

100 Years of the Graduale Romanum

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The history of the Graduale Romanum of 1908 is, as we all know, a history full of contrasts, contradictions, achievements, errors, and confusion. It is a history of emotionally overheated polemic and personal tension, and it was fought out with great fervor and led to downright splits and divisions. One must even acknowledge that such splits and rifts are even found within one and the same person. Goethe's saying about two souls within one breast truly applies to many protagonists of the chant restoration. These are tensions which are already hinted at in the prehistory of the 1908 Graduale Romanum, and then reached their high point in the first decade of the 20th century in connection with the immediate preparation of the Vatican edition. Indeed, in some form or other these tensions accompany the entire era of implementation of the Vatican Edition and the Graduale Romanum, right up to the present day. Who can be surprised, then, that with such a conflict-laden history, the books of the Vatican edition, and especially the Graduale Romanum, cannot be other than ambivalent.

In view of the facts merely hinted at here, facts which we all know, one can pose the question of whether it makes sense that we have gathered for this congress in order to celebrate the birth of a child born with such pain and injury and who even today, 100 years later, has not entirely recovered from such a traumatic birth.

And yet, we all have good reason to commemorate the achievement of the publication of the Graduale Romanum 100 years ago and to celebrate its birthday worthily. For precisely here it holds true: against the background of dark shadows the light shines all the more brightly. And actually the history of the Graduale Romanum displays from its beginning onward many illustrious moments which are at work right up to the present and repeatedly have set free powers of new creative breakthroughs and initiatives – and this precisely on the basis of what was definitively achieved by the Vatican edition.

By the pertinent secondary literature we are very well informed about the chronology of events and the tendencies and developments of the first stages of the restoration of Gregorian chant up until the publication of the Vatican chant editions. To be named in the first place is the comprehensive study of Fr. Pierre Combe, OSB of Solesmes titled Histoire de la Restauration du Chant grégorien d'après des Documents inédits (Solesmes, 1969).¹ Those who find the reading of this work of almost 500 pages too taxing and time-consuming are well served by Felice Rainoldi's condensed depiction, "Das Graduale Romanum von Dom Prosper Guéranger bis 1974" in *Beiträge zur Gregorianik* 31 (2001) 27-51, or in the Italian original, "Il Graduale Romanum da Dom Prosper Guéranger al 1974" in *Studi Gregoriani* XV (1999) 7-38. This last piece, which is based on a paper read at the 1999 congress of the International Association for the Studies of Gregorian Chant, is concerned especially with the history of the implementation of the Graduale Romanum in the 20th century up until the publication of the postconciliar Graduale Romanum of 1974 and thereafter. The same is true of the very informative articles of Fr. Jean Claire, "Centocinquanta Anni di 'Restaurazione gregoriana' a Solesmes – Uomini, Idee, Libri" in *Bollettino dell' AISCGre* IV (1990) 3-22 and "Un Secolo di Lavoro a Solesmes" in *Studi Gregoriani* XVI (2000) 5-35. Not least should also be mentioned the opening address of Fr. Daniel Saulnier at the 1999 congress of AISCGre in Verona titled "Das Graduale Romanum: Rückblick und Ausblick. Chancen und

¹ English: Pierre Combe, The Restoration of Gregorian Chant: Solesmes and the Vatican Edition, tr. Theodore N. Marier and William Skinner (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 480 pages.

Schwierigkeiten einer Überarbeitung des *Graduale Romanum*,” in German translation in *Beiträge zur Gregorianik* 30 (2000) 33-42.²

In view of the very detailed portrayal of the chronology of events in connection with the production and publication of the 1908 *Graduale Romanum* in the above-named publications, and also in view of the manifold currents and developments from the beginning of the chant restoration in the 19th century up until the most recent past, I elect to limit myself in what follows to a few facts and viewpoints. I am concerned above all to shine some light on the background lying behind names, dates, and raw facts. In other words, I wish to shake out what it is that the extraordinarily moving history of the *Graduale Romanum* has left us as an inheritance. Reflection upon the received inheritance, and above all upon the impulses, ideas, and guidelines upon which it was based, ineluctably confronts us with the question of what consequences we should draw for our creative dealing with this inheritance now and in the future.

I. The Great Breakthrough: The Prehistory of the 1908 *Graduale Romanum*

The great breakthrough has a name: Solesmes. The fact is that the cradle of the chant restoration is the Abbey of Solesmes, resettled by Benedictine monks in 1833. To be sure, scholarly activity in the area of Gregorian chant was beginning at this time in other places as well, above all as medieval chant manuscripts were increasingly rediscovered since approximately the middle of the century. This was true especially in France and Germany. But nowhere as at Solesmes were the forces so configured which guided the investigation of the original Gregorian chant. This owes primarily to that luminary who stood at the beginning of the chant restoration and afforded it its foundational ideas and guiding direction: Abbot Prosper GUÉRANGER, founding abbot of Solesmes. The significance of this man and, thanks to his path breaking ideas and initiatives, of the Abbey of Solesmes as a whole for the history of the Church in the 19th century cannot be overestimated.

After the confusion of the French Revolution and of the secularization in other countries which brought about the closing and dissolving of most of the monasteries, decisive ideas and impulses went forth from the newly resettled Abbey of Solesmes for the restoration of Benedictine monasticism above all. This also had its effect in other countries, e.g. Germany. In France, the vast majority of whose dioceses had abandoned the Roman liturgy, Abbot Guéranger's writings on liturgy and also the nationwide exemplary influence of his monastery sent signals which finally reached their crowning success in the return of the French dioceses to the Roman liturgy. Above and beyond this, Abbot Guéranger was convinced that both the restoration of Benedictine monasticism and the reconsiderations in the area of liturgy were closely tied to the revival of Gregorian chant. For him the liturgical chant of Rome, which extended back to the earliest days of the Church, was a significant symbol of the unity of the Church and her liturgy. But to do justice to this unifying function of Gregorian chant, better editions were needed than those in use in the 19th century. Those editions witnessed primarily to the disintegration into many diverse versions and local traditions. In order to find one's way back to the unity of the tradition of Gregorian chant, there was no other path than recourse to the oldest sources of the Middle Ages.

² Translator's note: Two overviews of the chant restoration in English are Cuthbert Johnson, "An Episode in the Struggle for Reform of the Gregorian Chant and for Religious Liberty," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 1 (2004), 29-61, and Anthony Ruff, "The Nineteenth Century Gregorian Chant Revival" in Anthony Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations: Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2007) GET PAGE NUMBERS.

These sources were not the medieval theoretical writings. On the contrary: as we learn from an 1868 letter of Fr. Paul JAUSIONS, the first important chant scholar of Solesmes, there was great mistrust of medieval music theory at Solesmes from the very beginning. This theory was under the influence of the “nouvel art” [“new art,” *ars nova*], *musica figurata*, which was inevitably mensuralist. In this remark of Fr. Jausions we see also a clear differentiation in Solesmes from the various attempts precisely in France (but also elsewhere) to interpret and define the rhythm of Gregorian chant in a mensuralist manner. No, a return to the oldest sources of the Middle Ages could only mean a return to the oldest manuscripts which contain the musical repertoire. This included both the oldest manuscripts *in campo aperto* [lineless notation], which Fr. Jausions believed offered precise information at the rhythmic level, and also later manuscripts with staff lines whose melodic versions were able to be correlated with the data of the oldest neumatic notation.³

Here we have already a declaration of the methodological principle of comparative study of sources. From the beginning, Abbot Guéranger made this principle his own. He was convinced that only the determination of broad agreement of many manuscripts could bring about the most authentic version of chant. In order to reach this goal, he commissioned some of his monks to search libraries within and outside of France and to produce the most comprehensive documentation possible of Gregorian manuscripts. The cornerstone was thereby laid for the extraordinarily richly endowed paleographical “atelier” [workshop] of Solesmes. Later, Fr. Mocquereau and his colleagues would considerably build upon and expand this edifice.

There is another aspect in which Abbot Guéranger set the standard in the area of Gregorian chant which affected his monastery in succeeding eras right up until the present day and which has made the community a model of chant interpretation. I am speaking of the unique *singing style* of the monks of Solesmes, which, according to the unanimous judgment of authoritative persons at Solesmes right up to Fr. Jean Claire in recent times, Abbot Guéranger himself did the most to shape. In fact, Abbot Guéranger arrived at the recognition that the archeological investigation of chant manuscripts by itself was not sufficient to bring about a manner of singing which is convincing, and what is more important, appropriate for the liturgy. For him, Gregorian chant was in the first place prayer, the sung prayer of the liturgy. And just as the Gregorian composers drew from the depths of meditation on the sacred text, the words of the liturgy, in order to provide a congenial musical form, so also the interpretation of these chants must be inspired by the spirit of the liturgy and immersion in the spiritual substance of the texts. A clear principle is formulated here which elevates the word, the liturgical text, to the first and highest authority for the interpretation of Gregorian chant. Gregorian chant is “parole chanté,” “parola cantata” [sung text], as Fr. Cardine would rather stereotypically emphasize later. But also the “rythme oratoire” [oratorical rhythm], the rhythmic concept which Fr. Pothier developed already during the lifetime of Abbot Guéranger, was based on this principle. This text-oriented manner of singing has remained up until the present day the special trademark of Solesmes’s chant interpretation. And ultimately this is the most important and most beautiful inheritance in the realm of chant interpretation which Abbot Guéranger left to his monastery, and also to us today who strive for the best possible interpretation of Gregorian chant.

What does all of this have to do with the Vatican edition and the 1908 Graduale Romanum? Many will wonder. And the question is justified, for a half century was to pass until the

³ See Combe, Restoration [footnote 1], 72ff.

publication of the Graduale Romanum. And yet, let it be said clearly: Without the pioneering work of the monks of Solesmes and especially of their abbot Proper Guéranger before and around the middle of the 19th century, there would be no Vatican edition and no Graduale Romanum in the form we now know, and developments in the succeeding decades would have taken an entirely different course.

Already in the second half of the 19th century, the most important stages were set in the path that ultimately led to the Vatican edition and the Graduale Roman after the turn of the century. In the center of this development stood two monks of Solesmes who were to have a preeminent importance--but not without ambivalence--for the restoration of Gregorian chant. They were Fr. Joseph POTHIER and Fr. André MOCQUEREAU. Both carried out their research and deployed their activities in the service of the restoration of Gregorian chant along the lines prescribed by Abbot Guéranger. But from the beginning they had different emphases, and these were to develop later into irreconcilably contrasting positions. This was the case even though they worked together effectively for decades and up to the very end did not fail to maintain mutual respect and esteem at the personal level. While Fr. Pothier followed more the trail of the text as the highest principle of interpretation and was inclined to limit the study and investigation of medieval manuscripts to the necessary minimum, for Fr. Mocquereau it was the manuscripts which attracted him and then got him interested in the most comprehensive documentation and intensive investigation of them as possible.

In their differing routes and differing set of goals, both researchers arrived at significant results of path breaking importance for both the Vatican edition and especially the Graduale Romanum, and also for the entire recent history of chant in the 20th century. But this also was in an entirely ambivalent manner.

In 1880 Fr. Pothier published his foundational book Les Mélodies Grégoriennes d'après la Tradition in which, among other things, he laid out and justified his theory of Gregorian rhythm, the “nombre oratoire.” Three years later his Liber Gradualis appeared with the publisher Desclée in Tournai. This was a true sensation and a veritable leap forward in quality in comparison to all the previously available editions. It was a work for which even Fr. Mocquereau could not fail to register his admiration. Above and beyond this, it represented a brave, indeed audacious action, for in the same year (1883) the papal decree “*Romanorum Pontificum Sollicitudo*” had just confirmed the privileges of the (neo-)Medici edition as Rome’s response to the 1882 Congress of Arezzo. This congress had in turn spoken out enthusiastically for the research activities of Solesmes and explicitly against the neo-Medici edition of Pustet in Regensburg. Fr. Jausions, who died in 1870 at the age of 36, was involved in the completion of both works, as both works had been completed already in the end of the 1860s.

In 1889 Fr. Mocquereau published at Solesmes the first volume of the *Paléographie Musicale*, that scholarly documentary series which had as its goal the photomechanical reproduction of the oldest and most important medieval chant manuscripts. This series has since grown to 24 volumes, and its provisionally last volume was released at Solesmes in 2001 in remembrance of our friend Fr. Rupert Fischer, founding member of our research society.

As brilliant as the achievements and services of both of these researchers are for the restoration of Gregorian chant, the splits between them are curiously apparent in their respective scholarly biographies. With Fr. Pothier, his open opposition to the *Paléographie Musicale* project is indeed astonishing, and this even though his own Liber Gradualis was only able to see the light of day through the intensive study of the old manuscripts. Only

through the consultation of manuscripts could he hit upon the law of the “mora ultimae vocis” [lengthening of the final note], which he rightly grasped in its essentials but did not explore further. At the same time, it is the case the Fr. Pothier employed only a few manuscripts as the basis for his reconstruction of the Gregorian chants. He was familiar for sure with manuscripts from St. Gall and manuscript 239 from Laon. Already in the 1860s he made copies of Laon 239 and the cantatorium from St. Gall, 359. In fact he based his restitution of the melodies for the most part upon the codex Montpellier H 159. Thus, Fr. Combe perhaps has it right when he opines that Fr. Pothier seemed to have feared that his *Liber Gradualis* would be subjected to criticism or even called into question by the *Paléographie Musicale* project with its ambitious goal of making the oldest and best manuscripts – and as many of them as possible – accessible to the scholarly world.⁴ Fr. Claire claimed something similar when he said that according to the outlook of Fr. Pothier, there was nothing to discuss and nothing to add to his gradual.⁵ Ultimately, this was the reason for his negative attitude toward the *Paléographie Musicale* project. For him, the text was the only source for interpretation, and therefore he rejected *a priori* the study of the neumatic notation of the manuscripts.⁶

Entirely different was Fr. Mocquereau. For him the neumatic notation represented “l’expression la plus parfaite des cantilènes liturgiques” [“the most perfect expression of the liturgical chant”]. The manuscripts contain “tout ce que nous voulons savoir sur la version, sur la modalité, sur le rythme et la notation des mélodies ecclésiastiques” [“everything we want to know about the version, the modality, the rhythm, and the notation of the ecclesiastical melodies”].⁷ These quotes very clearly show Fr. Mocquereau as one who knew the old manuscripts very well and zealously defended the oldest tradition of Gregorian chant documented in the manuscripts.

But this is not the entire Fr. Mocquereau. This is, as Fr. Cardine always explained to us students, Mocquereau primo. But unfortunately, there was also Mocquereau secundo. Unfortunately, from our perspective! Thanks be to God, from the perspective of numerous conspicuous groupies of nearly the entire 20th century. In our view, his rhythmic system of the so-called “free musical rhythm” (“mesure libre” in the terminology of Fr. Claire) with its free succession of two-note and three-note groups and rhythmic marker points after every second or third note – a modern invention and a purely abstract system of rhythm which he laid out in detail in volume 1 of his two-volume magnum opus, *Le Nombre Musicale Grégorien ou Rythmique Grégorienne*⁸ – is in clear contradiction to the data of the very Gregorian paleography which he worked so hard to establish and disseminate. It goes without saying that in this contrived rhythmic system the text can only play a subordinate role. A look at the passage “in latitudinem” of the introit “Factus est Dominus” will make clear how little this rhythmic rendition does justice to the text:

[Example 1: the introit “Factus est Dominus.”]

100 years later and from the viewpoint of Gregorian semiology today, this fissure in the scholarly biography of Fr. Mocquereau can hardly be comprehended. Many generations around the world have sung according to this erroneous rhythmic system. The fact that they never sang according to this system at Solesmes itself changes nothing in this state of affairs. On the contrary, at Solesmes they have always held to the text-oriented singing style inherited

⁴ See Combe, *Restoration* [footnote 1], 110.

⁵ Cf. Jean CLAIRE, “Un Secolo di Lavoro a Solesmes,” *Studi Gregoriani* XVI (2000) 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷ *Paléographie Musicale* I, 23.

⁸ Tournai, 1908 and 1927.

from Abbot Guéranger.⁹ Nothing is changed either by the fact that there was obviously a Mocquereau terzo who, near the end of his life, was once again drawn to the Mocquereau primo, the Mocquereau of the manuscripts.¹⁰

II. The Immediate Preparation and Publication of the Graduale Romanum of 1908

Because the events and attendant conditions surrounding the immediate preparation and publication of the 1908 Graduale Romanum have been described, analyzed, and commented upon in detail in many publications, including those mentioned above, I can limit my comments to one or the other point which seems to me especially important for contemporary scholars and practitioners of Gregorian chant. It will thereby become clear that much of what is said here is nothing other than a further development of that which was more or less explicitly laid out and established in the long preceding time span stretching out over approximately 70 years. This is also the reason why I have given such great weight to the treatment of the prehistory.

1. The (Neo-)Medici Edition

The sharpest opposition to the work accomplished by the monks of Solesmes and to the Vatican edition and especially to the idea of a newly edited Graduale Romanum came from the quarter of the Medici edition, that is to say, from the circle of the publishing house Pustet in Regensburg. This publishing house in Regensburg enjoyed a 30-year papal privilege of exclusive printing for its republication of the Medici edition of 1871. This privilege was even confirmed in 1883 under Pope Leo XIII by the decree “Romanorum Pontificum sollicitudo” (already mentioned).

Via the two-volume work of Raphael Molitor of Beuron, the first abbot of Gerleve, titled Die nachtridentinische Choralreform zu Rom,¹¹ we now are very accurately informed about the course of events in connection with the Medici edition, which appeared in 1614 from the Medici publishing house. At almost the same time as the publication of Molitor’s work, Jesuit Angelo de Santi and Monsignor Carlo Respighi discovered the Roman documents which spoke against Palestrina’s authorship of the Medici edition. This discovery – most likely independent of Molitor’s discovery – was only confirmed by Molitor’s research.

I will not treat the Medici edition itself further here, since my colleague Fr. Giacomo Baroffio will take up this subject more closely. But a few references to Raffael Molitor’s work appear helpful to me, both for the historical appraisal of the Medici edition and also for the understanding of the conflict between the two editions – Neo-Medici edition and Vatican edition – around the turn of the century. Here I present these references briefly, summarized in 5 points:

- 1.) The Medici edition is a private edition. It was never an official publication of the Church, even if it enjoyed papal approbation and was repeatedly and emphatically recommended by Rome.¹²

⁹ Cf. Jean CLAIRES, “Centocinquanta Anni di ‘Restaurazione Gregoriana’ a Solesmes – Uomini, Idee, Libri,” *Bollettino dell’ AISCGre* IV (1990) 19f.

¹⁰ Cf. André MOCQUEREAU, “Examen des Critiques dirigées par D. Jeannin contre l’ Ecole de Solesmes,” *Monographies Grégoriennes* VII (1926) 102f.

¹¹ Leipzig, 1901 and 1902.

¹² Cf. Raffael MOLITOR, Die nachtridentinische Choralreform zu Rom, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1902), 117ff.

- 2.) The “reform” happened in the name of art. The “improvers” did not strive for any return to the oldest melodies, but rather, an adaptation of old melodies to the musical sensitivities of their time.¹³ “...Instead of reforming, they introduced innovations of their own invention.”¹⁴
- 3.) Around 1600 the monodic style arose in the history of polyphonic music, and this was soon to replace classical choral polyphony. Concern for the text and its expression, the emotive affects aroused by the text, become more and more important. Everything which stood in the way of understanding the text had to be done away with. This principle, which was first applied to polyphony, could not remain without effect for the “reform” of Gregorian chant. With the rearrangers of the reformed Medici gradual, Soriano and Anerio, we are dealing with polyphonic composers of the Roman school.¹⁵
- 4.) In the name of the primacy of the text, the “reformers” wanted to purify the Gregorian chant of all offensive “barbarisms.” By “barbarism” they especially meant that in the inherited Gregorian chant, neume groups with several notes, or even melismas, are oftentimes placed on an unaccented syllable, while the accented syllables are oftentimes treated with only a single note. One aimed especially at the avoidance of melismas on short unaccented syllables immediately before the text accent, and also the simplification of concluding melismas.¹⁶
- 5.) Clarity and uniformity were to be achieved in the realm of modality, especially by ensuring that each chant begins with either the first scale degree [tonic] or the reciting tone [dominant] of the mode. In order to take into account modern sensibilities, many B-naturals were lowered to B-flat, and this often in modes for which the B-natural is essential to the character.¹⁷

Let me note in conclusion regarding the Medici edition that perhaps one should ascribe entirely pastoral motives to these innovations and alterations, namely, understandability of text and conveying the substance of the text. This is possibly the same pastoral intention which led to a simplification of the all-too-complicated and turgid contrapuntal structures in the polyphonic sacred music of the era. But that which accomplished a true purification in contemporary polyphony was deathly for Gregorian chant. The melodic line of unison Gregorian chant in its most complete development in the Mass propers depends essentially upon ornamentation, even on unaccented syllables. This ornamentation need not be to the disadvantage of the text, but rather, it can bestow an all the more heightened profile upon the text. To have missed this was one of the most grave of the false interpretations of the authors of the Medici edition. To illustrate the difference between the (Neo-) Medici edition and the Vatican edition oriented toward the original melodic form, allow me to refer once again to the introit “Factus est Dominus”:

Example 2: The introit “Factus est Dominus” in the Medici edition and in the Vatican edition

2. The Work of the Papal Commission for the Official Vatican Edition and its Collapse

With the beginning of the pontificate of Pope Pius X, a new phase in the recent history of Gregorian chant begins, one clearly aimed at suppressing the (Neo-) Medici edition and making use of the work of the monks of Solesmes. This was to the credit not least of Pius X

¹³ Cf. Ibid., 150.

¹⁴ Ibid., 138.

¹⁵ Cf. Ibid., 150ff.

¹⁶ Cf. Ibid., 76, 188.

¹⁷ Cf. Ibid., 193ff.

himself, who already as Patriarch of Venice had spoken out clearly in favor of Solesmes. Already shortly after his election to pope, in the *motu proprio* of 11.22.1903 – widely acknowledged as the magna charta of the reform of sacred music – not only did he propose Gregorian chant as the most complete realization of sacred music and the highest model for every other form of music in the liturgy, but he also laid down the clear direction in which this was to be accomplished with the sentence, “The most recent studies have so happily restored the chant to its integrity and purity.”¹⁸ This decisive papal document was then followed a half year later with the *motu proprio* of April 25th, 1904. Here, the plan to create an official Vatican edition of Gregorian chant was juridically established. Furthermore, a commission was set up which was to determine what melodic version was to be taken into the books in what form. The commission was to bear responsibility for the publication of the books.

This commission consisted of ten members and ten advisors. Fr. Pothier, formerly monk of Solesmes and now abbot of Saint-Wandrille, was named president of the commission. The actual work of editorial reaction, in turn, was entrusted to a group of Solesmes monks under the leadership of Fr. Mocquereau, who was also a member of the commission. The collaborative work of these two groups, the commission and the editorial team, suffered from the outset from the fact that their respective competencies were not sufficiently defined and delimited from each other. In 1905, one year after the establishment of the commission and the editorial team, there were attempts to bring about clarity in the matter through official regulations. But by now there were already such deep divisions within the commission and also between individual members of the commission and the editorial team, that little hope of a productive work of collaboration remained. The differences of opinion were sparked especially in the following passage of the *motu proprio* of April 25th, 1904: the chant melodies were to be “restored in their integrity and purity in accordance with the truest reading of the most ancient codices, in such a way, however, that due attention be given to the true tradition contained in the codices throughout the centuries, and to the practical usage of contemporary liturgy.”¹⁹

In the interpretation of this text, two opposing tendencies developed which ultimately were based in the different attitudes of the two main personalities of the commission, Fathers Pothier and Mocquereau, toward the oldest chant manuscripts. I spoke of this in my treatment of the prehistory of the *Graduale Romanum*. These two opposed and ultimately irreconcilable directions may be identified with the slogans “retour à l’antiquité” [“return to antiquity”] (Fr. Mocquereau) and “tradition vivante” [“living tradition:”] (Fr. Pothier). The first direction would ascribe legitimacy in the reconstruction of Gregorian chant only to the authority of the oldest musical manuscripts standing closest to the origins of the core repertoire. The other direction, with Fr. Pothier at the head, favored a solution which also admitted later readings, especially when these were held to represent an improvement over the original reading. This interpretation could appeal in its favor to that passage in the text cited above in the *motu proprio* which spoke of “the true tradition contained in the codices throughout the centuries.” But in fact, in the interpretation of this legitimate later tradition, the “tradition vivante,” opinions were widely varied. According to Peter Wagner, member of the commission and follower of Fr. Pothier, it surely concerned readings which deviated from the oldest tradition. According to Fr. Mocquereau, the consultation of later tradition was legitimate only when this had substantially preserved the original reading.²⁰

¹⁸ Cf. the *motu proprio*, *Tra le sollecitudini*, Chapter II, “The different kinds of sacred music,” article 3.

¹⁹ Translators note: this Latin document has not been translated into English as far as I know; this is my translation of the Latin from Ruff, *Treasures* (see footnote 2), GET PAGE.

²⁰ Cf. Pierre COMBE, op. cit., 342-3.

Opinions clashed above all in the question of the reciting note in Modes III and VIII. While Fr. Mocquereau favored the original reading with TI, Fr. Pothier and his followers vehemently pleaded for DO. Peter Wagner from the “tradition vivante” quarter went so far as to announce a disaster for German-speaking lands in the case of an archeological solution according to the mind of Fr. Mocquereau.²¹ The conflict regarding TI or DO for the reciting tone flamed up already in the editing of the Kyrie “Lux et origo,” where Mocquereau called for TI instead of DO. In view of the late and diverse transmission of the Ordinary chants as a whole, the decision of the commission to take up these chants first was a mistake and a burden which only sharpened the already tense situation. The decision was no doubt made for pastoral reasons.

These battles ultimately led Fr. Mocquereau and the redaction team under him to terminate their work on the Vatican edition. On June 29th, 1905, one year after the establishment of the commission and the editorial team, the editorial team definitively returned to the community of Solesmes, which at this time was settled in England in exile. Immediately before this, a letter of the Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry de Val, made known the decision that the redaction of the Graduale Romanum was to be carried out under the leadership of Fr. Pothier on the basis of his own Liber Gradualis in its edition of 1895. Already in 1905 the Kyriale saw the light of day, and then on April 8th, 1908, the Graduale Romanum of the Vatican edition. The Antiphonale Romanum followed finally in 1912.

In 1913 the papal commission, which since 1905 had no longer existed in its original formation, was definitively dissolved. In the same year, 1913, a new commission was founded in Rome which in turn laid the final responsibility for further editions of Gregorian chant once again in the hands of the monks of Solesmes.

III. The Graduale Romanum of 1908: Its Effectiveness and Significance in the Course of the 20th and 21st Centuries

From my remarks thus far, it should be clear that the 1908 Graduale Romanum is ultimately the work of one lone man: Fr. Pothier. In fact it represents a lightly revised republication of his Liber Gradualis in its 1895 edition, into which a very few of the recommendations for correction from Fr. Mocquereau were taken in.

The decree of the Congregation of Rites of August 7th, 1907, which is reprinted in the 1908 Graduale Romanum, notes the new juridical state of affairs – that the new gradual is considered the official edition of the Church which supersedes all previously permissible editions.

The introductory text, “De ratione Editionis Vaticanae cantus Romani” [“On the Vatican edition of the Roman chant”], clearly shows the hand of Fr. Pothier. The principle of “living tradition” is once again put forth and corroborated by the passage cited above from the *motu proprio* of April 25th, 1904.

Also of interest is the immediately following section “De notularum cantus figuris et usu” [“The Notes: Their Forms and Use”]. Here, the most important neume figures are graphically introduced and discussed by name, including some special forms such as the quilisma and the liquescent. Especially informative from the standpoint of interpretation are some remarks

²¹ Cf. op. cit., 317 and 342-3.

which concern the distinction between melismatic and nonmelismatic chants. Regarding the nonmelismatic chants it is said: “Tunc neuma quaeque a syllaba cui addicitur indolem et potestatem ita mutuatur, ut maiore impulsu efferatur neuma, si ipsa syllaba proprio sit fortior accentu: minore vero, si obscuriorem sonum natura syllabae requirat.” [“Then the neume adapted to each syllable changes its quality and strength by receiving a stronger accent if the syllable to which it belongs is strongly accented, but it is weaker if the nature of the corresponding syllable needs less emphasis.”]. In brief, it is a matter of an interpretation of the neumes which does justice to the text and which, in terms of dynamic (and not rhythm) should certainly be differentiated in accord with the quality of the syllables. For melismatic chants the notion of “mora ultimae vocis” [“lengthening of the final note”] is brought into play, which applies in the case of a *divisio minima* (“lineola divisionis”) [quarter bar] within a melisma, or in the case of a wider interval (“*latiori spatio*”) between two units of neumes within one melisma.

Above and beyond this, reference is made to the necessity of comprehension of text in chant with a quotation from a letter of Bernard of Clairvaux: “Cantus enim oportet ut litterae sensum non evacuet sed fecundet.” [“For the chant ought not to weaken but to improve the sense of the words.”]

The 1908 Graduale Romanum thus became the official chant book of the church, in the last analysis, by the authoritative decision of Rome. One may ask in this question what the role and especially the personal attitude of Pope Pius X himself was in the entire conflict around the preparation and publication of the Vatican edition and the Graduale Romanum. It is not easy to answer this question. On the one hand, we know that both before his pontificate and also as pope, he repeatedly spoke out in recognition and encouragement of the work of the monks of Solesmes, and gave his express personal support. On the other hand, the end result speaks for a clear preference of the position of Fr. Pothier, who, to be sure, was a monk of Solesmes and as abbot of Saint-Wandrille always belonged to the French Benedictine congregation, but who clearly broke away from the prevailing direction in Solesmes in questions of Gregorian scholarship. From the sources given by Fr. Combe, however, it is clear that the attitude of the pope surely should not be understood in the sense of one-sided partisanship for Fr. Pothier. On the contrary, up to the very end the pope sought to mediate and reconcile. Just a few days before Frs. Mocquereau and Cagin definitively withdrew, the pope encouraged them to remain steadfast.²² Certainly, in view of the hopelessness of the situation within the papal commission, the pope saw himself obliged to make a swift decision, a decision which would lead most quickly to the desired goal. The quickest path was the publication of the Graduale Romanum on the basis of Fr. Pothier’s Liber Gradualis.

It is beyond question that the Vatican edition of the Graduale Romanum made great progress in comparison to all previous editions, with the exception of the Liber Gradualis of Fr. Pothier. One aspect of the progress is surely the square notation. In developing this notation, preference was given to the model of French manuscripts of the 13th and 14th centuries. This notation ensures a beautiful, balanced and harmonious printed image. It furthermore affords the great advantage that with multi-note neumes and melismas the elements of the neume which belong together are clearly made visible by means of conscious internal grouping.

The melodic version of the Graduale Romanum corresponds in its essentials to that of the Liber Gradualis of Fr. Pothier. The relatively few alterations compared to the Liber Gradualis represent an improvement for the most part. Generally this also holds true for the internal

²² Cf. Pierre COMBE, op. cit., 339.

grouping of multi-note neumes and melismas. But the reverse is also the case – there are instances where the Liber Gradualis rather than the Vatican edition displays the correct grouping. One may compare in this respect each version of the syllables “universi,” “confundentur,” “notas fac,” of the gradual “Universi,” and then test them against the lineless neumes of the Graduale Triplex:

[Example 3: the gradual “Universi” in the Liber Gradualis, the Graduale Romanum of 1908, and the Graduale Triplex]

A further difference of the Graduale Romanum compared to the Liber Gradualis consists in the newly introduced *divisio minima* (quarter bar), and the elimination of the double bar at the end of the intonation of a chant and its replacement with an asterisk. On purely optical grounds the asterisk is an improvement, for it does not suggest such a separation as does the double bar. But in practice this has not changed much. As we know from experience, the intonation in most cases is disruptive of the meaning, even if it is “only” indicated by an asterisk.

If one compares the melodic version of the 1908 Graduale Romanum with the versions of all the other Gregorian chant books of the 19th century, one must acknowledge with gratitude that with this version, and only with this, the original Gregorian chant is for the most part reconstructed. Especially the innovations introduced by the humanists of the Renaissance era, as for example in the Medici edition, which deformed Gregorian chant beyond recognition, are revoked. Even if we cannot entirely overcome the great distance in time which separates us from the era of the origins of these chants, we can at least build a bridge back to it. This is the perduring accomplishment of the Vatican edition and especially of the 1908 Graduale Romanum.

And yet: the Graduale Romanum is no perfect book. It reveals lesser and greater deficiencies. This is partly to ascribe to the fact that paleographical methodology had not yet sufficiently matured to be able to offer sure criteria for the restitution of the melodies. But the deficiencies are mostly due to the principle of “tradition vivante,” which in the end Fr. Pothier was able to implement over against Fr. Mocquereau.

In many aspects the melodies of the Graduale Romanum reflect a later development, of which the Antiphonal for the Mass of Montpellier was to serve as the principal witness. We encounter the negative consequences at every turn in the Graduale Triplex, which reproduces unchanged the melodic reading of the Vatican edition. Especially the chants of Mode III are affected, where the Vatican edition in principle provides the reciting note of the psalmody and also of the fundamental structure of the chants themselves as DO instead of TI. It is similar with the chants of Mode IV, where MI has frequently become FA. Also in many chants of Mode VIII an original TI has become DO. Analogous modifications, above all in the immediate context of subsemitonal scale degrees, are repeatedly found in chants of others modes.

The question of whether the *corda mobile* should be B-natural or B-flat is mostly resolved in the Vatican edition in favor of B-flat. To this day scholars’ opinions are divided on whether this is to be seen as an advantage or a weakness. Indeed, the controversy in this question has ignited again recently with the appearance of the new Antiphonale Monasticum. While since the 1920s the tendency had prevailed at Solesmes to give preference to B-natural rather than B-flat in the Vatican edition – this is the case above all in the 1934 Antiphonale Monasticum – in the new Antiphonale Monasticum we see rather a movement of regression. Admittedly,

this whole constellation of questions had not come to peaceful resolution at Solesmes itself after the publication of the 1934 Antiphonale Monasticum. Here the studies of modality, especially the investigation of the ur-modes, has played a decisive role.²³ In recent times, intensified studies of formulas, efforts in the area of comparative paleography, and not least, in the area of semiology, have all offered important answers to this question. All in all, even after the appearance of the new Antiphonale Monasticum, there remains much latitude and much need for research in this area to be intensively continued. This is the case because possible resolutions of this question which are arrived at for the chants of the Office are not transferable to the highly developed chants of the Mass propers without further ado. Here I see one of the principal challenges which we have to take up at the present time and in the immediate future.

In conclusion, allow me to return once more to the question raised at the outset: is the history of the 1908 Graduale Romanum a history of success or of failure? I do not presume to claim that the whole affair is a unique history of successes. Despite the diverse weaknesses and deficiencies, the Vatican edition and especially the publication of the Graduale Romanum set in motion an entire movement which led to a worldwide revitalization of Gregorian chant. In this, it was above all the books from Solesmes with their added rhythmic signs – but otherwise with the notation of the Vatican edition – which have contributed to this worldwide acceptance and dissemination. Efforts toward a certain popularization of Gregorian chant were not without success in some countries and regions. These efforts, however, turned out to be illusory, and with the liturgy reform after the Second Vatican Council at the latest, they collapsed.

But also for specialists and scholars active in various realms of Gregorian chant, the Graduale Romanum has proven to be an indispensable instrument for their activities and research. This was already true with the Solesmes editions of the gradual with added rhythmic signs. The monks of Solesmes have consciously elected in their editions to leave the melody of the Vatican edition unchanged, whereas in their private editions of the monastic Office they have sought to do justice to the most current state of scholarship. This is true above all in the Antiphonale Monasticum of 1934, where, e.g. they have reconstituted the original reciting note TI in the psalmody and the compositions of Mode III. Up to the present day the monks of Solesmes have remained faithful to this principle, to leave the Vatican version as it is in the books intended for the Roman liturgy of the universal church, but to undertake the necessary correction of the melodies in the books reserved to the monastic liturgy.

The Vatican edition of the Graduale Romanum has proven to be a book of foundational importance not least for the field of Gregorian semiology. In fact, there was and there is no way around the Vatican edition, neither for semiologically oriented performance practice within or outside of the liturgy, nor for semiological research activities. In practice, even in the Graduale Triplex we encounter the melodic version of the Vatican edition. The experiences of recent decades have taught us that the Graduale Romanum places in our hands a good foundation for chant, if only we know how to use it rightly. To be sure, it is often laborious to copy the necessary melodic corrections into the book, and not infrequently even more laborious to sing according to them. Even with all paleographical and semiological research up until now, it is an important methodological principle that one always employs the

²³ [In English these are sometimes called the “archaic modes.”] Cf. Jean CLAIRE, “Les Répertoires liturgiques latins avant l’Octoéchos. I. L’Office férial romano-franc,” *Études Grégoriennes* XV (1975) 5-192; Alberto TURCO, “Trace di Strutture modali originarie nella Salmodia del Temporale e del Sanctorale,” (Milano, 1972); idem., “Les répertoires liturgiques vers l’ octoéchos. La psalmodie grégorienne des fêtes du Temporal et du Sanctoral,” *Etudes Grégoriennes* XVIII (1979) 177-223.

melodic version of the Vatican edition as a starting point, in order to compare it with the melodies transmitted in the early manuscripts.

The reform of the liturgy following the Second Vatican Council, with the introduction of the vernacular into the liturgy, initially plunged Gregorian chant into a severe crisis. There seemed to be no place left for chant in the Latin language, since this exceeded the capabilities of most communities and posed an obstacle to the *actuosa participatio* [active participation] of the people so strongly called for. This was the case even though articles 116 and 117 of the liturgy constitution spoke out clearly in favor of Gregorian chant.

It is not my place here to treat the situation of Gregorian chant and its significance for the postconciliar Church, since another paper is dedicated to that topic. I wish to say only this much: I am not able to share the opinion of Felice Rainoldi, according to which it would be better today if Gregorian chant made its home outside the celebration of the liturgy, albeit still in connection with proclamation and prayer.²⁴ When the documents of the council and the postconciliar documents of liturgical reform speak of liturgical music, which without doubt includes Gregorian chant, this can only mean music within the liturgy and as part of the liturgy.

However, the crisis in which Gregorian chant found itself in the wake of the liturgy reform did not lead to its demise, but rather, it made possible the chance of a new beginning, and this under the banner of Gregorian semiology. In fact, semiology experienced its greatest upswing precisely in the years immediately after the council and in the 1970s. Proof of this new beginning is the great number of significant scholarly publications on semiological issues, with Semiologia Gregoriana (1968) of Fr. Eugène CARDINE, soon translated from Italian into several other languages, in the leading place. Also to be named are the publications of important Gregorian chant books: the Graduale neumé (1966), the Graduale Simplex (1967/1975), the Graduale Romanum (1974) which takes account of the reform of the liturgical calendar and the revised order of readings of Mass, the Graduale Triplex (1979) and the Offertoriale Triplex (1978/1985).

The basis for these books, with the exception of the Offertory verses in the Offertoriale Triplex, is the Vatican edition. The 1908 Graduale Romanum has survived to the present day and will surely live to experience its hundredth birthday next year. And yet, it is clear to everyone who considers the Vatican edition from a semiological viewpoint, and especially for everyone who is interested in a semiologically-guided singing practice, that one bill remains unpaid. This is the correspondence of the melodic version of the Vatican edition with the best semiological data. The path here can only lead back to the principle of Fr. Mocquereau, i.e., Mocquereau primo, and back to the oldest musical sources. From a semiological standpoint, our slogan is: the correct melody with the correction rhythm!

That this is the only path forward was recognized very early on by the monks of Solesmes, and they had this goal clearly before their eyes when in 1948 they began the massive project of an “édition critique.” Unfortunately, this project has not progressed beyond foundational and very helpful preliminary work. An international working group founded in 1977 for this purpose has taken up the same concern of melodic restitution better in accord with the semiological data. Their results achieved thus far are available as “Vorschläge zur Restitution von Melodien des Graduale Romanum” in *Beiträge zur Gregorianik* since Heft [volume] 21, 1996. *Studi Gregoriani* publishes these results gradually since volume XVI (2000).

²⁴ Cf. Felice RAINOLDI, op. cit., German version, 44; Italian version, “Il Graduale Romanum da Dom Prosper Guéranger al 1974,” *Studi Gregoriani* XV (1999) 36.

Encouraged by the call of article 117 of the liturgy constitution that “a more critical edition is to be prepared of those books already published since the restoration by St. Pius X,” the working group has been determined to continue its work and bring it to a happy conclusion. The first goal, the restitution of the Mass propers of all Sundays and feast days of the church year, will soon be reached. No competition to the Vatican edition is being created; rather, the foundation of the Vatican edition is being built upon organically.

We all have good reason to congratulate the dignified, gray-haired old lady, the Vatican edition. In her 100 years of existence, she has not been a *mater sterilis in domo* [“childless mother in her home”], as Psalm 113 puts it, but rather, as *mater laetans* [“rejoicing mother”], she have given the gift of life to many children. And as she remains true to this commission, she will certainly remain precious and important to us into the future.

In light of all this: *Ad multo annos*, Vatican edition! *Ad multos annos*, Graduale Romanum!

Johannes Berchmans Göschl