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Observations on the Performance of Plainchant in the Low Countries (10th-18th centuries)

Pieter Mannaerts

Abstract

This article discusses aspects of the performance practice of plainchant, with a special focus on (office) sources and repertory from the Low Countries, and argues that the performance practices within the region widely varied. The most important sources for the study of chant performance are discussed. Eight parameters of performance (notation, rhythm, tempo, melody, polyphony or accompaniment, text, acoustics, and ensemble) are analyzed in view of their pertinence to chant in the Low Countries. Furthermore, the importance of ceremonial aspects and the handling of relics, and their (in)direct impact on the performance of processions and the office are studied. Finally, it is argued that the processes of selection, repetition, and addition are pertinent to the practice of chant performance as well. This is demonstrated through an analysis of the interrelations between office and processional chants.

Key words: ceremony, chant, *historiae*, liturgical office, liturgy, local saints, Low Countries, patron saints, performance practice, plainchant, processions, relics, Tongeren, Ghent, Ghistel, Andenne

Resumen

Este artículo discute aspectos de la práctica del performance de canto llano con un énfasis en las fuentes y el repertorio del Oficio Divino en los Países Bajos, argumentando que la práctica en esta región era muy variada. Las fuentes más importantes para el estudio del performance del canto llano son discutidas y ocho parámetros de performance (notación, ritmo, tempo, melodía, polifonía o acompañamiento, texto, acústica y ensamble) son utilizados en el análisis de acuerdo a su pertinencia en el canto de los países bajos. El artículo también analiza la importancia de aspectos ceremoniales y el uso e impacto de reliquias en el performance de procesiones. Finalmente, sugiero que el proceso de selección, repetición e incorporación también son pertinentes en la práctica del performance del canto llano. Esto queda demostrado por medio de un análisis de las relaciones entre Oficio y cantos procesionales.

Palabras clave: ceremonia, canto llano, *historiae*, liturgia, santos locales, Países Bajos, santos patronos, performance, procesiones, reliquias, Tongeren, Ghent, Ghistel, Andenne

1. Introduction

The study of medieval plainchant sets as its purpose to find and interpret the sources of chant, to analyse their notations and repertory in order to discover how individual chants were composed, how genres and styles evolved over time and how the repertory of chant relates to other (polyphonic) music. It may seem tempting to paraphrase the German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) in stating that the achievement of a better understanding of what chant *really* was like, in the Middle Ages and beyond, is the ultimate goal of chant research.^[1]

The history of research has taught us to be critical of von Ranke's approach, however. Even if he laid the foundations of historicism, von Ranke is often denounced as too optimistic with regard to the directness with which the sources show us the historical past, and too positivist in his approach to history. Indeed, when applied to chant, the mere collecting of factual knowledge about chant does not suffice to gain deeper insight into its historical reality. Even establishing which *are* the facts about chant is difficult enough.

To obtain a global understanding of chant as it functioned in the liturgy, it is often necessary to rely on several types of liturgical sources and on the assistance of other disciplines. Indeed, without the help of Ordinals, rubrics, or archival documents, and without the expert knowledge from other disciplines such as history, art history, liturgiology and theology, to name just a few, it would be difficult to grasp even superficially the broader context in which chant functioned. Moreover, without them it would be virtually

But if all these elements, sources, and disciplines were taken together, would it then be possible to “sagen, wie es eigentlich gewesen”? To perform chant “as it really sounded” in a given historical period is a forceful ideal, and has inspired chant scholars and performers in their work to the present day. The ideal of the reconstruction of historical reality, however, may seem as elusive as it is inspiring. Indeed, for those wishing to investigate the historical performance practice with a view to understand, reconstruct, or perform specific parts of the chant repertory, the field is fraught with many problems and questions.

The present article will take up a number of these questions, with special attention to chant in the Low Countries. Rather than pretending to give definitive answers, it attempts to survey the most important parameters and bring together those elements that are pertinent to the performance practice of chant in the Low Countries. Consequently, it is not intended as a “guide to performers” on how to perform chant practically, but means to guide towards a fuller understanding of the aspects to be taken into account when studying historical chant performance.

While the beginning of this article (2.1) may seem rather general in comparison with the more detailed sections that follow, it is important to mention a number of medieval authors there, because many of the problems mentioned continue in force into the later Middle Ages and beyond, and because several of them were active in the Low Countries. Moreover, the writings of medieval theorists are probably the material that has been studied in greatest detail by musicologists, and therefore precede the discussion of liturgical sources.

After discussing the parameters that pertain to chant in general, special attention will be given to the performance aspects of the liturgical office in the Low Countries. With the exception of some of the earliest *historiae* from the Low Countries to contain chants in modal order, those composed by bishop Stephen of Liège (*d.* 920), much of the repertory has received relatively little scholarly attention to date, in spite of the comparably large number of extant *historiae*, and their continued composition during at least seven centuries.

The time frame has been kept deliberately broad for two reasons. First, because there was a continuity in the performance of chant throughout the Ancien Régime. This article attempts to illustrate how rich and varied the palette of chant performance was during this period. Second, because the composition of liturgical *historiae* in the Low Countries continued from the tenth to at least the seventeenth century – in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries probably stimulated by the Counter-Reformation – and both imprints with liturgical offices and office manuscripts were produced until the eighteenth century, occasionally even on parchment (e.g. in Ghent and Tongeren).

The examples offered in the following paragraphs aim at giving a representative cross-section of the cities in the Low Countries, admittedly with a somewhat stronger accent on the southern Low Countries.^[2] They are taken from liturgical and theoretical sources from Amsterdam, Andenne, Bruges, Ghent, Ghistel, Leuven, Liège, Mons, St Ghislain, St Trond, 's Hertogenbosch, Soignies, Ter Doest, Tongeren, Tongerlo, Tournai, Utrecht, and Zutphen.

2. Performance practice of chant

2.1. Sources for performance instructions and indications

While the discussion of performance practice following below (in section 2.2) focuses mainly on the information that can be gained from musical and liturgical sources, this article should not be without a brief overview of other sources where performance indications of chant can be found. Because of their complementarity to the liturgical sources, sources such as theoretical treatises, music iconography, and sound recordings are often studied or referred to in existing literature. But even though specimens of the same types of source material are also found in the Low Countries, no systematic research on this region has been carried out to date.^[3]

In studying chant performance, a logical point of departure are the theoretical and practical treatises on chant and music theory. Depending on their intended audience and use, treatises may contain instructions for the performance of chant, with widely varying degrees of explicitness and detail. A summary overview of the most important authors follows; the discussion of performance parameters below will refer to some of them. This very selective overview of music theorists not only offers hints at some of the problems at stake, it also suggests that theorists from the Low Countries, primarily from the diocese of Liège and the county of Hainaut, contributed to discussions of plainchant performance between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries.

Among the earliest authors cited in the literature^[4] are illustrious names, such as John Hymmonides (John the Deacon, *d.* before 882), who in his *Vita Gregorii* (BHL 3641) included a famous commentary on the difficulties the Frankish cantors experienced in mastering the Roman melodies and their ornamentations (Hiley 1993: 517, 562). After the turn of the millennium, the groundbreaking work of Guido of Arezzo (c. 990? – c. 1050?), is one of the first, and certainly the most important milestone to include references to the singing of chant (Guido d'Arezzo 2008 gives recent editions and translations of Guido's works, an extensive bibliography, and a list of earlier editions). The earliest witness of the introduction of Guido's diastematic notation in the Low Countries is the Benedictine abbot Rodolfus of St Trond (c. 1070 – 1138), who records the use of the new method in his *Gesta abbatum Trudoniensium*.^[5] The same author is credited with the authorship of the treatise *Quaestiones in musica*, probably datable to the early twelfth century (Steglich 1911). The *Quaestiones in musica* draws on important medieval authorities such as Boethius and Guido of Arezzo, and is of great interest for its section on notation (cf. *infra*).

Tractatus de musica, written after 1272 (cf. infra), and Elias Salomon's *Scientia artis musicae* of 1274 (Dyer 1980).^[6] A theorist active in the Low Countries in the same decade is the author of a *Tractatus de musica* known as Magister Lambertus or pseudo-Aristotle (fl. c. 1270). On account of his first name, Lambertus was previously thought to have originated around Liège, until Jeremy Yudkin identified him with a *magister* of the university of Paris who was also dean of the abbey of Soignies, situated between Mons and Brussels, and west of Nivelles (Yudkin 1991: 182-183, 191). The first part of the *Tractatus* deals with both the speculative and practical aspects of music; the tonary it includes pertains to the latter category. One of the important elements singled out by Lambertus is the use of the epiglottis in vocal music.

Both the *Quaestiones in musica* and the work of Magister Lambertus were known to Jacobus of Liège (Jacobus Leodiensis, c. 1260 – 1330), the early fourteenth-century author of the musical *summa* *Speculum musicae*. Traditionally, it has been assumed that Jacobus originated in, or was active in Liège, where he would have had access to well-equipped libraries, because Book Six of Jacobus of Liège's *Speculum musicae* refers to the *Quaestiones in musica*, and Book Seven refers to the treatise of Magister Lambertus.^[7] Alternatively, Karen Desmond has made a strong case for the identification of Jacobus with Jacobus de Montibus (c. 1270/80 – c. 1337/43), probably born in Mons, who obtained his *magister* degree in Paris, and received a canonicate at the collegiate church of St Paul in Liège in 1316 (Desmond 2000). Even though Jacobus is not particularly concerned with giving performance instructions for chant, his *Speculum musicae* gives a few important indications of chant use in the medieval diocese of Liège. In the sections describing the properties of the eight modes, Jacobus shows that the use of the East-Frankish chant dialect was evident to him (cf. infra). Furthermore, his concern for modal uniformity within the same Mass cycle is remarkable. More precisely, Jacobus proposes to have all Mass chants either in the same mode, or in modal order, "as is found in certain offices".^[8] It cannot be determined here whether this suggestion for Mass chants was a mere theoretical suggestion, or if it was also applied in Liégeois practice, as was the case with modally ordered offices. In any event, Jacobus's proposal shows the continuing interest in modal arrangement of chants in the region, which had begun with the already mentioned offices of Stephen of Liège.

Not only the medieval diocese of Liège, but also the county of Hainaut seems to have produced writers on music. Probably around the beginning of the fifteenth century, Arnulf, probably a Benedictine monk from St Ghislain in Hainaut, west of Mons, wrote a short but remarkable treatise on singing. In *De differentiis et gradibus cantorum* (c. 1400), Arnulf gives interesting remarks and impressions of chant. His references to the chant of female singers, with their predilection for microtonal singing,^[9] are particularly rare (Page 1992). They invite further research and comparison with possible indications for the use of microtones found in chant sources, e.g. from Utrecht (De Loos 1996), and raise many questions about the differences between performance traditions in male and female communities.

While Arnulf of St Ghislain's account of chant and singing is rather descriptive in nature, Italian and German treatises of the late fifteenth century provide more direct instructions for the performance of chant, such as the *Regula Musice Plane* (1497) of Bonaventura of Brescia, and the often cited treatise *De modo bene cantandi* (1474) of Conrad of Zabern. These authors provide particularly interesting references regarding the tempo of performance (cf. infra).

A second category of manuscript evidence is music iconography. The Low Countries were famous for their manuscript illuminations. Liturgical books such as Missals or Books of Hours, but also historical or hagiographic texts contain depictions of the performance of vocal music (a few examples: Bowles 1983: 170, 174-75, 180, 184, 187, 189-90). Illuminations may contain especially interesting iconographical information on the performance of chant. In their depictions of groups of (mostly male) singers, the cantor can often be seen "conducting", i.e. giving indications by means of hand movements to the other singers, who keep contact among each other by holding their hands on the shoulders of their fellow singers (Bowles 1983). Unless the illumination shows music manuscripts on which notes are visible, however, it is difficult to establish whether the performance depicted is of chant or polyphony.

A third type of source is radically different, i.e. recordings of chant performances. By their nature, (early) recordings of chant, the first of which are the Gramophone Company recordings of the Gregorian Congress in Rome (1904), pertain to the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century chant and chant scholarship, and may thus seem to fall outside the scope of this article. Systematic and accurate research of early recordings, on the condition that it be aptly contextualized, could develop the exploration of these sources into an exciting new field of chant research. They are nevertheless worth mentioning in the context of this article as well, because they may be helpful in assessing current performance styles more adequately, and determine modern performers' positions, e.g. against the Solesmes-based approach of chant of the late nineteenth century.^[10] Indeed, as early as 1891, a discussion in the French periodical *Musica sacra* deliberated the question of the role the phonograph could play in the dissemination of the Solesmes chant practice (Berry 1979: 197). Most of the work in this field remains to be done. Mary Berry delivered interesting comments on several early chant recordings from 1904 onwards, which reflect several stages of the Solesmes monks' restoration work (Berry 1979; also Brunner 1982, Weber 1990, Bergeron 1998: 131-142). One of the (to my knowledge) earliest recordings of chant from present-day Belgium, is a recording made on wax records by the Premonstratensian canons of Averbode in 1933.^[11] It would be worthwhile to compare the chants sung on this recording with both authentic Premonstratensian sources, such as the Antiphoner commissioned by abbot Tsgrooten of Tongerlo in 1522, imprints from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Mannaerts 2008b), and the "new" editions of the alleged "Premonstratensian chant tradition", produced in the first and second decades of the twentieth century under the direction of the abbey of Tongerlo, such as the Premonstratensian Gradual of 1910 (Hoondert 2003: 53-81). A systematic search for recordings may uncover many more (and earlier) documents, and stimulate research in chant performance of the past two centuries, as well as discussion and reflection upon current practices.

2.2. Parameters of performance

musical manuscripts with adiastematic or diastematic notation, manuscripts without musical notation containing instructions for or indications on the celebration of the liturgy, such as Ordinals or Customaries, and rubrics in different kinds of liturgical manuscripts. From liturgical manuscripts, many practical aspects of chant performance can be read, such as aspects of notation, rhythm, tempo, or melody. Indications about the “vertical dimension” occasionally added to chant, such as the alternation with polyphony or musical instruments, may also be found.

Other aspects are equally important and decisive for the eventual sound of the performance, but cannot, or not exclusively, be reconstructed on the basis of liturgical manuscripts. These aspects require a knowledge of the larger historical and cultural context, such as local pronunciations of Latin, and of locally and liturgically determined performance circumstances, such as the acoustics and the composition of the “ensemble” of performers, i.e. the individual singer or the group of singers performing the chant.

It is of course not possible to list all the elements that play a role in the coming into being of a single chant performance, and a full catalog of such elements is not intended here. In a recent book, Erika Fischer-Lichte differentiates in performance between *Inszenierung* and *das Performative*. More precisely, Fischer-Lichte distinguishes between the repeatable elements of the *mise-en-scène* (the staging), comparable to the instructions recorded in Ordinals or rubrics, which remain the same for each performance, and those elements of performance that are not repeatable, and, by contrast, make every performance unique in its own way (Fischer-Lichte 2001).^[12] Naturally, elements of chance also play a role in each performance, such as unintended errors, the absence of singers due to sickness (Page 1989: 162-165), noises in the church and its environment (Garrioch 2003), weather circumstances, etcetera. It is obvious that these cannot be taken into account here, and that research of historical performance practice mainly focuses on the elements that pertain to the music itself and the factors that contribute to its “staging”.

2.2.1. Notation

In contrast to those working from transcriptions of the music, performers wishing to work from the original sources or from facsimile editions need to be familiar with the type of notation used in these sources. This kind of performance requires an extensive frame of reference of early music notation, and “ideally” the ability to interpret the meaning of every individual notational sign. Much of the earlier chant scholarship is dedicated to the resolution of this kind of problems, and was initiated by the writings of scholars of the Benedictine abbey of Solesmes. The greatest merit of “Gregorian semiology” has been its fundamental contribution to the understanding of these earliest neumatic notations, including the specific notation characteristics (such as liquescence, cf. infra; Göschl 1980; Van Betteray 2007) and the rhythmic indications they contain (e.g. Cardine 1960; Cardine 1968).

The adiastematic chant notations found in the Low Countries attest to the region’s continuing position on the divide of several traditions, because different types of adiastematic notation can be found, such as French and Lotharingian neumes. Furthermore, a third neume type occurs, termed “Low Countries neumes” by Ike de Loos, which actually is a contact form that combines elements taken from French and German neumes (De Loos 1996). The occurrence of different types of neume forms raises questions about the relationship between these neume families: can it be assumed that these families are locally differentiated ways of recording identical or similar information? Or does each neume family have its singularity, which should also be reflected in performance?

Apart from these neumatic notations, other forms of notation, such as alphabetical notation, were known and used in the Low Countries, but probably for theoretical or didactic purposes only. One example bringing together various types of notation can be found in a manuscript containing Thomas Aquinas’s treatise *De sortibus* and the anonymous *Arithmetica et geometrica et geomantia* (Bruges, Groot Seminarie, 111/178), from the Cistercian abbey of Ter Doest. A later added gathering displays alphabetical notation and adiastematic neumes, beside two Guidonian hands (Mannaerts 2007).

The traditional focus on early notations has involved the neglect of later notation types. The extent to which Gothic or square notation contain specifications that affect the rhythm of chant has “with only a few exceptions (Berry 1968, Hiley 1984, Caldwell 1992)” barely been studied thus far. Filling these *lacunae* is of great importance for the Low Countries as well. After the introduction of “Guidonian” diastematic notation at the Benedictine abbey of St Trond (cf. supra), the Low Countries continued to be on the crossroads of influences. In the region, both square notation, written on staves of three to five lines, and Gothic or “Hufnagel” notation are found, often within the same city (e.g. Tongeren).

2.2.2. Rhythm

The aspect of chant notation that has been most diligently studied and most fiercely debated is its rhythm; the discussions between equalists, mensuralists (for a clear argumentation of the anti-mensuralist view: Wagner 1905) and the work of the monks of Solesmes (for a brief overview: Berry 1979, Brunner 1982) form an important chapter in the history of chant research. To date, the discussion about rhythm in adiastematic notation seems to be less heated, and is certainly couched in other terms than “equalism” and “mensuralism”. This does not mean, though, that it is definitively settled, even though many scholars gravitate towards a refined version of the “rhythme oratoire”^[13] of the Solesmes monks, taking into account the rhythmical finesses of early chant notation. These sophistications include the use of *episemata*, different forms of the same neume, *coupure neumatique*, and *litterae significativae*, indicating the lengthening of specific notes.^[14]

It is a task for future research to determine the place of the Low Countries in the field of chant rhythm. Even though the amount of sources in adiastematic neumes from the Low Countries is comparatively small and fragmentary, it is clear that these tend to use rather sparingly, if at all, rhythmical devices such

from Tongeren, for instance (Mannaerts 2008a: 37-43). Significant letters are mentioned in Chapter 23 of the First Book of the *Quaestiones de musica* (Steglich 1911: 63-64). Some of them (mainly *s* and *t*) also occur in an Antiphoner in diastematic notation from Utrecht (University Library 406) dating from the second half of the twelfth century (De Loos 1996: 91).

As mentioned earlier, the performance practice of later diastematic notations, such as square and Gothic neumes, has not been researched thoroughly. For the Low Countries, it would be an interesting exercise to compare the findings of the studies mentioned earlier with the many liturgical manuscripts and imprints found in the region. A few samples from manuscripts of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries seem to confirm the conclusions of John Caldwell's article of 1992, i.e. that a rhomboid shape was used frequently to indicate shorter note values, not only in series of two or more (as in a *scandicus* or *climacus*), but as a single note as well; but only rarely in a truly mensural idiom (Caldwell 1992: 11).^[15] An example of this usage can be found in the set of Graduals and Antiphoners that was produced for the Cathedral of St Bavo in Ghent between 1652 and 1659 (Mannaerts 2005a; Bouckaert & Vercammen 2005: 118-120, nos. 504-508).

2.2.3. Tempo

As indicated by several music theorists, the tempo of plainchant was variable and would differ depending on the solemnity or the festivity of the feast, or on to the genre of chant. Conrad of Zabern, writing in 1474, sums up six requirements of a good chant performance: it should be sung *concorditer*, *mensuraliter*, *mediocriter*, *differentialiter*, *devotionaliter*, and *satis urbaniter* (Dyer 1978: 211-12; MacClintock 1979: 12-17).^[16] The fourth of these, *differentialiter*, indicates that the accomplished singer should differentiate the tempo and pitch of performance according to the degree of solemnity and festivity of the liturgy. The more important and solemn the celebration, the slower the tempo should be. The more festive the occasion, the higher the chants should be intoned. A funeral service, for instance, is to be sung in an earnest and worthy manner, with a low intonation. This practice, Conrad adds, has "a good basis in the authority of the Council of Basel" (1431-49) (Dyer 1978, 211; MacClintock 1979: 13). Similarly, Conrad's recommendation to keep a uniform pitch level for chants that belong together, or if possible throughout the entire service, shows his attempt at a stronger musical unity throughout the celebration, not unlike that of Jacobus of Liège.^[17]

Writing twenty-three years later, Bonaventura of Brescia differentiates in an entirely distinct way. Instead of stressing musical and unity, Bonaventura underscores the different nature of each chant genre. According to their liturgical function, chants should be performed in a appropriate manner: introits and responsories should be sung in a lively manner, because they are meant to stir up the community to worship and devotion, at the beginning of Mass, or when the religious enter the church at night. According to a similar logic, antiphons and alleluias should sound soft and sweet, offertories and communions are to be sung with a moderate pace, and tracts and graduals in a slower tempo (Berry 1968: 312).

These approaches, the first stressing musical and liturgical unity, the second pointing to a clear-cut conscience of the proper idioms of the various chant genres, show divergent *modi operandi* for the tempo of chant. In their fundamental assumptions, both approaches had already been formulated in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. The first is already encountered in Jerome of Moravia (c. 1272), and is still found in Guidetti's *Directorium chori* of 1582 (Berry 1968: 308-310); the second is comparable to the exposition of Johannes de Grocheio (c. 1300), who compares each genre of chant to a genre of secular music and its corresponding manner and tempo of performance (Berry 1968: 312-314). Given their relative proximity to Paris, where these earlier treatises were written, it is not unreasonable to assume that similar performance guidelines were also applied in the churches and monasteries of the Low Countries.

2.2.4. Melody

Many problems related to notation arise from the lack of notation of certain parameters; this is certainly the case for the melodic aspect of chant. The extent to which embellishments were applied, for instance, varied chronologically and geographically; so did the degree to which these were either written or indicated in the sources, or improvised freely. It remains to be confirmed whether ornamentation was as ubiquitous as is claimed by some authors or performers (e.g. McGee 1998), but indications of it are found from the earliest adiastematic sources – in neume forms such as *quilisma*, *oriscus*, and *pressus* – to diastematic sources of the fifteenth century and later. In this respect, it is striking that the Gothic or "Hufnagel" neumes remain much longer faithful to their neumatic ancestors than the square notation, in which the only ornamental neume is the *plica* (Hiley 1984). Moreover, theorists such as Jerome of Moravia include in their treatises elaborate digressions on ornamentation (MacClintock 1979: 3-7).^[18]

Clearly related to the "problems of non-notation" on the melodic level are the avoidance of alterations other than *b* flat (of *e* flat and *f* sharp in particular) by means of transposition, and the use of unwritten alterations or *musica ficta*. Indeed, *musica ficta* was not limited to polyphony, but also occurs in the chant of the late Middle Ages and continues into the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Depending on local usage, *b* flats or *b* naturals were preferred. In order to avoid confusion, some sources clearly indicate all accidentals, such as the edition of the Roman Antiphonal published by the Franciscan, Francis of Bruges, in Venice in 1505 (Berry 1965: 122). Francis remarks that "we, French, and those living in Germany, and all those living in other regions, are pleased with the *b* natural, whereas the Italians, and certain nations south of the Alps are attracted towards the *b* flat".^[19]

Other books, such as the Florentine chant manual *Il Cantore Addottrinato* of Matteo Coferati (first edition 1682), devote considerable attention to the use of sharps in chant, as a means to attenuate tritones in the melodies (Dodds 2003: 536-47).

influences from various traditions of neumatic notation, their sources testify to the presence of both West- and East-Frankish chant dialects: two Graduals made in Ghent for the “Leprosérie” of St Magdalene in Bruges in 1504 and 1506 (Bruges, Public Centre for Social Welfare [OCMW], Inv. O. SJ 210.1 and O.SJ 211.1) display the West-Frankish dialects, whereas the Gradual from the collegiate church of Tongeren (Tongeren, Church of Our Lady’s Nativity, 57; Mannaerts 2006: 46-51) contains its East-Frankish counterpart. This may explain Francis’s awareness of existing differences as late as the early sixteenth century, even though one is left wondering why he distinguishes between *b* flat and *b* natural without mentioning the *c* as a third possibility. Given the Low Countries’ continuing position between two spheres of influence, the presence of both traditions in one region does not guarantee the performer any obvious choices.

That late medieval and early modern performers saw themselves confronted with the same difficulties is attested to by a number of manuscripts, which were adapted from one chant dialect to the other.^[20] These adaptations were probably the result of corrections made after a specific model manuscript. The same procedure was applied in a later period in Antiphoners of religious orders, which were corrected as late as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, after authoritative prints of the order. A case in point is the Tongerlo Antiphoner of 1522 referred to earlier, which was corrected after the *Antiphonarium Praemonstratense* printed in Paris in 1680 (Mannaerts 2008b). Similar corrections were – probably during the seventeenth century, if they are contemporary with the majority of the marginal glosses – made to the fourteenth-century Graduals of Tongeren, not so much by striking out or erasing melismas, but by putting them between brackets.

2.2.5. The “vertical dimension”

An important terrain for modern performers, again deserving of more research, is the relationship between chant and other repertoires, such as polyphony, with which chant alternated, or for which it provided the cantus firmus (e.g. Moll 2001).^[21] The importance of this relationship has been, for the Low Countries, convincingly demonstrated in the work of Jennifer Bloxam (Bloxam 1987, 1991 and 1992; also Sherr 1992). This domain may be further expanded by a component investigating the use of instruments such as the organ and the serpent as instruments of accompaniment or intonation. The serpent was invented by Edmé Guillaume, a canon of Auxerre, in 1590, and soon spread towards the northern France and the Low Countries. Pertinent comments on the liturgical use of the serpent in the Low Countries and northern France were given in the eighteenth century by Charles Burney, relating to Lille (Rijssel) and Antwerp, as well as to Paris (Spiessens 1988; Burney 1991).

2.2.6. Textual aspects

An aspect that strongly determines the actual sound of chant performance is, obviously, the type of Latin pronunciation used. Similar to the situation of today, and in line with the position of the Low Countries on the meeting point of various traditions and influences, the linguistic situation of the region was characterized by variety throughout its history. Traditionally, the northern half of present-day Belgium is Dutch-speaking, as are the present-day Netherlands, whereas the southern half of Belgium is a Francophone area. This is, *mutatis mutandis*, a situation largely similar to that in the Middle Ages. As Harold Copeman has pointed out, various types of Latin pronunciation were used in the Low Countries: a Flemish pronunciation, and at least two types of pronunciation related to French, i.e. Picard (North-French) and Walloon (Copeman 1996). One may even wonder whether, given the enduring adherence of the diocese of Liège to the Holy Roman Empire and the concomitant musical characteristics (such as the East-Frankish chant dialect and the use of Gothic neumes), a German-related type of pronunciation should not be added.

Even though linguistic matters are not often part of the competence of musicologists, they may, however, contribute in one respect to a fuller understanding of how pronunciation in music took place. More precisely, the study of the use of the liquescence, the modification of neume forms in function of the pronunciation of sounds such as “m”, “n”, “l”, and diphthongs, may be useful. In the Low Countries, the notation of liquescent neume forms is often, but not always, prominent in adiastrumatic neumes, as well as in diastematic square and Gothic neume forms.

A text-related problem of different nature is that of text underlay. In polyphony, where the coordination of the texts of several voices or the simultaneous rendering of several texts are major concerns, performers are well aware of its problematic character. In the context of chant, the question is rather related to the singing of text or melismas. Recently, Lori Kruckenberg has demonstrated that certain sequences were partly “neumatized”, i.e. sung as a textless melisma, a practice that continued into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Kruckenberg mentions two sequences from a Low Countries source: *Iam votiva festa* for Christmas and *Placatus quesumus* for Pentecost, found in a late-twelfth-century Gradual from Andenne (Namur, Musée diocésain, 1) (Kruckenberg 2006: 304-306). There is evidence to show that the dating of the practice can even be extended further, resulting in a longer continuity than Kruckenberg has assumed. While the occurrence of the text of the Pentecost sequence *Placatus quesumus* extends to the liturgical books of the second half of the sixteenth century (such as the Liège Missals of 1513 and 1552), these do not document any specific manner of performance, or indications of the inclusion or omission of textless sections. On the other hand, the late-fourteenth-century Gradual of Tongeren mentioned earlier, contains the same *Placatus quesumus* on folios 131-131^v (pages 260-261). Here, the letter “a” indicates the melisma (and perhaps suggesting the continuation of the preceding “alleluia”), followed by a texted setting of the same melody fragment. As in Andenne, all other sequences of the manuscript are set in a traditional, straightforward way. Chances are that the sequence was sung and perhaps “neumatized” more widely in the diocese of Liège, since *Placatus quesumus* also occurs in the Ordinal of the collegiate church of St Peter in Leuven (Lefèvre 1960: 124). Its inclusion in the Ordinal of the abbey of St Arnulf in Metz (Odermatt 1987: 217) may even suggest a certain dissemination in Lorraine as well. In both cases, however, it remains to be demonstrated that the performance of the sequence in Leuven and Metz actually was a “neumatized”

2.2.7. Acoustics

While the pronunciation of Latin probably had a certain consistency within the same region, the acoustics differed at every location. Most of the chant, in the Low Countries as elsewhere, was sung in the choir stalls. Rubrics and Ordinals occasionally prescribe small processions within the church space, a procession to a specific place in the church, such as the font, or a small tour around the church building.

As Eugene Schreurs has argued recently, the choir screen (*doxael*) which divided the choir from the church nave was used in a number of (collegiate) churches, such as those of Leuven, Mechelen, Antwerp and Ghent,^[23] as a location for singers to stand on. This peculiar position, considerably higher than the choir stalls, evidently must have had implications for performance and listening (Schreurs 2005).

Furthermore, architectural and decorative elements evidently influenced the acoustics of the church space, such as the number of side chapels, the size and height of the nave, the presence of textiles such as tapestries exhibited on major feasts, and the number of participants and faithful present in the church.

Finally, so-called acoustic vases were specifically intended to improve space acoustics. A technique dating back to the Roman architect Vitruvius (*De Architectura*, first century BC), the vases in churches were placed in the ceiling and under the choir stalls, and were almost always hidden from view. Some authors have argued that they were mainly used in Cistercian churches, but it is certain that their use was much more widespread (Arns & Crawford 1995: 112-119, 128-135).

2.2.8. Ensemble

As is clear from the example of the sequence *Placatus quesumus*, some late-medieval Ordinals, such as those from Tongeren or Metz, are especially valuable on account of their inclusion of ample instructions on the celebration of the liturgy (cf. infra). One type of indications particularly useful for the reconstruction of the performance of chant is the information about the liturgical "personnel" required to sing specific (parts of) chants or celebrations. In most cases, Ordinals and rubrics in liturgical manuscripts provide instructions on the role of the dignitaries present and singing (such as dean, cantor, pre/succentor), and on the precise points of alternation between choirs in antiphonal psalmody (Nowacki 1990). In this context, the recitation of the Passion should be mentioned here as well. Passion letters are found in some of the earliest gospel books in the Low Countries, such as the eighth-century Codex Eyckensis (Maaseik, Church of St Catherine, s.s.), the ninth-century Xanten Gospels (Brussels, Royal Library, 18723), and the tenth-century gospel book in Tongeren (Tongeren, Church of Our Lady's Nativity, olim 85). While these examples are of insular, Lower Rhineland and Breton origin, respectively, and hence display a wide array of letters used, the gospel books of later centuries are, e.g. in the diocese of Liège, quite consistent in their use of the letters *c*, *s*, and *t*, the standard combination in French sources (Huglo 1988: 20; Mannaerts 2008a: 25-36). The recitation of the Passion performed during Holy Week, is traditionally indicated by so-called "letters of the Passion" in Missals and Graduals, which indicate the *persona* (Christ, the evangelist, and others) and their respective recitation tones. The caveat that has to be given, however, is that these three letters do not necessarily indicate three different performers; indeed, as Kurt Von Fischer has argued, the performance of the by several performers (three or more) was only introduced in the second half of the thirteenth century (Von Fischer 1973).

3. Performance of office chant and *historiae*

Many of the aspects discussed in the preceding section apply to the entirety of the chant repertory, and are shaped differently in function of the chronological and geographical context. With respect to the performance of office chant in the Low Countries, a number of these parameters take specific shapes. It should be remarked here that processions, to which some of the following examples refer, are also considered as a part of the divine office, on the basis of their less standardized character, and, more importantly, of the repertory of responsories and antiphons, which are their main musical components.

The use of the serpent (2.2.5) is documented for the celebration of Bavo, the patron saint of the cathedral of Ghent in the eighteenth century (c. 1759). During the seventeenth century, the medieval office was replaced by a "new" office in honor of Bavo (Mannaerts 2005a). Among the sources, a part for serpent has also been preserved, which seems to confirm the use reported by Charles Burney: the serpent supports the intonation of the chants, and plays the bass part in polyphonic pieces (Bouckaert & Vercammen 2005: 39-40, no. 195; a color facsimile can be found in Schreurs 2005: 70).

The singing of melismas (2.2.6) did not only occur in sequences in the Mass, but also during the office. More precisely, the performance of responsory prosulas, a genre of tropes that displays a strong formal similarity to sequences (Kelly 1985), seems to have taken place more or less in the same way. Not only were certain parts sung to a textless melody, but, as in the instructions for the sequence *Placatus quesumus* in Metz (cf. supra), specific indications also indicated by whom specific chants should be sung (cf. 2.2.8.).

The late-fourteenth-century Antiphoners from the collegiate church of Tongeren (Tongeren, Church of Our Lady's Nativity, 63 and 64) contain a striking example. In the Matins of Christmas, the ninth responsory *Verbum caro* is sung, and is followed by an untexted trope melody, which is found in other sources as the trope *Quem ethera et terra*. Remarkably, the trope melody is divided into small sections, which are assigned by the rubrics to be sung in alternation between the right and the left sides of the

In the context of the office, performance instructions found in Ordinals may be very specific, and have implications for the interplay between performance and (church) acoustics (2.2.7). As mentioned earlier, the route the procession made, within the church, or with excursions into the ambulatory, into the city, or into the fields, with stations in other churches or chapels, evidently had its repercussions for the actual sound of the performance. But also when the performance took place in the choir of the church only, chant was sung in several directions. In fifteenth-century Tongeren, the responsory *Verbum caro* is sung in the middle of the church (*in medio ecclesie*) during the procession following Terce on Christmas. The Ordinal (Tongeren, Church of Our Lady's Nativity, 68, f. 13) specifies the succession of actions, which includes the singing in different directions:

The cantor should then begin the responsory *Verbum caro factum est*, three canons (*domini*) sing the verse *In principio*, turning towards the east; after the repetition [of the repetenda], three vicars sing the *Gloria Patri*, turning towards the west. After the repetition [of the repetenda], the *Speciosa* is sung *in organis*. In the meantime, the priests go to the treasury with their relics, and place them there [...]. (Lefèvre 1967: 30).^[25]

As the Ordinal indicates, "this order is observed in the church of Tongeren on the major feast days" (f. 13; Lefèvre 1967: 31). Indeed, the instructions for the Easter procession, for instance, read, *mutatis mutandis*, almost as an exact copy:

"[...] after the singing of the hymn [*Salve festa dies*], the cantor begins the antiphon *Christus resurgens* with its verse *Dicant nunc iudei*, entering the ambulatory [behind the church], entering the church by its right-hand side where the ladies [*domine*] stand, to the tower, and there the procession turns and goes towards the middle of the church, where a station is held. When all are gathered there, the cantor begins the responsory *Sedit angelus*, three canons sing the verse *Crucifixum* in the middle of the church, towards the east, and the choir repeats *Nolite metuere*. After this, three other vicars sing the verse *Recordamini*, with their faces towards the west, the *alleluia* is repeated, and then the *Regina coeli* is sung *in organis*; in the meantime, the priests, standing in the station before the dean go to the treasury with their relics and place them there [...]. (Lefèvre 1967: 170).^[26]

In the concluding sections of this article, two further "parameters" are presented which are of specific interest for office compositions, and for the celebration of patron saints in particular. The feasts of patron saints are especially well documented as to performance indications, because of their solemnity (comparable to that of Christmas and Easter), and often because of the presence of saints' relics in the abbey or church. In almost all ecclesiastical institutions, then, the feast of the patron saint was celebrated with special care. The celebration included recitation from the saint's *vita*, and performance of the saint's proper liturgical office (*historia*), which was frequently based on the *vita*.^[27] In many cases the feast also saw a special devotion to the primary and secondary relics of the saint, including their exhibition on or near the altar, incensing, and processions. Nearly all these actions were accompanied by chants, mostly selected from the proper office. Moreover, the veneration for the patron saint was frequently extended beyond the feast day, by additional celebrations of octave and commemorations, and by additional feasts as those of Translation and Elevation. The factors of selection (of significant passages of the *vitae*) and repetition (at fixed points throughout the liturgical year) contributed to a greater familiarity with "proper" and "local" saints and traditions, and thus played a significant role in the creation of medieval local or regional "identities".

3.1. Ceremonial aspects

The Christmas and Easter instructions from Tongeren cited earlier have already suggested what may be understood as "ceremony". Indeed, the term "ceremony" is used here in the sense outlined by John Harper (Harper 1991: 14), and thus designates the manner in which a liturgical ritual is carried out, including seemingly ephemeral phenomena such as movements, gestures, ornaments, and vestments. Briefly, it encompasses all information saying how things are done, and by whom.^[28] It is not without importance to include ceremonial instructions and practices as performance parameters, because they have direct or indirect implications for the various parameters mentioned earlier. They affect the performance directly, for example by specifying the liturgical personnel demanded for certain rites, which affects the "ensemble" of performers singing a certain chant (including, e.g., the cantor, *hebdomadarii*, canons, vicars, or choirboys,). Indirect implications could be compared to what Erika Fischer-Lichte designates as the "atmosphere" of a performance (Fischer-Lichte 2001), such as a certain *habitus* in the movements that are made, or the vestments, candles and incense used. Such factors can contribute to a sense of solemnity, which in its turn may affect the way in which chant is performed - and here Conrad of Zabern's requirement of singing *differentialiter* comes to mind again (2.2.3). Occasionally, the "performance" of the liturgy approximates the modern sense of the word "staging" (Fischer-Lichte's *Inszenierung*), in the use of almost "theatrical" techniques, such as a dove descending "ex machina", used on the Feast of the Annunciation in the church of St Jacob (James) in Bruges in the fifteenth, and in the cathedral of Tournai in the sixteenth century (Bärsch 2005: 1-2).

In the celebration of patron saints, the relics, as the objects that embody the physical and spiritual presence of the saint, were of primary importance. The Tongeren Ordinal, copied in 1435-36 probably on the basis of a considerably older manuscript, offers a good example of the solemnity with which the feast of the second patron saint of the church, Maternus,^[29] is celebrated:

On the feast day of St Maternus, the first bishop of Tongeren and confessor, which is celebrated as a triple feast, the great bells toll, the main altar is prepared as on major feast days, and on it are placed Maternus's pastoral staff and the chrysal in which [parts of] his right arm are kept. Two canons, the cantor and the *ebdomadarius*, serve on the choir, and the dean sings the Mass and the principal office hours. [...] [After Terce,] a procession is held in the church, all canons dressed in caps, going towards the tower, returning along the pillars of the nave into the ambulatory, re-entering the church and proceeding to the font, and returning through the middle of the church into the choir stalls without halt

The actions to be performed in the collegiate church of Tongeren on September 25 are given in considerable detail. Indeed, the feast of Maternus was celebrated with great solemnity; it was established with certainty as a triple feast before 1383, a rank which brought the feast on the same level as Christmas, Epiphany, All Saints, the Dedication of the church, and the major Marian feasts (Purification, Annunciation, Visitation, Assumption, Nativity, Conception). The instructions for the feast day of Maternus, the city's legendary first bishop, answer many questions about rite and ceremony (who, what, where, when, how): they specify the church personnel and its responsibilities, the decoration of the altar, the relics, the route to be followed by the procession. Important information on the music is given: which bells are tolled, and most importantly, which music is sung, when, and by whom.

The relic collections of certain churches comprised much more than the remains of the patron saint(s). Churches with a rich collection would also pay liturgical attention to the relics of other important saints, or, indeed, to the collection as a whole. Examples of both situations can be found, again, in the collegiate church of Tongeren. A special celebration was held in honor of Sts Processus and Martinian on the feast of the Visitation of the Virgin. This addition to a much more important (triple) feast day was justified on account of the presence of these saints' relics – the Ordinal actually says "bodies" – in the church, as is attested by the ancient Ordinal, the predecessor of the Ordinal of 1435-36 (Lefèvre 1968: 453).^[31] In addition to the celebrations related to the relics of individual saints, a yearly *festum reliquiarum nostrarum* was held in Tongeren on November 8 (the octave of All Saints), and every seven years an *Ostentatio reliquiarum* was held during two weeks, from July 9 until July 24 (Lefèvre 1968: 468-469, 552). While the *festum reliquiarum* had no items that fell out of the ordinary celebration of the octave of a feast, the procession with the relics held before the Mass of the *Ostentatio* involved no small participation of musicians and singers, again corresponding to the solemnity of the occasion:

Note that every seven years, the display of the relics of the church of Tongeren is held [...]. Then priest should dress in chasuble and prepare, with the deacon and subdeacon, for the singing of the special Mass of All Saints. Together with the canons and the chaplains, dressed in silken caps, and the scholars, they should go to the tower in procession, go up to the relics chamber, where each is given a relic container, and all descend in order, humbly and with great devotion, towards the main altar, lighted with candles, while all kinds of music should sound, that is, organs, trumpets, flutes, psalters and certain [other] instruments, and the responsory of All Saints *Tua sunt hec Christe opera* with the verse and the repetenda is sung, the antiphon *Gaudet in celis* and the antiphon *In circuitu tuo Domine*, when this should be necessary. Thus, this procession should proceed to the said altar with the greatest solemnity, where all relic holders should be placed on the main altar. Then the Mass of All Saints should begin (Lefèvre 1968: 468-469).^[32]

3.2. Aspects of repertory

The final section addresses two aspects of repertory: the first deals with the relationship between the repertory sung at processions, the second with the addition of new chants to an already established *historia* for a saint.

3.2.1. Selection and repetition

The procession repertory is often related to that of the saint's *historia*. But exactly what was the relationship between the former and the latter? Which chants were selected, and thus repeated more than once? An elaborate comparison of the use of chants in a primary (office) and secondary (processions, commemorations, etcetera) contexts of performance is not possible here, but a few examples will suffice to illustrate the principal points. Four patron saints and chants in their honor will be taken as an example: Maternus (Tongeren), Bavo (Ghent), Godeleva (Ghistel, close to Bruges), Begga (Andenne). The sources used are Antiphoners containing their *historiae* and Processionals containing one or several chants sung during the procession; in the cases of Tongeren and Andenne, an Ordinal also exists.

In honor of St Godeleva of Ghistel, the nuns of the Benedictine abbey at Ghistel sang two monastic offices, for the feast of Godeleva's Passion, and for her Elevation. Both offices are preserved in a manuscript copied in 1606, and presently kept in Bruges (Bruges, Abbey of St Godeleva, 4). The chants for the processions on Godeleva's feast days are preserved in the gatherings that form a fragment of a Processional (ibidem, 10). The responsories sung when entering the choir stalls (*in introitu chori*) during the procession on the feast of the Passion of Godeleva are the eighth responsories of the Passion (*Godeleva cum de carnis carcere*) and of the Elevation offices (*Multiplicia in miseros*), followed by the Magnificat antiphon from Second Vespers of the Passion office (*O bone Messia*). In the procession on the feast of the Elevation, the responsory from First and Second Vespers of the Elevation office (*Gaude Godeleva inclita*) is sung.

Before the seventeenth century, two medieval offices were also sung in honor of St Bavo, patron saint of the (male) Benedictine abbey of St Bavo (later transformed into a cathedral) in Ghent, for the feasts of the Deposition and the Elevation of Bavo. The offices are kept in the Antiphoner (Ghent, University Library, 15), and the processions in the Processional of St Bavo (Ghent, University Library, 184). The procession for the feast of the Deposition of Bavo selects the seventh (*Pater insignis Bavo*) and eighth responsory (*Exulte in omne cordis*) of the Deposition office, and the Magnificat antiphon of First Vespers (*Sancte Bavo confessor*) of the Deposition office. The procession for the Elevation makes use of the second (*Quocumque divini sator*) and third responsories (*Omnem carnis insolentiam*) of the Deposition office, and the same Magnificat antiphon.

In the processions for both Bavo and Godeleva, the responsories from the Elevation and the Passion or Deposition offices appear to be interchangeable: responsories from the Passion or Deposition offices are used in the Elevation processions, and vice versa. Furthermore, on account of their textual

the responsories of the third nocturn,^[33] while the “later” Elevation processions hark back to responsories of the first nocturn (Bavo) or of First Vespers (Godeleva).

In the *ordo* of the secular canons at the collegiate church of Our Lady in Tongeren, only one office for Maternus was used; it is preserved in the fourteenth-century Antiphoners of Tongeren (Tongeren, Church of Our Lady’s Nativity, 63 and 64) and in an compilation manuscript with components dating from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries (The Hague, Royal Library, 70 E 4); the processional chants are found in the fifteenth-century Processional (Tongeren, Church of Our Lady’s Nativity, 55). As was mentioned earlier (cf. a part of the description in the Ordinal above), the ceremonial aspects regarding relics, vestments, personnel, bells, candles, incense, and the procession itinerary, were described in detail in the Ordinal. During the procession, only one responsory was sung (*Gaude tuo*), the ninth responsory of the third nocturn. The feast of the Translation existed, but referred entirely to the chants of Maternus’s main feast. In the procession on the Translation feast, the Magnificat antiphon of Second Vespers from the Maternus office (*Ave pater Gallie*) was sung.

The convent of St Begga in Andenne also used only one office of Begga for the various celebrations of their patron saint. This convent counted a maximum of thirty secular canonesses among its inhabitants, as well as ten canons, one of which was a priest. The Begga office is preserved in a manuscript of 1669 from Andenne (Brussels, Royal Library, II 3316); the procession chants are found in the Andenne Processional of 1741 (Brussels, Royal Library, IV 7). After the “Messe des pèlerins” (f. 142) in this Processional, the faithful bring Begga’s shrine to the nave of the church, while singing the responsory *Gloriose regum*, the ninth responsory of Matins. On other important feast days, other responsories are sung: *Beata Begga* (the sixth responsory) in the procession of Corpus Christi, and *Cum iam Dei amica* (the seventh responsory) on the “jour de la feste d’Andenne” (f. 140). As in Tongeren, the Customs (*coûtures*) of Andenne give precise indications regarding Begga’s relics, candles, personnel, and the procession itinerary (edited in Misson 1990: 392-501). Remarkably, the indications in the Customs also point to a relative rare composition of the “ensemble” of performers: both canonesses and canons participated in the “*alternatim*” performance of chant during the celebrations.

Comparable to the processions of Bavo and Godeleva, those of Begga and Maternus make use of the final responsory from the third nocturn of the saints’ *historia*. On feast days of secondary importance compared to the saints’ principal feast, other responsories are sung (Begga), or a Magnificat antiphon (Maternus).

Summarizing, it is clear that the responsories from the third nocturn are the ones that are most likely to be performed more than once, since they are often selected for inclusion among the procession chants. Comparing of the musical components of processions to saints’ *historiae* thus seems to be an important indicator for the performance frequency of certain chants

As a confirmation of the predilection for the repetition of the final responsory, it must be pointed out that such repetitions also occur within the “primary context” of the *historia* itself. The Tongeren Ordinal requires repeatedly that the last responsory be repeated instead of the *Te Deum*, more specifically on the feasts of Lucy, Peter’s chair, Mary of Egypt (when it falls before Easter), the Holy Innocents, and Septuagesima Sunday.^[34] On certain feasts, such as on Septuagesima Sunday, the Ordinal further specifies that a bell tolls during the second performance of this responsory, lending it an even greater importance:

[...] the ninth responsory, *Ubi est Abel* [...] [is sung]; the *Te Deum* is not sung until Easter unless on double or triple feasts, but instead, the ninth responsory is repeated and is sung entirely, and in the meantime the second bell is tolled, instead of the *Te Deum*, until the end of the responsory. The *custos* of the choir always re-intones the responsory when the *Te Deum* is not sung (Lefèvre 1967: 105).^[35]

3.2.2. Additions

In a fashion similar to the repetition of the final responsories of Matins, the addition of a prosula adds to the importance of the concluding responsory. It is remarkable how consistently these prosulas were added to the ninth responsory of Matins.^[36]

To a certain extent, the addition of office prosulas to the great responsories at Matins is documented for the Low Countries. While nothing suggests that this actually was a frequent practice, some remnants still exist. As the case of the liturgy of Tongeren demonstrates, prosulas were added to office responsories on the feasts of popular and important saints, such as Mary, Catherine, or Nicholas, without necessarily including the patron saint as well. In Tongeren, prosulas were sung on the principal feasts of the Virgin Mary (*Stella maris* and *Inviolata* for the feasts of Conception, Purification, Assumption, Annunciation, or Nativity^[37]), and furthermore on the feasts of Catherine (*Eterne virgo*), Nicholas (*Sospitati*), Agnes (*Eve genus*) and Hubert (*Huberte presul*). For the second patron saint of the collegiate church, Maternus, no prosulas exist. Most of these prosulas, the Agnes-prosula excepted, have concordances in manuscripts from ‘s Hertogenbosch, Utrecht, or Zutphen.^[38]

A systematic search for the dissemination and continued use of prosulas has not yet been undertaken for the Low Countries, but there are elements to suggest that their use persisted well into the sixteenth century, both in manuscripts and in printed books. The *Cantuale* printed by Petrus Phalesius (Leuven, 1561) and destined for the new boys’ choir that emerged from the fusion of the choirs of the Old and the New Church in Amsterdam, for instance, contains prosulas for Nicholas, Catherine, and the Virgin Mary.^[39]

demonstrated how much can be gained from studying the liturgical context in rubrics and Ordinals and from the comparison of *historiae* and processional chants. Such a comparison yields important information about the interrelation between various celebrations of the same saint (Deposition, Passion, Elevation), and about the performance frequency of responsories.

Furthermore, the Low Countries' continuing position on the crossroads of many influences is clearly reflected in the flexible interpretation of the parameters of chant performance and in the writings of a number of medieval authors from the region. It makes clear that we should not be blind for certain continuities that persisted throughout the centuries, such as the continued use of ornamental forms in both adiastematic and Gothic neumes, or the various views on the differentiation of performance tempo. But on the other hand, and in spite of what an authority such as Peter Wagner envisaged as "the" traditional, and hence authentic way of performing chant in 1905, this article demonstrated that it is not possible to speak of one single performance practice, and that chronological and geographical variation is, or should be, one of the rules of a historically oriented performance practice.

Notes

- [1] As epitomized in Leopold Von Ranke's well-known adagium "bloss sagen, wie es eigentlich gewesen"; the ellipsis of the verb is original. See von Ranke 1824, VI; cf. Goetz 1999.
- [2] Many useful references to chant in the northern Low Countries can be found in De Loos 1998-2008 and De Loos 2003.
- [3] It has to be remarked here that Hendrik Vanden Abeele, founder and director of the ensemble Psallentes, is doing research on chant performance practice in the Low Countries (University of Leiden and K.U.Leuven Association), with a main focus on fourteenth- and fifteenth-century sources from Ghent (Vanden Abeele 2007).
- [4] For overviews including some of the authors cited here: Dyer 2000, Schlager 2000; also Potter 1998. MacClintock 1979 offers partial translations of texts by Jerome of Moravia, Anonymous XIII, and Conrad von Zabern.
- [5] Edited in *PL* 173, 33-434; *MGH SS* 10, 227-317.
- [6] I thank Björn Schmelzer (Ensemble Grain de la Voix) for this reference.
- [7] The standard edition of Jacobus's treatise is that by Roger Bragard, cf. Jacobus Leodiensis 1955-73. Further bibliography can be found in Desmond 2000.
- [8] In Jacobus's words: "Et videretur aliquibus pulchrum si omnes tacti cantus in missa correspondenter essent unus toni vel fieret in illis sicut fit in aliquibus antiphonis et responsoriis, ut primum responsorium est primi toni, secundum secundi, tertium tertii, et sic deinceps. Sic introitus missae esset primi toni; Kyrie eleison et Gloria in excelsis secundi, quia conveniens est ut Kyrie eleison et Gloria in excelsis sibi corresponderent quoad tonum; deinde graduale toni tertii; Alleluia quarti, et sic ulterius" see Jacobus Leodiensis 1955-73, Book VI, Chapter 87: 255.
- [9] "Among these there is a second group - that is to say of the favoured female sex - which is so much the more precious the more it is rare; when it freely divides tones into semitones with a sweet-sounding throat, and divides semitones into indivisible microtones, it enjoys itself with an indescribable melody that you would rather deem angelic than human" (Page 1992: 20). The original text reads "E quibus pars altera, favorosi videlicet sexus feminei, que quanto rarior tanto preciosior, dum in dulcinomi gutturis epigloto tonos librate dividit in semitonia, et semitonia in athomos indivisibiles garritat, ineffabili lascivit melodiomate quod magis putares angelicum quam humanum" (Page 1992: 16).
- [10] In addition, it may be remarked that recordings have also played a major role in the growing interest in ethnic musical cultures and ethnomusicology, and have influenced present-day performance practices of chant. Chant performances of certain ensembles often make implicit or explicit reference to European traditional music from the Mediterranean area (e.g. Sardinia, Corsica, or Croatia), from Arabic or African musical cultures, to account for a certain "style" of performance. Others have referred to existing oral cultures for a better understanding of the structural and performance implications of oral transmission (Jeffery 1992; Kaufman Shelemay & Jeffery 1993-1997).
- [11] A French company, Semen, made a series of 78 rpm-recordings at the abbeys of Averbode and Maredsous in the 1930s and 1940s. I thank Willy Schuyesmans (Nijlen, Belgium) for bringing this recording to my attention, and Jos Bielen (Abbey of Averbode) for these details.
- [12] I thank Nils Holger Petersen (University of Copenhagen) for bringing Fischer-Lichte's work to my attention.
- [13] The spelling "rhythme" is Pothier's.
- [14] *Episemata* are small traits added to the basic neume forms to indicate the prolongation of one or more of the notes; *coupure neumatique* is the use of different combinations of neume forms instead of one single sign (which is "broken" into several signs, hence "coupure") as a means to emphasize certain notes; the *litterae significativae* are letters added to the neumes specifying melodic or rhythmic aspects of the melody.
- [15] According to Mary Berry, the rhomboid or lozenge-shaped punctum gradually takes on the duration of the half of the square punctum, a proportion established by the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth century (Berry 1965: 131).
- [16] A German translation, *Lere von koergesanck*, was published in Gümpel 1956.
- [17] Cf. note 8
- [18] Many examples from both theorists and liturgical manuscripts and imprints are given in (Berry 1968: 325-369).
- [19] My translation; the original Latin text reads "Gallici enim nostri, et qui germanias incolunt: omnesque alij eas regiones *b* duro maxime delectantur. Italici vero, et ceterae nationes citra illos montes *b* mollis magis alliciuntur" (Berry 1965: 122).
- [20] De Loos 1998-2008 gives a number of interesting examples.
- [21] The relationship between chant and polyphony may be investigated from completely different viewpoints as well, such as the question about the primacy of one of both: did polyphony emerge from monophony? Some authors have argued that this view is reductionist and contingent, and belongs to the nineteenth century

- [23] Choir screens are also documented for churches in smaller towns, such as Aarschot, Diksmuide (Dixmude), or Lier; it is not certain to what extent all of them were used for musical performances.
- [24] The responsory *Verbum caro* and its untexted prosula occur three times in the Antiphoners: on Christmas, its octave, and on the feast of the Purification of the Virgin.
- [25] "Tunc cantor incipiat responsorium *Verbum caro factum est*, tres domini cantent versum *In principio*, vertentes se versus orientem, post repeticionem tres vicarii cantent *Gloria Patri*, vertentes se versus occidentem. Post repeticionem canitur *Speciosa* in organis, et interim vadant sacerdotes cum suis reliquiis ad fabricam, et deponant ibi [...]" (Lefèvre 1967: 30).
- [26] "Ymno cantato, cantor incipiat antiphonam *Xristus resurgens* cum versu *Dicant nunc Iudei*, intrando ambitum ecclesie, eundo per ecclesiam in dextro latere ubi domine stant, usque ad turrin, et ibi reflectitur in medium templi, et facta ibi statione, omnibus ibidem congregatis, cantor incipiat responsorium *Sedit angelus*, tres domini cantent versum *Crucifixum* in medio ecclesie versus orientem, et chorus repetat *Nolite metuere*, postea alii tres vicarii cantent versum *Recordamini*, versus occidentem habentes facies, repetitio *Alleluia*, deinde canitur *Regina celi* in organis; interim sacerdotes stantes in statione ante decanum vadant cum suis reliquiis ad fabricam et deponant ibi [...]" (Lefèvre 1967: 170).
- [27] Given the much stronger standardization of the Mass rite, Masses for patron saints do not usually contain many proper chants, except for a proper sequence and, occasionally, a proper alleluia verse.
- [28] "*Ceremony* is related to the conduct and style of an action or event. *Ceremony* can always be seen happening. It concerns the practical manifestation of the rite. It regulates who is to do something, and how they should do it" (Harper 1991: 14). Rite, on the other hand is described as "relate[d] specifically to order and content: it identifies what is to be said or done, and when" (Harper 1991: 13).
- [29] The primary patron saint is the Virgin Mary.
- [30] "In festivitate sancti Materni, primi episcopi ecclesie Tungrensis et confessoris, festum agitur triplex, et pulsatur cum majoribus campanis, et paratur majus altare sicut in magnis solemnitatibus, et superponitur baculus pastoralis sancti Materni et cristallum in quo habetur de dextro brachio ipsius sancti Materni, duo domini, videlicet cantor et ebdomadarius, servant chorum, decanus cantet missam et horas principales [...] fiet processio in omnibus cappis infra ecclesiam eundo versus turrin, et ibi reflectitur ad manum dexteram eundo per pilaria ecclesie, circueundo ambitum, intrando ecclesiam, eundo usque ad fontes, et per medium ecclesie revertitur in chorum sine statione, et canitur responsorium *Gaude tuo* cum versu et *Gloria Patri*." (Lefèvre 1968: 520-522).
- [31] "Post matutinas immediate legatur missa de sanctis martyribus Processo et Martiniano [...], quia corpora ipsorum reputantur esse in ecclesia Tungrensi secundum antiquum Ordinarium" (Lefèvre 1968: 453).
- [32] "Nota quod de septennio ad septennium fiunt ostensiones reliquiarum ecclesie Tungrensis [...] Tunc sacerdos sit indutus casula et aratus, cum dyacono et subdyacono, ad cantandum specialem missam de Omnibus Sanctis, qui cum canonicis et capellanis, indutis cappis sericis, et scholaribus processionaliter vadant usque ad turrin, ascendendo cameram reliquiarum, in qua datur cuilibet una capsula de reliquiis, secundum ordinem descendentes eundo humiliter, cum magna devotione, versus summum altare cum torsiis accensis, et interim fit sonitus omnium generum musicarum, videlicet organorum, tubarum, fistularum, psalteriorum et ceterorum instrumentorum, et cantatur responsorium de Omnibus Sanctis *Tua sunt hec Xriste opera* cum versu et repetitione, item antiphonam *Gaudet in celis* et antiphonam *In circuitu tuo Domine*, si opus fuerit. Et fit ista processio cum maxima solemnitate ead predictum altare, et ponentur omnes capselle reliquiarum supra summum altare ordinate, et tunc incipiatur missa de Omnibus Sanctis" (Lefèvre 1968: 468-469).
- [33] For the Bavo example, it should be pointed out that the source used (Ghent, University Library, 184) is a Processional made after the secularization of the Abbey of St Bavo, which became a collegiate church in 1536; the seventh and eighth responsories thus belong to the third nocturn as they functioned in a secular rite, and no longer in a monastic one.
- [34] In all cases this is the ninth responsory, except for the feast of Lucy, which has only one nocturn, of which the third responsory should be repeated (Lefèvre 1967-1968: 36, 105, 354, 388, 401).
- [35] "[...] nonum responsorium *Ubi est Abel* [...] *Te Deum* non canitur usque ad Pascha nisi in duplicibus aut triplicibus festis, sed loco *Te Deum* repetitur nonum responsorium et totum percantatur, et interim pulsatur secunda campana, loco *Te Deum*, usque ad finem responsorii, — custos chori reincipiat responsorium semper quando non canitur *Te Deum* (Lefèvre 1967: 105).
- [36] For an example from northern France (Cambrai), see the prosula *De convale paupertatis* added to the ninth responsory of the office for St Elizabeth of Hungary, *Gaudeat Hungaria* (Haggh 1995, 18).
- [37] The sequence *Inviolata* was very popular in northern France and the Low Countries. For its performance in Cambrai, cf. Wright 1978, 304; in Brussels, cf. Haggh 1988: 426-33.
- [38] Libraries and shelf numbers can be found on De Loos 1998-2008.
- [39] Five copies of the *Cantuale* are listed in the catalog of Henri Vanhulst (Vanhulst 1990; also Mannaerts 2005b). A sixth copy could be identified, which was used at the Round Beguinage of Amsterdam (Mannaerts 2009: 232).

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