

The Sarum Mass for the Ascension.

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This paper examines the Sarum mass-chants for the Feast of the Ascension, and briefly discusses the ways in which the content and musical style of the Sarum Chant relate to those of other plainchant traditions. The Sarum tradition grew up after the Norman conquest of England. Centered geographically at Salisbury or Sarisburiensis, by the time of its demise in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century it had become the predominant rite throughout England.

For the most part the Sarum tradition follows the order and content of the Roman Missal and Gradual in its pre-Tridentine forms, but the differences to be found are worthy of note.

The Sarum sources examined in connection with this paper consist of BL additional MS 12194. a 13<sup>th</sup>. c. Gradual, of which a facsimile edited by W. H. Frere was published by the Plainsong and Medieval Society in 1894, and three 16<sup>th</sup> century printed Graduals; 1508 (Huntingdon) 1527, Paris (Bodeleian), and 1532, Paris (Bodeleian).

While the Introit itself is the familiar *Viri Gallilei*, the verse found in the Sarum sources is not the psalm *Omnes gentes* found today, but rather the verse *Cumque intuerentur* from Acts 1:10. This marks one of the rare deviations from the tradition of using psalm texts for Introit verses, and instead expands the narrative of the Introit itself. The MS gives only the beginning of the verse, but the prints provide the full verse.

A review of pre-Tridentine Latin missals indicates in fact that the V. *Cumque intueretur*; is typically found, but sometimes V. *Omnes gentes* is found instead. Occasionally both verses appear, one after the other. It would seem that the regularizing revision of the Tridentine Breviary has the V. conform to the typical Introit V. as a Psalm.

In sum, the following patterns can be found in the pre-Tridentine sources. The Dominican and modern orders are given for comparison.

1. Ant. V. *Cumque*. Ant. V. *Omnes gentes*. Ant. *Gloria Patri*. Ant.
  2. Ant. V. *Omnes gentes*. Ant. *Gloria Patri*. Ant.
  3. Ant. V. *Cumque*. Ant. *Gloria Patri*. Ant.
- Dominican: Ant. V. *Cumque*. *Gloria Patri*. Ant.  
 Liber Usualis: 4. Ant. V. *Omnes gentes*. *Gloria Patri*. Ant.

The Sarum rite follows the third form.

Also, we find in most pre-Tridentine, non Sarum missals examined, that the *Cumque intueretur* verse concludes with the words “*qui et dixerunt*” “which also said”. It would seem that the omission of “*qui et dixerunt*” that we find in the Dominican form has to do with the omission of the repeat of the antiphon before the *Gloria Patri*. In the Sarum tradition the antiphon was repeated after the psalm verse and again after the *Gloria Patri* on all Sundays and feasts. Indeed the repetition of the antiphon is needed in order to make sense of the words *qui et dixerunt*.

Turning to the music of the Introit, in the beginning of the V. “*Cumque intuerentur*” the printed sources all set “*cumque*” as GC.CD, whereas the MS has GCB.CD. That the printed sources are consistent with one another should not be over-valued, for the printed Sarum sources seem frequently to rely upon one another. None are direct reprints of one another, yet they generally maintain a high degree of consistency. Now, we might consider that this variant was just an error of omission that crept in, perhaps first being written as a liquescent GCb And then omitted; but on comparison with other Mode VII Introit verses, we see that the same intonation does occur elsewhere, for example in the introit *Oculi mei* (Lent 3), the V. *Ad te Domine levavi* begins GC in the same manner; this is consistent in all three printed sources. But again the MS has the unusual GCB beginning.

This is not to say that the prints always have the GC opening in Mode VII introits. In both cases noted previously, the melodic gesture is associated with a consonantal ending that closes the lips, forming a liquescent. The Introit *Respice* (Trinity 13) also has the abbreviated form in the prints. Here the word is *Ut*, which does not conform to the liquescent in the same way. In this case the MS gives *Ut* with the liquescent, GCb. On the other hand, in the Introit *Adorate Deum* (Epiphany 3) the V. *Dominus regnavit*. has the full intonation GCB in all the prints. Also *Audivit* (Lent 6) Has the full form. Altogether, there seems to be sufficient warrant to consider the short form. G-C as a legitimate variant in the later Sarum sources.

The first Alleluia V. *Ascendit Deus*. is part of the typical western tradition. There is here a small detail that is worthy of note. In the middle of the V, at the word “et” the Ms. Has Dc, while the prints have D only. I draw this to our attention principally to remind us that the liquescent note, at least in the Sarum sources, sometimes may best be thought of as being in essence a regular note, but one that has been lightened on account of the nature of the syllable to which it is set. This would seem to be the case in situations where one source has the liquescent and another has two regular notes. However, there are plenty of cases, such as the present one, where the liquescent seems to be more of a pure grace note, an ornament that does not suggest any hint of a full note that has been reduced, but rather just a whisper or suggestion of a note to follow. And so we find that in some instances the liquescent is present, but in others, such as here, only the principal note appears. This line of thought can be summarized as follows. When liquescents appear in some sources, other sources may have either a full note or an omission of the liquescent, but sources will not display all three variants of the same passage. This notion deserves a separate study, but will have to await further attention.

The second Alleluia, *Ascendens Christus in altum*, is infrequently to be found in the Latin Rite, but does occur in both the Sarum and Dominican uses. This is one among many examples where the Sarum and Dominican share an affinity; indeed the Sarum and Dominican rites are often said to be closely related to one another. While the Sarum and Dominican share the same melody for this second

alleluia, the Sarum is in fact more elaborate, containing an additional 13 notes in the melisma at *captivitatem*, and containing a substantially elaborated melisma at *dedit dona hominibus*. (The Dominican version moves this text to the following melisma.)

I make brief mention also of a third Alleluia, *Dominus in Synai*. This Alleluia appears as the second alleluia in the Tridentine Missal, but in the Sarum tradition it is used daily during the octave. The one thing that I would like to mention about this piece is that the Sarum sources have two different versions. In the prints the conclusion of the final melisma agrees with that found in the *Liber Usualis*, a familiar and standard ending. However in the MS the conclusion of the final melisma is rather a repetition of the melisma found at the Alleluia. I think it is safe so suggest that the diverging endings can be accounted for through the earlier practice of not writing out the full endings of familiar melismas. Given the final word, “captivitatem”, plus a short cue to the melisma, a cantor could easily and satisfactorily conclude with either the ending found in the alleluia itself, as the MS does, or with the more familiar standard ending, as is found in the prints.

The sequence, *Rex omnipotens die hodierna*, attributed variously to Habtman and to Hermanus Contractus, appears to be a standard sequence for the Ascension. The one matter of note here is that there are variants to the cadence pattern of the chant. The typical text-line ends with an accent on the antepenult (*potentia*, line 2); In these cases ordinarily the fourth last note is lengthened (doubled in fact

by a repetition of the note), while the third last note carries the sub-tonic of the Gallican cadence. However, occasionally there is an accent on the penult (*hodierna*, line 1); here the penult takes the subtonic of the Gallican cadence in the form of a podatus. Besides these patterns, however, there are cases where the final word has only two syllables (e.g. “*in terra*”, “*nubes clara*”, “*veste alba*”, “*celorum alta*”); in all such cases the music follows the typical form described above as if the antepenult were accented.

The Offertory and Communion texts are in common with the Roman and Beneventan traditions.

The Offertory follows the Gregorian melody; this might be an opportunity to make a brief comparison between the Sarum and Gregorian versions, hinting at the type of variants that might, in a larger study, be found to be stylistic trends.

First, the Sarum sources, both MS and print, omit the quilisma, giving third-leaps in its place. It should not, however, be taken as a rule, that in Sarum all quilismas are simply omitted; in as many cases the note of the quilisma appears as a simple square note within the neume.

Second, while the Sarum MS agrees with the Liber Usualis in the use of B-flat on “*alleluia*”, the Sarum prints indicate B-flat at “*in*” where it is not shown in the Liber. This naturally begs the question of whether there should be a flat at “*Dominus*” as well.

Third, The Sarum MS agrees with the Liber in the use of a liquescent Dc on the “*lu*” of *alleluia*, whereas the prints omit the liquescent, and have only D.

These small variants suggest to me at the least that the MS is closer to the Gregorian tradition, and that the prints exhibit later performance practice or notational practice in the additional use of B-flat, and the omission of the liquescent. Naturally such a limited examination can be in no way conclusive; rather, it exhibits the kinds of differences one is likely to find when comparing Sarum and Gregorian sources.

Concerning the Communion, “*Psallite*”, for which text and tune are both in common with the Dominican and Gregorian sources, I would like to point out only that while the Dominican, Gregorian, and Sarum MS all begin with a single D, the Sarum prints each have two Ds for the first syllable. This naturally sets the prints apart again, as being somewhat further from the central Gregorian tradition, but it also strongly suggests to me that the doubling of the D is not a matter of repercussion, but of length (or emphasis) which is being expressed.

This concludes my remarks on the Sarum Office of the Ascension. This work is part of a larger project entitled The Sarum Rite, which is in process at [Sarum-chant.ca](http://Sarum-chant.ca). I invite you to explore the site where a copy of this paper and the slides is also available. Thank you for your attention.