

PAUL EVANS

# Early Trope Repertory of Saint Martial de Limoges



PRINCETON LEGACY LIBRARY

**The Early Trope Repertory of  
Saint Martial de Limoges**

*Number Two in the Princeton Studies in Music*

the early trope  
repertory of  
saint MARTIAL de Limoges

*By Paul Evans*

*Princeton University Press*

*Princeton, New Jersey*

*1970*

Copyright © 1970 by Princeton University Press

*All Rights Reserved*

L.C. Card: 66-11971

S.B.N. 691-09109-9

Publication of this book has been aided by  
the Louis A. Robb Fund of Princeton University Press  
and the Elsie and Walter W. Naumburg Fund in the  
Department of Music, Princeton University.

Printed in the United States of America  
by Princeton University Press

*To Sally*



## PREFACE

The trope represents one of the most significant musical developments of the early Middle Ages. Along with other types of additions to and interpolations within the official chant of the Western church, it provided one of the main creative outlets for church composers in the centuries immediately following the Carolingian standardization of the church's liturgy. Nevertheless, there are still many gaps in our knowledge of the origins and early development of this form, and the attempts to define the trope and to trace its history have frequently led to disagreement and confusion.

Much of the trouble results, I believe, from a lack of familiarity with the sources themselves—with the tropers and with the texts and music that these manuscripts contain. My aim, therefore, has been to make available in transcription the basic trope repertory of one of the most important centers of troping activity, the abbey of St. Martial de Limoges in southern France, as this repertory developed in the tenth and early eleventh centuries.

For this purpose, I have chosen to transcribe the Proper tropes and a selection of Ordinary tropes from one of the most important of the St. Martial manuscripts, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds latin 1121. This is the earliest *fully* transcribable St. Martial troper, dating from early in the eleventh century. I have also compared these transcriptions with the other extant St. Martial tropers, especially with those dating from the tenth century. In this way it has been possible to obtain a comprehensive view of the trope in southern France in the early stages of its development, and on this basis to take a fresh look at the text and music of the tropes and at some of the problems that still obscure the history of this important musical form.

The conclusions reached in this study are based primarily on St. Martial sources, but they are not limited entirely to them. Tenth- and eleventh-century tropers from other areas have also been consulted, and their evidence is presented whenever pertinent.

I am indebted above all to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris for the opportunity to study the St. Martial tropers and related manuscripts at first hand, and I am particularly grateful to the director and staff of the Cabinet des Manuscrits for their continual helpfulness and interest. Other libraries and institutions made manuscripts available to me: the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris, the Bibliothèque Municipale in Cambrai, the Basilica of Ste. Anne in Apt, the British Museum in London, and the Bodleian Library in Oxford. To these institutions and to their librarians I should also like to express my appreciation.

In addition, I am indebted to the Most Reverend Rembert Weakland, O.S.B., for his valuable help; to Mlle. Solange Corbin, whose constant interest, enthusiasm, and assistance greatly facilitated my work in Paris; and above all to Professor Oliver Strunk, whose wisdom, judgment, and insight helped to guide this work from its inception. Finally, I should like to thank Linda Peterson of Princeton University Press for her expert and sympathetic guidance in preparing this book for publication.

## CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	
<i>Chapter I.</i> The Meaning of Trope .....	1
<i>Chapter II.</i> The Historical Position of the Trope.....	17
<i>Chapter III.</i> The Tropers.....	29
Format of the Tropers	
Contents of the Tropers	
Problems of Determining Provenance and Date	
The Nine St. Martial Tropers	
Paris 1240, Paris 1120, Paris 1121, Paris 909	
Paris 1119, Paris 1084, Paris 1118, Paris 887	
Paris 903	
<i>Chapter IV.</i> The Texts of the Tropes.....	55
<i>Chapter V.</i> The Musical Structure of the Tropes.....	73
Melodic Style	
Modal Character of the Tropes	
Relationship of Trope to Chant	
Formal Organization of the Tropes	
<i>Transcriptions</i> .....	119
Introduction.....	121
Proper Tropes of Paris 1121.....	127
Examples of Ordinary Tropes.....	253
Examples of Prosulae.....	263
The Tonarium of Paris 1121.....	271
<i>Index of Tropes in Paris 1121</i> .....	275
<i>Bibliography</i> .....	285
<i>Index</i> .....	291



**The Early Trope Repertory of  
Saint Martial de Limoges**



## CHAPTER I

### THE MEANING OF TROPE

One of the central problems in the history of troping is that of terminology. "Qu'est-ce qu'un Trope?" Thus Léon Gautier began his pioneer study of the trope in 1886,<sup>1</sup> and although numerous answers have been advanced, the question still remains a critical one. In fact, the very attempt at definition has helped in large measure to obscure the essential nature of the trope.<sup>2</sup>

Too many modern definitions have been partial in their approach. Thus, the literary historian, although not unaware of the musical aspects of the trope, has tended to define the form solely in terms of the function of its text. For Gautier, a trope was the "interpolation of a liturgical text" or the insertion of a new, unofficial text into the official text of the liturgy.<sup>3</sup> Clemens Blume, while finding the word "interpolation" too restrictive, retained Gautier's literary bias when he extended the definition to include the embellishment of a

---

<sup>1</sup> Léon Gautier, *Histoire de la Poésie Liturgique au Moyen Age: Les Tropes*, Paris, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> For earlier definitions of the word "trope," see Gautier, *Histoire*, pp. 53ff., and C. Blume and H. M. Bannister, *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, Vol. 47, *Tropi Graduales...*, Leipzig, 1905, pp. 6ff. For important recent works on trope terminology, see especially Jacques Handschin, "Trope, Sequence, and Conductus," *New Oxford History of Music*, Vol. 2, Oxford, 1954, pp. 128ff.; the various studies of Heinrich Husmann mentioned throughout this book; Bruno Stäblein, "Die Unterlegung von Texten unter Melismen..." *Report of the Eighth Congress of the International Musicological Society, New York 1961*, Vol. I, pp. 12-29, and "Tropus," *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Vol. XIII, Kassel, 1966, cols. 797-826; and Richard Crocker, "The Troping Hypothesis," *Musical Quarterly*, LII (1966), 183-203.

<sup>3</sup> Gautier, *Histoire*, p. 1: a trope is "l'interpolation d'un texte liturgique...l'intercalation d'un texte nouveau et sans autorité dans un texte authentique et officiel."

liturgical text by means of introductions, insertions, and terminal additions.<sup>4</sup>

The music historian, on the other hand, has sometimes gone too far in attempting to redress the balance and has made unwarranted claims for musical supremacy in the tropes. Thus Handschin, for example, objected to Gautier's definition because "the trope is a musical phenomenon: it is, in fact, a melodic interpolation, which supplied the framework for a literary or poetic interpolation."<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, most modern definitions of the trope, whether made by literary or music historians, tend to expand the meaning of a precise and specific medieval term, "tropus," into a comprehensive, generic term encompassing various unrelated forms which would never have been called "tropes" in the early Middle Ages. This unfortunate tendency is seen, for example, in the statement of Handschin's that "the sequence is a subdivision of the trope: it is the trope connected with the Alleluia of the Mass.... Since the sequence became particularly prominent, the term 'trope,' which properly includes sequence, is also used, in a more restricted sense, to indicate any kind of trope which is not a sequence. So far the terminology is not in dispute."<sup>6</sup> Despite the qualification "not in dispute," this position seems untenable. No extant medieval troper *ever* identifies the sequence as a kind of trope. This is a modern assumption based on the misapplication of the precise medieval terminology.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Analecta Hymnica*, Vol. 47, p. 7: "Tropus ist die Interpolation oder die durch Interpolation, d.h. durch Einleitungen, Einschaltungen und Zusätze bewirkte Ausschmückung eines liturgischen Textes." Such definitions have not always been limited to literary historians. Thus, for example, the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* defines the trope as follows (p. 768): "In the Roman liturgy of the 9th to the 13th century a textual addition to the authorized texts as they were set down by St. Gregory (c. 600)."

<sup>5</sup> Handschin, "Trope, Sequence, and Conductus," p. 128.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

The reason for this confusion is easily found. If one isolates a single aspect of the historical trope as its essential quality—namely, its interpolation in an official liturgical chant—and makes this the basis of a definition, the term “trope” can then be applied to other forms of interpolation, even when they lack certain specific characteristics of the trope and are never so named in the Middle Ages. The speciousness of this simplification can readily be seen, and the damage it does in any attempt to arrive at an understanding of the trope as it was conceived by its medieval creators is obvious. To reach such an understanding we must avoid modern formulations of this sort and look at those compositions which are specifically identified as tropes in the earliest troper.

The manuscripts of the tenth and early eleventh centuries are strikingly consistent in their use of the term “tropus.” The pieces thus labeled fall into two basic groups: additions to the antiphonal Proper chants of the Mass—including the Offertories in this category—and additions to the chants of the Ordinary.

The first of these groups is by far the larger. It includes additions, either as introductions or as line-by-line interpolations, to the Introit antiphon, the Offertory, and the Communion of the major church feasts. In addition, the Introit psalm verses and doxology and the Offertory verses may be troped. One other type of trope may be included here, although strictly speaking it is connected with an addition to the Mass rather than with an official Mass chant. It is the trope “ad sequentiam”—a short preface trope which introduces the singing of the melismatic sequence after the Alleluia verse. The use of this type of trope was apparently not widespread, and examples of it are rare.<sup>7</sup>

The texts of all these Proper tropes refer to specific feasts. They relate the texts of the Mass chants which they embellish to their particular feast, and they are thus intended for use only on that day. The music as well as the text are newly composed additions to the official liturgical chant.

---

<sup>7</sup> See my discussion of the “sequence trope” in “The Tropi ad Sequentiam,” *Studies in Music History: Essays for Oliver Strunk*, Princeton, 1968, pp. 73-82.

The tropes of the Ordinary of the Mass form a much smaller group, although they were destined to outlive the more important tropes to the Proper. The primary categories in this group are additions to the Gloria, the Sanctus and Benedictus, and the Agnus Dei. There are, in addition, a few minor types of Ordinary tropes, examples of which are extremely rare. These include the so-called tropes "ad rogandum Episcopum," or short introductory tropes in which the bishop was invited to intone the Gloria, and tropes to the Kyrie and the *Ite missa est*.<sup>8</sup>

These pieces, like the Proper tropes, consist of newly composed music, but their texts do not necessarily refer to a specific feast. In fact, the majority of the texts, like those of the chants they embellish, are general in nature and thus can be used interchangeably for any feast desired.

The above division into tropes of the Proper and tropes of the Ordinary is not arbitrary.<sup>9</sup> The majority of troopers implicitly recognize it. The main series of tropes in the average troper consists of the tropes to the Proper chants of the Mass, arranged in the order of the church calendar and, under each feast, in the order of their occurrence in the Mass. The Ordinary tropes, on the other hand, like the Ordinary chants themselves, are kept in a separate series, arranged by category, at the end of the main series of Proper tropes.

The Proper tropes form a far more extensive and important group than those to the Ordinary in the first period of troping, in the tenth and early eleventh centuries. Of the Proper tropes themselves, the Introit tropes were the most extensively cultivated.

---

<sup>8</sup> Those pieces which are frequently called Kyrie "tropes" in modern reference works are in reality Kyrie prosulae. See below, p. 10. For a discussion of the St. Martial Gloria tropes, see Klaus Rönna, *Die Tropen zum Gloria in excelsis Deo*, Wiesbaden, 1967.

<sup>9</sup> However, to call these divisions Lesser and Greater Tropes respectively, as has been done by Gautier, *Histoire*, p. 75, and by W. H. Frere, *The Winchester Troper*, London, 1894, p. x, is not only historically unwarranted but actually misleading, for it fails to reflect their relative importance in the earliest period of troping.

Thus, for example, Paris 1240,<sup>10</sup> a St. Martial troper from the beginning of the tenth century and the earliest full troper extant, contains the following number of items in each category:

*Proper*: 80 tropes

Introit: 49 tropes

Offertory: 21 tropes

Communion: 5 tropes

Ad sequentiam: 5 tropes

*Ordinary*: 20 tropes

Gloria in excelsis: 13 tropes

Sanctus: 3 tropes

Agnus Dei: 3 tropes

Ad rogandum Episcopum: 1 trope

Thus, four-fifths of the manuscript's one hundred tropes are for the Proper of the Mass, and almost one-half of the total is made up of Introit tropes.

Another troper, Paris 1121, from the beginning of the eleventh century, represents the fully developed, classical form of the St. Martial troper. Its contents are as follows:

*Proper*: 207 tropes

Introit: 160 tropes

Offertory: 25 tropes

Communion: 18 tropes

Ad sequentiam: 4 tropes

*Ordinary*:<sup>11</sup> 37 tropes

Gloria in excelsis: 24 tropes

Sanctus: 7 tropes

Agnus Dei: 6 tropes

Ad rogandum Episcopum: none.

---

<sup>10</sup> Throughout this study, manuscripts from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris will be identified simply as "Paris" followed by the shelf number. Thus, the above reference should be understood to read: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds latin MS 1240. A MS from the series of "nouvelles acquisitions" will be listed simply as Paris n.a. 1871, and so forth.

Once again, the same general proportions are maintained. Over four-fifths of the total (85 percent) are Proper tropes, and the number of Introit tropes has increased to nearly two-thirds of the entire contents.

These tropes are the only ones that are specifically identified as such in the early manuscripts. What are their common characteristics, and what are the essential elements which distinguish them from the various other types of unofficial chant that were current in the tenth and eleventh centuries and are often preserved in the troopers themselves?

In the first place, the texts of the tropes, as we have noted, are additions to the official text of the liturgical chants that they embellish. These trope texts may be in poetry or in prose, they may be newly composed or drawn from the Bible, they may be general or related to the feast of the day, but in all cases they comment upon and amplify the official liturgical text.<sup>12</sup>

These additions occur in two forms. First, they may be preface tropes which introduce the official text. The following example is a trope to the Epiphany Offertory *Reges Tharsis* (Paris 1121, f. 10):

*Trope:* Regi Xpisto iam terris manifestato, quem adorant  
hodie Magi, psallite omnes cum propheta dicentes:

*Offertory:* Reges Tharsis et insule munera offerent; reges  
Arabum et Saba dona adducent: et adorabunt eum  
omnes reges terre, omnes gentes servient ei. (Ps. 71)

Historically, this is probably the original form of troping.<sup>13</sup> Certain categories of tropes are invariably found in the form of

<sup>11</sup> Paris 1121 lacks the Sanctus and Agnus tropes. The figures given here are from the very closely related manuscript Paris 1119. There is also a gap in the series of Proper tropes at the feast of St. Andrew, and if we included the Andrew tropes from Paris 1119, it would increase the above figure for Introit tropes to 163.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter IV, below, for a detailed discussion of the trope texts.

<sup>13</sup> See Heinrich Husmann, "Sinn und Wesen der Tropen," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, XVI (1959), 147, and below, p. 21.

prefaces, including the tropes “ad sequentiam” and “ad rogandum Episcopum.” The tropes to the Introit psalm verses and doxology are usually introductory, as indeed are the great majority of Offertory and Communion tropes.

The second form of troping consists of line-by-line interpolations, in which a trope introduces each phrase of the official chant. The following example is for the Introit *Etenim sederunt* of the feast of St. Stephen (Paris 1121, f. 5):

*Trope:* Hodie Stephanus martyr celos ascendit, quem propheta  
dudum intuens eius voce dicebat:

*Introit:* Etenim sederunt principes et adversum me loquebantur.

*Trope:* Insurrexerunt contra me Iudeorum populi inique,

*Introit:* Et iniqui persecuti sunt me.

*Trope:* Invidiose lapidibus oppresserunt me;

*Introit:* Adiuva me Dominus Deus meus.

*Trope:* Suscipe meum in pace spiritum,

*Introit:* Quia servus tuus exercebatur in tuis iustificationibus.  
(Ps. 118)

In only one case, that of the Sanctus tropes, is this general order of interpolation not followed. Here, the liturgical Preface itself serves as the introduction to the chant, and there is thus no place for an introductory trope. Instead, the tropes must follow the three statements of the word “Sanctus.” We can see this process clearly in the following Sanctus trope from Paris 1119 (f. 247v-248)—the official text is italicized here:

End of Preface: ... *sine fine dicentes:*

*Sanctus* Deus pater ingenitus,

*Sanctus* Filius eius unigenitus,

*Sanctus* Spiritus paraclitus ab utroque procedens, *Dominus*  
*Deus sabaoth* ..etc.

It should be noted that the Sanctus as a whole ends with the official text and not with a line of trope.

The second distinctive characteristic of the trope is its music, and it is this factor, perhaps more than any other, that is of decisive importance in differentiating the trope from other types of additions to the liturgy. Not only is the music of the trope newly composed, but it and the text are simultaneously conceived. In other words, a trope is not constructed by adding words to a preexisting melody, whether the latter is part of the chant, as in the case of the prosulae discussed below, or is itself an addition, as in the prosa or "sequence," as it is more commonly called today.<sup>14</sup> On the contrary, it is a true musical composition in which

---

<sup>14</sup> The almost general acceptance today of the word "sequence" is most unfortunate. "Sequentia" is found in what must have been its original sense in all of the French and English tropers and in some of the Italian. In these manuscripts, the term is used to refer to the extended melismatic addition which follows the Alleluia of the Mass. When this melody is supplied with a text, the term used for the text is "prosa," that is, the "prose" text added to a preexistent melody. French usage recognized the essentially literary origin of the form by retaining the term "prose" for the completed composition, even when the text ceased to be prosaic, as in the case of the poetic "proses" of Adam de Saint-Victor. In Germany, however, the solution was different, and the musical term "sequentia" was applied to the finished composition. It should be noted, however, that this development was relatively late, since Notker himself refers to his compositions only as "hymni." On this question, see Heinrich Husmann, "Sequenz und Prosa," *Annales Musicologiques*, II (1954), 61-91, and Richard Crocker, "The Repertory of Proses at Saint Martial de Limoges in the 10th Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XI (1958), 149-164.

The German usage is inconvenient, since the term "sequence" must be constantly qualified as either a "melismatic" sequence or a sequence "with text." Nor is it at all necessary to follow it, since we possess in the French terminology a precise and equally authentic usage. The French terminology will be used throughout this study, and should be understood as follows:

prosa = "sequence" in its current sense of melody with text.

sequentia = the extended melisma added after the Alleluia of the Mass. It is equivalent to the nonmedieval term "sequela," used, for example, by Dom Anselm Hughes in *Anglo-French Sequelae*, London, 1934.

prosula = a piece created by adding a text to a preexistent melisma in Alleluia and Offertory verses, the Kyrie, the Gloria trope line *Regnum tuum solidum*, etc.

new words are set to music, and the whole serves to embellish the liturgical chant. The stylistic ramifications of this compositional process are far-reaching. In order to demonstrate more clearly the musical distinctiveness of the trope, we may consider for a moment those other types of additions to the liturgy which have so frequently been mislabeled "trope": the *prosa* and the *prosula*.

Both the *prosa* and the *prosula* are basically literary in their conception. The *prosa* is created by adding a text to the pre-existent melismatic sequentia which follows the Alleluia. The less familiar *prosula* makes use of the same additive process, but here the scope is smaller, and the source of the original melisma is varied. The distinctive characteristics of these compositions can perhaps be seen most clearly in the *prosula*.

In the tropers, the term "*prosula*" refers to the following types of additions:<sup>15</sup>

1. Texts added to the melismas of responsorial chants of the Mass, especially the melismas of Alleluia and Offertory verses, but also on occasion those of Graduals and Tracts. Example 1<sup>16</sup> gives the Alleluia *Mirabilis Dominus* with its two *prosulae*, *Psallat unus* for the Alleluia and *Mirabilis atque* for the verse. In order to show clearly the relationship between the two forms, the official chant is given in the first line with the *prosulae* immediately beneath. Example 2 is the *prosula* *Invocavi te altissime* sung to the

---

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that Paris 1118, alone among the St. Martial tropers, uses the term "*tropus*" indiscriminately for both tropes and *prosulae* as here defined. This confusion may have resulted from the inclusion of a certain number of *prosulae* along with the Ordinary chants which they accompany in the main sequence of Proper tropes—a very unusual practice in Aquitanian manuscripts.

<sup>16</sup> This and the following examples will be found in the section of transcriptions, on p. 263ff.

final melisma "invocavi te" of the Offertory verse *Respice in me* for the Offertory *Ad te Domine*.<sup>17</sup>

2. The so-called Kyrie "tropes," in which texts are added to the melismas of the Kyrie.<sup>18</sup> Example 3 is the prosula *Tibi Xpiste supplices*, presented as it occurs in Paris 1119, with each line of the prosula followed by the melismatic Kyrie line.

3. Textual additions to the Osanna melisma of the Sanctus. Example 4 is the prosula *Osanna dulcis est*, set to the second Osanna melisma of a Sanctus melody no longer to be found in modern chant books. The melismatic version is given below the prosula.<sup>19</sup>

4. Texts added to the melisma of the Gloria trope line "Regnum tuum solidum...." Example 5 gives first the trope line as found in the Gloria trope *Laus honor Xpiste* in Paris 1084, f. 115v. This is followed by the Regnum prosula *Per te Xpiste*, transcribed from Paris 1119, f. 134.<sup>20</sup>

5. Textual additions to the melisma "Fabrice mundi" of the Christmas Respond *Descendit*. This form, however, was of relatively limited significance at St. Martial.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The Offertory verse itself may be found in Paris 903, ff. lv-2, reproduced in facsimile as Vol. XIII of the *Paléographie Musicale*, Tournai, 1925. It is also found with some variants in *Offertoriale sive Versus Offertoriosum*, ed. C. Ott, Paris, 1935, p. 6.



<sup>18</sup> Not to be confused with the true Kyrie tropes mentioned on p. 4.


<sup>19</sup> See J. Smits van Waesberghe, "Die Imitation der Sequenztechnik in den Hosanna-Prosulen," in *Festschrift Karl Gustav Fellerer*, Regensburg, 1962, pp. 485-490.

<sup>20</sup> See the discussion of the Regnum prosula by Klaus Rönna, "Regnum tuum solidum," *Festschrift Bruno Stäblein*, Kassel, 1967, pp. 195-205.

<sup>21</sup> Among the St. Martial manuscripts, collections of *Fabrice* prosulae are found only in Paris 1118, ff. 117-119; Paris 1084, ff. 7-9; and the proser Paris 1338, ff. 85v-86v—that is, in precisely those manuscripts that do not originate at St. Martial itself. This type of prosula is also found at St. Gall, Nevers, etc. See Gautier, *Histoire*, p. 166, note 1, sec. xvii.

Certain distinctive characteristics stand out clearly in a study of these examples. In the first place, the prosulae are always composed of a text added to a preexistent melisma, whether the latter is a melisma of the official chant or is itself an addition, as in the *Regnum prosulae*. The prosulae of the Proper chants of the Mass, as, for example, the Offertory verse prosula *Invocavi te* (Example 2), offer striking evidence of this principle, since here the priority of the version without added text can readily be determined in the countless official chant books of the period. But there can be little doubt that the principle is also at work in the other prosulae as well. Not only is the general style of all the prosulae identical, whatever the source of their original melismas, but there is also strong notational evidence in support of this assumption.

Thus, for example, the Kyrie prosula *Tibi Xpiste supplices* (Example 3), as it is preserved in Paris 1120, makes use of a curious and rare notational practice which might be termed a "split oriscus." That is to say, at each place in the Kyrie melisma where the normal Aquitainian oriscus is used (-  =  at the unison), the prosula melody in its syllabic setting represents the first of these unison notes with a normal punctum on the first syllable and the second with an isolated oriscus sign on the second syllable. This isolated oriscus is used, for example, on the syllable "-ces" of "supplices" and on the "dig-" of "digneris" in the first line. In other words, a neumatic sign, which is meaningful only as a component element of a larger group, is here made to function as a simple punctum. This can only mean that the prosula writer, in setting his text, was preserving the notational pattern of a preexistent melisma, even though this pattern was no longer pertinent to his own work.<sup>22</sup> Thus, it is difficult

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Ferretti's discussion of the oriscus in the introduction to *Paléographie Musicale*, XIII, 177ff., where he notes the existence of the "oriscus syllabique" but does not cite this use of it. It is interesting to note that the oriscus used in Paris 1120 is the typical French rather than Aquitainian form (  ). Although the French oriscus is not unknown in the earlier Aquitainian notation, its appearance here in this late-tenth-century troper strongly suggests that the Kyrie prosula in question, and perhaps even the form itself, came to St. Martial from

to accept the suggestion<sup>23</sup> that these Kyrie interpolations were originally tropes whose text and music were composed together and that the melismatic Kyries of the modern chant books represent troped Kyries later stripped of their texts. Even though the Kyrie melodies and the prosula texts added to them were doubtless composed at about the same time, the typical additive process of the prosula was strictly followed. In the few true Kyrie tropes that do exist, the melody of the trope is distinct from that of the Kyrie it embellishes.<sup>24</sup>

The second characteristic of these prosulae is that their texts, like those of the early prosae, are in prose; hence their name "prosula," the diminutive of "prosa."<sup>25</sup> This is the inevitable outgrowth of the process of adding texts to an existing melody, since the free melodic construction of the melisma makes the addition of a metrical text impossible.

Practically the only poetic device which occurs in the prosulae is the occasional use of assonance on the vowel sound of the original melisma.<sup>26</sup> We may note, for example, the assonance on the final *a* of "Osanna" in *Osanna dulcis est* (Example 4) and on the *e* of "te" in *Invocavi te altissime* (Example 2). This insistence by the prosula writer on the vowel sound of the origi-

---

the north at a comparatively late date. This possibility is strengthened when we recall that no Kyrie prosulae are found in the original section of the earliest St. Martial troper, Paris 1240.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, W. Apel, *Gregorian Chant*, Bloomington, 1958, p. 432.

<sup>24</sup> Parallel to the use of the oriscus discussed above is the "split pes" on "plebs" (l.4) in the version of this Kyrie prosula contained in Paris 1120. But cf. *Paléographie Musicale*, XIII, p. 166 of Introduction.

<sup>25</sup> Compare the alternate name "verba" found, for example, in the Novalesa troper at Oxford (Douce 222). This, too, implies the notion of adding "words" to an existing melody.

<sup>26</sup> There is occasionally an attempt to introduce rudimentary rhyme and even rhythm when the musical scheme allows, but this obviously happens very irregularly. Cf., for example, "suscipe cum agmina/angelorum cantica" in Example 4.

nal melisma in his own text argues strongly in itself for the priority of the melody.

Another example, more complicated than simple assonance but again striving for the preservation of the sounds of the original melisma, is found in the opening of the Alleluia prosula *Psallat unus spiritus* (Example 1). Here both vowels and consonants are retained to duplicate the sounds of "Alleluia":

Al-le-lu- - - - -ia  
Psal-lat u-nus spiritus et u-na

The relation of the prosula text to the text that it embellishes is necessarily determined by the location of the melisma in the original chant. Normally, the prosula text either follows the original text, as in the Offertory verse, Alleluia, and Osanna prosulae, or is interpolated within it, as in the Regnum and Alleluia verse prosulae. Since a melisma does not precede a chant, prosulae are rarely found functioning, like the tropes, as introductory texts. It is true that the K ryie prosulae, which set to words the entire melody of the Kyrie, precede the melismatic repetition of the Kyrie. But they could just as easily follow the melismatic version, as is indeed the case with the similar Alleluia prosulae.

The third striking characteristic of the prosulae is their musical style. This style is almost exclusively syllabic, one syllable of new text being supplied for each note of the original melisma. Except for a rare use of a group of two or three notes on a given syllable of the prosula text, as, for example, on "cunctipotes" in the first line of the Kyrie prosula *Tibi Xpiste supplices* (Example 3), on "cru-ce" in the second line of the Regnum prosula *Per te Xpiste* (Example 5), and so forth, the only use of neumatic writing occurs where part of the text of the original chant is incorporated into the prosula with its original setting, as, for example, at "Dominus noster" in the Alleluia verse prosula *Mirabilis atque laudabilis* (Example 1), or where a new text is supplied for a section of the text of the original chant, as, for example, "Tibi Xpiste" for "Kyrie" (Example 3) and "Psallat" for "Alleluia" (Example 1).

This strictly maintained syllabic style should not suggest that the creators of the prosulae were simply following a mechanical process of composition by counting up the number of notes in the melisma and arbitrarily writing a text with the requisite number of syllables. The care with which the assonance was placed at the end of melodic phrases or neumatic groups and the skillful incorporation of the original text into the prosula text clearly demonstrate a high degree of literary and musical sensitivity on the part of the creator. The fact remains, however, that the appropriate musical style for the prosulae was considered to be syllabic, and this style is consistently maintained throughout the prosula repertory.

Precisely those characteristics of the prosula which have been outlined above are to be found again in the early prosae. The prosae are composed of texts added to a preexistent melody, in this case the melismatic sequentia following the Alleluia. Their texts are in prose and frequently make use of assonance on the final *a* of "Alleluia." They are not introductory pieces, but function as an extended coda to the Alleluia. Their musical style is strictly syllabic. Even the double versicle construction of the prosa occurs in a limited way in the Regnum prosulae.

This identity of concept is clearly seen in the occasional use in the tropers of the term "prosa" for both prosae and prosulae, notably in the oldest extant troper, Paris 1240, where a collection of the two types of pieces is labeled "Congregatio Prosarum" (f. 43v). Thus, the term "prosula" can be understood simply as a "small prosa," that is, a piece of smaller dimensions than the prosa proper. This relationship is evident when we compare an early prosa with an Alleluia prosula like *Psallat unus spiritus* (Example 1), which might almost be a prosa in miniature.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Note, however, that despite the similarity in technique, the Alleluia prosula is distinguished from the prosa by its position before the Alleluia verse rather than after, and by being based on the official Alleluia melisma rather than on the added sequentia.

If we keep these characteristics of the *prosa* and *prosula* firmly in mind, we cannot fail to recognize the essential qualities of the genuine, historic trope.

Admittedly, both the trope on the one hand and the *prosa* and *prosula* on the other represent aspects of the same general practice of embellishing the liturgy with unofficial additions and interpolations, a practice which flourished from the ninth century on. Admittedly, too, both forms, although following different compositional procedures, result in the addition to the official liturgical text of a newly composed text amplifying and commenting upon it—a fact which has on occasion blinded literary historians to the basic musical distinctions between the trope and the *prosula*.

But beyond these general similarities, the two forms differ strikingly in their essential character. Thus, while the *prosa* and *prosula* are created by adding a text to an existing melisma, the trope is a true musical composition, adding both text and music to the official chant. As a result, the *prosa* and *prosula* are almost invariably in prose, while the text of the trope, although it may be in prose, can be, and frequently is, in verse. Furthermore, we often find that many different *prosula* or *prosa* texts are adapted to a single melisma, whereas a given trope text and its melody form a unique combination. Finally, the invariable syllabic style of the *prosa* and *prosula* is not found in the tropes, which are frequently neumatic in style and even, on occasion, melismatic, reflecting the style of the chants that they embellish.



## CHAPTER II

### THE HISTORICAL POSITION OF THE TROPE

The trope as we have described it belongs to a definitely circumscribed period of music history. Contrary to the impression given by a work like Gautier's, which considers various derived forms as if they were tropes, thereby extending the history of the trope well into the polyphonic period of Gothic music, the trope in its classical form had a relatively short life, from the ninth century to the middle of the eleventh century, although it flourished at a number of centers throughout western Europe during that period.

Gautier's division of the history of liturgical interpolation into two periods is, however, a useful one, if we recognize the truly distinctive characteristics of these periods.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Gautier's emphasis on the predominance of rhyme in the second period, that is, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is a valid stylistic observation. But the essential distinction, it seems to me, is purely formal. In a word, the first period of troping is characterized by the overwhelming preponderance of tropes to the Proper of the Mass, whereas after the middle of the eleventh century, that is, in Gautier's second period, these Proper tropes almost completely disappear, and even the tropes to the Ordinary are reduced to a relatively insignificant number. To put it in another way, the second period of "troping," if we may call it that, is characterized by the almost complete absence of tropes in the original, classical form described in the previous chapter. Instead, we find a host of related forms, such as the *Benedicamus Domino* "tropes," connected primarily with the Office rather than the Mass, and deriving stylistically from the syllabic manner of the prosula. Although the syllabic style remains, the compositional process ceases to be additive, and we now have a preponderance of texts in verse.

---

<sup>1</sup> Gautier, *Histoire*, pp. 147ff.

These forms are not without considerable interest, particularly in their relationship to the rise of Latin and vernacular poetry and to such musical forms of the polyphonic period as the conductus. But they have already moved far from the original concept of troping, which is our primary concern here.

In dealing with the question of the origins of troping, we are faced at the outset with a difficulty common to the study of all medieval chant, namely, that the manuscripts which preserve this repertory come at a date well after the period of its creation and early development. Thus, the earliest troper that we possess, the St. Martial troper Paris 1240, dating from the early decades of the tenth century, already contains a full repertory of tropes for the major church feasts, and the pieces have already achieved the form which will be standard for all subsequent French tropers. We can only assume that a considerable amount of troping activity must have preceded this manuscript. But beyond this our documentary evidence will not allow us to go, and any more precise answer to the question of the origin of troping must be based largely on conjecture.

A few hints, however, may suggest a possible setting and occasion for the creation of this new musical form. The occurrence of trope texts in classical hexameters in even the oldest tropers suggests a possible connection with the circle of poets at the Carolingian court, an impression which is perhaps strengthened by the appearance in Paris 1240 of the Palm Sunday processional hymn *Gloria laus et honor* written by one of the greatest of these Carolingian poets, Theodulf of Orleans (ca. 760-821).<sup>2</sup>

Another possibility concerns the work of St. Benedict of Aniane (ca. 750-821). The ceremonial innovations and developments at his monastery near Montpellier in the south of France

---

<sup>2</sup>For the work of Theodulf and the other Carolingian court poets, see F. J. E. Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry*, 2nd edn., Oxford, 1953, pp. 154ff.