typical León cadence: "In L8, the last two syllables of the cadential patterns [...] most commonly have a three-note or a two-note ascent (NHH or NH) on the penultimate syllable, followed by a two-note ascent (NH) or single note (N) on the final syllable". In respect of this particular cadence, I highlight compositionally the three-note ascent on the penultimate syllable, followed by a single note on the final syllable, as shown in the second choir material in bars 70-71 of *Antiphon II* in Figure 4.2 below.



Figure 4.2 Antiphon II b. 69-75

I wanted to draw attention to this aspect of cadential work found in analysing the neume materials. To do so, all voices within the second choir move as the original gesture determines against static vocal lines in the first choir. Moreover, to further differentiate this melodic feature and to assert greater focus at this cadence, I included the English translation of 'Emmanuel' (God is with us). With both cadences in *Antiphon II* and *Antiphon II* decorated in the same way, unity between movements is upheld.

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¹⁵ Further discussion into melodic dialects and the distinction between different cadential formula can be found in Hornby and Maloy, 'Melodic dialects in Old Hispanic chant', 25 (2016), 37-72.

¹⁶ Hornby and Maloy, 'Melodic dialects in Old Hispanic chant', 45-46.

PERFORMABILITY

One of the most important developments of my own compositional understanding was evolving a sense of performability. In my first few compositional drafts as part of my portfolio, I thought I needed to be complicated in my musical approach to showcase the research aspect of my writing. An example of this is found in one of the very first works I had written as part of my portfolio. In *Beata es Regina*, the melodic choral lines bear no resemblance to the singability I try to evoke in my later works, and the accompanying organ part has little contextual appreciation of the choral parts (Figure 5.1).



Figure 5.1 Beata es Regina b. 35-38

After taking a step back from this work, and evaluating the purpose of my compositions, I realised that I needed to use singability and performability as an aspiration, which in turn echoes the simplicity and transmissibility of the original chant. Further developing this concept, I started to think about the linear lines of chant in a contemporary context, and what would happen to the vertical harmony should each line of chant overlap in an imitative gesture (again, with this notion of transmissibility being reiterated in my compositional work through the echo effect created through the displaced imitation). An example of this is in my composition, *Exultabit Spiritus – Alleluia*, found below in Figure 5.2.



Figure 5.2 Exultabit Spiritus – Alleluia b. 1-2

De

Within the work *Exultabit Spiritus – Alleluia*, I wanted to create a sense of etherial blending, so not only do the individual lines of chant overlap, they are also drawn in and out of the texture through dynamic contrast. To further reduce complexity in my compositional work, I developed the concept of vertical harmony created through the imitative chant lines, with a sense of unity in a more homophonic section. This allowed for an acknowledgement of the original source through the monophonic lines of chant (Figure 5.3). Through this work, I also utilised the structure of this full chant, with the exposition of the chant material, the inclusion of a doxology, and then the repetition of the chant material once more. It is interesting to note that the doxology that separates the repetition of the chant is more developed, with an increased sense of devotion, than that of the Roman doxologies (as previously mentioned, developed theology is one of the main inspirations of my compositional work through the Old Hispanic repertoire). ¹⁷ It is through these more simple lines of melodic chant composed in *Exultabit Spiritus – Alleluia* that inspire the melodic material for the choral parts in *Sit Nomen Eius Emmanuel*.

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¹⁷ Fourth council of Toledo, canon 15, specifies the text of this Old Hispanic doxology (*Colección Canónica*, V, 204-5). It differs from the Roman and Byzantine doxologies, adding 'et honor' after 'Gloria'. See Louis Brou, 'Études sur la liturgie mozarabe: le Trisagion de la Messe dans les sources manuscrites', *Ephemerides liturgicae*, 56 (2012), 309-34; 318.

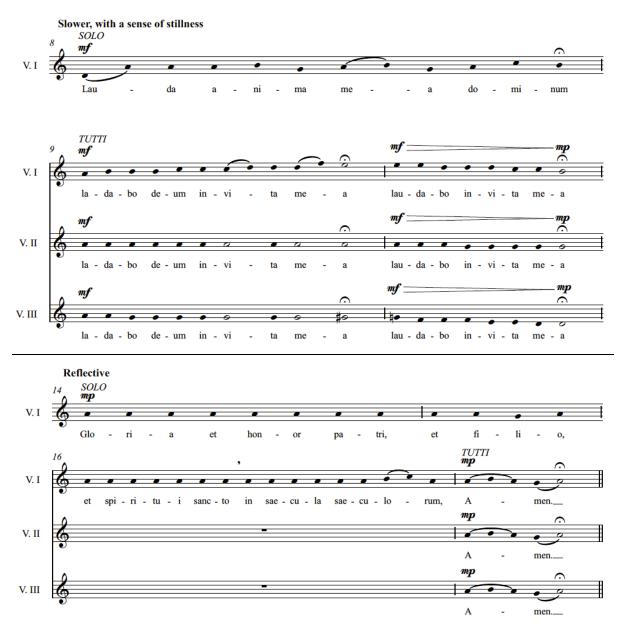


Figure 5.3 Exultabit Spiritus – Alleluia b. 8-9, 14-16

HARMONIC LANGUAGE

Another aspect of my compositional dialect that developed through the writing of this portfolio was my understanding of harmonic language. In many of my early compositions, I would find that my use of harmony was stuck within the realms of functional harmony, and that my compositional work would rotate simply through a basic harmonic structure in which I would add dissonance to create undeveloped interest. However, the melodic gesture of the NHL analysis gave me the confidence and inspiration to move away from functional harmony and use harmony that followed the movement or intensity of the NHL analysis. By using this sense of gesture, I started to explore the ways in which I could shift melodies up or down, either by tone or semitone, and use particular melodic notes as a pivot in which I could shift tonal centres.

As I started to explore this further, John Pickard introduced me to the concept of transposed inversion in chords, where chords (or harmonic clusters) would be inverted and then transposed to sound the original tonic note by the intervallic difference between the new tonic and the original tonic of the chord. By using this form of chord rotation, there is a sense of unity and variety at the same time. The tonic note of the chords remains the same giving harmonic stability, whilst the remaining pitches are transposed by interval giving a new and exciting colour. Stepping away from the use of functional harmony and by experimenting with the direction in which to take my harmony led me to be bolder in my harmonic choices (I was also drawn to Lutosławki's sense of harmonic direction in Lacrimosa, where various harmonic pivots draw the ear to fluctuating spaces and colours). 18 Figure 6.1 is an example where I utilise a particular note as a pivot in which I shift my harmonic centre: bar 28 of the Alleluiaticus is written in the key of F# major, and uses the enharmonic sixth degree of the scale to then pivot to Eb mixolydian (as implied by the highlighted first cello part in bar 28). Listening to Penderecki's choral works developed my sense of harmony further and led me to focus on independent line within my harmonic work, as opposed to thinking in tonal centres.¹⁹ His choral works conceive of independent melodic lines that are not bound by vertical harmony but are liberated sung lines that when combined form harmonic movements that often occur by chance. I started to experiment with this idea, ensuring that my attention was given to writing a melodic line that was

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¹⁸ Witold Lutosławski, Lutosławski: Vocal and Orchestral Works, Chandos, 2018.

¹⁹ In par In particular *Piesn Cherubinow* and *O Gloriosa Virginum* as found on Kryzsztof Penderecki, *Warsaw Philhamonic: Penderecki Conducts Penderecki* Vol. 2, Warner Music, 2017.

interesting and singable, but didn't necessarily have any harmonic anchor with what was happening musically around such a line (aside from utilising the same tonal or modal centre).



Figure 6.1 Alleluiaticus b. 28-32

As my confidence grew in this harmonic area, I then started to use the concept of gesture (as reflected in the melodic representation of the original chants) to develop my sense of harmony further. I began to let my harmonic direction in my accompaniment figures be offered more by chance, determined by how my ear perceived the journey in which an independent melodic line should take, as demonstrated in Figure 6.2.

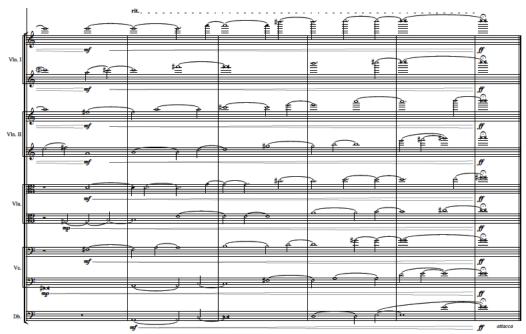


Figure 6.2 Responsorium b. 104-end

UNDERSTANDING TEXTURE AND COLOUR

Textural understanding proved to be another aspect in which my compositional creativity developed. One of the most important questions I asked myself through this portfolio is that of how I can turn monophonic chant into a full choral and instrumental texture. The answer came in my growth of understanding the use of textures and colours. My previous compositions contained heavy aspects of melody dominated homophony, homophonic and choral works, and a lack of understanding in variation, as demonstrated in Figure 7.1.



Figure 7.1 Augustine's Epiphany b. 19-21

By focusing heavily on the aspect of chant and what it meant to utilise monophonic writing in my own work, I started to understand how to combine melodic lines, which slowly started to turn into more sophisticated contrapuntal music. Suddenly, I found my work contained added dimensions of counterpoint revolving around ever-changed harmonic spaces. I combined this

concept with the use of antiphonal writing that is found in L8 where melodic gesture and textual pacing are governed by the structure of each part of the Missa. Through this, I explored orchestral and choral colours, noting that to create certain musical effects I could alter the texture to suit the musical narrative I was trying to evoke. An example of this is in the *Alleluiaticus*: there are no lower voices used, thereby creating a higher and lighter timbre, with the accompanying instrumental forces used as a wash of sound. I wanted this movement of *Sit Nomen Eius Emmanuel* to be more meditative, where the prominent repetition of the word 'Alleluia' allowed me to use the text and textual pacing as a musical focal point.

To create this wash of sound, I focussed on blurring any sense of rhythmic pulse by using different tuplet durations, alongside some string parts within the ensemble playing brief melodic fragments independently of one another. The long, sustained notes also add to the wash of sound, whilst allowing the vocal parts to hear tonal stability in assisting their pitch. Such musical expression can be seen in Figure 7.2 as an example below.



Figure 7.2 Alleluiaticus b. 23-27

²⁰ Hornby and Maloy, Music and Meaning, 108; 112.

Whilst those that would have sung this music in its original state would have controlled the pace of the text themselves, as a composer utilising the Old Hispanic repertoire as a source of inspiration for my own composition, I too was able to control the pace of the text. I felt it important to highlight the word 'Alleluia' as a focal point within this movement of the Missa, and to that end, by augmenting the rhythmic pacing of this particular word, attention would be drawn to the text and the decorative melisma (as demonstrated in Figure 7.3). The use of longer note durations signifies the importance not only of the word 'Alleluia', but greater impact is placed on the prominence of this word through the long melismatic writing in the original neumes. In turn, this compliments the wash created by the accompanying figures.²¹

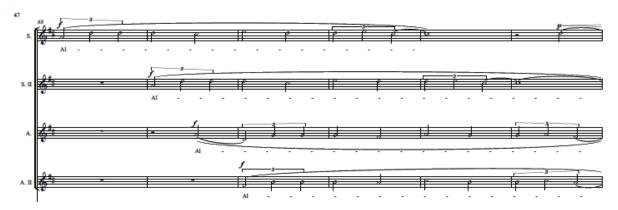


Figure 7.3 Alleluiaticus b. 68-73

As a contrast, and to demonstrate an awareness of textual pacing, Figure 7.4 highlights the rhythmic element to the textual pacing of the main body of text in this compositional movement, where shorter rhythmic values are used to move the text along.



Figure 7.4 Alleluiaticus b. 16-22

²¹ The importance of the word *Alleluia* in different liturgical traditions and its placement within these liturgies is discussed in James McKinnon, 'Preface to the Study of the Alleluia', *Early Music History*, 15 (2008), 213-249.

CLIMACTIC WRITING

Combining my new understanding of controlling and manipulating texture, colour, harmonic space, melodic writing, and textual pacing allowed me to demonstrate a new understanding in the shape of my own music, especially when writing climactic points in my work. Figure 8.1 is an example of a moment in the *Responsorium* in which I was able to build to a climactic point in the work by using shifts in harmonic writing, changes in orchestral colours through the percussion and string artificial harmonics, along with a developing texture in the choral parts.



Figure 8.1 Responsorium b. 82-90

Listening to the orchestral suites of Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe* gave me a greater understanding of building orchestral textures in important climactic moments of composition. ²² I found some features within Ravel's work that taught me the importance of the use of space and silence, stillness and reflection. I was able to draw these ideas to match those of my earlier ideas of pacing in my own music. Climactic writing need not be drawn out over a long period of music, but instead might be created through interest where shorter burst of music are almost fragmented, and juxtaposed by quieter moments to draw the listener in. Figure 8.2 demonstrates the establishment of furious virtuosity in the strings, followed by a hollower and more inward motif exposed in the piano part (which came to be used as a musical motif throughout *Sit Nomen Eius Emmanuel*). Climactic writing is shorter and more demanding in this instance, as it draws the attention of the listener into hearing the opening of the movement: this reflects the fact that most Antiphon texts are used in a way that focuses attention on particular words or phrases, and will therefore have repetition of particular biblical expressions "thematically linking [the text] to the chants", just as this piano motif appears in different movements of *Sit Nomen Eius Emmanuel*.²³

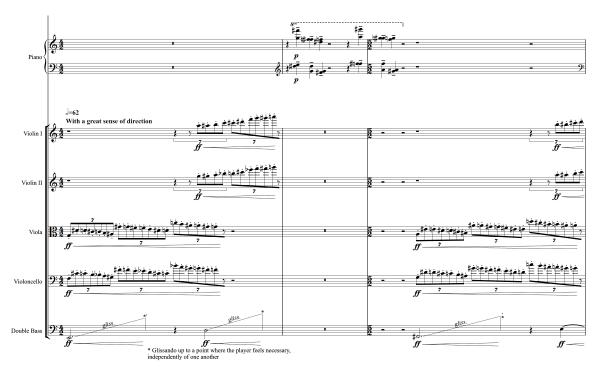


Figure 8.2 Antiphon II b. 1-3

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²² Maurice Ravel, Ravel: Daphnis et Chloë, Deutsche Grammophon, 1995.

²³ Although the Marian Office in L8 falls towards Christmastide, the principles of text use within chants remains the same in L8. Further discussion on this matter is found in Hornby and Maloy, 'Thematic Congruity in the Old Hispanic Lenten Liturgies' in *Music and* Meaning, 37, and further in Ihnat and Maloy, 'Text, Melody, and Theology in the Old Hispanic Marian Office'.

I continued to think about the use of movement in melodic lines, and the use of such musical ideas in reference to climactic points on a smaller scale in accompanying figures. I wanted to represent such accompanying figures to symbolise smaller antiphonal points in the chant. The result is shown in figure 8.3 where the overlapping violin and viola string parts create dissonance against the lower strings. This anti-suspension occurs where the dissonance creates the climactic point – the dissonant note is sounded in the previous chord, before the harmony shifts to then make this note consonant. I wanted to disguise the use of dissonance, and in giving the string parts a heavy portamento, further weight and colour is given to this form of melodic line.



Figure 8.3 Responsorium VR b. 33-end

FINISHING A PIECE

After exploring all my new compositional tools, and through seeking inspiration from the Old Hispanic repertoire for my own music, finishing each composition in a constructive and convincing way was the final hurdle for me to overcome. My fear was that occasionally the endings to my compositions would sound too gimmicky. Figure 9.1 illustrates the string parts of an unsatisfactory ending at the end of an early draft of the *Allehiaticus VR* in which the final fortissimo chord has no musical context with any previous material, and concludes the piece in an odd and jarring fashion.

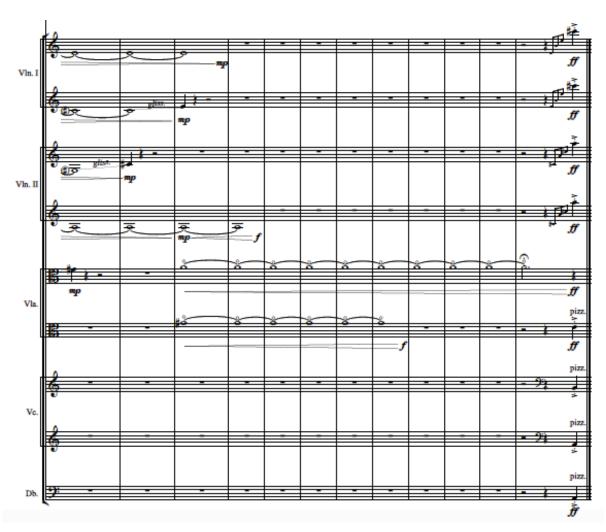


Figure 9.1 Alleluiaticus VR, Draft Ib. 37-end

I once again took a step back from my own work and thought about how the final iterations of chant might prove to inspire the final bars of my own compositions. This approach was a more holistic venture, encouraged by my own experiences in singing chant (albeit more in the Gregorian tradition). I concentrated on the reduction of material, the pace of the music and text

decelerating, and resolving any harmonic obscurities to a satisfactory conclusion.²⁴ The ending of *Antiphon I VR* (Figure 9.2) displays a moment in which the inverted pedal note in the Violin I part clings to a tonal centre, around which the chords finally resolve and musical material is reduced through texture.



Figure 9.2 Antiphon I VR b. 16-end

By taking musical material away, I was able to manipulate the way in which the audience would hear the music. It would become obvious to the listener that a particular section is drawing to a close, not necessarily at the end of a piece, but in approaching a new section of the text. This allowed me to control the textual pacing and the original neumatic material once again in a way that meant I could draw attention to important moments in the original source. Fragmenting musical material in the *Alleluiaticus* as shown in Figure 9.3, and by displacing each fragment at disjunct rhythmic intervals within the string parts allowed the suitable conclusion to previously heard musical material, before commencing the next section. It was also important for the next section of music to be comprised of new musical material. There is a textual thematic link with this musical motif in the *Alleluiaticus* and the previously heard *Antiphons* (I mention the importance of textual unity in section titled 'Unifying the Music').

²⁴ Observing David Bednall's choral works, I was able to explore the ways in which Bednall pushes the boundaries of modality in *In Manus Tuas*, and yet can manipulate the tonality to a restorative state with a satisfying ending.

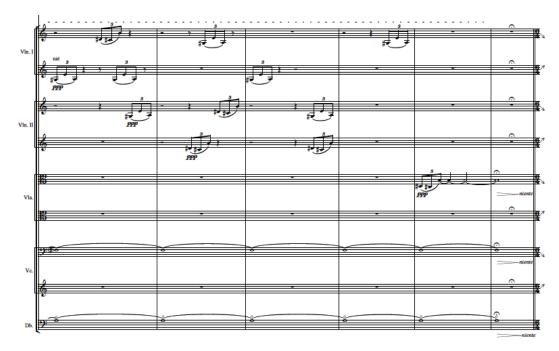


Figure 9.3 Antiphon I VR b. 37-42

Another example of how I was able to manipulate musical material was with the simple use of retrograde. The opening bars of the *Alleluiaticus* in Figure 9.4 form the musical material for the retrograde use in concluding the *Alleluiatics VR* (Figure 9.5). As they are thematically linked, this provides a fitting opening and ending to these movements within *Sit Nomen Eius Emmanuel* (which, incidentally, is the outcome of working on the unsuitable ending as demonstrated in Figure 9.1).

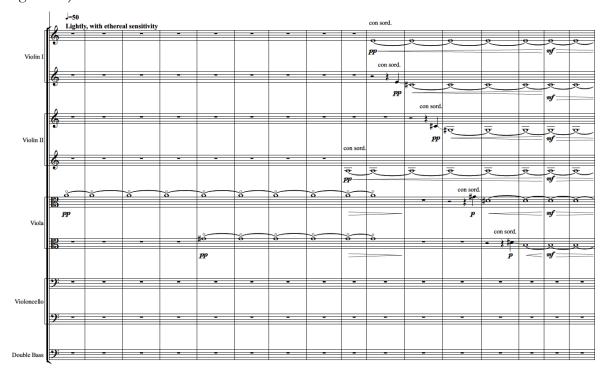


Figure 9.4 Alleluiaticus b. 1-16

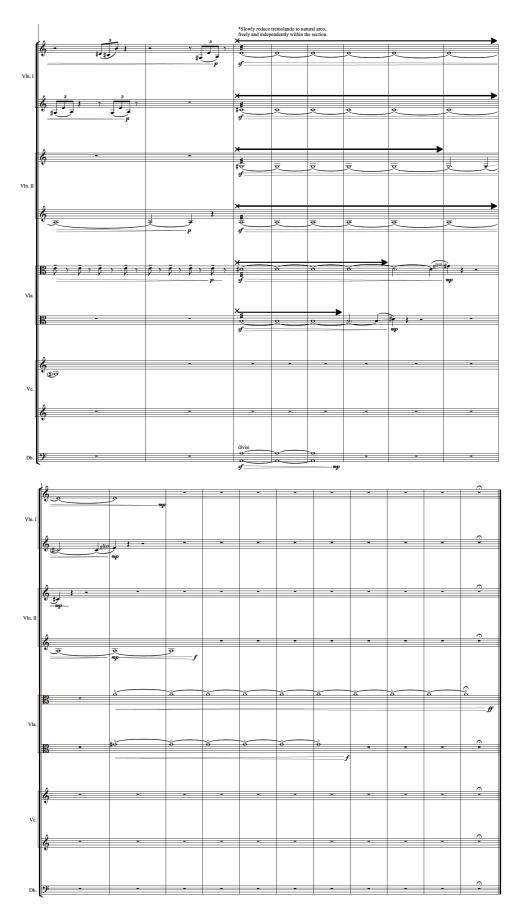


Figure 9.5 Alleluiaticus VR b. 29-end

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the time it has taken to compose this portfolio, amongst many other compositions that are not part of *Sit Nomen Eius Emmanuel*, the text as mentioned in my introduction, "Eructuabit cor meum verbum bonum, dico ego opera mea regi alleluia", has always resounded as an echo inside my mind. It has been a constant reminder of the devotion, depth, majesty, and beauty of the Old Hispanic repertoire.

Using this notion as the basis of my compositional material has allowed me to focus on the splendour of this ancient rite, using the original manuscript as inspiration for my own work. It has facilitated an exploration in reflecting on the importance of textual pacing and melodic gesture: deciding where to place the emphasis on the important aspects of the original text, or how to manipulate the ebbs and flows of the melodic gesture to compose a melodic line that was musically convincing and would still decorate the text adequately.

By using the Old Hispanic repertoire as a source of inspiration for my contemporary composition, I have been able to take a step back in many instances and observe characteristics of a thousand-year-old manuscript that would colour the splendour of such rich and devout texts. I have relished the opportunity to use these characteristics to further develop my own understanding of what it means to create music.

In these commentaries, I have looked at the theme of textual pacing and melodic gesture, studying the importance of these musical aspects in both music of the Old Hispanic repertoire, and the implication of the significance of these musical aspects in contemporary composition. I have thoroughly enjoyed seeking similarities and drawing comparisons with this ancient repertoire and the music of contemporary composers whom I admire. I have also seen my own compositional awareness, language, and personality develop through the study of all the materials afforded to me over the last two years. Sometimes, it is important for us to note that to move forward in our own way, we may often have to look back at the past for inspiration.

APPENDIX I: MISSA I ANTIPHON I

 $\begin{array}{lll} Au-N & con-NH \\ di-NLUH & ci-NUHL \\ te-N & pi-NHL \\ et-N \end{array}$

 $\begin{aligned} &Do-NH\text{-}NQqqHL\\ &mus-NUUHLH \end{aligned} \qquad &et-N \end{aligned}$

 $\begin{array}{ccc} Da-NUHLH & pa-NL \\ vid-N & ri-NHL-N \\ et-N \end{array}$

 $\begin{array}{ll} Do-NH \\ mi-NLHH & fi-NHL \\ nus-N-NS-NHL-NSSHL & li-NL \\ um-N \end{array}$

 $\begin{aligned} da - NH \\ bit - NLHH \end{aligned} \qquad et - N$

 $\begin{array}{ccc} vo - N & & vo - N \\ bis - NHHH & & ca - NH \\ bi - NLHH & & \end{array}$

sig – NH-NL num – NH-NLH-NSH

 $\begin{array}{c} no-NHH \\ Ec-N \\ ce-N \end{array}$

 $\begin{array}{c} ei-NHHDHL \\ vir-NL-N-NUHL \\ go-N \end{array}$

Em- N ma – NHHL nu – NHL el – N

APPENDIX II: MISSA I ANTIPHON II

fi - NDa – NH bit-NLli – NHH um - Nvo – NH bis - NLet - NHHDo – NHL vo - Nmi – NLH ca - NSnus - Nvi – NL tis – NSH sig - NH num - NSno - Nmen - NH in - NLei – NS ter – NH-NH-NLH us - NHLra – NLH Em-Nvir - NHma - NHHLgo – NLHL nu – NHH el - Nin - Nsci-Nu - NHto - NHte - NH te - NH-NL-NH ro - NLHH gen – NHHH tes – NL-NHL-NH-NL ac - Nci - NHHL pi – NL quo - N-NSSLNL et - Nni – NHL am - NHHDD-N-NL-NL-NH-NSHLet - Nno - Npa – NHH bis - NHH cum - Nri - N

et – NH-NSH

est – NH-NLH

 $\begin{array}{c} De-NH\\ us-N \end{array}$

APPENDIX III: MISSA I ALLELUIATICUS

Al – NUHL al – N-NS-NLHL-NUL

le – N-NH-NHL-NS-NHL le – N-NU-NHL-NUL-NHH-NS-NL-NUL-N-NH-N-NLH

 $\begin{array}{ll} lu-NHH & lu-NH \\ ia-NH & ia-N \end{array}$

cre - N a - NHHbit - N

Do – NHSH

mi-NL

nus - N

no – NH bum – NS

su - NH

per - N

ter - N

ram – NSH

a - NH

le – NHL-NS-NHL

lu – NHH

ia - N

Fe – NH-NLH

mi – N-NUHL

na - NL

cir- NSH

cum - N

da – NHL

bit - N

vi - N

rum - NS

a - NH

le – NL-NLH

lu – NH

ia - N

APPENDIX IV: MISSA I RESPONSORIUM

Mis - NHte – NH sus - NLcum - Nest - Nbe - NH-NSHL ne – N a - Ndic - NHHH ta – NUUHL de – NHL o - NSS-NHL-NSHL tu - NHHLL-NH-NLHL in – NH an - NHH ter - Nge – NH lus - NLmu - N-NHLNL ga – NHH li - NL-NLH bri – NL e – NH el – NHS-NHDH res – NH ad - NHL prop - Nte – NHH ma – NLH rea - NL-NS-NL-NL-NH-NHL-NSSHL ri – NHL am – N-NUHL quod – NHH vir - Nna - Ngi – NH sce - NHH num - NH-NLL-NSSH tur - Ndi – NH ex - NLcens - Nte – N-NUHL a – NH-NHL sanc – NHL be – N-NH-NH-NLHL tam – NHL-NSSHL ma - Nri - NH vo - Na - NH-NLL-NS-NHDH ca – N-NUL-NH-NUL-NHHUH-NHDH-NL-NS gra – NHL bi – NHL ti - NLtur – NLL-NUL-NSSHL a – NHL fi - Nple - Nli – NH na - NH-NSHL us – NH-NLL-NSSH do - Nde – NH

i - N

mi – NH

nus - NH-NLL-NSSH

APPENDIX V: MISSA I RESPONSORIUM VR

Spi – NHH
ri - N
tus - NL

sanc-NHH

tus-NL

su - NHper - NL

ve – NH

ni - N

et - NH

in - NL

te - NH

et - N

vir - NHtus - NH

al – NH

tis - N

si - N

mi-N

o - N

bum-N

bra - N

bit-N

ti - NH

bi – NHH-NLHL

APPENDIX VI: MISSA I, TRANSLATION OF TEXTS

Antiphona: Audite domus David, Dominus dabit vobis signum: Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filinoum et vocabitis nomen eius Emmanuel	Isaiah 7:13–14	Listen, David, the Lord will give you a sign: behold a virgin shall conceive and bear forth a son, and will call him Emmanuel
VR: Audite hec [omnes]	Psalm 48:2	Listen to this, all
Antiphona: Dabit vobis Dominus signum in terra: virgo in utero accipiet et pariet filium et vocavitis nomen eius Emmanuel, scitote gentes quoniam nobiscum est Deus	Isaiah 7:14	God will give a sign on earth that a virgin shall conceive and bear forth a son, and his name shall be Emmanuel, which means God is with us
VR: Omnes gentes [plau]	Psalm 46:2	All the people
Alleluiaticus: Alleluia creabit Dominus nobum super terram, alleluia. Femina circumdabit virum, alleluia alleluia	Jeremiah 31:22	Alleluia, how long will you wander unfaithful daughter? The Lord will create a new thing on earth, and the woman will embrace her God. Alleluia, alleluia.
VR: Sit nomen [Domini]	Psalm 112:2	In the name of the Lord
Responsorium: Missus est a Deo angelus Gabriel ad Mariam virginem dicens: Abe Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu inter mulieres propterea quod nascetur ex te sanctum vocabitur filius Dei	Luke 1:26–28/35	The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin saying: Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou amongst women, you will bear a son who will be called the Son of God
VR: Spiritus sanctus superveniet in te et virtus altissimi obumbrabit tibi	Luke 1:35	The Holy Spirit will be upon you, and all power will be given to you

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