Introduction

MARK EVERIST

'O sing unto the Lord a new song' is the text introduced by the initial on the cover of *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music*. But our two Austin canons pictured in the initial stand with their mouths resolutely closed. Furthermore, it is difficult to square the elaborate ligatures on the roll before which the two Augustinians stand with any sort of psalmody; at the very least the music looks more like a melisma from a gradual, alleluia or responsory; the more optimistic modern gaze might even see the tenor of a polyphonic work there. And while the cleric on the right is pointing to the notation on the roll, there is very little doubt that the one on the left is indicating solmization syllables on his hand (although never described by Guido d'Arezzo, this practice was known throughout the Middle Ages as the Guidonian Hand). In many ways, then, the initial that adorns this book addresses issues raised by its contents: monophony and polyphony, psalmody and composed chant, written and unwritten, codex and *rotulus*, musical literacy, cheironomy, silence and sound.

The component parts of our 'Cantate' initial are very much the concerns of the contributors to *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music*. We are interested, of course, in following the path of music history from the middle of the first millennium to around 1400, but we are also interested in the ways in which plainsong and polyphony interact: there is always the risk in any book of this sort of treating monophony – liturgical, sacred and vernacular – as something that stopped as soon as someone sang a fifth above a fundamental, and our accounts, for example, of the role of plainsong in trecento Italy or in Parisian organum of the twelfth century, or the weight given to Machaut's monophonic songs will make clear our reluctance to fall prey to this sort of reasoning. The friction between theory and practice – perfectly dramatized by our two Austin canons – lies at the heart of much of the volume, and our chapters on liturgy and institution take us right to the centre of the question of when and when not music was composed, performed and consumed.

The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music is a totally different proposition to almost every other volume in the Cambridge Companions series. Whereas *The Cambridge Companion to Stainer* or *The Cambridge Companion to the Ocarina*, when they are written, will have their scope relatively straightforwardly defined by their subject matter, our attempt to assemble

a companion to a body of music that spans the best part of a millennium, and most of what is now considered Europe, is an exercise fraught with ambiguity and uncertainty. So while *The Cambridge Companion to Mozart* and *The Cambridge Companion to Rossini* treat the life, works and contexts of their respective subjects in clearly different ways, there is little doubt as to how many concert arias the former wrote or how long the latter spent in Naples. Furthermore, in companions with such clearly defined limits, the scope for the examination and analysis of, say, Mozart's *Requiem* or Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* is broad; by contrast, the luxury of more than a handful of exemplary analyses to support general points would have made *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music* significantly longer than it already is. We focus, then, on repertories and their contexts rather than on groups of works defined by composer.

'Composer' is of course a highly contested term. In a post-Romantic age that professionalizes the composer in a way largely unknown before the past two hundred years, it is helpful to return to the idea of composition as something that went hand in hand with singing, instruction and theorizing. In particular, coming back to the idea of composition as the placing together – as its etymology (*componere*) suggests – gives a context to the common medieval practices of reworking text and music sometimes over a period of centuries. This is no less a process of composition than the one portrayed in the images of Beethoven composing the 'Pastoral' Symphony or of Haydn composing in his best clothes. Time and time again in the pages that follow, the question of composition and authorship will surface in very different ways, and our understanding and enjoyment of medieval music will be impoverished if reworking and embellishment are treated as something on a lower plane than what we understand today as 'composition'. There is a sense then that the *canticum novum* sung by our Austin Canons might allude to almost any part of the music of the Middle Ages: all could be considered old, and all could also be counted as new.

What are the Middle Ages, and what should a *Companion to Medieval Music* include? Both beginnings and endings are severely problematic, to say nothing of the general question of periodization. One could speculate on what the successor to this volume might be called: *The Cambridge Companion to Music of the Early Modern Period* – in acknowledgement of the unease that the terms Renaissance and Reformation have generated? An answer to this question might assist with finding an end point for our study. But at the beginning of the period treated by this volume, the problem can be articulated through a number of questions: how does the formulation 'late antiquity' play into the history of music? Is there a place for the concept of the Dark Ages? What criteria might one use for answering such questions? Yet at the end of the period, there are almost more answers than questions:

the fall of Constantinople (1453), the end of the Wars of the Roses (1485), the beginnings of the colonization of America (1492) or the beginnings of the Reformation (1517). But as these examples show, decisions about periodization are largely formed along disciplinary lines: different fields of study prefer different solutions (European history, English history, the history of colonization, and so on). And if such divisions are marked by events that are deemed of significance in individual subject areas, it might seem, there should be little difficulty in doing the same for music, although even here there are significant differences even between different areas of study: Du Fay seems fairly placed in the 'Renaissance' whereas arguments are made for considering Dunstaple 'medieval', although Reese's *Music in the Middle Ages* was unique in including the composer. Looking further afield – and this is the case in Robert Curry's chapter on medieval music east of the Rhine – the points of change may be even more marked. It of course goes without saying that Lawrence Earp's chapter on the modern reception of medieval music largely begins where the rest of the book leaves off.

It is easy to subject the question of periodization to endless interrogation and to overlook the equally important issues of geography and topography. In this regard, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music* is simultaneously conservative and path-breaking: conservative in its conventional distinction – made by the choices of chapter and author in Part II – between England, Italy, the Iberian peninsula and Eastern Europe, but path-breaking in the synoptic view of the Middle Ages provided by Christopher Page, which, among other things, looks back to third-century Carthage as the origins of the gradual, in the context of what he calls 'circuits of communication'. There is an important counterpoint in the volume between the disciplining of musical repertories that are given in Part II and an account of modes of musical transmission found in Page's chapter.

Needless to say, such an organization – regional studies in Part II and a chronological account of musical repertories in Part I – opens up the unattractive prospect of a *Hauptcorpus* identified with French mainstream repertories in Part I and subsidiary *corpora* in Part II, coupled to the implication that the French music that forms the basis of the chapters in Part I somehow represents a centre to which the music discussed in Part II is a periphery. Such a view is of course as pernicious as the analogous one that holds Austro-German music of later periods a centre with other repertories as 'national' – as if there were little or no national importance to Austro-German music or that non-Austro-German repertories had no role to play east of the Rhine. Page's chapter goes a long way towards blurring the boundaries between centre and periphery, but it would be a wilfully blind

editor who denied that any volume such as this is to a degree a prisoner of its disciplinary and scholarly past.

And in other ways, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music* differs from previous studies in its attempts to control the music of the Middle Ages. While questions of performance, instrumental music and iconography are treated in those chapters where they belong, rather than being selected for special attention, Part III deploys the knowledge gained from Parts I and II to give a synoptic view on such subjects as the liturgy, institutions, poetry, composition, manuscripts and music theory. Thus, some repertories will appear both in Part III and in either Part I or II. This bifocal view enables the reader constantly to balance a view of the subject based both on repertories and on musical cultures.

There is always an irony about writing about music: the one thing that characterizes music – its sonic quality, whether in modern recorded sound or *musica instrumentalis* – is absent, and the closed mouths of the Austin canons in our 'Cantate' initial bear eloquent testimony here. There is a further irony in writing about medieval music in that almost the only witnesses that come down to us are essentially visual, whether in terms of the manuscripts that preserve musical repertories or those that record theoretical and other writings about music (again our initial is emblematic). And while this irony has only recently been acknowledged in literary studies in the wake of the so-called New Philology, in music the importance of the visual – the manuscript evidence – has always been paramount. Nowhere is this more clear than in the dozens of published facsimiles of medieval music manuscripts that grace library shelves, both public and private. Hardly surprisingly, then, contributors have made regular reference to the particular wealth of visual material also available to readers of *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music*. Useful collections of facsimiles are also in print (all listed in the bibliography), and may well be viewed as addenda to this volume. Particularly useful are Cullin's *L'image musique*, Besseler's *Schriftbild der mehrstimmigen Musik*, Bell's *Music in Medieval Manuscripts*, and, more important perhaps, the online *Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music* (www.diamm.ac.uk/index.html) where some of the material discussed in this volume is presented in high-quality colour images. Such initiatives are certain to continue with individual libraries presenting treasures of their own in an open-access digital format; major sources from St Gall and Montpellier have been made available during the final stages of work on this project, and more will certainly have emerged by the time of the book's publication.

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PART ONE

Repertory, styles and techniques

1 Plainsong

SUSAN BOYNTON

After the introduction of public Christian worship services in the fourth and fifth centuries, chant genres of varying styles developed gradually as the parts of the services sung by the congregation became distinguished from those performed by a soloist and choir. Already in the fourth century, responsorial psalmody, performed by a soloist with congregational responses, followed the readings in the first part of the mass. Descriptions of Western liturgical practice in the fourth and fifth centuries suggest an emerging repertory of chant along the lines of the full annual cycle that was established in the Jerusalem liturgy by the middle of the fifth century.[1] Patristic writings such as the sermons of Saint Augustine and Pope Leo I refer to commentary by the celebrant at mass on a psalm verse just performed, but at first the liturgical assignments of these verses were not entirely fixed.[2] The emphasis of early writers on the psalms in the liturgy is part of a broader intellectual movement in late antiquity that made the Book of Psalms central to Christian liturgy and exegesis; as early as Augustine and Cassiodorus, commentary traditions present the psalms as prophetic texts, and allegorical readings of the psalms profoundly shaped the choice of those psalm verses that were used as chant texts.[3]

The principal scriptural influence on the shape of the annual liturgical cycle was the gospel reading at mass. The Roman cycle of gospel readings for the Sundays and principal feast days of the liturgical year was established by the end of the sixth century.[4] The gospel reading reflected the event commemorated on that day or occupied a place in a series that emerged from the continuous reading of the gospels over the course of the year. The theme of the gospel often shaped the texts of the liturgy for the day as a whole.

Another important consideration governing the selection of chants for the liturgy was the difference between proper texts, which change according the liturgical occasion, and common texts, which remain essentially unchanged (throughout the year, during a liturgical season, or on the same day of every week). Over the course of the Middle Ages, the number of propers increased with the introduction of new feasts and cults of saints.

Patristic writings suggest that the responsorial proper chants of the mass were already florid, virtuosic pieces. However, liturgical books from the period before 900 provide only the texts for the chant repertory, and

even with the development of Western musical notations in the ninth and tenth centuries, the unheighted neumes of Latin chant must still be interpreted in light of sources with staff lines. Each genre of plainsong had a particular musical style and liturgical function. In the divine office, the focus of individual hours on the communal chanting of psalms and canticles seems to have fostered musical settings that are fairly unadorned except in some of the antiphons for the canticles, and in the great responsories of matins and vespers. In the mass, the ritual focus on the Eucharist and the diverse responsibilities of the ministers involved in this celebration engendered both a wider range of styles than in the office and a more complex distribution of musical roles. The liturgy included many different forms of musically heightened declamation that correspond to various points on a continuum between song and the spoken word. Readings were sung to reciting tones that varied from place to place and also by occasion, with the most elaborate tones reserved for major feasts.[5] The psalms pervaded the Latin liturgy both as the source for the texts of individual chants in practically all the genres of plainsong (except for the ordinary of the mass and the office hymn), and in the form of entire psalms, which comprised the foundation of the eight daily services of the divine office.

Chant in the office

By the early Middle Ages the singing of psalms in the daily office followed a particular ordering which distributed the totality of the psalter over the hours of the day and the days of the week; the distribution employed in monastic churches, found in the Benedictine Rule, differed from that in collegiate or cathedral churches, where services employed fewer psalms.[6] Certain feast days had particular series of psalms, which like the ferial psalm series differed slightly in monastic and secular churches.

The psalms of the office were sung to tones consisting of melodic formulas employed in the syllabic chanting of a psalm verse on a single pitch; each formula had its own melody for the intonation and intermediary pause in the middle of the verse. The conclusion of a psalm verse was sung to a cadential termination formula known as a differentia; each psalm tone had several different possible differentiae.[7] The lesser doxology (*Gloria Patri et filio et spiritui sancto sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in secula seculorum amen*) was performed at the end of a psalm or a group of psalms. In many chant manuscripts the vowels of the last two words in the doxology (*e u o u a e*) are written below the melodies of the differentiae as a guide to singers.

The performance practice of psalms in the monastic office changed over time from responsorial singing in late antiquity to antiphonal singing in the Carolingian period.[8] Beginning in the ninth century, the psalm tones were linked to the modes; each mode was represented by one psalm tone, and the psalm tone and possible cadences of each mode were listed in tonaries (catalogues of chants by mode). Other texts in the divine office that were sung to recitation tones were the New Testament canticles at vespers (the Magnificat) and lauds (the Benedictus).[9] Over the course of the Middle Ages, the modality of chants came to be categorized in reference to the characteristics associated with these tones.[10]

The office genre with the largest repertory is the antiphon, a brief chant of relatively simple style sung chorally in alternation with psalms. Antiphons were performed before and after each psalm or group of psalms (and in the early Middle Ages, the antiphon seems to have been sung after each psalm verse). Antiphons for the daily office had texts drawn from the psalms with which they alternated; greater textual variety characterizes the antiphons for feast days. The mode of an office antiphon determined the choice of the psalm-tone cadence so as to ensure that the termination of the psalm was in the same mode as the melody of the antiphon. Antiphons for the psalms illustrate the relationship between mode and formulaic structure; most antiphons in mode 1 exhibit similar turns of phrase, such as a minor third from D to F and a leap of a fifth between D and A.[11] These gestures combine in a melodic contour that reflects the characteristics associated with the mode. Consequently, many different antiphon texts have similar or nearly identical melodies. Longer and often more complex than the psalm antiphons are those sung with the Magnificat at vespers and the Benedictus at lauds. These chants (known as gospel antiphons because the Magnificat and Benedictus originated in the gospels) usually have texts from the gospel reading of the day's mass. Still more elaborate antiphons are those sung at the beginning of matins with the invitatory psalm (Psalm 94, *Venite exultemus*), and repeated after each verse. Even antiphons that are not part of such a cohesive group draw upon similar melodic conventions. Nevertheless, the medieval repertory of office antiphons, which numbers in the thousands, exhibits enough diversity that more study is required to achieve an adequate description of the whole.

Two further antiphon types are distinct from the rest of the repertory in that they were sung independently, without psalms. Processional antiphons were performed during the processions on major feasts of the church year such as Palm Sunday, Christmas, and the Rogation Days. Another genre of independent antiphon was the Marian antiphon, which emerged in the twelfth century for use in devotions to the Virgin, including the procession

after compline that concluded with the performance of a Marian antiphon in front of an image of the Virgin.

Each hour of the divine office also included a hymn, sung to a melody (usually strophic) in strophic form.[12] Hymns were introduced into the office as early as the fifth century, but their melodies were rarely recorded before the eleventh.[13] Another syllabic genre was the brief responsory, which consisted of a respond sung by a soloist and repeated by the choir, followed by a solo verse, a choral repeat of the respond, a solo doxology, and a second choral repeat of the respond. The simplest genres of the divine office were those texts chanted to recitation tones: besides the psalms, these comprised the readings, prayers, and versicles and responses (sung in dialogue by choir and presider) that opened and closed each service.

The great responsories of matins, much lengthier and more ornate than the brief responsories, employ a wide variety of melodic formulas.[14] Great responsories are proper chants; their texts are often related to the lessons that precede them. The office of matins included three sets of chants organized in units called nocturns, each one comprised of antiphons and psalms followed by lessons and responsories (nine in secular uses, twelve in monastic use).[15] The verses of great responsories were often formulaic tones (one was associated with each mode), although newly composed verses are not unusual, especially in the later repertory. The performance practice for great responsories varied somewhat from place to place, but it essentially followed the alternation of choir and soloist just described for the brief responsory. The repeat of the respond was usually abbreviated to only its second half; many manuscripts contain cues indicating where the repeat should begin. According to the Benedictine Rule, the doxology should be sung only with the last responsory of each nocturn, and in the Middle Ages the custom was to perform only the first half of the doxology (the words *Gloria patri et filio et spiritui sancto*).[16] Example 1.1, a transcription of the final responsory in the monastic office of St Benedict as found in an eleventh-century antiphoner from the Parisian abbey of St-Maur-des-Fossés, demonstrates the repetition of the second half of the respond and the performance of the doxology. The verse of this responsory is newly composed, not one of the traditional responsory verse tones.

Chant in the mass

Whereas the great responsories were the only musically elaborate element of the divine office, the liturgy of the mass included several different complex genres of plainsong (see Table 1.1).[17] Mass began with the introit, a proper chant composed of an antiphon with psalm sung by the choir during the