



ANTEMUS

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Report from the 14th Annual Colloquium of the GIC

By Rachelle Chiasson-Taylor

As a musicologist, early music performer and university teacher, I embraced this 14th GIC Colloquium with the fervent wish to learn. In all of my graduate seminars on the performance practice of early music at McGill University, I always felt compelled to tell students there was “bad news” about the music they were going to examine in my class: a very significant amount of medieval, Renaissance, and baroque repertoires absolutely requires that you understand things sacred and practices liturgical to perform it well. From the earliest plainchant sources through Genevan Psalter settings, Lutheran chorale tunes used by Bach and *Grands* and *petits* motets, the sacred—and even some aspects of the secular—early music repertoire is incomprehensible without reference to liturgy in some way. The good news is that you can learn about it, and the best news is that there are some occasions to practise the music in context. This Colloquium was one such occasion.



Saint-Benoît-du-Lac Abbey church

Held at the Abbey of Saint-Benoît-du-Lac, August 8–11, 2019, participants were given a wonderful opportunity to delve into a corner of the chant repertoire that only a few specialists could speak to, let alone practice. And what a peerless specialist, what a great scholar and experienced performer we had in our guest leader, Juan Carlos Asensio from Madrid.

After registration and a welcoming address, we were treated to an introductory workshop providing an overview of the Hispanic chant repertoire we were tasked with performing at the Colloquium's conclusion. After supper, and Vespers, then Compline sung by the monks, at 8:30 p.m. participants settled down in the Guests' Library and study facility—the venue for most Colloquium activities—to a lecture by Juan Carlos entitled, “Hispanic Chant: History, Sources, Performance.” This was to be one of three immensely informative talks.

It was absolutely fascinating to discover in these lectures the extent of contextual influence on an art form—even, or especially, an art form intimately bound up with belief, liturgy and prayer. Scholars are often remiss in calling Hispanic chant “Mozarabic,” for that only accounts for part of its development. In its earliest form, Hispanic chant is called “Visigothic” and survived only up until the 8th century. Moorish invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in 711 considerably changed the fate of this Indigenous Spanish form, which barely survived, concealed by Christians in Toledo, until it was officially suppressed after that city’s *Reconquista* and the adoption of Gregorian Chant in 1085-6. It is at this point only that we can speak of Mozarabic Chant. What has come down to us of the earliest corpus of Hispanic—or Visigothic—Chant is a total of 27 original pieces, some of which we were going to revive for our North American listeners at the concluding Colloquium concert!

I want to briefly mention points explored in Juan Carlos’ plan to set the context for the repertoire we were going to sing: manuscript sources; neumatic styles and provenances; number of modes employed in antiphons (only two or three frequently used in both Office and Mass); prosody (how different it is from Gregorian chant!); pronunciation (not what one is used to: Latin with a Spanish accent) and of course, the reforms of Cardinal Cisneros around 1500. Fatefully, it was Cisneros who, discovering Mozarabic liturgical books in Visigothic script, began a campaign to preserve the ancient rite from disappearing entirely. Of course, Cisneros’ actions had much broader implications, “... turning the memory of the medieval rite from local observance to an early modern symbol of the Spanish nation,” according to Susan Boynton.¹ In other words, rather than revive, Cisneros expanded on the *prima materia* and in the process, killed the original Hispanic chant with kindness.

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Vespers with Gregorian Chant: An Experience

By Jean-Pierre Noiseux

Introducing Gregorian chant in a liturgical setting, particularly the mass, is not an easy thing to do. Parishes are accustomed to their musical orientations, and for various reasons they seldom wish to change them. Add to this the difficulty for choristers with little experience, or even newcomers, to approach the chants of the Mass and especially the Proper. A few years ago, I came up with the idea of singing Sunday Vespers in Gregorian Chant. I imagined it would be easier that way to eke out a place for Gregorian Chant in the liturgy without taking anyone’s place. By these means we would thus try to revive a lost tradition of celebrating Sunday Vespers in parish churches.

A friend and enthusiast of Gregorian Chant to whom I had spoken about the idea of singing Vespers proceeded to find a church that would accept a group such as we had in mind for Sunday Vespers. After a few attempts that led nowhere, we knocked on the presbytery door of Saint-Léon-of-Westmount Church. Father Yves Guillemette seemed favourable to the idea, so a small group of choristers began to sing Vespers in Gregorian Chant once a month starting in the fall of 2016, in the magnificent Church of Saint-Léon.²

¹ Susan Boynton, “Restoration or Invention? Archbishop Cisneros and the Mozarabic Rite in Toledo,” *Yale Journal of Music and Religion* vol. 1, no. 1 (2015): 6.

² Saint-Léon Church was inaugurated in 1903. In 1928, Guido Nincheri, whose works (stained glass and frescoes) adorn numerous churches throughout Canada, was entrusted with its richly decorated interior. Decoration work was carried out over a period extending to 1957. For additional information on the architecture and decoration of Saint-Léon de Westmount Church, it is worth consulting the website of the Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec [Religious Heritage Council of Quebec] at <http://www.patrimoine-religieux.qc.ca/en/publications/podcasting/saint-leon-of-westmount>



Stained glass window in the nave and the interior of Saint-Léon-de-Westmount Church.

In the first

year, we sang First Sunday Vespers with Father Guillemette as celebrant, Saturday evening after the dominical Mass at 5 p.m. The chant book we used was, and still is, the *Antiphonale romanum II* published in 2009 by the Abbey of Saint-Pierre de Solesmes. This is a very practical chant book, because it contains everything one needs to celebrate First and Second Vespers on all Sundays and principal feasts of the year in Gregorian chant, according to the renewed Roman Rite (or Ordinary Form).

456 Dominica Hebdomadae I

Antiphona 1 Ps 109, 2

Virgam virtutis tuae emittet Dominus ex
Sion: domus tuae in medio inimicorum tuorum.

Euouae.

PSALMUS 109
MESSIAS REX ET SACERDOS
Oportet illum regnare, donec ponat omnes inimicos sub pedibus eius (1 Cor 15, 25)

Dixit Dominus Domino meo: «Sede a dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum».

Virgam potentiae tuae emittet Dominus ex Sion: dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.

Tecum principatus in die virtutis tuae, in splendoribus sanctis, ex utero ante luciferum genuit te.

Iuravit Dominus et non paenitebit eum: «Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech».

Dominus a dextris tuis, conquassabit in die irae suae reges. De torrente in via bibet, propterea exaltabit caput.

Antiphona 2 Cf. Ex 13, 14

Ex Aegypto edu-xisti nos, Domine.

Antiphonale romanum II

Our initial efforts sometimes proved difficult. Except for 2 or 3 real aficionados, our choristers were not always present, and they still lacked experience, especially in the recitation of psalms. Very few of the faithful stayed past the Mass to attend Vespers. In addition, we were assigned choir stalls to sing, so we found ourselves somewhat lost in the church's immense structure. And to boot, singing First Vespers after dominical Mass made little sense from a liturgical point of view.

After our first season, we spoke with Father Guillemette about the possibility of celebrating First Vespers before Mass on Saturday. This solution was not retained because the church organist and pastoral singing leader absolutely needed time before Mass to practise. Thus, we decided to sing Second Vespers without a celebrant, on Sundays at 4 p.m. in front of the lateral Lady Altar, which suited a small group such as ours. We figured that changing Vespers on Sunday would incite the faithful, such as our choristers, to remain present. We formed a fairly stable group of 6 choristers, psalmody was improving little by little, and some of the church's community began to attend Vespers in greater numbers.

In our third season (2018–2019), our basic core was solidly established and was definitely improving in terms of the quality of our chanting and its liturgical implementation. We began to notice a modest but constant

attendance by parishioners. One evening in the spring of 2019, after Vespers, two choristers were approached by a woman at the underground station nearest to the church. She asked them if they were part of the group that had just sung. Then, she thanked them, saying that the chanting had procured her great comfort, and that was exactly what she needed. That sole testimony is enough to convince me that singing Vespers is worthwhile.

We embarked on our fourth season last fall with the same group, but with the addition of a new singer and Saint-Léon parishioner who had some experience as a chorister. He had never sung Gregorian chant, but after hearing us in October, felt he wanted to learn. Here was another positive sign to support us in the pursuit of the experience.

— Jean-Pierre Noiseux



New “Canadian Chant Database” for Manuscripts and Fragments

By Debra Lacoste

Calling all Canadians who have manuscript artefacts on shelves, in drawers, or hanging on walls! Researchers at Dalhousie University, led by Jennifer Bain, are collecting information for a new *Canadian Chant Database* which will house data about manuscripts and fragments in Canadian institutions and private collections. The creation of this online resource is one of a number of objectives in the new research initiative *Digital Analysis of Chant Transmission* (DACT), a project that will help us to understand how chant travelled from Europe to other continents and adapted over time and place through oral and written traditions. The new *Canadian Chant Database* will be networked online with the *Cantus Index Catalogue of Chant Texts and Melodies*, which is partnered with the *Cantus Database for Latin Ecclesiastical Chant*, overseen by Debra Lacoste.

In addition to the creation of the *Canadian Chant Database*, the DACT project is building a large network of international partners to both mentor new scholars and build capacity to trace the transmission of plainchant not only through Western Europe, but on a global level, between Western Europe and former colonies in the Americas, Africa, and Oceania. For example, books containing chant translated into Indigenous languages of North America will be a focus of research, and the study of the transmission of chant through fragmented manuscripts will also be key. The dispersal of European manuscript artefacts either whole or piece-by-piece by eager booksellers has resulted in a complicated manuscript history. The development of new computational resources in tandem with existing chant databases and digital repositories of manuscripts will offer us the necessary infrastructure to restore an understanding of: 1) the original form and layouts of the books from which the fragmented leaves were torn, 2) the contents of the books, including chants of the Mass, the Offices, and other liturgical items that have been separated from one another, and 3) the possibly fascinating routes across land and sea where these artefacts travelled in the world. The DACT project is important for what it will tell us about the communication of culture through the encounters of people and ideas.

With all data amassed online into a central chant hub, chant practitioners—choir directors, church musicians, and Indigenous singers—will have easy access to international and local resources for bringing chant to contemporary audiences. Researchers will continue to piece together the traditions of sung liturgies from little-known (or presently unknown) chant manuscript sources contained in the rare book rooms of Canadian libraries or hanging on office walls. The public will benefit from being able to learn details about the manuscript pages they own, and students, scholars, and singers from around the world will build an international community around the precious witnesses to devotional practices of the past.

This new research has been made possible by a SSHRC Partnership Development grant. For more information about DACT and the *Canadian Chant Database*, and to send us information about your manuscripts or fragmented leaves, please contact Debra Lacoste (dlacoste@uwaterloo.ca) or Jennifer Bain (jennifer.bain@dal.ca).

— Debra Lacoste



CHANT ALIVE! – The 15th Annual Colloquium of the GIC

This year's colloquium will feature a workshop with Marcel Pérès: *Approaches to Chant Performance*. Marcel Pérès has spent his life championing this close connection between research and performance through his Ensemble Organum, founded in 1982. In 2001, he founded CIRMA, the Centre itinérant de recherche sur les musiques anciennes, in Moissac, France. His recordings with Ensemble Organum have attracted much attention and great acclaim for their compelling and fresh interpretations of ancient music, based on new research. We celebrate his presence with us by inviting scholars and liturgical musicians to speak about how the performance of chant fits within the scope of their own work.



St. Augustine's Seminary

The program features daily Lauds, Vespers, Compline, a concert with the Adelphi Choir, and Sunday Mass with full sung propers. Accommodation will be at the St. Augustine's Seminary, Toronto. The facility has been renovated and now has air conditioning! Those who were there a few years ago will appreciate this. Please visit www.gregorian.ca for more information.

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Report from the 14th Annual Colloquium of the GIC

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But back to the Colloquium: thus, began four days divided between compelling historical discussion and singing the actual music in workshops held twice a day. It was exhilarating, some would say exhausting, but no one could deny it was fascinating. And it cannot be said that participants, including myself, did not puzzle, nay, struggle over prosody, Spanish pronunciation, neumes, and even the mindset of some of the chants (including a particularly graphic setting of *Job* 17:14). I learned that nothing would come of sight-reading this repertoire in the little time we had before the concert. I witnessed fellow participants staying up late into the night to practice. I realized that I had to embrace the meaning in the words, the inflections in the music, the memory of a long-lost rite and the echo that survived from the earliest centuries of this fragmentary and sometimes exotic-sounding repertoire.

During the Colloquium, participants also attended offices in the abbey with the monks who had so graciously accepted us into their midst. Father Abbott Dom André Laberge spoke to us in an inspiring spirit of openness and welcome. Dom Richard Gagné, Choirmaster and one of the monastery's organists (with Dom Laberge, who is a world-renowned organist and harpsichordist himself), invited us to sing both at the celebration of the liturgy for St. Lawrence on the Saturday (excerpts from Cisneros) and alternate with the monks in chanting during dominical Mass. Keeping the hours, keeping silence after 9:30 p.m., eating in silence, surrounded by the beauty of the Eastern Townships where St-Benoît-du-Lac is situated, all of these things combined to create a memorable hiatus in the hectic urban life that some of us lead. Therein lies the modern miracle of a community devoted to the pursuit of that which is essential.

After four days, we were ready (or so we hoped) to present the fruits of our labour. Sunday, August 11, 2 p.m.: an enthusiastic and plentiful audience was seated in the pews of the abbatial church. We took our pre-rehearsed

positions. Dom Gagné was stationed at the beautiful Wilhelm Organ. The moment was intense: would we remember the words, perform the intonations and cadential formulas right, nail the old Spanish pronunciation? Juan Carlos conducted the 40-strong choir with the precision and consummate art of a highly experienced leader. Dom Gagné improvised six breathtaking pieces at different moments of the concert, some peaceful, others full of fire and brimstone. The public was highly appreciative. It was one of the most challenging and rewarding concerts in my experience.

As the participants dispersed and took to the road to return home, I realized that I had been very lucky to be at St-Benoît-du-Lac those past four days. The Gregorian Institute of Canada is a unique organization with a mandate that few others would even think of assuming: to meld the spirit and the scholarship of plainchant, often *in situ* in monasteries or convents, and open the event to everyone. This, too, is a modern miracle. Thank you to GIC, Juan Carlos, William Renwick, Jean-Pierre Noiseux, Dom André Laberge, Dom Richard Gagné, the monks of St-Benoît and my fellow Colloquium participants with whom I had the immense pleasure of working on this marvellous four-day journey into medieval Spain.

— Rachelle Chiasson-Taylor



A Very Special CD for Ensemble Scholastica's 10th Anniversary!

By Pascale Duhamel

Indeed, it was in the fall of 2008, that I returned to Montréal after several years of research and training in Paris at the Institute d'Histoire et de Recherche des Textes, and at the Centre de Musiques Médiévales with members of Ensemble Discantus, and then at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies where I conducted its Gregorian Workshop for two years. When I finally returned home to Montréal, I wanted to continue this practice and create a vocal ensemble in this city—one with the necessary skills to perform interpretations of Gregorian and medieval chant that were based on musicological knowledge but were nonetheless vibrant and moving for modern audiences. With the help of some friends and their contacts, I gradually gathered together a group of seven singers and instrumentalists who were already interested or trained in medieval music, and we gave, under my direction, our first concert in April 2009.

In a very serendipitous way, in the years preceding our 10th anniversary, I had the pleasure of directing the research of Sylvain Margot at the University of Ottawa. He wanted to uncover the medieval liturgical chant repertoire specific to his region of origin—the Haute-Marche, today's Creuse Department. As a matter of fact, the medieval musical heritage of this part of France, between Poitiers and Limoges, bore the ravages of religious wars and suffered from its turbulent past. In following the trail of local saints and combing through regional libraries, Sylvain was able to unearth fragments of this music that had been composed for the offices of St. Yrieix and the Conception of the Virgin and, from several surviving documents, to reconstruct the office of St. Pardoux. The music Sylvain compiled is entirely original to the Haute-Marche region; it dates from around the 9th century for St. Yrieix, and from the 12th century for the two other offices, and had probably not been heard since the Renaissance!

Together, Sylvain and myself studied those manuscripts, and the occasion was too beautiful not to take the opportunity of the ensemble's 10th anniversary and bring this music back to life. So, Sylvain went forward and transcribed methodically the whole corpus, a process for which he had to make some difficult decisions. We then reviewed and together corrected his transcriptions. The greater part of this repertoire dates from the 12th century and its musical phrases take surprising liberties with modes and ranges, producing melodic shapes that are almost sensual in nature, recalling the music of Hildegard von Bingen and Abélard. Along with Rebecca Bain, the director of Ensemble Scholastica, we selected the most interesting of these chants, and began with the ensemble the process

of singing and performing them, which led to some corrections and adaptations in ornamentation and pace variations. This phase of the project was especially fascinating, since it allowed us to experience how performance is crucial in putting the last hand to transcriptions of such a repertoire. Then, various members of the ensemble put their talents to work: Rebecca, Catherine Hermann and Elizabeth Ekholm composed polyphonic elaborations for some chants, Rebecca and Angèle Trudeau improvised instrumental accompaniments, and Catherine Hermann developed *organetto* pieces on other chants. I, myself, added in readings of miracles from the lives of St. Yrieix and St. Pardoux. Overall, it resulted, on June 1st, 2019, in a 10th anniversary concert of which we could certainly be very proud! Here are some highlights: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7wuvEq8FA>

We then had to record a CD! For the important research it represents, but also to allow you as well to rediscover this such special and unknown repertoire. The music, the polyphonic elaborations, the *organetto* pieces and the readings embody a rich and prolific inventiveness, whose vivacity is still obvious today. We consequently invite you to join us not only in rediscovering a lost heritage, but also on a voyage back in time to a world of fervent and wondrous imagination.

Astonishing Saints: Lost and found sacred songs of the 12th century

Available at Atma Classique: May 1st, 2020 <https://www.atmaclassique.com/>

Launch concert: May 3, 2020, 3 pm, Église de la Visitation, Montreal

<https://www.momentsmusicaux.ca/saison-2019-2020/>

— Pascale Duhamel, University of Ottawa

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New Research on Old Chant

By William Renwick

The Gregorian Institute of Canada is pleased to announce the publication of its fourth volume of *Conference Proceedings: New Research on Old Chant / La Recherche Nouvelle du Plain-chant Ancien*, edited by Kate Helsen. This volume, in memoriam of Andrew Hughes, contains papers from the 2016 Colloquium at St. Augustine's Seminary, Toronto. It is published by The Institute of Medieval Music, Kitchener, Ontario, 2018 (ISBN 978-1-926664-49-1).

Contents:

- Kate Helsen, *Remembering Andrew Hughes (En Souvenir d'Andrew Hughes, trans. Jean-Pierre Noiseux)*
- Kate Helsen, *Publications of Andrew Hughes*
- Barbara Swanson, *The Cantus Gradual Project: Porrentruy, Bibliothèque Cantonale Jurassienne, 18.*
- Sylvain Margot and Pascale Duhamel, *Fragments pour Saint-Yrieix et la Conception de la Vierge: Témoins de la Vie Liturgique Médiévale en Haute-Marche*
- Helen Patterson, *Chant in Medieval Ireland*
- William Renwick, *Rhymed Offices in the use of Sarum*
- Innocent Smith O.P., *The Use and Abuse of Computers in Liturgical Research*
- Kate Helsen, *Perspectives on the Scholarship of Andrew Hughes*

- Estelle Joubert, *Digital Geographies of Chant Scholarship*
- Jennifer Bain, *Where and How Should We House the Digital Legacy of Andrew Hughes?*

For more information please visit <https://medievalmusic.ca/>.

— William Renwick, recently made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music (FRSCM) in recognition of his work on Sarum chant. Here follows the citation:

William Renwick is Professor Emeritus of Music at McMaster University in Canada with an extensive record of scholarship in medieval and modern music. He helped found the Gregorian Institute of Canada in 2005 and his lifelong project of editing the music of the Sarum Mass and Office in its entirety is a significant contribution to the world of church music. Professor Renwick is also a composer, conductor and church musician of many years' service.

