

Zeitschrift: Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft = Annales suisses de musicologie = Annuario Svizzero di musicologia
Herausgeber: Schweizerische Musikforschende Gesellschaft
Band: 2 (1982)

Artikel: From ritual through language to music
Autor: Treitler, Leo
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-835296>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 18.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

From Ritual Through Language to Music

LEO TREITLER

In the network of ritual-language-music that is our subject here today, I would like to work at these connections in particular: language as form of ritual meaning, and music as form of language utterance. My objective will not be quite the demonstration of how *particular* forms and genres have been derived from particular ritual procedures, but rather the suggestion and illustration of this general hypothesis: the task of liturgical melody to present language structure clearly and appropriately – and thereby to articulate language meaning – constituted a driving force for the exercise and development – in a sense the further discovery of the formal and syntactical properties of the musical system. So it is not the path from ritual to forms that I want to follow, but the path from ritual meaning to the idea and the resources of musical form.

My examples are drawn from the troping tradition, for several reasons. Ritual is of course a factor in the language of the tropes in constituting an outer structure to which the troped chant must conform. But that may be relatively trivial, compared to the hermeneutic role of the tropes vis-à-vis the meaning of their ritual occasions. In playing out that role the tropes dispose of an artful language in which meaning depends closely on form. My thesis is that in developing melody as an instrument of that hermeneutic task – that is in finding means for the projection or translation of language-form in the resources of the chant tradition, musicians worked out the formal and syntactical properties of the musical system in ways that had lasting effect.

I would like to set forth, first in general terms, a view of the music-language relation in the tropes (but not alone in the tropes) that is central to the hypothesis I am suggesting. Then I shall try to concretize this view with reference to some examples.

Melody was the medium for the oral recitation of the texts; it was an adjunct to language. The melodic realization of a text, as it is recorded in writing in a particular source, represents a particular way of reciting it. It records a «reading» of the text, in the sense of «interpretation.» In this process melody plays a role something like that of punctuation, whose signs, as Cassiodorus put it, «are, as it were, paths of meaning and lanterns to words, as instructive to readers as the best commentaries.»¹ Melody was the musician's way of elucidating the relation-

1 Cited in M. B. Parkes, «Medieval Punctuation, or Pause and Effect,» *Medieval Eloquence*, ed. J. J. Murphy (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1978) pp. 127–42. The functional continuity between melody and punctuation was, I now believe, the basis for the derivation of neumatic notation from the practice and signs of punctuation. Although this is an important side-aspect of my subject here, it cannot be discussed within the framework of this paper. But see my papers «The Early History of Music Writing in the West,» *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 35 (1982), pp. 237–79, and «Reading and Singing: On the Genesis of Occidental Music-Writing,» *Early Music History* 4 (1984), pp. 137–210.

ships among word order, syntax, and phrasing, and through those relationships, of elucidating meaning. The melody sets commas, it underscores syntax, it associates words and clauses, it places emphasis. The musician making melody attends to the way the text can be segmented according to its sense, to the grouping of words through syntactic and semantic associations or through rhyme and assonance, and to the effect on semantic nuance of rhythmic details such as accent patterns and word- or phrase-length.

The analysis of melody in relation to language seeks out intentions with respect to these matters. I suggest two general dimensions for the pursuit of such analysis. Like verbal language, the melody of tropes conforms to a grammar – generally the grammar of the chant tradition. The grammar can be described in terms of principles that determine what will constitute a correct, or well-formed, melodic expression. Such principles may apply at different levels of melodic flow and structure: from the shortest note-groups (neumes), through phrases and phrase-groups, to entire melodies. These principles would be concerned mainly with modal coherence and contrast (ranges, intervals, formulas) and melodic syntax (phrase sequences and associations, cadence hierarchies, proprieties of formula-placement). Such principles determine both the resources and the constraints that define particular melodic domains – the domains of mode or melodic family. Such a grammar must be understood and accepted both by those who make melody and by those who hear it. But in itself the grammar is not sufficient. A melody must not only be correct; it must also be appropriate and effective in respect of some purpose or idea, and it must be informed by a design. A melody embodies choices made from among the correct things that the grammar makes available. The musician must choose *where* to place a caesura or a cadence, *when* to pose a modal contrast, *how* to open a phrase (with what intervals or formulas) and *how* to close it, and *when* to make associations between and among phrases. We might say that these things have to do with the rhetoric of the melody.

The grammar of a trope melody is a matter of musical tradition. Its rhetoric arises from the text as that text has been interpreted by the maker of the melody, who must attend to all the formal matters that have been enumerated above.

The examples are three widely broadcast sets of trope elements for the Introit antiphon, two of them for Epiphany and one for Pentecost. All three are transmitted in sources dated to the tenth through twelfth centuries; i.e. they represent the troping tradition in its active period as early as we can know that.

In the enumeration of the *Corpus Troporum*,² the trope sets are 15–17–18–19 (Example 1), for the antiphon «Ecce advenit dominator Dominus» (Epiphany); 63^{a+}–64^{a+}–65^{a+} (Example 2), for the same Introit antiphon; and 23^a–25^a–24^a (Example 3), for the Introit antiphon «Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum» (Pentecost).

The analysis begins with the comparison of the texts of the antiphon and trope elements 15–17–18–19, as instance of the transformation of the force and mean-

2 Ritva Jonsson et alii, *Corpus Troporum, Tropes du propre de la messe*. Vol. I, Cycle de Noël (Stockholm, 1975).

ing of a liturgical item through the troping process.³ It is a matter of the deepening and differentiation of meaning, activation of voice, enlivening, dramatizing, actualizing. A different conception is projected of the central figure of Christ, the response of the Christian is transformed, the object of celebration is living event over and above ritual symbol. This is achieved through the manipulation of language, in both its semantic and formal aspects.

The comparison is followed by observations on the melodic settings as translations and clarifications of the structural aspects of the texts. Comparison with the melodic setting of the antiphon suggests the enrichment and differentiation of the syntactic properties of the musical style that is the response to the task of intoning the language.

The other two trope sets will provide material for complementary observations bearing on the general hypothesis. The transmission of the examples is taken into account to show that variants in the texts result in different musical structures. This is supportive of the hypothesis.

Example 1

Trope element 15

Pa 909, fol. 18v.

Ec - cle - si - ae spon - sus il - lu - mi - na - tor gen - ti - um

Apt 17, fol. 91

as in 909

ba - ptis - ma - tis sa - cra - tor or - bis re - dem - ptor

Introit antiphon

Pa 776, fol. 19v.

Ec - ce ad - ve - nit

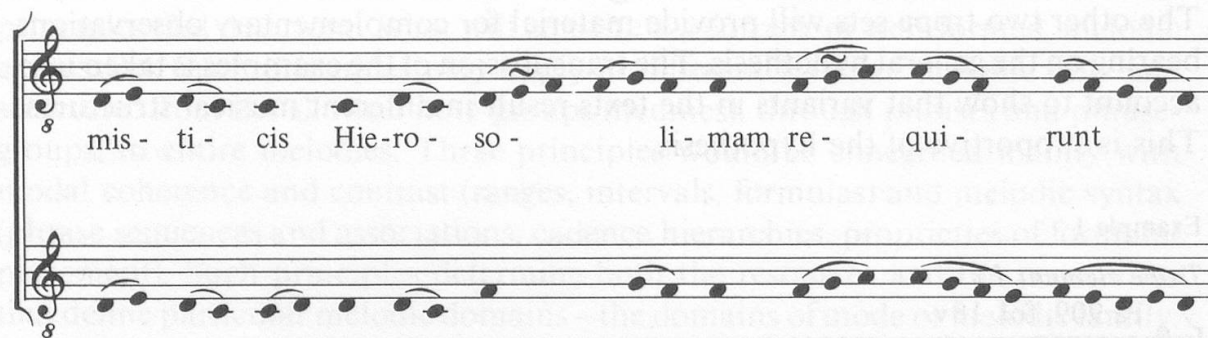
³ I have learned much about these texts, and about the close interpretation of liturgical texts in general, from conversations with Ritva Jonsson.

Trope element 17

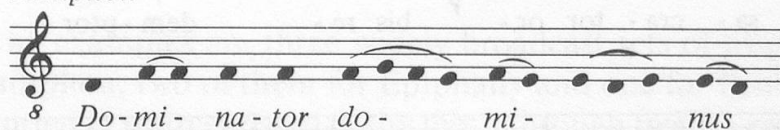
Pa 909



Apt 17

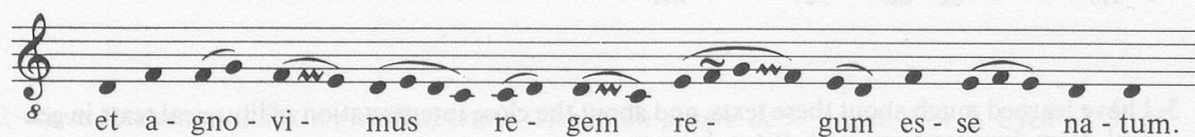


Antiphon



Trope element 18

Pa 909



Antiphon



Trope element 19

Pa 909



Antiphon



Example 2

Trope element 63^a

Pa 1871, fol. 10



Introit antiphon

Pa 776, fol 19v.



Trope element 64^{a+}

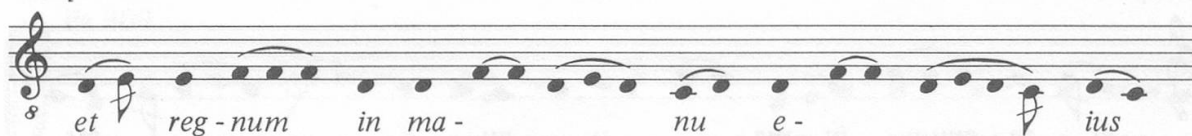
Pa 1871



Pa 909, fol. 18



Antiphon



Trope element 65^{a+}
(Pa 1871)



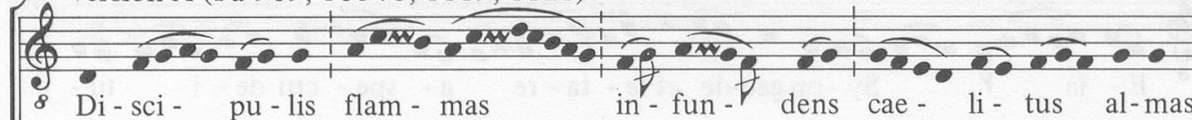
Antiphon



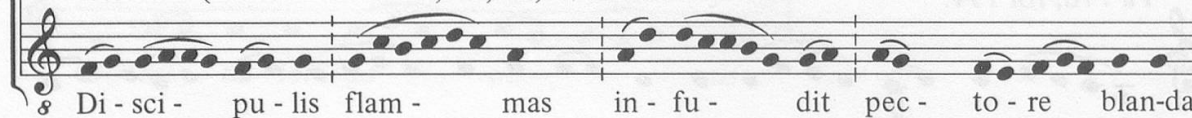
Example 3

Trope element 23^a

Version A (Pa 909, 1084b, 1119, 1121)



Version B (Benevento VI 34, 38, 40)



Introit antiphon

Pa 776



Trope element 25^a

Version A



Version B (Vich 105)



Antiphon



Trope element 24

Version A



Antiphon



The text of the Introit antiphon for Epiphany starkly proclaims the advent of the Deity, identifying him only by reference to the domain of his power: «Ecce advenit Dominator dominus.» The effect of the trope text is, in a way, to bring that cosmic proclamation down to earth.

The center of the whole complex in the version of Pa 909 is the first word of the second element (17), «Ihesus,» naming the figure whom the antiphon had announced in such an impersonal way. It is in fact a substitution in the text, which now reads «Ecce advenit Ihesus,» instead of «Ecce advenit Dominator dominus.» This latter epithet is pushed forward, newly motivated as aspect of the question «Ubi est qui natus est?» in element 17. The question comes as climax

to the reference to the story of the Magi, which has been introduced by way of the relative clause «quem reges. . .» following upon the central word «Ihesus.» It all becomes present, local («Hierosolymam») and concrete.

A network of associations operates throughout: «reges gentium» takes up the attribute «Illuminator gentium» of the first element (15). The Magi represent the heathens and are led to the light under the guidance of the star of Bethlehem. «Dicentes» continues the participial «reges.» And «Dominator dominus» circles back to «Ihesus.»

The principal task of the melody that intones the long sentence of this element (17) is the clear presentation of its complex clausal structure. The first word, «Ihesus,» comes as the subject of the verb phrase «Ecce advenit.» A natural way of setting that would have been to make a single phrase of «Ecce advenit Ihesus,» i.e. bringing the trope element in at the end of a musical phrase. Something like that is done in the trope-set 63^{a+}–64^{a+}–65^{a+}. There the epithet «Dominator dominus» in the antiphon is followed by the relative pronoun «cui» of element 64^{a+}. By itself the antiphon phrase cadences at «dominus.» But in the trope the cadence is extended on «cui,» and the consequent noun phrase «materie celi et terrae» is given a new melodic phrase whose cadence rhymes with that of «cui.» This illustrates nicely how the melodic setting can clarify the language syntax, and in doing so create formal bonds of its own.

But this particular option is not taken in the setting of element 17. Perhaps the idea of singing the word «Ihesus» to a cadential figure did not seem appropriate. Instead, it is articulated separately, by what is potentially one of the strongest opening gestures in the vocabulary of the style, the rising 5th. This has to be understood in the light of the importance of the word, absolutely, but also of its central position in the form of the whole complex.

The setting of «Ihesus» enunciates the interval of the 5th that identifies the mode, and the relative clause «quem reges gentium» prolongs and spells out that 5th as a pentachord, thus underscoring the coherence of noun and relative clause. The clause regarding the gifts – «cum muneribus mysticis» – develops the contrasting phrase based on the 4th f–c, which temporarily destabilizes the melody. The localization, «Hierosolymam,» inverts the latter phrase to c–f. This re-establishes the stability of the melody, for the f becomes the center of the pentachord d–a in the setting of «requirunt dicentes.»

The trope melody could end there, with the clear cadence on the final d at («di)centes.» But in fact that cadence functions as a colon, and the question «ubi est qui natus est» is set off entirely by itself, in a phrase that rhymes with the setting of the identification, «Dominator dominus.»

I call attention to two variants in the transmission of this element. One is a matter of a minute detail with broadening consequences. The other is a more substantial matter from the start.

(1) In Apt 17 the setting of («misti)cis» is a pes, c–d. This keeps the entire clause «cum muneribus mysticis Hierosolymam» within the tonic pentachord (along with «Ihesus quem reges gentium») rather than setting it off by means of the contrasting 4th; it obscures the cadence at «mysticis;» and in consequence it does not separate «Hierosolymam.» In short, the whole line is run together, rather than being punctuated, as it is in Pa 909. Variants in the pitches, then, are not just that;

they are variants in the melodic structure, and they reflect different ways of reading the text.

(2) Apt 17 lacks the word «Ihesus.»⁴ The text reads (from the beginning) «Ecclesiae sponsus illuminator gentium baptismatis sacrator *Ecce advenit* quem reges gentium. . .» This works well enough grammatically. But to begin with the accumulation of epithets building up to the verb phrase («ecce advenit»), and then to provide only the relative clause as subject («quem reges. . .»), is quite weak from the point of view of poetic effect. And it is noteworthy from the theological point of view, as well, for the subject of the complex as a whole then remains the «Dominator dominus» of the antiphon.⁵

I have already called attention to the fact that the melodic high-point in the version of Pa 909 is at the beginning of element 17, coinciding with «Ihesus.» The striking thing is that Apt 17's melody for that place opens with the same rising 5th, despite the absence of the word «Ihesus.» It seems that there has been an independent melodic transmission. And it also seems that there has not been the same sort of attention to the coordination of music- and language-effect as in the version of Pa 909. In a way the gesture of the rising 5th has been wasted here, its potential for making a strong effect has not been exploited. But this same gesture had already been neutralized in Apt 17's setting of element 15. If we compare the use of this figure in just these two versions of our trope complex, we receive the impression that in Apt 17 it is just another melodic turn while in Pa 909 it is reserved for special effect. And this contrast generalizes. As I shall have occasion to suggest again, compared to the Aquitanian sources, Apt 17 tends to take less advantage of the possibilities of differentiation in the use of melodic resources to articulate language. Its melodies tend therefore to be flatter, less contoured.

But it will be more instructive to transpose this observation into the positive mode. The effect that is made by a bit of traditional formulaic melody depends not only on the characteristics of the formula in itself, but also on the context in

4 The versions in the following sources are also without the word «Ihesus:» Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 473 (folio 20); Oxford, Bodleian 775 (folio 14); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, latin 9449 (folio 18); Paris, B.n., nouv. acq. lat. 1235 (folio 199 v); Paris, B.n., lat. 13252 (folio 7 v); Paris Bibl. Ars. 1169 (folio 13).

5 It is at just about the time during which this trope was in circulation that a shift was taking place in the western Christian conception of God – from the self-sufficient and awesome God of the Jewish and early Christian tradition (i.e. the «Dominator dominus») to the human, loving figure of Jesus (cf. this dictum of Bernard of Clairvaux: «This was the principal cause why the invisible God wished to be seen in the flesh and to converse with man, that he might draw all the affections of carnal men, who were unable to love except after the flesh, to the saving love of His flesh, and so step by step to lead them to spiritual love.» *Sermo super cantica* 20 V, 5–6. Trans. R. W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* New Haven, 1953, p. 233). Concerning the wider significance of this shift see Charles M. Radding, «Evolution of Medieval Mentalities: A Cognitive-Structural Approach», *American Historical Review* 83 (1978), pp. 577–597. – The significance of the variant with respect to the presence or absence of the name of Jesus is confirmed by the following statistic. 750 distinct trope elements (or verses) are identified in volume I of the *Corpus Troporum*, i.e. trope verses for the mass proper of feasts of the Christmas season that circulated in Europe from the 10th to the 12th centuries. Of those, nineteen include the name of Jesus in their texts, as against 114 that mention Christus, and they are especially rare in the oldest sources (only one in Pa 1240, three in St. Gall 484, four in St. Gall 381, etc.). The new attitude was manifested also in a new kind of representation of the figure of Christ in Gothic art: a more gentle, personal figure in comparison to the stern God-figure of earlier representations.

which it is sung. Expressive force is latent in the formulaic material of the tradition and becomes actual in the musician's composition, if he has the intention and the ability to make it so. But it must be put the other way about, too. Expressive force becomes latent in the material as a consequence of the accumulation of compositional practice in the tradition.⁶ The artful use of the figure of the rising 5th in Pa 909 exemplifies the central thesis of this paper, which is that the potentials of the melodic style for articulating musical form were developed by musicians carrying out their primary task, to provide clear projection of the structure and meaning of language through melody.⁷

Now I want to consider element 15 in the reverse order: first the melodies of Pa 909 and Apt 17, then the text. Both melodies move in four phrases, dividing the text in exactly the same places. But their progress is very different. The movement in Pa 909 is a steady ascent through the peak-tones of the first three phrases: to f', to g', and to a'. There is an intensification as the melody stretches upward. The climax comes at the peak of the third phrase, and the tension is sprung when that phrase cadences on the contrasting tone, e'. The fourth phrase picks up the e' at the beginning, returns once again to g' at its peak, and brings the melody to rest again on d'.

Apt 17, though the second and fourth of its phrases are identical to their counterparts in Pa 909, makes an altogether different effect. Its most noticeable feature is the virtual repetition of the first phrase as its third phrase (but with cadence on e', as in Pa 909). That casts the melody of the element as a whole in a symmetrical two-part form, since the fourth phrase is closely congruent with the second. The form is balanced and symmetrical (A B A' B') in contrast to the skewed form of Pa 909. The latter is motivated as the melody unfolds; each phrase follows the preceding with increasing necessity. In Apt 17 that is the case only from the third to the fourth phrase, and then only because of the cadential e' in the third phrase which must be displaced to d'. That is rather a more mechanical procedure. In consequence the Apt melody is more static, the Aquitanian melody more dynamic. (The bare fact that two phrases are identical in the two versions and two quite different is itself significant for the nature of the transmission. It is highly characteristic for a situation in which oral and written processes of transmission interacted. Although written models were undoubtedly at hand in the passage of such an item from one place to another, in taking up the item for

6 This formulation was suggested to me by Michael N. Nagler's paper, «Towards a Generative View of the Oral Formula,» in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 98 (1967), pp. 269–311. Of all the efforts I know to come to grips with the nature of oral formulaic poetry and its compositional process, Nagler's is closest to my own generative and critical approach to the understanding of medieval melody. The similarity of conception is strong, despite the vast difference in our objects – Homeric verse and medieval chant melody – and despite the fact that his are the artifacts of a purely oral culture while mine belong to a culture that put into writing music that was composed through techniques continuous with those of oral composition.

7 Of the other sources omitting «Jhesus» that are cited in note 5, Pa 1235 begins the setting of element 17 with an ascending 5th. The neumatization of Pa 9449 allows for such an opening. That of the remaining four sources seems not to. In none of these sources does the notation suggest an opening of element 15 with an ascending 5th, as in Apt 17.

their use, the musicians reprocessed it through the screen of local styles and standards. This could be as true for the transmission of texts as of music.⁸⁾ Now to the text of element 15, and its setting in the melodies. The four phrases of the melodies correspond to four epithets by which the subject of the trope-chant complex is characterized: Bridegroom of the Church, Enlightener of the Gentiles, Consecrator of the Baptism, Redeemer of the World. That the melodies of both versions fall into four phrases is in response to that. The first three epithets refer to the three miracles that are celebrated in the feast of the Epiphany: the transformation of water to wine in the Marriage at Cana, the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles (the Magi), and the Baptism in the Jordan. The fourth can be understood as consequent to the others; i.e. it is through the three miracles that the world is redeemed. The melody of Pa 909 organizes the text for comprehension in that way, that of Apt 17 not so clearly, if at all: the repetition of the first phrase can be heard to close off the first three phrases as a group, but the paraphrase of the second in the fourth contradicts that by grouping 2+2. Whether the intensification on the third phrase of the Aquitanian melody is meant to highlight the Baptism among the three miracles is difficult to say. As the event that confirmed the Messiahship of Jesus, the Baptism *can* occupy a central position in Christian thought. On the other hand the special weight of the third phrase would follow in any case from the decision to group the three phrases in that way.

Twice now I have suggested that Apt 17 presents a melody that is related to an Aquitanian counterpart but is yet independent, is less differentiated within itself, is less acutely responsive to the fine points of structure and meaning in the text, proceeding more mechanically to provide an adequate setting through the use of the conventional resources of the melodic tradition. The Aquitanian versions in both cases are more individualized, because they have made a compositional task of providing a closely responsive setting of their texts.⁹

Now I would like to take this interpretation one step further, and at the same time to steer it in a different direction. My analysis so far has focussed on consistently different ways that versions of melodies of Apt 17 and Pa 909 have utilized the conventional resources and procedures of a tradition. I have characterized the Apt settings as more «mechanical» (I might better have said «additive»), more «repetitive,» less «differentiated» and in that sense «flatter,» less distinctly shaped as an integrated response to an overall conception of the poetry. These interpretations come essentially from the vantage point of a critic comparing and evaluating two texts of equivalent status as regards their textuality, and there is a clear implication that one is artistically less successful than the other. But the

8 See, for example, Joseph Duggan, «Oral Performance, Writing, and the Textual Tradition of the Medieval Epic in the Romance Languages: The Example of the Song of Roland.» Forthcoming in the journal *Paragon* (Sydney, 1984).

9 Another instance of this is described in my paper «Observations on the Transmission of Some Aquitanian Tropes», *Aktuelle Fragen der musikbezogenen Mittelalterforschung* (Winterthur, 1982, pp. 11–60 (Forum musicologicum 3). See especially p. 22. It remains to be discovered through future study whether this tendency is consistent through Apt 17. But such critical study of the contents of whole manuscripts should have a high priority now.

premise of their equivalent status may mask an important historical differentiation, and that suspicion suggests a different vantage point. I have already hinted at it in speaking of the interaction of oral and written processes in the transmission of the tropes.

There is no doubt that we must learn to read the sources from this period as witnesses to a transition in musical thought and expression from oral to literate modes, for that is surely what they represent. The characteristics that I have thought to identify in the Apt 17 versions, and that I have just summarized, are typically characteristics of the products of oral traditions, and they are caused originally by the constraints of composition in the absence of any writing.¹⁰

In the age with which we are dealing here these characteristics are residues of the habits of oral composition, which cannot be expected to have been extinguished all at once by the introduction of writing, but only supplanted in varying degrees here and there by new modes of composition made possible by writing. The larger designs that I have thought to recognize in the Pa 909 versions, the more integral assimilation of the given chant material into those designs, may be attributable to the possibility of looking backward and thinking forward and reworking that is afforded by writing, and that would have been seized upon more in one place than in another. The interpretation in this light, then, is not the claim that the Apt 17 versions *were* orally composed, but that they belong to a musical tradition with a greater retention of the manners of the oral tradition; and that the development of the «formal and syntactical properties of the musical system» through working at the compositional task of setting poetic texts was helped along by the opportunity for working things out that was presented by writing. From this point of view the implied judgement about the relative artistic successfulness of the two versions loses its relevance.

How well that task can be carried out is again nicely outlined by a contrast that can be drawn between elements 15 and 65^{a+}. In the latter there is a series of words emphasizing the general praise theme of this trope set: «*Ipsi decet decus gloria atque iubilatio.*» The successive lengthening of the words in italics effects an intensification. The melodic setting sharpens the effect. Each of those words is given its own phrase («iubilatio» together with the connective «atque»). Each of the three phrases begins on *f* and falls to *d*, so that one hears them as versions of the same melodic episode. And the successive lengthening of the phrases gives the feeling of stretching that gesture, intensifying it. In element 15, on the other hand, the intensification depends on an upward expansion at the center of successive phrases – stretching the range rather than the duration. These are musical resources that are still in use today. They are born of the musical response to the structure of language.

The two text lines of element 18 are in a simple antecedent-consequent relationship (there is an implied «therefore» or «thus» at the beginning of the second line). That logical relationship is reflected in the melodic setting, which falls in two phrases that are to one another as antecedent and consequent.

10 This has been described in a rich literature dealing with oral and written composition with respect to language. For a recent survey of this literature, and an excellent overview of what has been learned through it, see Walter J. Ong, S. J., *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* [London: Methuen & Co., 1982].)

«Cui,» the first word of element 19, refers to «eius,» the last word of the preceding antiphon clause. Its melodic setting reiterates the end of the antiphon phrase. (In my experience such «motivic» identities or reiterations generally have some explanation in terms of the music-language relation, and are not simply to be understood as efforts at purely musical «unity,» as one sometimes reads in the recent literature. That is what I mean in suggesting that the task of elucidating the structure and meaning of language calls forth the formal resources of music.)

The first caesura in the melody occurs at «debetur,» and it serves, again, as a sort of colon, preparing the series of tributes that follows. Each item in the series is given an articulated setting, beginning with that strong gesture of the rising 5th, and descending step by step in the peak tones to the final.

I have been suggesting that the very structured flow of the trope melodies results from the adaptation of melody to its task of rendering clear the syntax and therefore the meaning of language. That impression is reinforced for me by trope elements like 23^a, where the language is of a markedly different style from that of, say, the elements 15–17–18–19. The difference is in the relationship between word order and syntactic (or simply sense) grouping.¹¹

The basic principle underlying the text settings that we have considered so far is that sense-units in the text are given distinct melodic phrases, so that that melodic caesuras and cadences act rather like punctuation. Huckle has repeatedly called attention to this principle,¹² and Bielitz¹³ and Powers¹⁴ have shown that it was explicitly taught in the Middle Ages as a principle of chant composition and analysis. I call the division of language into sense units, and the corresponding division of melody into phrases, segmentation. Segmentation in language, especially in the oral presentation of language, serves the projection of meaning. Segmentation in melody that intones language serves the same purpose. It would obscure the sense of a text to make a melody continuous over successive words that do not belong together syntactically.

The stylistic difference to which I want to call attention has to do with these things. It is that in the language of the elements 15–17–18–19 the constituents of syntactic groups are generally adjacent to one another in the word order. This tends also to be the case in the scriptural language of the host chants. But it is not the case in the language of element 23^a. One sees that quickly in a translation into English that preserves the word order: «Into the disciples the flames instilling from heaven propitious.» (Words in the English joined by continuous underlining correspond in each case to a single word in the Latin.) A higher degree of segmentation is introduced by this dispersal of the constituents of syntactic groups across the line. It is at least in part a consequence of the fact that 23^a is

11 This matter is discussed more fully in Ritva Jonsson and Leo Treitler, «Medieval Music and Language: A Reconsideration of the Relationship.» *Studies in the History of Music*, I: *Music and Language* (New York, Broude Brothers, 1983), pp. 1–23.

12 Most recently in «Toward a New Historical View of Gregorian Chant,» *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 33 (1980), pp. 437–67.

13 Mathias Bielitz, *Musik und Grammatik. Studien zur mittelalterlichen Musiktheorie* (Munich, 1977) (Beiträge zur Musikforschung 4).

14 Harold S. Powers, «Language Models and Musical Analysis,» *Ethnomusicology* 24 (1980), pp. 1–60.

in hexameter verse, and in general represents a Latin that is based on classical literary models marked by a high degree of refinement in diction, word order, and syntax.

Of course the word order seems peculiar in my English version, but it would not have seemed so to someone accustomed to reading Latin, who would have read it more or less as a synchronic aggregate in which the understanding is less dependent on a particular word order. In the Middle Ages Latin was the *written* language. I conjecture that the issue entailed in the difference would have been forced by the need for oral presentation of the language in a liturgical situation. That is what is suggested by the musical setting. Virtually every word is given a distinct phrase. I interpret that in the sense of the general principle of segmentation, that words not belonging together in a syntactic group are separated by the melodic phrasing. (The exception is the last phrase, which groups «caelitus almas.» But, while «almas» belongs syntactically with «flammas,» there is a different sort of basis for its grouping with «caelitus.» «Almas» is an adjective frequently used in conjunction with the Holy Spirit, e.g. Notker's Pentecost sequence: «Spiritus alme illustrator hominum.» That association may have been carried by the word as a fringe of meaning independent of its particular syntactic connection.)

The greater frequency of segmentation in this sort of trope melody is in effect forced by the style characteristic of the language that I have been describing. The formal arrangement of the segments seems designed to hold together the scattered elements of the linguistic syntax. The verse is sung in four phrases, linked in successive pairs with a form something like ABAC. The first two phrases span the octave, with a certain ambivalence about whether the pivotal tone is g or a. An aspect of the melodic process is the clarification of g as the central tone. With g established as central tone, we can see that the two phrases are in contrast as the tetrachord and pentachord of the G tonality.

The third phrase reiterates the first, but without the opening d. The absence of the low tone neutralizes the phrase, so that it corresponds musically to the syntactic isolation of the verb. The fourth phrase, unambiguously in the g tetrachord, balances the second, which is in the corresponding pentachord; the two relate as antecedent and consequent. These associations between the first and third phrases and the second and fourth pair the phrases, giving an overall coherence to the whole verse. The antecedent-consequent relation between the second and fourth phrases underscores the rhyme «flammas» – «almas» (or «flammas» – «blandas»).

Comparison of the other main version in the transmission of this element (version B) is again instructive. Like version A, it comprises four phrases corresponding to the text segmentation «Discipulis/flammas/infudit/pectore blandas.» The first two phrases are related in much the same way as they are in the Aquitanian version. But with the third phrase version B takes a different direction from the Aquitanian. The third phrase reverses the second, and the fourth is like the first. The resulting form is ABBA, a more closed form than the ABAC of version A. That corresponds to the fact that the B text, with the verb form «infudit,» has a more self-contained form than the A version, with the verb «infundens.» The sequence of elements is paratactic in the B version, not so in the A version. This

in turn corresponds to the fact that in the transmission the A version, open in musical form and text-sense, is always in the introductory position, whereas the B version floats, so to speak: it appears before «Spiritus Domini» (Vich 105), before «et hoc quod continet omnia» (Benevento 34, 38, 40), before «replevit orbem terrarum» (Benevento 35), and before the «alleluias» (Benevento 39).

The linkage of text form and meaning and musical form that is demonstrated by all this can be seen from another side in the element 25^a. The text is in mirror form, with the sequence: adjective attribute – noun – verb – noun – genitive attribute. In the transmission of both the A and B versions the melodic settings reflect the language form with a three-part symmetrical form of their own, despite the fact that surface details of the two melodies are quite different. This exemplifies the general phenomenon in the transmission of trope melodies that often it is the *form* of the melodies, more than their surface details, that is transmitted. And that, in turn, I take to be reflective of the principal task of melody to articulate the structure of language. Again, I suggest that in carrying out that task the musicians developed the formal properties, or better, perhaps, the *form-making* properties, of the musical system in which they worked.

beginning already with Pope Gregory, or at least he is supposed to have done so, the churches of the north, at least in the north, were not to be left in the dark. It is a moot point here to ask whether these imports were essentially a purely musical and musical, as maintained by Bruno Staben, or whether the chant and liturgy sent north by a series of popes were so to speak a «pan-Roman» or perhaps more accurately a «central-Italian» chant and liturgy. For as Helmut Hucke has shown in a number of occasions, the final product that crystallized in the cathedral schools of the ultramontane north in the ninth and tenth centuries retained its Roman texts and musical categories for the most part, but all of this was clothed in a melodic language that, even though it shows a clear relationship to the central Italian language, was different in a number of essential ways.¹ What is important is that the liturgy and chant imposed on Europe by the Carolingians were different, often drastically different, from the traditional forms of ritual and music that had evolved in the earlier centuries in Merovingian and early Carolingian Gaul, so that the adoption of the new liturgical and musical forms must have represented a relatively drastic change in the ways of public worship in these regions.

The numerous references to episodes connected with the imposition and early transmission of Gregorian chant in the north – its very name became something of a propaganda ploy – and the comments of chroniclers, liturgists, and music theorists suggest that the decision of the Carolingian emperors met with puzzlement and incomprehension on the part of the popes, at least at the beginning, a similar incomprehension, misunderstood as malevolence by Frankish writers, on the part of the Roman singers, and outright resistance and resentment on the

¹ Staben's characterisation fully in his introduction to *Die Gesänge des Gregorianischen Choralgesangs*, Vol. 1, 31/32, ed. Staben, Leipzig: Minkowski Monumenta musicae medii aevi, 3 (Kassel, 1970).

² Helmut Hucke, «The Carolingian New Historical View of Gregorian Chant», *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 33 (1980), 433–467.

