

Psallendae Mariae: Marian Processional Chants of the Ambrosian Rite

by

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ABSTRACT

This interdisciplinary study examines a collection of chants intrinsically connected to the larger body of Western Chant: the *psallendae*. These chants of the Ambrosian rite, the form of Christian worship proper to the archdiocese of Milan, were sung during religious processions. With over 700 *psallendae* assigned to the Church calendar, this study examines only those assigned to feast days of the Virgin Mary, and in doing so, reveals a rich history of devotion to her.

The primary sources examined are thirteenth-century manuscripts and medieval liturgical manuals. The processional chants are subjected to a thorough literary and musical analysis. Rooted in François-Auguste Gevaert's thematic theory, and using tools of reticular and stemmatic analysis, the *psallendae* are grouped according to melodic profile. Each group is then reduced to a core melodic theme, which, when juxtaposed with the ancient practice of religious processions, makes a compelling argument for the *psallendae* as among the oldest Christian chants.

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Introduction

This study examines a collection of chants that are intrinsically connected to the larger body of Western Chant, namely, the Ambrosian *psallendae*. These chants are found in the antiphoners of the Ambrosian rite, the form of Christian worship proper to the archdiocese of Milan. From the context in which they appear in Ambrosian antiphoners and other liturgical books, it can be stated with confidence that the *psallendae* were sung during religious processions. Thus they form a special category of chant: one that is performed outside of the physical building of the church (with a few exceptions), and yet are not simply devotional pieces. Although the number of *psallendae* assigned to the Church calendar year exceeds seven hundred, this study is limited to the *psallendae* assigned to Marian feast days (i.e., the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Annunciation, the Assumption, and a number of other minor feast days that are relevant to this study).

The primary methodology employed herein comes from Belgian musicologist and composer François-Auguste Gevaert.¹ Using sources from the ninth to the eleventh century, Gevaert assembled a catalogue of melodic themes which he derived from the corpus of Roman chant. Amazingly, he reduced an entire repertory to just 47 themes, classifying them according to final and termination formula.

Adopting Gevaert's theory of oral transmission of melodic themes, this study examines a selection of Ambrosian processional antiphons in order to determine whether or not melodic concordances exist between individual processional chants and other Office antiphons. Stemmatic analysis is used to conduct a comparison of a pair or group of chants that exhibit similarities in melodic profile. Following the initial identification of these groups of chants, I used this method of analysis to stack the chants vertically and align the

¹ François-Auguste Gevaert, *La Mélodie Antique dans le Chant de l'Église Latine* (Gand: A. Hoste, 1895).

melodies in order to highlight any differences. If a chant of the group contained a few extra notes to account for an extra word, for example, but these notes did not alter the melody significantly, they were described as 'soft' differences. If however, one of the chants contained a long, melodically divergent section, it was labelled as a 'hard' difference. Finally, once the differences between individual chants were identified (both soft and hard), it was possible to provide a reduction of the entire melodic group. This reduction, or more appropriately, 'stem' may be seen as the core melody in which the others are rooted.

If indeed it appears that the *psallendae* are rooted in a limited number of core, melodic themes, they could represent some of the oldest Christian chants conceivable. The earliest antiphoners of Ambrosian chant date from the relatively late period of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The late notation of the Ambrosian Chant repertory should not be interpreted as contradictory evidence to the early dating of Ambrosian chant, as the chants notated show a remarkable consistency among various sources, indicating that a long, oral tradition of chant transmission had been in place for centuries. When the first antiphoners were assembled, it was a matter of committing to parchment the melodies that existed in the memories and liturgical life of the Milanese Christians for centuries before. To say that entire repertory of Ambrosian chant was composed in the twelfth or thirteenth century would show ignorance of the subtleties posed by a system rich in melodic formula and variation. It is through internal, not external, evidence that we propose these chants to be among the earliest to contribute to the Church's liturgy. The work already completed by Paul Merkley and Terence Bailey on Ambrosian Office Antiphons² presents a compelling argument for the

² Terence Bailey and Paul Merkley, *The Melodic Tradition of the Ambrosian Office Antiphons* (Ottawa: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1990).

applicability of Gevaert's theory. Following their example, this study proposes to apply the same method to a selection of chants unique to the Ambrosian repertory: the *psallendae*.

Milan holds an important place in the history of the Roman Empire, particularly during the fourth century. During this period Mediolanum (modern day Milan) was in fact the capital of the Western Empire. From roughly 286 AD under the reign of Maximian until 402 AD under the reign of Theodosius, at which point the Western capital was moved to Ravenna, Mediolanum prospered and achieved prominence in political, liturgical, and musical matters. The famous Edicts of Milan (313 AD) in which Constantine granted religious freedom to Christians enabled them to practice their religion in the public sphere, free from the persecution of the former centuries. But in doing so, and in converting to the religion himself, Constantine established Christianity as the official religion of the Empire; a move that may have been “part of a divine intervention in human affairs” or perhaps he “[sought] to bolster the tottering Empire with a dynamic moral force.”³ At any rate, Milan became an important centre in which the relatively new religion flourished publicly. The Ambrosian Mass and Office are descendants of the ancient Gallican liturgy, as opposed to the Roman liturgy. According to liturgical scholar Joseph Jungmann:

During the fourth century, Milan was the residence of the Emperors. In ecclesiastical affairs Milan's influence later extended as far as Spain. Accordingly, if we suppose that one of Milan's bishops who came from the Orient—like the Cappadocian Auxentius (355-374)—had established this liturgical type, then we can explain many of the coincidences which are features of the Gallican liturgies and distinguish them from the Roman.⁴

Specific items of the Mass attest to this connection, such as the twelvefold Kyrie, the post Evangelium (a Proper chant sung after the Gospel), and the Confractorium (a Proper chant

³ Denys Hay, *The Medieval Centuries* (London: Methuen & Co., 1964), 9.

⁴ Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1959), 35.

sung during the breaking of the host), among others. Unlike other Mass Propers, these particular items have no equivalents in the Roman Rite. Several other liturgical traditions specific to the archdiocese of Milan imbue the Ambrosian rite with a rich sense of history. The customs and rituals developed in an area of such prominence, in conjunction with the great figure of St. Ambrose, were undoubtedly influential to neighbouring communities, and even as far as Benevento in southern Italy. Through accessing the chants and melodic themes of the Ambrosian rite, we come into contact with some of the oldest extant Christian chants of the Church.

Central to the understanding of the Ambrosian liturgy is its practice of using two primary churches for the same community; one for the winter part of the liturgical year (from the feast of St Martin on November 11 until Holy Saturday) and one for the summer part. This practice has its origins in the ancient division of the Christian Church in the third and fourth centuries into an Arian sect, who believed that Christ possessed a human nature solely, and the Orthodox sect, who held that Christ possessed two natures: one divine and one human. Failing to reach an agreement, both sects erected their respective churches.

But during this period when Milan experienced renewed prominence as capital of the Western Empire, the dispute between the two sects had to be settled. Such violent divisions within the capital city may have been interpreted as a weakness of the Empire itself. A successful Empire was built through unity, after all, not through division. The Council of Nicea condemned Arianism in 325 AD, and in 374 St Ambrose was elected bishop of Milan. Details of St Ambrose's life are provided by his biographer, Paulus Diaconus.

Following the disintegration of Arianism both in Milan and elsewhere, the major Arian churches became places of worship for the Orthodox Christian community. The early Christians took full advantage of the situation, appointing one church to be used during the

summer and the other to be used during the winter. It is not surprising therefore that this duality is reflected in the liturgical books of the Ambrosian rite, including the antiphoners, in which the liturgical year is consistently divided into the *pars aestiva* (summer part) and the *pars hiemalis* (winter part).

With two churches at their disposal, a large repertory of processional chants grew and became a standard part of Milanese Christians' worship. The chants sung during the religious processions of the Ambrosian rite are called *psallendae*. They occupy a unique place in the liturgy, assigned specifically for use during processions, but also in many cases re-assigned for use in the Office or Mass. Chapter 3 addresses the classification of the *psallendae* in a more detailed manner.

Unlike other, less fortunate chant dialects, the repertory of Ambrosian chant survived the Carolingian reforms of the eighth and ninth centuries. This was in a large part thanks to a firmly established liturgical tradition and the authoritative figure of St. Ambrose (bishop of Milan from 374-397 AD). It was a battle not easily won, however. A poem-treatise attributed to Paulus Diaconus in MS Montecassino, Abbazia, Q 318 reveals the bitterness felt by many of the Gregorian reforms. An excerpt reads,

Immobilis vir romuleo pro carmine mansit. Alter e contra ecce precando ruit.
(Sententia): Quod autem dicitur 'Alter et e contra ecce precando ruit' non est ita intellegendum, ut cantus ambrosianus abominandus sit. Set annuente Deo, romanus cantus est preferendus pro brevitae et fastidio plebis.⁵

[The Roman singer remained standing and singing. Behold to the contrary, the other, in praying, falls. (The judgement): Therefore it was said, 'Behold to the contrary, the other, in praying, falls.' It is not to be understood in such a way, that the Ambrosian chant is to be despised. But by God's favour, the Roman chant is to be preferred for brevity and the short attention span of the people.]⁶

⁵ Paulus Diaconus in Paul Merkley, *Italian Tonaries* (Ottawa: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1988), 127.

⁶ Translation in Thomas Forrest Kelly, *The Beneventan Chant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 24.

In the final phrase we get a sense of the author's true feelings on the matter. The Roman chant is preferred for its simplicity—and for its accessibility to 'simple' minds.

Likewise, an anonymous treatise from the fifteenth century (Salzburg, St. Peter's Abbey, a.VI.44, ff. 1r-19v.) describes the survival of Ambrosian chant. As per the wishes of Charlemagne and Pope Hadrian, Gregorian chant was to be declared the official chant of the Church. There was hesitation in striking out Ambrosian chant, however, because of its connection to St. Ambrose. To solve the problem, a council was assembled and put two missals on an altar, one containing Gregorian chant and the other containing Ambrosian chant. They decided to let God Himself choose. Miraculously, both missals were opened and thus Ambrosian chant was to be preserved in the archdiocese of Milan.

Whether or not this episode actually took place is of lesser significance than what it represents: that Ambrosian chant was preserved during a time when all other chant dialects were suppressed, and this speaks volumes to the importance of the office of the bishop of Milan. This office was made famous by St. Ambrose, who has been connected with the musical repertory of the Milanese rite from the fourth century, and despite the fact that it is now commonly believed that he was responsible for only a handful of hymns, the repertory still bears his name. Ambrosian chant is authoritative in the same way that the homilies and letters of the early Church Fathers, such as St. Ambrose, are.

The present study examines a selection of Ambrosian chants, and in doing so, establishes the presence or absence of core, melodic themes. The first chapter is an overview of the source materials: the Ambrosian antiphoners that contain chants for the Office and Mass. The second and third chapters address the history and nature of religious processions, Marian devotion and the *psallendae*. The final two chapters consist of an in-depth musical

analysis of the *psallendae*, including categorization into melodic families and comparison with Office antiphons.

Chapter 1: Source Materials

The primary source materials used in this study are Milanese antiphoners dating from approximately the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. These are the earliest extant complete (or near-complete) sources of Ambrosian chant with Guidonian notation. The Ambrosian antiphoners contain chants for the Mass and Office (*sanctorale* and *temporale*) in the order they appear in the liturgical year. Although the manuscripts themselves have been dated no earlier than the twelfth century, an extensive oral tradition certainly existed through which the chants of the Office and Mass were preserved and passed down from generation to generation for centuries before the first notated attempts were made.

The following manuscript descriptions were made possible by the extensive paleographical study by Michel Huglo⁷ and by my own personal research conducted at the archive of San Stefano in Vimercate, Italy.⁸ A thorough study of the original source material provides critical information about the assembly and use of the manuscript editions. By examining the page preparation (i.e., foliation, page pricking, ruling, etc.), we are able to determine whether the manuscript was originally assembled as an integral document or whether it was made up of multiple parts. The size of the manuscript is also an important factor in determining its use. Smaller manuscripts tended to have been used by individuals (e.g., personal copies of popular devotions), whereas larger manuscripts were generally assembled for use by a group or community. The question of size was important for this study because of the nature of these processional chants.⁹ If the sources were large, heavy books, it is unlikely that the singers would have carried them in procession with them. But if

⁷ Michel Huglo, *Fonti e Paleografia del Canto Ambrosiano* (Milano: Rivista Ambrosius, 1956).

⁸ This opportunity was made possible thanks to Paul Merkley, the Pontifical Ambrosian Institute of Sacred Music and Carlo Mauri of Vimercate.

⁹ This study began with the use of microfilm images only, which do not give a sense of the original size of the document. Thanks to generous funding from the University of Ottawa, this question and others were addressed through onsite research in Italy in May 2011.

they were small, portable books, it may have been possible to carry them and sing at the same time. In the former case, as it would have been impracticable to carry the books, singers may have memorized all of the required chants ahead of time, using the large antiphoner only as a reference and memory aid. Additionally, paleographic research can provide clues into a manuscript's dating, which will be discussed later in the case of the antiphoner from Bedero.

Some deviations from standard spellings of Latin words are present in each of the sources and are worth noting: 'ae' vs. 'e' in *seculorum*, *que*, and *celi*; the occasional use of letter 'H' in *hortus* and *Christus*; the interchangeability of the letter 'Y' with 'I' as in *Kirie*; and the lack of distinction between 'U' and 'V'. Capital letters and punctuation are not used, except for at the beginning of a new chant or text. Roman numeral four is written out as 'iiii', not 'iv'. This last point becomes an issue when several *psallendae* are assigned to a particular feast day and listed in order by numeral. It is not uncommon for scribes to make labeling errors in the numbering of these lists of chants, especially in numbers that appear similar such as xxxiiii and xxxviii. This happens in several places in the Vimercate sources.

In all of the manuscript editions employed in this study, there are a number of examples of marginalia. Long index fingers point the way from one chant, or one part of a chant, to another.

Two sets of antiphoners from the city of Vimercate were integral in this study, namely, Vimercate A and C ("Vim A", "Vim C"), and Vimercate B and D ("Vim B", "Vim D"). The latter set is an inexact copy of the former, and both sets were assembled during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the same village in which they are currently housed. An inscription inside the front cover of Vim C indicates that they were officially presented on the feast of St. Stephen (September 6) in 1272, at the consecration of the local church

bearing his name. Similarly, a guard-leaf in Vim D (folio 226) includes details about the consecration of an altar for the same event, suggesting that both sets of antiphoners may have been presented together on the feast of St Stephen.¹⁰

Vimercate A, the winter antiphoner or *pars hiemalis*, contains chants and prayers from the feast of St. Martin to Holy Saturday, inclusive. It is remarkably well preserved in the library of San Stefano, and was evidently assembled with great care and attention to detail. The manuscript consists of regular quinternions, with a few instances of folios having been cut out and others having been re-pasted or restored at a later date (e.g., f18). The folio size is 340 mm x 230 mm, likely reduced from its original size during the seventeenth-century rebinding process. The modern binding consists of leather stretched over wooden boards, with five leather binding thongs fastened to secure the spine of the manuscript and two strap-and-pin mechanisms in place to protect and keep the manuscript closed. Attached to the front cover are five circular, raised metal bosses, which conceal and protect the binding.

Each folio contains nine staves. In each staff, the *do* line is outlined in yellow ink and the *fa* line in red ink. In addition to these coloured inks, black ink is used for text underlay, the remainder of the four-line staff, and for diastematic neumes. Blue or red ink is used occasionally in miniatures and frequently for decorated initials. Rubrics are written with red ink, as is customary. The writing surface itself measures 237 mm x 170 mm, leaving a considerable amount of empty space at the bottom of each folio. Each grid line measures 7 mm. The relatively small size of the text and notation do not imply use by an entire group, but rather, by an individual.

¹⁰ Terence Bailey and Paul Merkley, *The Melodic Tradition of the Ambrosian Office-Antiphons*, xiii.

The summer antiphoner or *pars aestiva* from the same set (Vim C) contains chants and prayers from Easter Sunday to Pentecost, ending with the Common of Saints and the Office of the Dead. An inscription inside the front cover recounts how the manuscript was lost in 1885, found in 1958, and restored to the library San Stefano in 1961. Like Vim A, it contains regular quinternions and has been rebound in the seventeenth century in the same manner. Evidence of the rebinding process is found on folio 91, where the page (including some text) is cut off. The first folio contains the following message:

Incipit antiphonarius est sed in memoriam S. Ambrosii R/ ad fontes

[The beginning of this antiphony is in memory of St. Ambrose R/ to the fountains]¹¹

Though similar in size and form to its winter partner, Vim C is considerably more illuminated. In addition to the regular inks for the text underlay, staff lines, rubrics, and minor initials, it contains green, brown, and orange ink used for historiated initials and illustrations throughout the manuscript. The writing surface is slightly smaller than Vim A, measuring 238 mm x 168 mm, and the grid ruling is once again 7 mm. Extensions of the four-line staff are drawn in red ink and no instances of green B-flat lines were found in either antiphoner. Small stains are found throughout the manuscript, with mirror images on neighbouring folios. The size and shape of the stains suggests candle wax as a viable possibility, indicating performance at night or in a procession.

In addition to the Vimercate manuscripts from the church of San Stefano, sources from Brezzo di Bedero and the Biblioteca Ambrosiana were examined. The Bedero

¹¹ *Ad fontes* translates literally to ‘to the fountains’ and is derived from Psalm 42 (Like as the hart is drawn *to the fountains* so longeth my soul after thee). The connection to scripture is made explicit through the R/ that precedes the phrase. The expression *ad fontes* may be translated as “to the sources” in this context. It is likely that the Solesmes monk who wrote it in 1851 was deliberately creating a parallel between his work of chant re-discovery and the re-discovery of the importance of original source materials that took place in the time of Renaissance Humanism.

manuscript (“Bedero”) originates in the collegiate church of San Vittore in Brezzo di Bedero in the province of Varese. The church contains four antiphoners dating from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, labeled Codex A, B, C, and D, respectively.¹² Codex B, a summer antiphoner, has been dated by Huglo to the second half of the twelfth century and contains 165 folios in relatively good condition.¹³ The first page contains the following inscription:

Antifonario estivo corale del sec. XII ad uso della chiesa collegiale plebana di S. Vittore in Bedero di Valle Travaglia. Sono fogli 165. Manca il resto. 1851 agosto.

[Summer choral antiphoner from the twelfth century made for use by the collegiate church of St Victor in Bedero of Valle Travaglia. There are 165 pages. The rest is missing. August 1851.]

As the inscription states, several pages are missing and others contain lacunae. The notation is diastematic, consisting of neumes written above a text with a yellow line outlining *do* and a red line for *fa*. Huglo outlines the probable order of events that took place in assembling Bedero Codex B, from ruling the page, to inserting rubrications, to adding texts and neumes.¹⁴ Interestingly, it appears that the neumes were written before the *do* and *fa* lines were inserted. Slanted *do* and *fa* lines or neumes that seem to run off the rails, as it were, are examples of internal evidence showing that the neumes were written first without reference lines to indicate specific pitches. This strengthens the notion that an oral tradition was in place long before the composition of chants according to a specific mode or tonality. It is likely that the scribes simply wrote down the melodies as they remembered them (or were instructed to do so by a *magister*) and only afterwards superimposed an early form of the staff on the melodies. Of this manuscript source, Huglo states:

¹² Microfilm images of Codex B alone were employed, as it is the oldest of the Bedero antiphonaries and contains the greatest number of chants relevant to the present study. The purpose of this study was to survey a selection of chants in the four earliest sources. While a study of melodic variations in the four Bedero antiphonaries may have been interesting, it was not deemed desirable or directly relevant.

¹³ Huglo, *Fonti e Paleographia del Canto Ambrosiano*, 45.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 46.

Dom Sunol ha rilevato in questo antifonario alcuni errori di chiave, scrivendo: “In alcune pagine pero, bisogna far attenzione alla posizione della linea gialla o rossa: esse non sempre ci sembrano anteriori o contemporanee alla scrittura dei neumi. Si puo forse anche dire che non era lo stesso amanuense che segnava le linee e le note: per questo non sempre corrispondono le righe al vero valore diastematico proprio alla melodia”.¹⁵

[Dom Sunol found some key errors in this antiphoner, and wrote: “In some pages however, it is necessary to pay attention to the position of the yellow and red lines: they do not seem to always be in front of or contemporaneous with the writing of the neumes. If I may also say that perhaps it was not the same scribe who wrote the line and the note: for these rulings do not always correspond to the true diastematic merit proper to the melodies.”]

The apparent errors pointed out by Solesmes monk and scholar Dom Sunol are of great interest when one considers that the chant repertory in question existed for several hundred years as an oral tradition. That Bedero B is the oldest extant source adds further intrigue. The evidence suggests that the melodies were written first and the staff lines were inserted on top of them, possibly by a second hand, as Sunol notes. Huglo’s dating of the manuscript to the second half of the twelfth century may be somewhat late, considering that Guido of Arezzo’s four line staff was in widespread use by that point. Roughly equivalent manuscripts containing Gregorian chant date as far back as the ninth century in the case of chironomic notation and the eleventh century in the case of diastematic notation. Conflicting modal assignments, and occasionally melodic fragments, are fairly common in these early sources as the first scribes attempted to translate an oral musical language into a written one. Paul Merkley addresses this question further in chapters five and six of his study, *Italian Tonaries*:

An antiphon (or other chant melody) placed with one set of antiphons in one tonary and a completely different set in another constitutes a conflicting assignment. The process used to find conflicting assignments has three steps: the

¹⁵ Huglo, *Fonti*, 46.

identification of the antiphons in the differentiae, the intersection of the differentiae, and the analysis of the resulting conflicts.¹⁶

Bedero B contains liturgical chants (*temporale* and *sanctorale* inclusive) beginning with vespers of Holy Saturday and ending with the first part of the Requiem Mass. This particular antiphoner is the oldest known source of Ambrosian chant and was Dottore Marco Magistretti's primary source in compiling the *Manuale Ambrosianum*.

The last source, *M99 Supplemental*, is currently housed in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana though it originated from the library of the Oblates of the Holy Sepulchre in Milan. As Huglo notes, the first 201 folios are in the same hand and contain chants from the summer part of the liturgical year, or *pars aestiva*. The seven pages that follow (ff 202-208) are written in a second hand.

Invaluable to any research of the Ambrosian liturgy and its chant is the two-volume *Manuale Ambrosianum*: a twelfth-century codex attributed to Beroldus, edited and published by Marco Magistretti in 1904. The first volume, the Pontifical, contains liturgical guidelines and prayers to be used by bishops. The second, the Ordinal, contains texts for Masses and the Divine Office for the entire liturgical year, to be celebrated by a priest. However, neither of Magistretti's publications contain musical notation of Ambrosian chants.

This study of the primary sources proved to be a fruitful endeavour. Through examining them and researching their respective histories, it was possible to surmise information about the preservation and performance of these Ambrosian antiphons. An ostensibly small matter, such as the size of a particular manuscript, or whether the staff lines were drawn in before or after the notes, can raise further questions about an antiphon's use and dating. It is through internal evidence, after all, that we gather much of our knowledge

¹⁶ Paul Merkley, *Italian Tonaries* (Ottawa: The Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1988), 60-1.

about medieval manuscripts. The presence of a particular saint in an antiphoner can be indicative of a strong tradition of veneration to him or her (as in the case of Saint Ambrose in Milan), especially if the feast day is laden with many processional chants or contains illuminations. The next chapter will examine the presence of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the medieval Ambrosian liturgy; addressing specifically the longstanding expression of Christian devotion to her through music.

Chapter 2: Marian Veneration and the Processions

2.1 Mary and the Processions

The vast number of *psallendae* found in the antiphoners bears witness to the importance of processions in the Ambrosian rite. Over seven hundred *psallendae* are assigned to various feasts throughout the Church year, any one of which may contain upwards of thirty processional chants at one given Office. In the Ambrosian rite there are processions for various occasions, including major feast days and dedication ceremonies for newly erected churches. This chapter will focus exclusively on the processional chants that are assigned to feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Processions have played an integral role in Christian worship from the earliest recorded times. Religious processions that involved visiting various stations, such as the tombs of martyrs or relics of particular importance, were commonplace in Jerusalem, Rome and elsewhere. The writings of the renowned female pilgrim Egeria provide detailed accounts of religious processions in the Holy Land in *circa* 385.¹⁷ She describes the people involved, including monks, bishops and pilgrims; the custom of visiting certain stations, such as the greater church “built by Constantine...situated in Golgotha behind the cross”; and the practice of performing “suitable psalms and antiphons” during the processions.¹⁸ Although she uses the word “dicuntur” when describing the recitation of these “psalms and antiphons”, which best translates to “are to be said”, it is commonly accepted that she meant “are to be sung” instead.

In a similar manner, the twelfth-century *Ordo* of Beroldus describes such processions in great detail:

¹⁷ Egeria in Colman J. Barry, *Readings in Church History* (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1985), 182-190.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 182-3.

[Primus diaconus] incipit psallendam secundam quae fuit in matutinis, et canendo exeunt de secretario, subdiaconibus praecedentibus usque ad altare cum thuribulo et candelabris accensis, datis per manus cicendelarii ebdomadarii, et statim magister scholarum dicit *Gloria Patri*, reiterando cum pueris suis praedictam psallendam.

[[The first deacon] begins the second of the psallendae from Matins, singing [which], they leave the treasury on the way to the altar, the subdeacons preceding with a thurible and candlesticks with lighted candles handed over by a hebdomadary acolyte. And directly after, the master of the boys sings *Gloria Patri*, repeating together with the boys the above-mentioned psallenda.]¹⁹

The word used by Beroldus to denote Milanese religious processions is *psallentium*, which bears an obvious etymological connection to *psallendae*, the word used for the processional antiphons themselves.

The *psallendae* examined in this study were drawn from the major Marian feast days celebrated in the Ambrosian calendar, as of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They are: the Nativity of Mary (September 8), the sixth Sunday of Advent and its Vigil (variable dates), the Purification of Mary/Candlemas (February 2), the Annunciation (March 25), and the Assumption (August 15). Additionally, the fifth Sunday of Advent was included as it contains a number of Marian references.

Mary is distinct from other saints because of her special role in the history of salvation. This importance and distinction comes as a result of her *fiat*: her humble submission to the will of God, and her role as the Mother of Christ. There is a long tradition of Marian veneration in the Church. From antiquity, there was an understanding among Christians of her role as intercessor in heaven, and some of the oldest prayers refer to this role (e.g., *Sub tuam protectionem*). In addition, various titles given to her indicate that Christians were thinking this way. Even before the establishment of specific feast days to commemorate

¹⁹ Beroldus in Terence Bailey, "Ambrosian Processions to the Baptistries," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 15 (2006): 39.

various points in her life or aspects of her holiness (e.g., that she was immaculately conceived), she was exalted as an intercessor and venerated through private prayer and public devotions. There is evidence of this in the Councils that took place in the early centuries. At the Council of Ephesus in 431, she was defined as the *Theotokos*: the Mother of God. Likewise, she is given a prominent place in Christian art from very early on. In Poreč, Croatia, the Eufrasiana Basilica (built *circa* 543)²⁰ contains an apse mosaic of the Virgin with the Christ-child on her lap. The walls on either side of it portray the Annunciation and the Visitation. In Constantinople, Christians had an icon called the *Hodegetria* ("She who shows the way") that was much venerated.²¹ It was brought out to the city walls during attacks, as protection. In Hagia Sophia, the remarkable church built by Emperor Justinian in the sixth century in Constantinople, there is a huge image of the *Theotokos* that was dedicated in 867.²²

The veneration of saints developed through a local populace recognizing the virtues and holiness of a man or woman, and by the local bishop acclaiming this person to be a saint. Thus the cult of a saint was sanctioned by acclamation, rather than by through a long, arduous, official process. Because of abuses that were taking place (see, e.g., Saint Guinefort, dog), Church officials deemed it necessary to regularize the process.

Towards the close of the eleventh century the popes found it necessary to restrict episcopal authority on this point, and decreed that the virtues and miracles of persons proposed for public veneration should be examined in councils, more particularly in general councils.²³

²⁰ John Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1997), 140.

²¹ Steven Runciman, *Byzantine Art and Civilization*, (London: Folio Society, 2004), 54.

²² Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, 176.

²³ Camillo Beccari, "Beatification and Canonization" In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), accessed Aug 22, 2012, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02364b.htm>.

Could there be parallels to this in the establishment of feast days? Christians made pilgrimages to holy sites in Jerusalem, sharing a common belief that Mary was the Mother of God, and eventually, that she was preserved from the stain of original sin. The latter point was not universally held, however, and it was not until the thirteenth century that John Duns Scotus (c. 1265-1308) found a solution to the theological difficulties posed by Mary's Immaculate Conception. Long before this, Christians believed that she was assumed into heaven and, accordingly, celebrated this event on August 15. According to Archbishop Terence Prendergast, the feast of the Assumption is in fact the oldest Marian feast, despite the doctrine being one of the latest to be officially recognized.²⁴ He says,

The Assumption is the oldest feast day of Our Lady. Yet, its origin was lost before Jerusalem was restored as a sacred city, at the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine. For 200 years, every memory of Jesus had been erased from the city. The sites made holy by His life, death and Resurrection had become pagan temples.

After the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built in 336, faithful Christians restored the sacred sites. The people of Jerusalem began to celebrate memories of the life of Our Lord. One of the memories about his mother centered on the Tomb of Mary, close to Mount Zion, where the early Christian community had lived.

On the hill itself was the Place of Dormition, the spot of Mary's "falling asleep," where she had died. The Tomb of Mary was where she was buried. The faithful of the day celebrated the feast of the Memory of Mary.

For a time, the Memory of Mary was marked only in Palestine, but later the emperor extended it to all the churches of the East. In the seventh century, it was celebrated in Rome as the "Falling Asleep" (Dormition) of the Mother of God.

Soon, the Church changed the name to the Assumption of Mary. In addition to her passing from this life, the new name also proclaimed that she had been taken up, body and soul, into heaven.

La croyance en l'Assomption de la sainte Vierge était ancienne, remontant aux apôtres eux-mêmes. Le tombeau de Marie au bord de Jérusalem était vide. Ce lieu est devenu un lieu de pèlerinage, mais il n'y avait pas des reliques à vénérer. Les évêques du monde méditerranéen se sont réunis à Constantinople en 451 pour le concile de Chalcédoine. L'empereur

²⁴ Homily by Archbishop Terence Prendergast at l'église Sainte-Anne, Ottawa, delivered on August 15, 2012. Available online at <http://archbishopterry.blogspot.ca/>. I am grateful to His Grace for granting permission to use this excerpt.

Marcian a demandé au Patriarche de Jérusalem de lui apporter les reliques de Marie afin qu'elles soient déposées dans le Capitole. Le Patriarche a répondu qu'il n'y avait aucune relique de Marie à Jérusalem. Il déclara : Marie est morte en présence des apôtres; mais plus tard, lorsqu'on a ouvert sa tombe, on l'a retrouvée vide. Les apôtres ont alors conclu que le corps avait été emporté au ciel.

Au VIIIe siècle, saint Jean Damascène était reconnu pour donner des sermons sur les lieux saints de Jérusalem. Au tombeau de Marie, il dit : « Bien que son corps a été déposé dans la tombe suivant la coutume, il ne séjourne pas dans la mort et n'est pas détruit par la corruption. Vous avez été emporté dans votre demeure céleste, Ô Notre-Dame, vous êtes vraiment Reine et Mère de Dieu. »²⁵

Did Christians' private and public acts of worship influence the establishment of official feast days for Mary? With such a long history of devotion to Mary and her Assumption into heaven, it may come as a surprise to learn that it was not until 1950 that the dogma was officially established by Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Munificentissimus Deus*.²⁶

Her significance stems from the fact that she bore Christ, so it is common to find *psallendae* that are not obviously (or literally) Marian. The sixth Sunday of Advent is filled with Marian references and chants, due to the possibility that the feast of the Annunciation itself was at one point moved to Advent VI to avoid the issue of it falling during Lent (March 25).²⁷ According to Weakland, this feast of the Annunciation was “the only Marian feast in the Ambrosian calendar until Carolingian times.”²⁸ While it is entirely conceivable that certain Roman saints were ‘imported’ into the Milanese calendar during the Carolingian reforms, it is highly doubtful that the Blessed Virgin Mary herself was more or less absent from the calendar until that point. After all, Mary has been venerated throughout Christendom from antiquity to the present day. The analysis of Marian *psallendae* that will

²⁵ Archbishop Terence Prendergast, August 2012.

²⁶ Pope Pius XII, “Munificentissimus Deus,” (November 1950): http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-xii_apc_19501101_munificentissimus-deus_en.html

²⁷ Terence Bailey, *Antiphon and Psalm in the Ambrosian Office* (Ottawa: The Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1994), 340.

²⁸ Rembert Weakland, “The Office Antiphons of the Ambrosian Chant,” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2000): 242.

take place in the following chapters may reveal a long-standing tradition of Marian veneration that was an integral part of the Ambrosian rite.

It is likely that, in the Ambrosian rite, the feast of the Annunciation was not traditionally celebrated in March (nine months before Christmas), but rather directly before Christmas. This explains the other title of Advent VI as *Dominica de Exceptato*, or ‘of the expectation’ (implying Mary’s expectation of the arrival of Jesus) and the six *feriae de exceptato* that follow it. Despite the feast day having been later ‘restored’ to its original place in March,²⁹ many of the chants remained and so Advent VI continues to have a distinctly Marian character. In human terms, it is unusual to have Annunciation chants signaling the beginning of Mary’s pregnancy, followed only a week later by the celebration of Christ’s birth. But for the medieval mind it may have been perfectly acceptable to move the feast day to before Christmas, making symbolic connections between the conception of Jesus that happened first, and the resulting birth of Christ, which happened next, regardless of the actual time lapse in between. Either way, it is possible that this change never really caught on, as the sixth Sunday of Advent is still essentially a celebration of the Annunciation in addition to the formal feast day on March 25.

The primary assignments of Marian *psallendae* are, in most cases, to her proper feast days. That is, many of the processional chants are proper to a certain occasion, such as the Annunciation. The feast to which a given chant is proper is known as its primary assignment. Any other uses of the chant are considered secondary assignments. It is not always easy to determine which is the primary assignment, however. Terence Bailey and Paul Merkley suggest a theory about textual relations between antiphon and psalm to provide

²⁹ A change that may have come about as a result of Carolingian reforms, as the Roman calendar traditionally celebrates this feast day on March 25.

clues into Ambrosian antiphon assignments.³⁰ *Psallendae*, however, do not use psalmody unless it occurs in the antiphon itself. Therefore the only assignments that we can deem ‘primary’ with any assurance are those that contain direct textual references to the feast day being celebrated. For example, the following *psallenda* is properly assigned to the feast of the Assumption on August 15:

***Hodie** maria virgo celos ascendit gaudete quia cum cristo regnat in eternum.*

[**Today** the virgin Maria ascends into heaven, rejoice, because with Christ she reigns forever.]

The use of the word *hodie* makes it very clear that the feast being celebrated is that of the Assumption.

The following table outlines the assignments of all the Marian *psallendae* examined in this study to the main Marian feast days in the Church calendar. The main source for the information gathered in the chart was the Magistretti edition of the Ordinal compiled by Beroldus.

³⁰ Bailey and Merkley, *The Melodic Tradition of the Ambrosian Office-Antiphons*, 26.

Table 2-1: Occurrences of Marian *psallendae* as listed in Magistretti

	Nativity of the BVM (Sept. 8)	Purification (Feb. 2)	Assumption (Aug. 15)	Dom. VI Adventus	Location in manuscript
Portam hanc quam viditis	x		x		Vim B 40v
Virgo verbum concepit	xx	xx			Vim B 42r
Exultavit spiritus meus	x		x		M99 p. 65 Bedero p. 274
Erit radix iesse	xx				Vim B 27v
Beata progenies	x	x			Vim B 84r Vim C 114r
De radice lesse	x				Vim C 113v
In flore mater	x	x			Vim B 83v
Dignus es Domine	x	x			Vim B 84r Vim C 114r
Laudabilis virgo	x	x			Vim B 84r/ Vim C 114r
Super salutem	x		x		Vim C/D 114r Bedero p. 184
(H)ortus conclusus	x		xxx		Vim C/D 114v Bedero p. 184
Beatam me dicent	x	x			Vim B 86r
Maria virgo	x	x			Vim B 86r
Beata es Maria	x	x			Vim B 49r
Virgo Dei genitrix	x	xxx	xx		Vim B 41v
Sub tuam misericordiam	x	x	x	x	Vim B 46r
Sub tuam protectionem	x	x		x	Vim B 47r
Senex puerum portabat		xx			Vim B 114v
O virgo virginum		x			Vim B 45v
Maria autem		x			Vim B, 76v
Beatus ille venter		x			Vim A, 41r
Magnificamus te		x			Vim B 41v
Nesciens mater		x		x	Vim B 46v

	Nativity of the BVM (Sept. 8)	Purification (Feb. 2)	Assumption (Aug. 15)	Dom. VI Adventus	Location in manuscript
Virgo hodie		x		x	Vim B 46r
Gaudeamus omnes		x		x	Vim B 46v
Responsum accepit		x			Vim B 114r
Revertere, revertere Sunamitis			x		Vim C 114v Bedero p. 184
Hodie Maria virgo caelos ascendit			x		Vim C/D 114r Bedero p. 184
Surge, aquilo, et veni, auster			x		Bedero p. 184
Exaltata est sancta Dei genitrix			x		Vim C/D 114r Bedero p. 184
Spiritus sanctus in te descendet				x	Vim B 40v
Maria autem conservabat					Vim B 76v
Sapientia edificavit					Vim D 138v
O amirabile commercium		x		x	Vim B 46r

In the table, “x” indicates assignment to a feast day. Multiple x’s indicate that the chant in question was assigned more than once to a feast; either appearing as a *psallenda* at both Vespers and Matins, or appearing as a *psallenda* at one point in the liturgy and as an Office antiphon (such as an *antiphona in benedicite*) at another point. The major Marian feast days are listed at the top of the chart, followed by a column that provides the location of the *psallendae* in the manuscript editions. A quick glance at the chart gives some sense of the solemnity with which these feast days were celebrated. The feast of the Purification on February 2 contains many *psallendae*, several of which are repeated as Office antiphons. It is probably fair to assume that feast days such as the Purification had correspondingly long and elaborate processions. This particular example became one of the few surviving feasts that retained its procession after the reforms in the Roman Rite also, through the ceremony of the blessing of candles (hence its other name as ‘Candlemas’). Likewise in the Ambrosian Rite, the feast day of the Ordination of St. Ambrose on December 7 contains 23 *psallendae* in the morning procession alone. Before this, there are four entries for processions (and their respective antiphons) to churches of St. Andrew, St. Vitalis, St. Nabor, and St. Ambrose in succession. In general, major feast days warranted major processions.

Returning to the chart, other assignments of Marian antiphons include:

- ❖ *Dom post Nat Domini/Octava Annuniationis* (Sunday after Christmas)
- ❖ *Advent V* (Fifth Sunday of Advent)
- ❖ *Innocentium* (Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 28)
- ❖ *Ded maioris* (Dedication of the Major Church)
- ❖ Saints whose feast days fall within the octave of Christmas

Certain assignments may initially appear unusual, such as the “Nesciens mater” to the Feast of St. Eugenius, who was a fifth-century bishop. But upon closer inspection, all of these seemingly unusual assignments fall on saints’ feast days that take place within the octave of Christmas. Even in today’s liturgical calendar, Christmas takes precedence over certain parts

of the office for these other feast days, resulting in a fascinating combination of texts drawn from the commons, proper texts for the saints in question, and those carried over from Christmas day. This situation is not unique to the Ambrosian rite, however, as one finds similar patterns in the Roman rite. For example, on the feast of St John the Evangelist, the proper preface assigned is that of Christmas Day, as it falls within the octave of Christmas. The Mass Ordinary functions in a similar way, as the *Gloria* is prescribed for every Mass within this octave.

The major church in Milan, presently located beneath the enormous *Duomo*, was dedicated to Mary (Santa Maria Maggiore). This dedication was celebrated throughout churches in Lombardy on the third Sunday of October. As was customary, a procession took place on the morning of the feast day. Magistretti provides the order of events as follows:

In Dedicatione Ecclesiae [Maioris] – Dom. III Octobris

❖ Mane. Ad Missam. *Ingr. in eccl. hyem.* Inclinauit Salomon...

❖ Mane. *Psallent. Ant.*

I. Benedictionem dabit qui in legem dedit

II. Surgite, Sancti Dei, de mansionibus vestris

III. De Ierusalem exeunt reliquiae

IIII. Ambulabant sancti gaudentes velut agni pleni pascua: una voce laudabant Deum suum, qui confortabat eos. Allel, allel.

V. Cum iocunditate exhibitis

VI. Novit Dominus vias immaculatum

VII. Beati immaculati in via

VIII. Sub tuam misericordiam

VIIII. Sub tuam protectionem

Post Kyr. cum Gloria. Gloria in excelsis.³¹

The first seven *psallendae* deal with the dedication ceremony. The third *psallenda* is particularly striking,

*Ambulabant sancti gaudentes velut agni pleni pascua:
una voce laudabant Deum suum, qui confortabat eos. Allel, allel.*

³¹ Beroldus, *Manuale Ambrosianum ex Codice Saeculum XI, Pars Altera*, edited by Marco Magistretti (Milan: Kraus Reprint, 1971), 364.

[The saints walk joyfully, as full lambs about to be consumed:
with one voice they praise their God, who comforts them. Alleluia, alleluia.]

It is easy to imagine the Milanese faithful chanting in procession with such a rich text; “Ambulabant sancti gaudentes.” This *psallenda* sings of its own nature; the *speculum* of Ambrosian processional chants.

The *Sub tuam* chants are the last two included in the procession for the feast day of the Dedication of the Major Church (located on Vim D 131r, *incipit* only). Out of all the *psallendae* assigned to this feast, these are the only two that make direct reference to Mary. With that in mind, could it be more likely that they were included for their popularity as general intercessory prayers rather than to provide a topical connection between the Dedication of the Church and of Mary as ‘home’ of the Lord? If the latter were true, one would expect more frequent and obvious connections in the texts to Mary as the physical home of Christ and the Church, but that does not seem to be the case here. However, for the Dedication of Temples we find a topical connection to Mary in the following processional chant:

*In Dedicatione Templi. Mane psallentium. Ant. XIII. Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum in Maria virgine desponsata Ioseph.*³²

[In the Dedication of Temples. At the morning procession. Antiphon 14. Wisdom has made for herself a home in the Virgin Mary, espoused to Joseph.]

This chant is the penultimate *psallenda* listed for the procession. The text itself combines a biblical excerpt *Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum*³³ [Wisdom has made for herself a home], with a non-biblical addition, namely that the Virgin Mary, espoused to Joseph, takes on this

³² Beroldus, *Manuale Ambrosianum*, 369. There is a discrepancy in the sources for this particular chant. Magistretti lists it as XIII in the order of procession, whereas Vimercate D lists this as XIII in the order of procession, with *Vidit iacob* as XIII.

³³ Proverbs 9:1.

role as the ‘home of wisdom.’ This chant clearly draws together the notion of the church as the house of God where Christ is present and Mary as the living tabernacle who enshrined Christ in her body.

Processions have been vehicles of religious devotion in the Church from the time of the early Christians. Likewise, the Virgin Mary herself has been an object of veneration, manifest in religious art and music, and through the act of making pilgrimages to holy sites. Drawing on scripture as well as freely composed religious poetry, a large number of antiphons were composed to honour her on specific feast days. Among these are the Marian *psallendae*, which are, in general, short, devotional-liturgical works that were sung during a procession. In several of the *psallendae*, symbolic connections are made between Mary and the Old Testament, a point that will be addressed further through the analysis of several case studies in chapter four. The following chapter will attempt to classify the *psallendae* according to their function in the Ambrosian liturgy, and their musical attributes.

Chapter 3: *Psallenda* classification and assignments

3.1 *Psallenda* classification

The nature and sheer number of *psallendae* has deterred many authors from including them in studies of Ambrosian Office antiphons. Rembert Weakland's recently published dissertation on the Ambrosian Office Antiphons includes the following footnote:

A complete analysis of the Ambrosian version of these Vespers would also have to include the psallendae.³⁴

Likewise, Bailey and Merkley state:

The decision to omit the *psallendae* from this study is as much owing to practical considerations as to editorial principle.³⁵

In fact, it is only in recent years that authors have made religious and civic processions a subject of major research. Kathleen Ashley attests:

It is remarkable that *procession*—arguably the most ubiquitous and versatile public performance mode until the seventeenth century—has received so little scholarly or theoretical attention.³⁶

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the *psallendae* as distinct musical and liturgical entities. Questions such as how to locate them in the manuscript editions, of classification, and of liturgical function will be addressed as an analysis is made of this long-neglected category of chant.

From the enormous collection of *psallendae* found in the *Manuale*, chants are used interchangeably as other items of the Office or Mass (such as the *Transitorium*) according to the liturgical necessity. According to Bailey and Merkley, “There is good reason to think that a significant proportion of them [*psallendae*] were intended originally as processions

³⁴ Rembert Weakland, “The Office Antiphons of the Ambrosian Chant”: 177.

³⁵ T. Bailey and P. Merkley, *The Antiphons of the Ambrosian Office* (Ottawa: The Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1989), 16.

³⁶ Kathleen Ashley, “The Moving Subjects of Processional Performance” In *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Eds. Kathleen Ashley and Wim Husken (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 7.

and were only later assigned to the Office, replacing chants of the *Commune sanctorum*.³⁷ Similarly, the texts of the *psallendae* are used for many liturgical items, which at times have completely different musical settings (such as the *Portam hanc quam videtis*, which appears as a *psallenda*, but also as an ornate responsorial chant). This caused considerable difficulty in originally locating *psallendae* in manuscript sources, as the abbreviation “ps” is used for both *psallendae* and *psallmelli*, the latter being roughly equivalent to the Gradual found in the Roman Mass. This confusion also posed a problem for performance practice, as the *psallmellus* chants are, in general, highly melismatic. Taking aspects of physical performance into consideration, the elaborate *psallmelli* seemed highly unlikely to be performed in a procession, as it consisted of a long line of people, without books, in the dark. Thus through internal evidence, the *psallendae* were identified by attributes of syllabic or neumatic text setting, a limited vocal range, and some indication of “psallenda”, “psl” or “ps” preceding the chant in the manuscript. Additionally, chants labeled *Mane*, *Psallentium*, *antiphona I, II, III, etc.* (In the morning, at the procession, antiphons 1, 2, 3, etc.), *Antiphonae de baptisterio ad ecc. min.* (Antiphons from the Baptistery to the Minor Church), *Antiphonae de baptisterio ad aliud ecc.* (Antiphons from the Baptistery to the other church) are all certainly processional chants.

Another category of processional chants, though not dealt with in the present study, is also worth mentioning. The *antiphonae ad crucem* consist of 39 antiphons that

were sung after the Benedictus (or Attende Caelum) on Sundays (except in Lent) and on festivals, each antiphon sung five or seven times in processions involving three crosses, one surmounted by lighted candles. Only one of the thirty-nine chants has any other assignment, a circumstance that suggests that the *antiphonae ad crucem* constitute a category that is properly separate from the *psallendae*. *Miseris omnium Domine* is the exception. It is assigned several times as a *psallenda*, but only once (for Quinquagesima Sunday) as an

³⁷ Ashley, “The Moving Subjects of Processional Performance”: 7.

antiphona ad crucem. Although these antiphons were sung with the Gloria Patri and triple Kyrie, there is no indication that the processions involved psalmody...³⁸

Contrary to Bailey and Merkley's assessment, there may not in fact be a significant musical distinction between the *antiphonae ad crucem* and the *psallendae*. Given that the former were in used in processions for a very specific liturgical act, there may be no reason to assume that they are not *psallendae* just because they are not assigned elsewhere. Although it is extremely common for *psallendae* to have multiple assignments, it is by no means a liturgical or musical requirement.

In performance, the *psallendae* are sung once through, followed by the *Gloria Patri* and then repeated. Different musical formulas for the *differentiae*, in this case the lesser doxology (*Gloria patri*) are assigned to individual *psallendae*. In the manuscript sources, this is indicated by placing the letters "evovae" beneath a series of pitches that are clearly separated from the *psallenda* chant by a vertical line. The letters "evovae" act merely as an abbreviation for the final words of the *Gloria Patri*, that is, *seculorum amen*. The letters "u" and "v" occur interchangeably in manuscripts at this time. This practice mirrors the singing of the psalms in the Divine Office, wherein several verses of a psalm are chanted, concluding always³⁹ with the *Gloria Patri* before returning to the designated antiphon. In Bailey's article on processional chants, he addresses the question of psalms, that is, whether or not the *psallendae* are performed in alternation with psalm verses.⁴⁰ He makes this suggestion based on the possible etymological connection of *psalm* and *psallenda*. Bailey reveals that seven *psallendae* are assigned specific psalm verses in place of the *differentia*, and that the text of

³⁸ Bailey and Merkley, *The Antiphons of the Ambrosian Office*, 12.

³⁹ Exceptions in the Roman Rite include the Office for the Dead (*Ufficium Defunctorum*), Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

⁴⁰ Terence Bailey, "Ambrosian Processions to the Baptistries," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 15 (2006): 38.

the psalm verse in six of the seven cases corresponds to the biblical text of the *psallenda* itself. The seventh example demonstrates no clear textual connection between the *psallenda* and assigned psalm, which raises the possibility that “some necessary information was transmitted outside the service books.”⁴¹ That is to say, there may have been a tradition of performing *psallendae* with psalmody that was not actually notated in the manuscript sources, the exception being the seven aforementioned cases. Bailey suggests that on longer processional routes, psalmody may have been used in alternation with *psallendae* as a means of lengthening the musical accompaniment.⁴² While this may well have been the case, the notion of improvised psalmody seems to contradict the ‘new arrangement’ of liturgical books that took place during the thirteenth century. Jungmann writes of this change, in which multiple liturgical books (missal, sacramentary, epistles) were assembled into one large, highly detailed *Missale Plenum*.⁴³ It is questionable that no indication of psalmody is found (save for in seven cases), even as a brief note or cue in the margin, if it was to be included in the performance.

The texts of a number of *psallendae* are derived from the Old Testament. A number of the texts used for feast days of the Blessed Virgin are derived from the Song of Songs. Examples include *Revertere revertere sulamitis* (Song of Solomon 6:12) for the feast of the Assumption. Paul Merkley hypothesizes that an Office chant that derives its text from sacred scripture⁴⁴ (specifically from the psalm verse with which it is sung) is older than a chant that derives its text from elsewhere in scripture⁴⁵ or from a source outside of scripture.⁴⁶ Taking

⁴¹ Bailey, “Ambrosian Processions to the Baptistries”: 40.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Joseph A. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, trans. Francis A. Brunner (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1959), 79.

⁴⁴ Labeled as Class 1 in T. Bailey and P. Merkley, *The Antiphons of the Ambrosian Office*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, labeled as Class 2.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, labeled as Class 3.

his theory into consideration, these biblical *psallendae* may well be some of the earliest examples of processional chants.

Many other *psallendae* texts are non-biblical and prosaic. Another example from the feast of the Assumption is the *Hodie maria virgo celos ascendit*, the text of which does not appear anywhere in scripture. It is tempting then to make the argument that *psallendae* with scriptural texts are in fact older than their non-scriptural counterparts, the latter of which may have been composed to add greater solemnity to a feast day through a greater number of processional chants.⁴⁷ Additionally, non-biblical *psallendae* texts for feasts of the saints (including the Virgin Mary) are necessarily proper to the occasion in that specific names or events are described. The text of the *Hodie maria virgo celos ascendit* is an obvious example here, as it describes the event of the Assumption itself. This may be contrasted with the chant *Revertere, revertere*, which, although assigned to the feast of the Assumption, is not in fact proper to it. The lack of specific reference lends these biblical *psallendae* to wider use in that the same chants may be assigned to several different feast days.

The extensive rubrics provided by Beroldus⁴⁸ of Milanese processions during the twelfth century indicate that the *psallendae* were considered an integral part of the Ambrosian liturgy. These chants were not considered merely extra devotions that could or could not be included on a given feast day, but rather were necessary additions to the Divine Office and Mass. This thought gives rise to yet another interpretation of the etymology of the word *psallenda*; namely that it is a gerund. *Psallendae*: chants that must be sung, and cannot be excluded from a feast or replaced by another chant.

⁴⁷ There is evidence of non-scriptural Christian hymnody from antiquity in Saint Paul's letters. Saint Augustine also refers to hymns composed by Saint Ambrose, some of which are still in use in the Divine Office.

⁴⁸ Beroldus, *Sive Ecclesiae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis Kalendarium et Ordines Saec. XII*, ed. Marco Magistretti (Mediolani: J. Giovanola et Soc, 1894).

On the other hand, the Latin verb *psallere* means to “play upon a stringed instrument.”⁴⁹ Could this imply that the *psallendae* were once performed accompanied, possibly by stringed instruments? This is not likely to be the case if these chants were performed inside churches given the history of instrumental accompaniment of liturgical Offices. One has only to examine the writings of the early Church Fathers⁵⁰ to find a very consistent condemnation of this practice. But given the nature of *psallendae* as processional chants, oftentimes performed outside of the physical church building, does this change anything? Was the issue with location (inside vs. outside of a church) or with performance practice (i.e., liturgical chants are not to be accompanied)? Edmond Bowles addresses the use of musical instruments in processions during the middle ages,

A similar Feast of the Virgin celebrated at Louvain since the 11th Century included a civic procession in honor of the town's patroness. Joined to the annual kermess, this popular celebration included a symbolical presentation ranging in subject matter from the Creation to the Assumption of the Virgin. Following mass in the Church of St. Pierre, clergy and civic officials breakfasted together, then assembled for the procession, in the center of which was carried a statue of Our Lady of Louvain. They left the doors of the church to the sound of bells and musical instruments, while 4 musicians marched ahead of the statue playing harp, lute, and viols.⁵¹

Given the Church Fathers’ (and later, popes’) fervent condemnation of this practice, it is likely that it was more common than we might allow ourselves to imagine. Processions lend themselves to spectacle, as in the case of royal entrances in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Bowles, describing the typical scene of a civic procession during this time says,

⁴⁹ Lewis, *Elementary Latin Dictionary*, s.v. “psallere.”

⁵⁰ See St. Augustine of Hippo describing the singing at Alexandria under Athanasius, “Musical instruments were not used. The pipe, tabret, and harp here associate so intimately with the sensual heathen cults, as well as with the wild revelries and shameless performances of the degenerate theater and circus, it is easy to understand the prejudices against their use in the worship.”

⁵¹ Edmund A. Bowles, “Musical Instruments in Civic Processions in the Middle Ages,” *Acta Musicologica* 33, Fasc. 2/4, Special Issue on the Occasion of the 8th Congress of the International Musicological Society, (1961): 158.

Streets were cleaned and strewn with fresh rushes, houses along the route were decked out with tapestries, flowers, garlands, and boughs were draped about, fountains gushed forth wine, church bells rang, crowds of spectators shouted, and minstrels performed on their various instruments.⁵²

It is not too difficult to stretch our imagination, then, to include some of these practices in the religious processions that took place in Milan during the Middle Ages. It would be unusual for a practice to be spoken against with such ardency if it was not actually taking place.

Psallendae, and Ambrosian chants in general, are based on melodic themes that are elaborated by the repetition of certain melodic motifs. The same motif (e.g., F G A G) may be repeated several times in a row, and may reappear throughout the chant in various inversions. Excellent examples that demonstrate this pattern in the extreme are the *melodiae* in Ambrosian Alleluias and Responsories, which are lengthy melismas based on a limited number of melodic fragments. Sasha Siem addresses the *melodiae* in her study of the *Vidi speciosa*, a Responsory assigned to feasts of the Blessed Virgin and of the Dedication.⁵³ Such chants may be composed of a number of different melodic patterns, each of which is stated multiple times throughout the piece, usually in the original pitch-series (i.e., not transposed). An interesting example of a *melodia*, *Dei et homine* is found on folio 57 *recto* of Vimercate B. The short text is set melismatically, and is clearly composed of smaller melodic fragments. These fragments are actually labeled under the staff with Roman numerals as they reappear throughout the piece. This is an obvious difference between Ambrosian and Gregorian styles, the latter employing techniques such as word painting in chants. Ambrosian chants are, on the whole, more formulaic than their Gregorian counterparts.

⁵² *Ibid*, 147.

⁵³ Sasha Siem, "The Making and Breaking of Restrictive Chains: A Closer Look at the *Melodiae* of Ambrosian Chant" In *Ambrosiana at Harvard: New Sources of Milanese Chant* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 137-152.

In a similar way, chants containing certain themes or references are used freely, even though at times they are not suitable to the specific occasion (e.g., using Christmas chants for the Assumption—both involve Mary but represent different stages of her life—this does not appear to be an issue for the medieval Ambrosian church).

The prayers, chants and readings of the Divine Office and Mass together form one complete liturgical day in the Ambrosian rite. This is reflected in the liturgical books that contain chants from both as a continuous flow, as contrasted with the Roman separation of the chants into a *Graduale* for Mass chants and *Antiphonale* for Office chants. Many chants are used interchangeably in both Offices. In fact, it is not at all uncommon for *psallendae* to be used as processional chants for vespers on the night before a major feast, only to be re-used for the morning procession and again at Mass under the designation, *Post kirie cum gloria*. This last mentioned use of the *psallendae* as introductory pieces to the Mass parallels the function of the *introit* in the Roman rite. The rough equivalent of the *Introit* in the Ambrosian rite is the *ingressa*, which is sung after the priest has already reached the altar, thus negating any possible association with processions. If we allow ourselves to consider musical form as an indicator of liturgical function, there may be an older parallel between the two forms and their introductory processions. The Ambrosian *psallendae* and the Roman *introit* both follow a basic ABA format: antiphon, *Gloria Patri*, repeat of antiphon. Given that the former are already associated with processions, is it possible that the *ingressae* were originally *psallendae*? Christian Troelsgard points out that a great deal of variety exists in both the *ingressae* and *psallendae* that do not derive their texts from the Psalter.

The *Ingressae* form a rather heterogenous group of chants; I mention above that more than fifty percent of these share text and melodic skeleton with the Roman tradition and the texts of this portion are almost exclusively from the Psalter...The *ingressae* which are not based on the psalms vary a great deal in style and length.

The same variation is found among the *psallendae*, which are furnished with the same range of texts, but with a clear preponderance of the shorter pieces.⁵⁴

Jungmann's description of the early liturgy indicates that the entrance rite (the "fore-Mass") and music affiliated with it became a standard part of the Mass from very early on.⁵⁵ Is it possible that texts/chants that were used for a liturgical act in the Mass were the same as those used in the Office? Or, that chants commonly sung as devotional works eventually became incorporated into the liturgy? Many *psallendae* contain multiple assignments to both Mass and Office items, so it is likely that a given piece served many purposes if it was deemed appropriate to the occasion. By extension, it may be that the first *ingressae* were actually *psallendae*, especially given their place in the prayers and chants that precede the beginning of Mass (*Post kirie cum gloria*), and the fact that they too are a 'heterogeneous' group of chants. In order to answer this question, it would be necessary to compare the melodic themes (and texts) used in the *ingressae* with those found in the *psallendae*.

3.2 Primary and secondary *psallenda* assignments

The chart located at the end of this chapter shows primary and secondary assignments of Marian *psallendae*, organized by feast day. For example, the *psallenda*, *Beatam me dicent* is assigned as a *psallenda* (indicated by PSA in the chart) on the feasts of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Purification, and as a Magnificat antiphon (indicated by MAG) on the Sunday after Christmas (i.e. *Dominica post Nativitas Domini*). Many *psallendae* are assigned to multiple feast days, but exclusively as processional chants. Examples include *Virgo verbum*, *Super salute*, and *Sub tuam misericordiam*, among others. Other *psallendae*

⁵⁴ Christian Troelsgard, "Stational Liturgy and Processional Antiphons in the Ambrosian Rite," *In Liturgy and the Arts in the Middle Ages: Studies in Honour of C. Clifford Flanigan*, edited by C. Clifford Flanigan, Eva Louise Lillie, and Nils Holger Petersen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1996), 89-90.

⁵⁵ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 188.

appear to serve multiple purposes, as in the case of *Beata progenies*, which is assigned as a *psallenda*, vespers antiphon, and an antiphon *in cantemus*. Considering the development of the Ambrosian liturgy and the ancient tradition of religious processions (and the music that accompanies them), it is entirely plausible that those antiphons with multiple assignments were first conceived as *psallendae*, and then later re-assigned to serve other liturgical functions for practical purposes. It is not always an easy task to determine what the primary assignment of a chant is, however. According to Merkley and Bailey,

The great majority of the *proper* antiphons *de sanctis* for the *Magnificat* belong to Class 3.⁵⁶ Most have other assignments, especially as *Psallendae*, and it is not always possible to decide which assignment is primary...It is much more difficult to decide the question when a chant is also sung as a *Psallendae*, as so many were. Musical characteristics are not always decisive. There is no reason to suppose that singers who were accustomed to chants appearing more than once in the liturgy—and as often as not for different purposes—would have continued to preserve distinctions in style between the various classifications of antiphons.⁵⁷

If the text and music of a *psallenda* were proper to a specific occasion, as in the case of the *Responsum accepit simeon* for the feast of the Purification, there was nothing to prevent it from serving multiple liturgical purposes. In this example, the *psallenda* is re-used as a *Magnificat* antiphon and a *Benedictus* antiphon, as indicated on the chart by “PSA, MAG, BES.”

When considering the multiple assignments of antiphons, the question arises of why some chants appear to be more popular than others. For example, the *Sub tuam* chants are assigned to seven different feast days, unlike other *psallendae* that are assigned to only one or two. Is the text the determining factor? Proper texts may seem inflexible and ill-suited to other occasions, but this is not the case with Christmas *psallendae* that are used throughout

⁵⁶ Class 3 antiphons are those that derive their texts *extra scripturas sacras*, that is, from sources outside of sacred scripture.

⁵⁷ Bailey, *Antiphon and Psalm in the Ambrosian Office*, 270.

the liturgical calendar. Another possibility is that the melodies and/or the texts associated with the chants were well-loved and familiar to the Milanese.

The information presented in the chart was assembled through examining the texts and chants of the given feast days in the Ordinal by Beroldus and also in the manuscript editions. In deciphering the order and make-up of each feast day, and through familiarizing myself with the various ways in which a *psallenda* can be labeled (e.g., “ps”, “de eccl. in aliud”, etc.), I was able to identify and catalogue the relevant chants. To my knowledge, no such catalogue has yet been assembled for any of the Ambrosian *psallendae*. In cases where *psallendae* were used multiple times on the same feast day (with one or more liturgical functions), subsequent cues were given by a two- or three-word *incipit* only. That is, when a given chant appeared for the first time in the antiphoner, it was written out in full with musical notation. Following appearances on the same feast day and secondary assignments to other feast days only provided the *incipit*, meaning that the singer would have either had the chant memorized (in which case a textual cue was sufficient), or that the singer would have been familiar enough with the various assignments to know which feast day to consult for the full score if he needed a visual reminder of the melody and/or text.

Further, there are some cases where one given text is used for two widely divergent liturgical functions. Such is the case with *Portam hanc quam videtis*, which is set in a relatively simple manner for its assignment as a *psallenda* and *antiphon in benedictus*. The same text also underscores a highly ornamented chant for its assignment as a *psalmellus* in the context of the Mass. Therefore when it is referenced as an *incipit* only, the liturgical function (and thus musical setting) must be taken into consideration to determine which of the two versions will be used.

Key to the table:

BEE – *Antiphona in Benedicite*
BES – *Antiphona in Benedictus*
CAN – *Antiphona in Cantemus*
LAU – *Antiphona in Laudate*
MAG – *Antiphona in Magnificat*
VES – *Antiphona in Vesperas*
VIG – *Antiphona in Vigiliis*
PSA – *Psallenda*
TRA – *Transitorium*

Table 3-1: Assignments of Marian *Psallendae*

	Nativity of the BVM	Purification	Annunciation (Dom de Expectatio)	Advent VI	Assumption	Other
Portam hanc quam	PSA, BES					PSA Adv. V
Virgo verbum	PSA	PSA	PSA			PSA Dom post Nat Domini
Exultavit spiritus meus	PSA		PSA		PSA	PSA Com virginum
Erit radix Iesse	PSA					PSA Adv. III
Beata progenies	PSA, VES, CAN	PSA, CAN				CAN Dom post Nat Domini
De radice Iesse	PSA, VES					PSA Adv. V
In flore mater	PSA	PSA				BES Dom post Nat Domini
Dignus es Domine	PSA, BEE	PSA, BEE				BEE Dom post Nat Domini
Laudabilis virgo	PSA, LAU	PSA, LAU				LAU Dom post Nat Domini
Super salutem	PSA		PSA		PSA	
(H)ortus conclusus	PSA		PSA		PSA	
Beatam me dicent	PSA	PSA				MAG Dom post Nat Domini
Maria virgo	PSA	PSA				TRA Dom post Nat. Domini
Beata es Maria	PSA	PSA		MAG		MAG Fer VI in Adv. VI
Virgo Dei genitrix	PSA	PSA	PSA		PSA	PSA Dom post Nat Domini
Sub tuam misericordiam	PSA	PSA		PSA	PSA	PSA Ded maioris, Fer II post Ded maiorem, Dom I Octobris

	Nativity of the BVM	Purification	Annunciation (Dom de Expectatio)	Advent VI	Assumption	Other
Sub tuam protectionem	PSA	PSA		PSA	PSA	PSA Ded maioris, Fer II post Ded maiorem, Dom I Octobris
Senex puerum portabat		PSA				
O virgo virginum		PSA		PSA		
Maria autem		PSA				MAG Innocentium, Fer VI in heb Nat Domini
Beatus ille venter	VIG	PSA, VIG	VIG			
Magnificamus te	VIG	PSA, VIG	VIG			TRA Dom I post Epiph.
Nesciens mater				PSA		PSA Innocentium, Eugenii
Virgo hodie		PSA		PSA		PSA Iacobi, Circumcisionis
Gaudeamus omnes				PSA		PSA Iacobi
Responsum accepit		PSA, MAG, BES				
Revertere, revertere					PSA	
Hodie Maria virgo					PSA, VIG	
Exaltata est sancta Dei					PSA, MAG, VIG	
Surge aquilo et veni					PSA	
O admirabile commercium		PSA		PSA		
Ave virgo Maria		PSA, VES	VES			BEE Adv. V
Ecce ancilla domini	PSA		PSA, MAG			
Ioseph conturbatus est						PSA Nat Domini, Iacobi, Eugenii

This chart gives a good sense of where Marian *psallendae* are assigned in the liturgical calendar. The final column contains a great variety of ‘other’ feast days to which Marian chants are assigned, ranging from feasts of saints to Dedications, and even to *feriae*. Several *psallendae* appear to be deliberately grouped together, always appearing in the order of procession on the same feast days. See for example, *Super salutem* and *Hortus conclusus* on the previous page, which appear together on feasts of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Annunciation and the Assumption. Organizing the material in such a way was very useful for conducting quick comparisons of the chants in question. It also made the process of locating chants in the manuscript editions easier, as full versions (i.e., versions that include the full *psallenda* text and music) only appear once or twice in the antiphoner. Other assignments include a brief *incipit* only. It was necessary to identify and transcribe the *psallendae*, so knowing which feast days they were assigned to saved a considerable amount of time that would otherwise have been spent searching for a given chant one page at a time. The following chapter will examine this deliberate grouping of chants, exploring topical connections in the texts as well as musical attributes of the *psallendae* themselves.

Chapter 4: *Psallenda* Groupings

4.1 Overview of *Psallenda* Groupings

Once a selection of Marian *psallendae* had been transcribed, the parallels between a number of the *psallenda* melodies were manifestly obvious. The following step then was to sift through the repertory and group *psallendae* according to similarities in melodic composition. Thus a number of groups were formed, in which many different chants use the same melodic material. Often this task was made simple as a result of the deliberate arrangement of *psallendae* belonging to the same melodic family in the manuscript source itself, as in the case of the Group 1 *psallendae* in Vimercate B, which appear in succession on folio 46, *recto* and *verso*.

Having identified all the members of a given melodic family, the *psallendae* were then transcribed in such a way as to facilitate a melodic comparison between individual melodies. This comparison led to the identification of soft and hard melodic differences, which will be discussed further in chapter 5. Additionally, the method of melodic comparison made it possible to create a stemma, that is, a reduction of the entire group into a single core melody on which all of the members are based.

Special care was taken to preserve the original text underlay from the manuscript sources, as significant clues were often embedded therein. *Psallendae* with longer texts have correspondingly longer melodic expansions of the core melody and vice versa. Additionally, a number of *psallendae* were analyzed for their text setting, be it syllabic, neumatic, melismatic, or some combination thereof. This information provided insight to the Ambrosian compositional style. Contrary to what we might expect, important words were not consistently marked with long, florid melismas. Rather, it appears that pre-existing melodic material was superimposed on new texts, and adjustments (such as adding extra

notes to compensate for extra syllables) were made as necessary. However, the case is not so cut and dry. There are inconsistencies in some of the groups, which include hard variants, such as those found in *O admirabile*. The reasoning for this is uncertain. It is the first *psallenda* in the order of appearance for its group. This may suggest that it is the prime form of the melodic theme, and those that follow derive their melodic material from it. Or it could be merely that the longer text warrants extra notes. Through a detailed look at the individual *psallendae* of the melodic-thematic groups, these and other questions will be brought into consideration.

4.2 Melodic Groupings

4.2.1 Group 1: *Nesciens mater, Virgo hodie, Gaudeamus omnes, O admirabile*

4.2.1.1 *Nesciens mater*

*Nesciens mater virgo virum peperit sine dolore | salvatorem seculorum | ipsum regem angelorum sola virgo lactitabat | ubere de celo pleno | evovae*⁵⁸

[Without knowing man, the virgin mother gave birth without pain to the saviour of the ages; the virgin alone, whose breasts were filled by heaven, gave suck to this same king of angels.]

xxviii.

Nesciens mater virgo virum peperit sine dolo - re salvatorem
 seculorum ipsum regem angelorum sola virgo lacti -
 -tabat ubera de celo plena evovae

- ❖ Vimercate B “xxviii” 46v
- ❖ Missale Ambrosianum “XV” In Purificatione
- ❖ Magistretti p. 111 (Purification) “Mane. Psallentium ad sanctam Mariam. XIII.”

⁵⁸ The vertical lines included between parts of the text of this particular *psallenda* are present in Vimercate B, folio 46 *verso*.

- ❖ Magistretti p. 42 (Advent VI) “Psallentium ad S. Mariam ad Circulum. XXVIII”
- ❖ Assigned to Purification (PSA), Advent VI (PSA - xxviii), Innocentium (PSA - #2 of Vigils after Mag antiphon) and Eugenii (PSA)
- ❖ Finalis: F
- ❖ Range: C to c
- ❖ Evovae formula: g f g a g f

The primary assignment of the *psallenda Nesciens mater* is located on folio 46v in Vimercate B, amongst other chants for the sixth Sunday of Advent. It is the 28th *psallenda* listed in the order of procession. This chant is also assigned as an *incipit* only to the feast days of the Purification,⁵⁹ the Holy Innocents, and St. Eugene. *Nesciens mater* is consistently classified as a *psallenda* and does not appear to serve any other liturgical purpose in the Office or Mass.

The melody itself is syllabic-neumatic with one instance of a melisma, on the word *angelorum*. The finalis is F and the range spans one octave, from C to c. Although it is not actually written in, a B-flat is implied through multiple outlines of the tritone (F to B). The *differentia* formula is “G F G A G F”, a series of neighbour tones found in the opening phrase of the melody on the words *mater virgo virum*. This formula is the only example of its kind to be used in this particular group.

In the modern *Missale Ambrosianum* (1935), the chant *Nesciens mater* is assigned primarily to the feast of the Purification and is the 15th *psallenda* in the order of procession. Additionally the chant is transposed down to the plagal mode, thus begins on C. This modern edition reinforces the notion that a B-flat was implied in the original edition, for in the transposed version, the melody outlines the interval of a perfect fourth (C to F), with emphasis on the semitone motion from E to F.

⁵⁹ This chant is not assigned to the Purification in Vimercate B, but *is* assigned to it according to Magistretti and Merkley-Bailey. The early sources used for this study include only one winter antiphoner, however, the only other source being the modern 1935 Missal.

This narrative and laudatory *psallenda* poetically describes the motherhood of Mary from Christ's conception to his infancy. It employs alliteration and rhyme in an artful manner. The former occurs twice: “*virgo virum*” and “*salvatorem saeculorum*” and the latter occurs twice as well “...*sine dolore salvatore saeculorum, ipsum regem angelorum*” and “*caelo pleno*”. That Mary gave birth without pain was widely disputed in the early Church and has been defended in the writings of St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas.⁶⁰ It was believed that she who merited to bear the Son of God in her womb would have been exempt from the effects of original sin, one of which is pain during childbirth. The feast of the Immaculate Conception upholds this doctrine, although any reference to it is absent from the current source materials, with the exception of the 1935 *Missale Ambrosianum*. As in the *Beatus ille venter*, this *psallenda* makes reference to Mary's physical nursing of the Christ child. The physiological connection in this *psallenda* is striking—“*ubere de caelo pleno*”—the author reinforces Mary's virginity by writing that her breasts were filled by heaven, as opposed to the natural physiological result of pregnancy and birthing.

4.2.1.2 *Virgo hodie*

Virgo hodie fidelis etsi verbum genuit incarnatum virgo mansit et post partum quem laudantes omnes dicimus benedicta tu in mulieribus.

[Although the faithful virgin brings forth the incarnate Word today, she remains a virgin during and after birth, and we all praise her saying blessed are you among women.]

⁶⁰ Anthony Maas, "The Blessed Virgin Mary," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* Vol. 15 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912) <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15464b.htm>>.

xxx
vii.

Virgo hodie fidelis etsi verbum genuit incarnatum virgo mansit
et post partum quem laudantes omnes dicimus benedicta
tu in muli - er - i - bus

- ❖ Vimercate B “xxxvii” 46r⁶¹
- ❖ Missale Ambrosianum “XVI” In Purificatione
- ❖ Magistretti p. 111 (Purification) “Mane. Psallentium ad sanctam Mariam. XV”
- ❖ Magistretti p. 42 (Advent VI) “Psallentium ad S. Mariam ad Circulum. XXIX”
- ❖ Assigned to Purification (PSA #10 ad mat), Advent VI (PSA - xxxvii), Iacobi (PSA - #2 in Vigils post Mag antiphon), Circumcisionis (PSA)
- ❖ Finalis: F
- ❖ Range: C to b
- ❖ Evovae formula: f f d

The *psallenda Virgo hodie* is assigned primarily to the sixth Sunday of Advent, but also to the feasts of the Purification, St. Jacob, and the Circumcision of the Lord. Vimercate B contains the chant on folio 46v; the 37th *psallenda* in the order of procession for Advent VI. The melody itself spans the range of a seventh, from C to b (or an implied B-flat), and the finalis is F. This chant closely resembles the previous *psallenda*, *Nesciens mater*, with a few slight modifications. They are clearly derived from the same melodic family. The *differentia* pattern is simpler, consisting only of three notes: F F D. The sole melisma now falls on the word “*dicimus*”, making any inference of word painting unlikely.

Like *Nesciens mater*, this chant has been transposed down a fourth in the 1935 *Missale Ambrosianum*, thus avoiding any tritone outlines. Interestingly, a B-flat is supplemented on the antepenultimate note, creating a weaker cadential movement (from B-flat to C as opposed to the original semitone motion a fourth higher, from E to F).

⁶¹ There is a labeling error in Vimercate B. It should be xxvii. This coincides with an inconsistency in numbering in Vim B on folios 45-47.

This narrative/laudatory *psallenda* is an unusual choice for the feast of the Purification, as the text is proper to Christmas day, “*virgo hodie fidelis esti verbum genuit incarnatum.*” It may be that the liturgical authorities wanted to illustrate the connection between the two events (Christ’s birth and his Presentation in the Temple) through including this chant in the celebration of Candlemas. It is also possible that it was selected simply because of its reference to the Blessed Virgin, who is honoured on the feast day of the Purification. The Jewish ritual for Purification traditionally took place forty days after childbirth, and the forty days to the feast of the Purification in the liturgical calendar marks the time when Mary would have gone to the temple, and is also the end of the Christmas season. The first portion of the *psallenda* is non-scriptural, poetic, while the latter portion, “*benedicta tu in mulieribus*” is taken from Luke’s gospel depiction of the Visitation.⁶² This latter portion also came to form part of the most famous of all Marian prayers: the *Ave Maria*.

This *psallenda* contains a distinct rhyme scheme,

*Virgo hodie fidelis etsi verbum
genuit incarnatum
virgo mansit et post partum
quem laudantes omnes dicimus
benedicta tu in mulieribus*

The five-line division according to the rhyme scheme suggests the presence of a pentameter, but the rhythmic patterns of the syllables do not comply with such a suggestion. Despite the presence other poetic elements in this text, there is no formal metre. This may be a clue as to how these chants were written; the theological points (e.g., Mary is Mother of God) were of utmost importance, and the poetic metre was considered secondary. Again we find reference to the *topos* of Mary’s virginity before, during and after birth, and an allegorical reference to Christ as “the Word.”

⁶² Luke 1:42.

4.2.1.3 *Gaudeamus omnes*

Gaudeamus omnes fideles salvator noster natus est in mundo hodie processit proles et magnifici germinis perseverans pudor virginitas.

[Ye faithful people, let us all rejoice, for our Saviour is born in our world: this Day there has been born the Son of the great Mother, and she yet a pure Virgin.]

xx
viii.

The image shows three staves of musical notation in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 7/8 time signature. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The second staff continues with: B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. The third staff continues with: B1, A1, G1, F1, E1, D1, C1, B0, A0, G0, F0, E0, D0, C0. The lyrics are written below the notes: "Gaudeamus omnes fideles salva - tor noster nat(us) est in mundo hodie p(ro)cessit p(rol)es et magnifici germinis p(er)severans pudor virginitatis".

- ❖ Vimercate B “xxviii” 46v
- ❖ Missale Ambrosianum “XVII” In Purificatione
- ❖ Magistretti p. 111 (Purification) “Mane. Psallentium ad sanctam Mariam. XVI.”
- ❖ Magistretti p. 42 (Advent VI) “Psallentium ad S. Mariam ad Circulum. “XXX”
- ❖ Assigned to Purification (PSA), Advent VI (PSA), Iacobi (PSA)
- ❖ Finalis: F
- ❖ Range: C to c
- ❖ Evovae formula: a a g f g a g

The *psallenda Gaudeamus omnes* is the twenty-ninth in the order of procession for the sixth Sunday of Advent in Vim B. It is located on folio 46v, alongside the others of this group. It is additionally assigned to the feast days of the Purification and of St. Jacob.

The melody closely resembles the others of this group, with an F final and an octave range spanning C to c. The *differentia* is A A G F G A G, suggesting a half-cadence. As with the previous two *psallendae*, B-flats are implied through multiple tritone outlines, though not actually written in.

As seen in the previous example, this *psallenda* is yet another text proper to the celebration of Christmas day, “*salvator noster natus est in mundo hodie.*” Unlike the former however, the text is prosaic, non-biblical, and does not contain any elements of rhyme or

poetic metre. It addresses the faithful rather than the Blessed Virgin or Christ, as might be expected, yet it still conveys the message of the incarnation in conjunction with laudatory invocation. Again the word “*magnifici*” is used to describe Mary, but this time in conjunction with an unmodified reference to the Son. That is to say, the usual order has been reversed in the second portion of this *psallenda*. Whereas we commonly see phrases that describe the “great Son of the Mother,” here we see the “Son of the great Mother.” This emphasis on Mary reflects Milanese Christians’ devotion to her in the Middle Ages, but does not take precedence over Christ’s primacy, as the first part of the sentence, “*Gaudeamus omnes fideles salvator noster natus est*” makes clear the object of rejoicing: the birth of Christ the Saviour.

4.2.1.4 *O amirabile commercum*

O amirabile commercum creator generis humani animatum corpus summens de virgine nasci dignatus est et procedens homo sine semine largitus est nobis suam deitatem.

[O admirable exchange! The creator of mankind, taking on living flesh was worthy to be born of a virgin, and, coming forth without seed as a man, has given us his deity in abundance.]

xxx.
vi.

O amirabile commercum creator generis humani animatum corpus
summens de virgine dignatus est et procedens homo
sine semine largitus est nobis suam deitatem

- ❖ Vimercate A “xxxvi”
- ❖ Missale Ambrosianum “XVIII” In Purificatione
- ❖ Does not appear in Magistretti Purification *psallendae*
- ❖ Magistretti p. 42 (Advent VI) “Psallentium ad S. Mariam ad Circulum. XXVII”
- ❖ Assigned to Purification (PSA) and Advent VI (PSA)
- ❖ Finalis: F

- ❖ Range: C to c
- ❖ No *differentia* assigned

The fourth and final chant of group 1 is a reflection on the “exchange” (*commercum* or, usually, *commercium*) of the Incarnation. God becomes man, taking on flesh and being born of a virgin. Man in turn receives God’s deity ‘in abundance’ through this same great mystery. In the Roman rite, this antiphon comes at the end of the Christmas octave, on the feast of the Circumcision (January 1). However, it is not assigned to this feast in the Ordinal by Beroldus, but rather, is assigned to the feast of the Purification and to the sixth Sunday of Advent.

This antiphon has an interesting history, finding a place in medieval epics. According to Professor Samuel Moore, this antiphon was the basis for the fourth section of *The Advent* in Cynewulf’s *Christ*, an eighth-century English epic poem.⁶³ Further,

Father Burgert...adds, "with the O admirabile as its basis, this final paraphrase, even if a later addition, fittingly closes the great theme carried out in Part I of Cynewulf's *Christ*, for it is with the Octave of Christmas to which the source belongs, that the Christmas Office finds its close."⁶⁴

Despite not being assigned to any date in the octave of Christmas in the Ambrosian rite, this chant still maintains a connection to the Christmas mystery through its text and through its assignment to the sixth Sunday of Advent. This *psallenda* also makes an appearance in Professor Shoaf’s assessment of *Sir Gawain*,

In the first instance Shoaf employs "O admirabile commercium," an antiphon chanted during Laudes of the feast of the Circumcision, in order to identify the commerce of theology with Christ's roles as giver and receiver in the Incarnation.⁶⁵

⁶³ Mary Catherine, **Review** *The Dependence of Part I of Cynewulf's Christ upon the Antiphonary* by Edward Burgert *Modern Language Notes* Vol. 38, No. 8 (Dec, 1923), 486.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 487.

⁶⁵ Robert J. Blanch, **Review** *The Poem as Green Girdle: "Commercium" in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"* by R. A. Shoaf *Speculum* Vol. 62, No. 1 (Jan., 1987), 195.

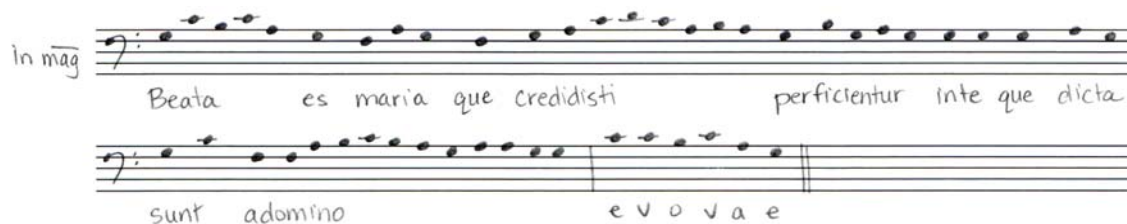
It would seem that this chant, or at least the text of this chant, was well known during the Middle Ages. Can the popularity of a chant be gauged by its appearance in extra-liturgical works written during the Middle Ages? As with some other *psallendae*, *O admirabile* was undoubtedly heard at Mass by the faithful throughout the Middle Ages. The text may well have originated in the preface for the feast of the Circumcision, or for Christmas. Other common sources of non-scriptural *psallendae* texts include sermons, from which this piece may have been derived.

4.2.2 Group 2: *Beata es, Beatus ille venter*

4.2.2.1 *Beata es Maria*

Beata es Maria *quae credidisti perficientur in te quae dicta sunt tibi a Domino.*

[Blessed are you Mary, who believe that all the things said to you by the Lord would be perfected in you.]



- ❖ Vimercate B "in mag" 49r
- ❖ Missale Ambrosianum "VII" In Purificatione
- ❖ Assigned to Nativitas de BMV (PSA), Purification (PSA), Advent VI (MAG) and Fer VI in Adv. VI (MAG)
- ❖ Finalis: G
- ❖ Range: F to d
- ❖ Evovae formula: c c b c a g

This laudatory/narrative *psallenda* is drawn directly from scripture, specifically the account of the Mary's visitation to Elizabeth in Luke 1:45. The words of the chant are spoken by Elizabeth herself and are paraphrased here in addressing Mary in the second person, rather

than in the third person, as the text appears Luke’s gospel: “And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.” This *psallenda* contains no rhyme scheme or poetic metre. It speaks of Mary’s humble acceptance of the Divine Plan and of its perfection in her.

4.2.2.2 *Beatus ille venter*

Beatus ille venter qui te portavit Christe et beata ubera quae te lactaverunt Dominum et Salvatorem mundi qui pro salute generis humani carnem assumere dignatus es.

[Blessed is the womb that carried you, Christ: and blessed are the breasts that nurse you, the Lord and Saviour of the world, who for the salvation of all mankind deems it worthy to take on mortal flesh.]

ant

Beatus ille venter q(u)e te portavit criste et beata ubera
 que te lactaverunt dominum et salvatorem mundi V. Qui pro
 salute generis humani carnem assumere dignatus es p̄

- ❖ Vimercate B “ant v(es)p(eras)” 41r “Advent VI”
- ❖ Missale Ambrosianum “XIII” In Purificatione and “Confractorium” In Vigilas Assumption and In Vigilas Nativitas de BMV
- ❖ Assigned to Nativitas (VIG), Purification (PSA, VIG) and Annunciation (VIG)
- ❖ Finalis: G
- ❖ Range: D to d
- ❖ Psalm tone formula: c c b c a g

This *psallenda* is a laudatory invocation that originates partly in scripture, “A woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, ‘Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!’ But he said, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!’”⁶⁶ The second portion of the *psallenda* summarizes the purpose of Christ’s incarnation:

⁶⁶ Luke 11:27.

Virgo permansit (5)
virgo genuit (5)
regem omnium regum (7)

The end-rhymes of the first three lines coincide with repetitions of the word *virgo* in a truly symmetrical fashion. The final line of text is palindromic in a sense, continuing the poetic sense of the first three but necessarily altering it in order to reflect the new subject, the “king of kings.” The metre is also symmetrical, as indicated in parentheses above. Three distinct phrases make up this one *psallenda* and are united by the recurring subject, *virgo*. This text may have come from a Christmas sermon written by St. Zeno (bishop of Verona from 362-371 AD). The original reads,

*O magnum sacramentum! Maria Virgo incorrupta concepit; post conceptum virgo peperit; post partum virgo permansit.*⁶⁸

[O great sacrament! The Virgin Mary conceived without sin; after conceiving, she gave birth, and after birth she remained a virgin.]

Likewise, St. Augustine (bishop of Hippo from 396-430 AD) wrote in Sermon 51:18,

*Illa enim virgo concepit, virgo peperit, virgo permansit.*⁶⁹

[That in fact, the Virgin conceived, the Virgin gave birth and she remained a virgin.]

Given St. Augustine’s special connection to the Milanese, it is likely that the text of this *psallenda* was well known. The repetition of *virgo* and the division of the text into three statements that narrate the life of the Virgin make for a poetic and memorable phrase. It should not come as a surprise that such a piece would be set musically. Further, it can easily be divided into three musical phrases, indicating the distinction of each of the statements, yet in combination, forming one complete idea.

⁶⁸ St. Zeno in *Institutiones theologiae dogmaticae generalis seu fundamentalis*, Part 3, arranged by Alberto Knoll (Augustae Taurinorum: Petri Marietti, 1892), 105.

⁶⁹ Saint Augustine, *Corpus Augustinian Gissense*, electronic edition edited by Cornelius Mayer (Basel: Schwabe, 1995). Available online through *Intalex: Past Masters*: <http://www.nlx.com/collections/11>.

4.2.3.2 *Virgo dei genitrix*

Virgo Dei Genitrix, quem totus non capit orbis: In tua se clausit viscera factus homo. Vera fides Geniti purgavit crimina mundi, Et tibi virginitas inviolata manet.

[O Virgin Mother of God, he whom the whole world does not contain, enclosed himself in thy womb, being made man. True faith in thy begotten Son has cast out the sins of the world, and for thee virginity remains inviolate.]

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the chant 'Virgo dei genitrix'. It consists of four staves of music, each with a treble clef and a 7/8 time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with 'Virgo dei genitrix quem totus non capit orbis in tua se clausit'. The second staff continues with 'viscera factus homo vera fides geniti'. The third staff continues with 'purgavit crimina mundi et tibi virginitas inviolata'. The fourth staff concludes with 'manet evovae'. The notation is a simple line with dots representing notes, characteristic of medieval chant notation.

- ❖ Vimercate B “ps” 41v “Sab VI Adventus”
- ❖ Vimercate B “ps” 114 r incipit only “iiii”
- ❖ Missale Ambrosianum “I” In Purification”
- ❖ Assigned to Nativitas de BMV (PSA), Purification (PSA), Annunciation (PSA), Assumption (PSA) and Dom post Nat Domini (PSA)
- ❖ Finalis: D
- ❖ Range: C to a
- ❖ Evovae formula: da a g f e f d

The second example, *Virgo dei genitrix*, has a significantly longer text, amounting to twenty-six words in total. It is natural then that this *psallenda* contains a more extensive melody, in concordance with its longer text. Some melodic figurations are common to both chants, such as the opening melodic motif outlined earlier. Other common melodic features include leaps and outlines of perfect fourths, which occur in both chants, though not necessarily on the same pitches or in the same direction.

One melodic figure found only in the second example is particularly striking. The word *viscera* is set with the following melisma, “D G D G F E D E F E D C”. It stands out immediately as the preceding eleven words are set more or less syllabically.

In fact, the entire *psallenda* can be divided into two sections:

Virgo dei genitrix quem totus (10)
non capit orbis in tua se clausit (11)
viscera factus homo (7)
(15 words – 28 syllables)

vera fides geniti purgavit crimina mundi (15)
et tibi virginitas inviolata manet (14)
(11 words – 29 syllables)

This *psallenda* contains elements of both narrative and laudatory invocation. Through its recapturing of Mary’s mysterious conception of Christ, “He...enclosed Himself in thy womb,” it emphasizes Mary’s participation in the divine plan, as well as the manifestation of the Holy Spirit within her, without the need for the usual procreative process. This was a major point of contention between the early Christians and the Jews, the latter of whom did not consider the virginal birth to be a fulfillment of Isaias’ prophecy, “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and his name shall be called Emmanuel.”⁷⁰ The second portion of the *psallenda* text draws attention to the “begotten Son’s” ability to cast out sins; a thing possible only for God.

This *psallenda* again connects two phrases that have no necessary connection. The first part of the first phrase, *Virgo Dei Genitrix, quem totus no capit orbis* presents the hearer with a stupefying thought: God in his infinitude is so immense that even the whole world cannot contain him. The hearer is to conjure up an image of something larger than imaginable, and is meant to be awestruck by the sheer magnitude of God. The second part of the phrase is no

⁷⁰ Isaiah 7:14.

less awe inspiring: *in tua se clausit viscera factus homo*. This same God, whom the world cannot contain, accomplishes the seemingly impossible by becoming enclosed within a womb. The phrase causes the hearer to think beyond the biggest thing imaginable to being enclosed in a way that is almost unimaginable. This contrast of images could be intended to lead the hearer to meditate both on the power of God and the humility of Jesus: as God, he is greater than the whole world, and yet chose to become one of the most vulnerable of creatures, a baby. The second phrase is more laudatory, but again points to the impossible becoming reality. Sin and evil are everywhere in our world, however, the faith of Mary allows for the means to expunge it: *vera fides Geniti purgavit inviolat*. The text again moves from the very large, the reign of sin, to the very small, the faith of one girl. The last portion of this text, *et tibi virginitas inviolate manet* would seem to be more didactic, connecting the teaching of Mary's virginity to the larger mystery. Nevertheless, the theme of the impossible becoming possible is continued even here, and perhaps that is the point of this *psallenda*. In each of the phrases, something beyond imagining becomes reality.

The poetic structure found in the first chant of this group (*Virgo verbum*) is not found in the second (*Virgo dei genitrix*). Rather, the second *psallenda* is divided into two sections, each containing a roughly equal number of syllables (28 vs. 29). The division of the text is marked by a repetition of the musical phrase; from *virgo* to *homo* contains the same music as *vera* to *manet*. This particular type of chant is called an *antiphona dupla*, a 'double' antiphon, which consists of two sections of text that are set to the same melody. The melody may be altered slightly in the repetition to account for variations in the second portion of the text. Further indications that this chant is bipartite are included in the text-to-music setting itself. Figure 1 displays a comparison of the first and second half of this *antiphona dupla*, labeled Part A and Part B, respectively.

Figure 4-1: Melodic comparison of Parts A and B of Virgo dei genitrix (antiphona dupla)

Part A
Virgo dei genitrix quem totus non capit orbis in tua se

Part B
vera fides geniti purgavit crimina mundi et tibi

Part A
Clausit viscera factus homo

Part B
virginitas inviolata manet

It is interesting to note that there are textual and syllabic concordances at points in the chant that align. The opening motif of both sections contains a word beginning with the letter “V”: *virgo* and *vera*. A few notes later, we note the words *genitrix* and *geniti* set to exactly the same melodic fragment. Likewise, the words *viscera* and *virginitas* both appear to cue a melisma.

4.2.4 Group 4: Sub tuam misericordiam, Sub tuam protectionem

4.2.4.1 Sub tuam misericordiam

Sub tuam misericordiam confugimus Dei genitrix ut nostram deprecationem ne inducas in tentationem sed de periculo libera nos sola casta et benedicta. Hallelujah.

[Under your mercy we take refuge Mother of God; may our petitions not be abandoned into temptation, but from danger deliver us, only pure and blessed. Alleluia.]

xxx.

Sub tuam misericordiam confugimus dei genitrix ut nostram
 deprecationem ne inducas in temptationem sed de periculo libera
 nos sola casta et benedicta e v o v a e

- ❖ Vimercate B “xxx” 46v “man(e) cum ant ps”
- ❖ Missale Ambrosianum “XIX” In Purificatione
- ❖ Assigned to Nativitas (PSA), Purification (PSA), Advent VI (PSA), Assumption (PSA), Ded maioris (PSA), Fer II post Ded maiorem (PSA) and Dom I Octobris (PSA)
- ❖ Finalis: D
- ❖ Range: C to a
- ❖ Evovae formula: d a g f e f d

The text of this *psallenda* is derived from one of the oldest known prayers to Mary, the Greek original of which is recorded on an Egyptian papyrus dated to the third century. It is a clear example of intercessory invocation, in that it addresses the Mother of God specifically with references to *nostram deprecationem* and appeals for deliverance *de periculo*. The choice of words bear a deliberate likeness to those of the *Pater Noster* given by Christ to his disciples (and recounted in Luke 11:2-4), *ne inducas in tentationem*, which raises many questions about Mary’s perceived role as intercessor in the spiritual lives of the early Christians. This *psallenda* also draws attention to her special election by God, *sola benedicta*, her perpetual virginity, *sola casta*, and her Motherhood, *Dei genitrix*.

This *psallenda* contains a subtle rhyme scheme in some of the lines,

Sub tuam misericordiam
confugimus Dei genitrix
nostram deprecationem
ne inducas in tentationem
sed de periculo libera nos
sola casta et benedicta
Hallelujah

The addition of the word *Hallelujah* at the end of this piece represents the Christian's joy and hope in the promise of the resurrection despite the temptations of this world, and it creates a seven-line piece. The number seven itself is considered a holy number through its association with the seven virtues, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the seven sacraments.

Musicologist Christian Troelsgard draws attention to this chant and its parallel in the Byzantine liturgy. "It was at Milan used as a *psallenda* and *antiphona post evangelium* on Marian feasts and its Byzantine parallel, the *apolytikion* Ὑπο την σην εὐσπλαχνίαν was used at the conclusion of ordinary Vespers in Lent."⁷¹ Considering the lack of interaction between the the Byzantine rite and the Western rites in later times, this parallel attests to the antiquity of the text.

4.2.4.2 *Sub tuam protectionem*

Sub tuam protectionem confugimus ubi infirmi susceperunt virtutem et propter hoc tibi psallimus Dei genetrix virgo.

[Under your protection we fly where the infirm receive power and on account of this we sing to you, virgin bearer of God.]

xxxj.

Sub tuam protectionem confugimus ubi infirmi susceperunt
virtutem et propter hoc tibi psallimus dei genitrix vera

- ❖ Vimercate B "xxxj" 46v "man(e) cum ant ps"
- ❖ Missale Ambrosianum "XX" In Purificatione
- ❖ Assigned to Nativitas (PSA), Purification (PSA), Advent VI (PSA), Assumption (PSA), Ded maioris (PSA), Fer II post Ded maiorem (PSA) and Dom I Octobris (PSA)
- ❖ Finalis: D
- ❖ Range: C to a

⁷¹ Christian Troelsgard, "Stational Liturgy and Processional Antiphons in the Ambrosian Rite," 90-1.

- ❖ No *differentia* formula assigned

This intercessory *psallenda* closely resembles the previous *Sub tuum misericordiam* in form and content. There are direct parallels in the word choice: *Sub tuam*, and *confugimus* being the most noteworthy. It contains an allegorical reference to Mary in the first portion, *ubi infirmi susceperunt virtutem*, whose subject is made clear in the second portion, *Dei genatrix virgo*. The choice of the word *psallimus* is most appropriate in this context as it makes a direct connection with the piece's function, a *psallenda* as something to be sung, and it creates a parallelism with the former *Sub tuum*. While the present *psallenda* describes the act of singing, the former one ends with the word *Hallelujah*, a word near inseparable from its musical, sung context. Further, there are musical parallels between the two pieces to emphasize their intended pairing in the order of performance, such as a rising three-note motive on the word *tuum* or *tuam*. This *psallenda* clearly calls attention to Mary's role as intercessor, evident through widespread veneration to her in general and in the Egyptian papyrus containing the original version of this prayer.

4.2.5 Group 5: *Beata progenies, O virgo virginum*

4.2.5.1 *Beata progenies*

Beata progenies unde christus natus est quam gloriosa est celi regem genuit. Evovae.

[Blessed is the stock from which Christ was born, how glorious is she who gave birth to the King of heaven.]



- ❖ Vimercate B “in cantem” 84r “Dominica post natal”
- ❖ Missale Ambrosianum “II” In Purificatione

- ❖ Assigned to Nativitas de BMV (PSA, VES, CAN), Purification (PSA, CAN) and **Dom post Nat Domini** (CAN)
- ❖ Finalis: D
- ❖ Range: C to a
- ❖ Evovae formula: f f f f d

This laudatory *psallenda* addresses the Virgin Mary in the third person, unlike some of the more familiar *psallendae*, which address her directly (e.g., *you* who merited to bear in your womb Christ). In fact, it invokes Mary solely through apposition, that is, without naming her explicitly, but rather addressing her allegorically as the “stock from which Christ was born.” Themes that arise immediately include Mary as the Mother of God (*Theotokos*) and Christ as King of heaven. The author creates a parallelism in the phrase, visible when it is separated into two phrases as seen in the English translation. The first praises the earthly roots of Christ's ancestry and calls his stock *beata*, that is, blessed or happy. The second phrase takes his stock to a higher level, calling her *gloriosa*. The second phrase is built on the first.

4.2.5.2 *O virgo virginum*

O virgo virginum *quomodo fiet istud quia nec primam te similem visa est nec habere sequentem fili(a)e Jerusalem quid me admiramini divinum est mysterium hoc quod cernitis.*

[O virgin of virgins, how shall this be brought about? For neither has anyone comparable been seen before you, nor anyone after you. Daughters of Jerusalem, why do you admire me? The mystery that you perceive is divine.]

xxviii.

O virgo virginum quo modo fiet istud quia nec primam te
similem visa es nec habere sequentem filiae ierusalem quid me
admiramini divinum est mysterium hoc quod
cernitis evovae

- ❖ Vimercate B “xxviii” 45v
- ❖ Missale Ambrosianum “VIII” In Purificatione
- ❖ Assigned to Purification (PSA) and Advent VI (PSA)
- ❖ Finalis: D
- ❖ Range: A to a
- ❖ Evovae formula: f f f f d

This *psallenda* is a laudatory invocation to Mary as “virgin of virgins.” Emphasis is placed on the mystery of the virginal conception and on the unique place of Mary in the history of salvation. This chant is also included in the traditional O Antiphons that are sung in the days leading up to Christmas.⁷²

This *psallenda* presents the hearer with two voices. In the first phrase, we have the daughters of Jerusalem praising Mary for how all these events were brought about. In the second phrase, Mary responds. It is here that the speaker of the first phrase is identified as the daughters of Jerusalem. To be the mother of the messiah was highly desired by young Jewish women. To be the woman chosen by God to bear the messiah would be an honour beyond description. The daughters of Jerusalem praise Mary not so much for her bearing the messiah, but for what she is: *nec primam te similem visa est nec habere sequentem*. Mary's response moves the emphasis away from herself: *quid me admiramini?* Both being the mother of the messiah and possessing the unspoken virtues that Mary possesses are not her own work: *divinum est mysterium*, all of this is of a divine origin.

Those who are included among the “daughters of Jerusalem” can also be extended to all believers. As Émilien Lamirande remarks, “Jérusalem, c’est à la fois la femme, l’Église et Marie.”⁷³ Not just a young Jewish woman would bring forth a messiah, but the image of

⁷² Hugh Henry, "O Antiphons," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* Vol. 11 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911) <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11173b.htm>>.

⁷³ Émilien Lamirande, “La thème de la Jerusalem celeste chez saint Ambroise,” *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes Paris* 29/3-4 (1983), 219.

Jerusalem itself as the holy city would produce a saviour, and so the “daughters of Jerusalem” could also mean all those who come from the holy city. Lamirande notes that St Ambrose,

associe au bonheur de Jérusalem, qui est mère comme Ève, le bonheur d’une autre mère, Marie : “Beata mater Hierusalem, beatus et Mariae uterus, qui tantum dominum coronavit”. Il reprend les images conventionnelles sur le sein de Marie, comme temple ou palais du Très-Haut, et il finit par montrer que la femme-mère-Jérusalem se réalise en plénitude en la personne de la mère de Jésus.⁷⁴
[footnotes omitted]

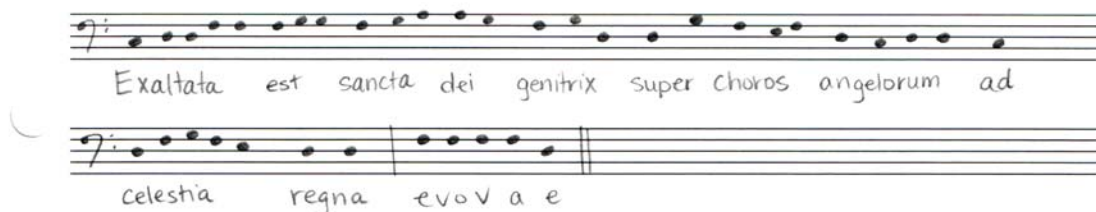
Thus, it is very much in keeping with Ambrosian thought to personify the city of Jerusalem in the person of Mary. Those who sing this chant are members of that new holy city, namely, the Church, and they all sing as adopted children of that mother.

4.2.6 Group 6: *Exaltata est, Sapientia h edificavit*

4.2.6.1 *Exaltata est*

Exaltata est sancta dei genitrix super choros angelorum ad celestia regna. Evovae.

[The holy mother of God has gone up to the heavenly kingdom above the chorus of angels.]



- ❖ Vimercate C 114r, Bedero p. 184
- ❖ Assigned to Assumption
- ❖ Finalis: D
- ❖ Range: C to a
- ❖ Evovae formula: F F F F D

This *psallenda* speaks of the Assumption of Mary into heaven. The addition of *super choros angelorum* places her physically above the angels, presumably next to the Son. The chant

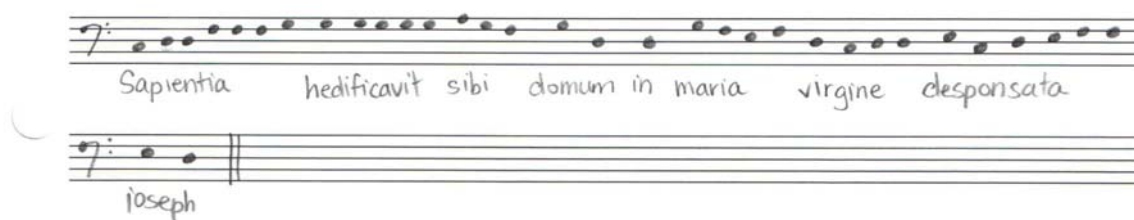
⁷⁴ Emilien Lamirande, “La theme de la Jerusalem celeste chez saint Ambroise,” 219.

contains many instances of rising melodic motion (see, for example, *Exaltata est*, which rises from C to G), perhaps to draw musical connections to the text.

4.2.6.2 *Sapientia hedificavit*

Sapientia hedificavit sibi domum in maria virgine desponsata ioseph.

[Wisdom has found for herself a home in the Virgin Mary, who is espoused to Joseph.]



- ❖ Vimercate D “xiii” 138v
- ❖ Assigned to *In Dedicatione Templi*
- ❖ Finalis: D
- ❖ Range: C to a

This psallenda draws on scripture to reinforce Mary’s importance as mother of God. The first four words, *Sapientia hedificavit sibi domum*, are derived from Proverbs 8:1, “Wisdom has found for herself a home.” It continues, however, to indicate that the Virgin Mary herself is the home of Wisdom, now made manifest in Christ Jesus. This deliberate connection to scripture realizes Mary as the virgin who was chosen to give birth to the Messiah. What is interesting about this particular text is the appendix: *desponsata ioseph*, meaning, “espoused to Joseph.” Although he was undeniably connected to the life of Christ, devotion to St. Joseph developed very slowly, over the course of many centuries. The Beroldus does not contain a feast day for St. Joseph, as it was only added to the Roman calendar under the pontificate of Sixtus IV (1471-84).⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Charles Souvay, "St. Joseph," In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 8 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910). 6 Sept. 2012 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08504a.htm>>.

The devotion, then merely private, as it seems, gained a great impetus owing to the influence and zeal of such saintly persons as St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Gertrude, and St. Bridget of Sweden. According to Benedict XIV (De Serv. Dei beatif., I, iv, n. 11; xx, n. 17), "the general opinion of the learned is that the Fathers of Carmel were the first to import from the East into the West the laudable practice of giving the fullest cultus to St. Joseph".⁷⁶

Mention of him in this *psallenda* is noteworthy, especially considering his relative absence from the Ambrosian calendar at the time in which the manuscript editions were assembled. His role in this piece may appear to be insignificant, but he himself is dignified by the fact that he is espoused to Mary.

4.3 Psallendae Grouped by Differentiae

In order to test Gevaert's theory of melodic families, the *psallendae* were first organized into categories according to their respective finals and termination formulas. This enabled a quick comparison to be conducted between the core *psallenda* melodies and those of other Ambrosian Office antiphons, as listed in Merkley and Bailey's taxonomy in *Antiphons of the Ambrosian Office*. This experiment sought to determine whether or not the melodic families of the *psallendae* were in any way related to the core melodies of the Office antiphons. With a repertory of over 700 *psallendae*, it would seem very likely that melodies would be re-used as Office antiphons. In fact, several *psallendae* serve double-duty in that they are assigned both as processional chants and as Office antiphons, occasionally on the same feast day. An example of this is the *Responsum accepit Simeon*, which is assigned as a *psallenda*, *magnificat* antiphon and *benedictus* antiphon on the feast of the Purification. On the other hand, chants such as the *Beata es Maria* are assigned exclusively as *psallenda* on certain feast days, yet behave as Office antiphons on other related feast days. In this case, the *Beata*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

es Maria is assigned as a *psallenda* to the feasts of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and to the Purification, but as a *magnificat* antiphon to the sixth Sunday of Advent.

D-final psallendae

Virgo dei genitrix	D A A G F E F D	Possibly 425
Virgo verbum concepit	D A A G F E F D	
Sub tuam misericordiam	D A G F E F D	
Senex puerum portabat	D A A G F E F D	
O virgo virginum	D A G F E F D	
Erit radix yesse	D A A G F E F D	
Beata progenies	F F F F D	157 (CantemusD3)
Exaltata est sancta	F F F F D	137 (Miserere D3)
Sapientia hedificavit	N/A	137
Super salutem	A A G F G A G	1295 (Laudate D2)
Dignus es domine	E E F D F E D (psalm tone termination)	
Sub tuam protectionem	N/A	
Magnificamus te	N/A	

E-final psallendae

In flore mater	A A G A E	
Dignus es domine	E E F D F E D	

F-final psallendae

Maria autem conservabat	C C B C A G	851 (Magnificat G 1)
Nesciens mater	G F G A G F	
Virgo hodie	F F D	
Gaudeamus omnes	A A G F G A G	
Responsum accepit	C C C C A	
O admirabile commercium Spiritus sanctus in te descendit		

G-final psallendae

Hodie maria virgo	C C C C B C A G	630 (Psalms proprios G aliae)
Ortus conclusus	(psalm)	
Laudabilis virgo	C C C B C A G	809 (Laudate G 6)
Maria autem conservabat	C C B C A G	
Beatus ille venter	C C B C A G	173 (Psalms proprios G aliae)

De radice yesse	C C	B C A G	306 (Psalms proprios G 1)
Spiritus sanctus in te descendit	C C	B C A G	
Beata es maria	C C	B C A G	154
Maria autem conservabat	C C	B C A G	
Revertere revertere	C C	B C A G	
Ecce ancilla domini	CC	B C A G	440 (Magnificat G aliae)
Portam hanc quam	C C C C A		1045 (Benedictus G 2)
Surge aquilo	D D D D	C	
Magnificamus te	D D D D D B		
Beatam me dicent	D D E C D B	(psalm)	
Maria virgo semper laetare	D D	B C A G	

A-final in Bedero, B-final in M99

Exultavit spiritus meus	C C B C A G
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The information presented in these charts shows that some of the *psallendae* examined in this study have melodies that are in a category distinct from the other Office antiphons of the Ambrosian rite. The chants that contain a number in the third column demonstrated melodic parallels to Office antiphons, and this number in turn corresponds to the number assigned by Merkley and Bailey in their taxonomy. The information that follows the number, enclosed in parenthesis, includes the type of antiphon (e.g., *Benedictus* = *antiphona in Benedictus*) and *differentia* group (e.g., “G 2” = G final, *differentia* 2).

Upon closer inspection of the manuscript editions, the possibility is raised that some of the *differentiae* were inserted at a later date, probably by a second hand. It certainly appears that some termination formulas (e.g., *Virgo verbum concepit*) were inserted later, as the hand appears much heavier in comparison to that which notated the rest of the chant. However, the text “evovae” is in the first hand. Did this hypothetical second hand erase the original *differentiae* and replace them with new ones in order to make them fit into groups?

This theory holds fast for *psallendae Virgo verbum concepit* and *Virgo dei genitrix*, both of which have *differentiae* that appear to have been rewritten.

There appears to be a limited number of melodic themes that are used throughout this selection of Ambrosian *psallendae*. The groups presented have been formed according to similarities in melodic structure and termination formulas. We have seen that the *psallendae* are assigned regularly as Office antiphons, and many of the Marian processional chants examined in this study appear to share melodic-thematic material with other Office chants, with some exceptions. Chapter 5 will demonstrate the melodic concordances and variants among *psallendae* in greater detail, and through the use of stemmas, attempt to show the original readings of these chants.

Chapter 5: Reticular analysis

5.1 Examination of texts

The purpose of this chapter is to take the information presented in the first part of this study, and in assembling it, conduct a reticular and stemmatic analysis of the *psallendae*. In the previous chapter, it was discovered that melodic thematic material was shared by groups of chants. The next task was to determine if textual similarities could be found among members of a given melodic family.⁷⁷ If so, is this connection of text and melody deliberate? Considering the long history of oral transmission of chants that is found in the Ambrosian rite, it would be both practical and effective to group melodies according to similarities in texts. In this way, a very large repertory could be reduced to a limited number of groups of related pieces. If a link exists between texts and melodic theme, and I am inclined to believe there is, are there concordances in the textual sources of *psallenda* groups? That is, do all of the texts from Group X come from the same passage of the Bible? Or are all of the texts from Group Y freely composed? Such questions will be examined in this chapter.

Concerning origin, the question arises of which came first, the melody or the text? The earliest sources contain text only, but this is not necessarily an indication that the melody was not in use, rather, that there were insufficient means (and possibly lack of desire) to notate it. The text alone was enough of a cue to prompt the singers to intone a *psallenda* with one or another melodic theme on which many of the chants appear to be based. Even today, certain melodies are used for a variety of texts (Mozart's variations on "*Ah, vous dirai-je maman*" come to mind), from nursery rhymes to television commercials, and their use is found especially in classrooms as a mnemonic aid. This last function of melody may

⁷⁷ See *Beatus ille* and *Beata es*, and *Sub tuam misericordiam* and *Sub tuam protectionem*.

be a key into the minds of the early Christians, who sought to preserve a large number of liturgical texts. With a limited number of melodic themes, ranging from basic to considerably ornate, perhaps the first chants of the Church were passed from generation to generation through the use of melody as a memory aid. In this way, a formal musical score may have been unnecessary. After all, how many elementary school teachers provide their students with a score when teaching “Twinkle, twinkle, little star”? It is through repetition and frequent encounters with the melody that the students commit it to memory. So too, the Milanese may have used a selection of popular melodic themes to sing processional chants, thus widening the participation from a small, professional schola to the inhabitants of entire villages. Religious processions were probably as much social events as they were liturgical. Beroldus provides some insight with the inclusion of the phrase "*Silentium habete!*" that was to be proclaimed by the subdeacon in such events.⁷⁸

It is tempting then to make the argument that *psallendae* with scriptural texts are in fact older than their non-scriptural counterparts, the latter of which may have been composed to add greater solemnity to a feast day through a greater number of processional chants. Additionally, non-biblical *psallendae* texts for feasts of the saints (including the Virgin Mary) are necessarily proper to the occasion, in that specific names or events are described. The text of the *Hodie maria virgo celos ascendit* is an obvious example here, which describes the event of the Assumption itself. This may be contrasted with the *Revertere, revertere*, which, although assigned to the feast of the Assumption, is not in fact proper to it. The lack of specific detail lends these biblical *psallendae* to wider use, in that the same chants may be assigned to several different feast days.

⁷⁸ Beroldus, *Sive Ecclesiae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis Kalendarium et Ordines Saec. XII*, ed. Marco Magistretti, 51.

In order to test this theory, a reticular analysis of the biblical and non-biblical *psallendae* is necessary. The sources alone are insufficient for providing any information regarding the relative dating of chants, as the earliest antiphoners date from the twelfth century and contain both biblical and non-biblical *psallendae*. Through the process of reticular analysis, the texts were organized according to their origin (biblical vs. non-biblical) and melodic final. Following this, it was necessary to determine whether certain melodic themes occurred in both biblical and non-biblical *psallendae*, or whether certain melodic themes were proper to a particular category. The table below contains this information, providing a group number (according to earlier designations) or a melodic *incipit* where no group was found.

Table 5-1: Marian *psallendae* with Biblical Texts

Incipit	Origin (P=paraphrase, M=modified)	Final	Melodic theme (Group or Incipit)	Is this melodic theme found amongst the other Office antiphons?
(H)ortus conclusus	Song of Solomon 4:12 (P)	G	GCB BAG	
Surge aquilo et veni	Song of Solomon 4:16	G	DDBDEED	
Revertere, revertere	Song of Solomon 6:12	G	GBCAGFG	
De radice yesse	Isaiah 11:1	G	AFGACA	MB306
Sapientia edificavit sibi domum	Proverbs 9:1 (M)	D	Group 6*	MB137
Beata es maria	Luke 1:45	G	Group 2	MB154
Beatus ille venter	Luke 11:27	G	Group 2	MB173
Beatam me dicent	Luke 1:48-49	G	GGBCDED	
Maria autem conservabat	Luke 2:19	G	GBCAGA	MB851
Responsum accepit	Luke 2:26	F	ACACDDCB	
Exultavit spiritus meus	Luke 1:47-48	A/B	GAGFAAC	
Ave virgo maria	Luke 1:42 (P)			
Ecce ancilla domini	Luke 1:38	G	GGFDCFF	MB440
Spiritus sanctus in te descendet	Luke 1:30-31, 35 (P)	G	DFFFGGG	

Incipit	Origin (P=paraphrase, M=modified)	Final	Melodic theme (Group or Incipit)	Is this melodic theme found amongst the other Office antiphons?
Erit radix yesse	Romans 15:12	D	CDFDFFG	
Dignus es domine	Rev. 4:11	D/E	CDEEFED	

Table 5-2: Marian *psallendae* with Non-Biblical Texts

Incipit	Origin (if known)	Final	Melodic theme or Incipit	Is this melodic theme found amongst the other Office antiphons?
Virgo dei genitrix		D	Group 3	
Virgo verbum concepit	Sermon by St. Zeno and/or St. Augustine	D	Group 3	
Sub tuam misericordiam	Egyptian papyrus dated to c. 250 AD	D	Group 4	MB425
Sub tuam protectionem	“	D	Group 4	
Beata progenies		D	Group 5	MB157
O virgo virginum	O antiphons	D	Group 5	
Exaltata est sancta		D	Group 6*	MB137
Super salutem		D	DCFGFGAA	MB1295
Magnificamus te		D	CEGAGAG	
In flore mater		E	EAGAEFG	
Nesciens mater		F	Group 1	
Virgo hodie		F	Group 1	
Gaudeamus omnes		F	Group 1	
O admirabile commercium	O antiphons	F	Group 1	
Hodie maria virgo		G	FFGGACCG	MB630
Laudabilis virgo		G	GGAGFFGA	MB809
Portam hanc quam		G	GGGBCDDD	MB1045
Maria virgo semper laetare		G	GBCDDDEC	

These tables present the information in such a way that immediately a few key observations become apparent. Firstly, in comparing the two categories, we find that there are slightly more non-biblical Marian *psallendae* than biblical. While it is possible that versions of the

Bible existed that included *psallenda* texts from the former category,⁷⁹ it is perhaps more likely that these texts were freely composed. Many of the non-biblical *psallendae* are intercessory prayers or commentaries on various stages in the life of the Blessed Virgin, such as those proper to Christmas or the feast of the Assumption. Further, the non-biblical *psallendae* show more consistency in adhering to a limited number of melodic themes than do their biblical counterparts. Half of the non-biblical *psallendae* listed in the table have D finals, an interesting point for our understanding of the transmission of these chants in pre-recorded times. Perhaps it was advantageous mentally to group together similarly themed chants according to their final. On the other hand, this statistic could also be merely a result of the translation from a long oral tradition into a written one. It is also worth mentioning that very few of the chants with D finals actually begin on D or show any semblance of D modality, aside from the final and doxology. The modal system (*octoechos*) was not directly involved in the composition of these chants, which are better described as adaptations of core melodic themes.

To contrast, the vast majority of biblical *psallendae* have G finals. This distinction between the two categories may be merely coincidental, but it also may imply a difference in dating between biblical and non-biblical *psallendae*. It is impossible to answer this question directly, but we can hypothesize about the age of the texts and consider factors such as the final and *differentia* formula in conjunction with it. To continue, there are significantly more biblical *psallendae* from the New Testament, particularly the gospel according to Luke, versus the Old Testament. This should not come as a surprise, as Luke's gospel contains

⁷⁹ The *Glossa Ordinaria*, which was the standard Bible during the medieval period, contains running commentary on scriptural passages in the margins and between the lines. Authors of glosses include Venerable Bede, Pope St. Gregory the Great, Origen and others. The only chapter of the *Glossa Ordinaria* of which we have a full edition is the *Canticum Canticorum*, or Songs of Solomon, from which many of the Old Testament Marian *psallendae* are derived. It is likely that some of the “non-scriptural” *psallendae* actually come from glosses.

more accounts of Mary than those of Matthew, Mark, or John. On the other hand, *psallendae* derived from the Old Testament are in some cases paraphrased or modified to include Mary in a more direct way (e.g., *Sapientia aedificavit domum in maria virgine desponsata ioseph*).

Connections between text and melodic theme exist in both biblical and non-biblical sources, as outlined in the table under the heading “Melodic Theme or Incipit.” It would seem that the opening words of a chant were important for establishing melodic-thematic connections. From the biblical category, *psallendae Beata es* and *Beatus ille* share a melodic theme (Group 2). Likewise, from the non-biblical category, *psallendae Virgo dei genitrix* and *Virgo verbum concepit* share a melodic theme (Group 3). There is one example of a crossover, that is, one non-biblical *psallenda* and one biblical using the same melodic theme (Group 6). In this case, there is no apparent connection between text and melodic theme, given the incompatibility of *Sapientia aedificavit* and *Exaltata est sancta*.

It would appear that *psallendae* with melodic and textual concordances are assigned to the same feast days. See, for example, *Virgo verbum/Virgo dei genitrix*, which are both assigned to the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Purification, Annunciation, and the Sunday after Christmas. Groups of chants sharing core melodic material are generally kept together and often appear in succession in the manuscript editions. While this notion holds true for chants with blatant textual and melodic parallels, such as the *Sub tuam* pair, *psallendae* derived from the same biblical passage are not necessarily connected. There are a number of *psallendae* that take their texts from the gospel according to Luke. Two of these quote Mary’s famous *Magnificat* (i.e., *Exultavit spiritus meus* and *Beatam me dicent*), but are not located close to each other in the order of procession, and bear no musical similarities other than a common final of G.

	Incipit	Final	Assignments	Order in procession ⁸⁰
Exultavit spiritus meus	GAGFAAC	G	<i>Nativitas de BMV</i> Assumption Com. Virginum	<i>Vig. ii</i> Vesp. ii Vig. iii
Beatam me dicent	GGBCDED	G	<i>Nativitas de BMV</i> Purification	<i>Mane. viiii</i> Mane. x

5.2 Hard and Soft Melodic Differences

After identifying several groups or ‘families’ of melodies, it was desirable to arrange them in such a way that made it possible to isolate a core melodic theme. In doing so, we are able to get a sense of what the original reading may have sounded like. The individual differences between the chants of a given group are labeled as ‘soft’ or ‘hard’ differences, indicated on the stemma with parenthesis or square brackets, respectively.

The variants found through examining multiple editions of the same chant can also be fruitful for the study of the transmission of Ambrosian chant. Figure 5-1 displays three versions of the chant *Ortus conclusus*, a Marian chant assigned to the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin and to the Assumption.

⁸⁰ As listed in Beroldus/Magistretti.

Figure 5-1: Comparison of *Ortus conclusus* in Three Sources

Bedero
Ortus conclusus dei genitrix ortus conclusus et

VimC
Ortus conclusus dei genitrix ortus conclusus et

VimD
Ortus conclusus dei genitrix ortus conclusus et

Bedero
fons signatus evovae

VimC
fons signatus evovae

VimD
fons signatus evovae

What is remarkable is the consistency with which this chant is notated, considering the geographic distance that separates the sources (approximately 100km between Vimercate and Brezzo di Bedero) and their relatively late dates. This notion and these readings contradict Treitler's theory of oral reconstruction.⁸¹ He essentially asserts that the singer improvised each time a chant was performed. According to Treitler,

In the absence of scores, the medium of composition is performance...Any account of the oral invention of plainchant, to be realistic, must look to the practical, recognizing that in composition through performance the primary, pervasive, and controlling condition is the continuity of the performance. The singer does not make sketches, he does not consult a catalogue of formulas and deliberate about which ones he will string together, he does not have before him a skeleton outline of the melody that he is to elaborate, and he does not go back and make revisions.⁸²

⁸¹ Leo Treitler, "Homer and Gregory: the Transmission of Epic Poetry and Plainchant," *The Musical Quarterly* 60 (1974): 333-72.

⁸² *Ibid.*: 347-8.

Because of the nature of improvisation, Treitler's theory implies that there would be significant variants between chants in the manuscript editions. As we have seen here, there is a remarkable amount of consistency among the manuscript editions, including very few 'hard' variants. Thus a theory of oral transmission of previously composed chants seems much more likely.

Although there are very slight variants in the Bedero versus Vimercate sources, the musical setting of each of the words in the chant *Ortus conclusus* is extraordinarily consistent. See, for example, the rising fourth motion that opens the piece, followed by a double-neighbour passage on the word *conclusus*. The doxology (*evovae*) is the same in all three sources. It should also be noted that the transcription of *Ortus conclusus* in Vim D contains a question mark above the word *genitrix* because the manuscript edition contained some damage at this particular spot, thus making it impossible to get a proper reading without the aid of other equipment.

Another question that arises in the transmission of Ambrosian chant is that of *ficta*. In several *psallendae* one is left asking the question, is that a B or a B-flat? There is no indication in the present manuscript editions that B should be lowered, although in other early sources of Ambrosian chant, such as British Library Add. MS 34209, there are instances of green lines that "hover in the space where B should be, and are clearly meant to indicate B-flat."⁸³ Huglo considers the green lines to be later additions. It is possible that the Bs that form troublesome tritones may have been lowered in performance practice anyway. Interestingly, the 1935 *Antiphonale Missarum* versions of all four 'Group 1' *psallendae* are transposed down a fourth, beginning on C instead of F. Doing so avoids

⁸³ Anna Zayaranaya, "In Defense of Green Lines" In *Ambrosiana at Harvard*, edited by Thomas Forrest Kelly (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 33.

outlining the tritone altogether, which originally occurred between F and B-natural, and in its transposed state occurs between C and F.

5.3 Stemmatic comparisons of Melodic Groups

A stemmatic comparison was made of each of the melodic groups identified in chapter 4. Each stemma provides the chants of the respective groups, and in the case of group one, a proposed reduction of the members to a core, melodic theme.

Figure 5-1: Stemmatic Comparison of Group 1 *Psallendae*

CORE melody

1 Gaudeamus omnes fideles salvator noster natus est in mundo

2 Nesciens mater virgo virum peperit sine dolore salvatorem

3 Virgo hodie fidelis etsi verbum genuit incarnatum virgo

4 O admirabile commercium creator generis humani animatum corpus

CORE

1 hodie processit proles et magnifici germinis perseverans pector

2 seculorum ipsum regem angelorum sola virgo lactitabat

3 mansit et post partum quem laudantes omnes dicimus benedicta

4 sumens de virgine dignatus est et procedens homo sine semine

The chants in Group 1 contain many soft variants because of differences in text. For example, the opening motif “F F F G” is lengthened with extra repeated notes, as in the cases

of *Nesciens* and *O admirabile*, which begin with “F F F F G” and “F F F F F G”, respectively. Thus extra notes are added to compensate for extra syllables in the text.

Musicologist David Hughes refers to such examples as ‘duct tape’ variants.

The written sources of Gregorian chant show a remarkably stable tradition, with few “hard” melodic variants. As David Hughes has proven and remarked, Gregorian variants are improperly characterized by Leo Treitler’s suggestion of ‘Gladly, the cross-eyed bear’ (supposed variant for ‘Gladly the cross I’d bear’)—anyone transmitting that variant in public would be corrected, if only on theological grounds; Hughes suggests that a more appropriate comparison would be a textual variant that can be encountered in any North American hardware store: ‘duct tape,’ and ‘duc tape.’⁸⁴

In contrast, hard variants represent a major alteration of the melody itself with or without any connection to the text. For example, *O admirabile* contains an added segment of melody, which drops down to D and repeats the F G F neighbour motion before continuing with the core melody.

Overall, the chants of Group 1 and the melodic theme on which they are based are extremely fluid. The melodic core consists mainly of stepwise motion that outlines thirds and fourths. The question of *ficta* is pertinent here, as the chant regularly outlines F to B. Although not shown in Figure 5-2, the *differentiae* for three of the four chants of Group 1 cadence on F—the final. One however (*Gaudeamus omnes*), is assigned a *differentia* formula that ends on G. It is interesting that lengthy melismas occur at approximately the same place in each of the chants, regardless of the text. For example, the melisma that occurs on *germinis/angelorum/dicimus/semine* does not seem to serve any expressive purpose in terms of word painting. Rather, it seems as though the words are assigned to pre-existing melodic material according to the order in which they appear in the chant.

⁸⁴ M. Fassler and R. Baltzer, eds., *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 549.

Figure 5-3: Comparison of Group 2 *Psallendae*

The figure displays three systems of musical notation, each consisting of three staves. The first system is labeled (A) and (B). The second system is labeled (A) and (B). The third system is labeled (A) and (B). The lyrics are written below the staves.

System 1 (A): Beata es maria que credidisti perficientur in te que dicta sunt
 System 1 (B): Qui pro salu te genens
 System 2 (A): Beatus ille venter que te portavit criste
 System 3 (A): a domino
 System 3 (B): et beata ubera que te lactaverunt dominum et salvatorem mundi
 System 4 (A): car nem assu mere digna tus es

The melodies of Group 2 are clearly related, though not as closely as other examples. The first two systems of the musical staff exhibit the two halves of the *antiphona dupla*, *Beata es maria*, labeled “A” and “B.” The third system provides *Beatus ille venter*. Through this format of presentation, it is possible to compare each half of the first *psallenda* with the full version of the second *psallenda*. Part A of the first *psallenda* mirrors the second *psallenda* closely for the first four to five words, (c.f., *Beata es maria que credidisti* and *Beatus ille venter que te portavit*) but diverges significantly after that. As the second *psallenda*, *Beatus ille venter* draws to a close, it parallels Part B of the first *psallenda*, particularly in the final phrase, *salvatorem mundi/dignatus es*. If one tries to imagine a core melodic theme for these three pieces, it might resemble *Beatus ille venter*, which is essentially a condensed version of the *antiphona dupla*.

Figure 5-4: Comparison of Group 3 *Psallendae*

(A) Virgo dei genitrix quem totus non capit orbis

(B) vera fides geni-ti pur-gavit cri-mina mundi

Virgo verbum concepit virgo permansit virgo genuit

in tua se clausit viscera factus homo

et tibi virginitas inviolata manet

regem omnium regum

The *psallendae* of Group 3 appear very close to each other in Vimercate B, on folio 41 *verso* and folio 42 *recto*. They are separated by a single Responsory (*Sancta dei genitrix*) and exhibit clear melodic parallels. The concordances do not appear to remain throughout, as they did in Group 1, but rather seem to dwindle after the opening melodic passage, resuming again at the melisma toward the end of the piece.

The opening melodic motif is identical in both *psallendae*: “C D E F F E D C C D D”. Correspondingly, the first word of both chants is *virgo*. Following the opening musical phrase, the two chants diverge briefly. The melodic concordances resume at the words *virgo* (*genuit*) and *totus non*, outlining and filling in the interval of a major third.

One key factor to the lack of melodic familiarity between the two *psallendae* is the length of the individual texts. The first example, *Virgo verbum concepit*, consists of a mere ten words that can be further subdivided into three groups, as indicated below:

Virgo verbum concepit
Virgo permansit
Virgo genuit regem omnium regum

As with the former example, the Group 3 *psallendae* consist of an *antiphona dupla*, *Virgo dei genitrix*, and a *psallenda*, *Virgo verbum concepit*. The labeling is as before, dividing the *antiphona dupla* into two parts, A and B. The *psallendae* (or parts thereof) are remarkably similar in melodic make-up, with one brief divergence at the words *virgo permansit* in the *psallenda*, *Virgo verbum*. As with the previous example, there are strong parallels between the beginning of the *psallenda* *Virgo verbum* and part A of *Virgo dei genitrix*, and between the end of the former chant and the end of part B of the latter.

Figure 5-5: Comparison of Group 4 *Psallendae*

Vim B
 46v
 xxx. Sub tuam misericordiam confugimus dei genitrix ut nostram

Vim B
 46v
 xxxi. Sub tuam protectionem confugimus u-

xxx. deprecationem ne inducas in temptationem sed de periculo

xxxi. -bi infirmi susceperunt virtutem et propter hoc

xxx. libera nos sola casta et benedicta evovae

xxxi. tibi psallimus dei genitrix vera

The melodies and the texts of Group 4 showcase clear parallelisms. The *incipits* are essentially identical, with the exception of one soft variant to account for an extra syllable in *misericordiam*. Following this, the word *confugimus* in *Sub tuam protectionem* is a pseudo-retrograde inversion of *confugimus* in *Sub tuam misericordiam*. Sections such as those which are found on the second system, *ne inducas in temptationem/succeperunt virtutem* are mirrored so closely that they are surely derived from the same core melodic theme. The “x” marked in *temptationem* is a *littera significativa*: a letter used to indicate tempo. In this particular example, the “x” stands for *extrahere*, meaning slow down a great deal.

Figure 5-6: Comparison of Group 5 Psallendae

The figure displays three systems of musical notation for Group 5 Psallendae. Each system consists of three staves (A, B, and a lower staff) with Latin lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are as follows:

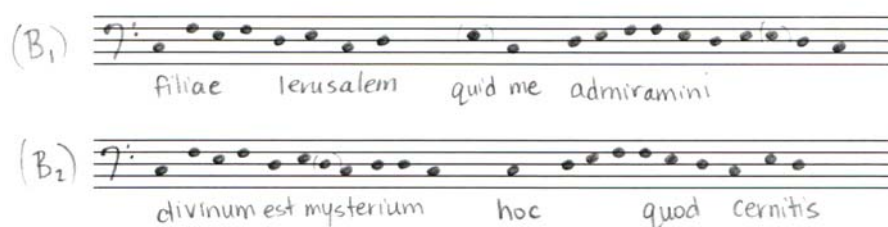
- System 1:
 - Staff A: O virgo virginum quo modo fiet istud quia nec primam te
 - Staff B: filiae ierusalem quid me admiramini divinum est mysterium
 - Lower staff: Beata progenies unde cristus natus est quam
- System 2:
 - Staff A: similem visa es nec habere sequentem
 - Staff B: hoc quod cernitis
 - Lower staff: gloriosa est virgo que celi regea genuit

As with Groups 2 and 3, this comparison involves a *psallenda*, *Beata progenies*, and an *antiphona dupla*, *O virgo virginum*. This group was the only one that contained a transposition in the *incipit*. That is, the opening motif of *Beata progenies* (D D G D) is transposed one whole tone higher than the opening motif of *O virgo virginum* (C F F D).

This transposition could be an interesting coincidence, or more likely, a result of the type of issue that arose as a result of translating a long oral tradition into a written one. The melodic profile remains essentially the same in both examples, despite the difference in the opening three notes.

The *antiphona dupla* contains another layer of repetition. The second phrase, labeled “B”, may be further subdivided into two roughly equal parts, labeled “B1” and “B2” in Figure 7.

Figure 5-7: Comparison of second phrase of *O Virgo Virginum*



The point at which the melody re-starts occurs when Mary begins speaking, *Filiae ierusalem quid me admiramini* (B₁), *divinum est mysterium hoc quod cernitis* (B₂). Thus it is a logical place to divide the text and music, given Mary’s answer consists of two distinct phrases. With its threefold repetition of melodic material, perhaps this example is better referred to as an *antiphona tripla*.

Figure 5-8: Comparison of Group 6 *Psallendae*

The image displays four staves of musical notation in a single system, each with a treble clef and a 7/8 time signature. The first staff contains the melody for "Exaltata est sancta dei genitrix super choros angelorum". The second staff contains the melody for "Sapientia edificavit sibi domum in maria virgine". The third staff contains the melody for "ad cel-esti-a regna evova e". The fourth staff contains the melody for "desponsata ioseph". The lyrics are written in a handwritten style below the notes. The melody is a simple, stepwise line with a final cadence on the fourth staff.

The melodies of Group 6 are remarkably parallel. With the exception of a few minor soft differences, the melodies of the two examples are identical. Interestingly, this pair of *psallendae* never occurs together in the same procession. The second example, *Sapientia edificavit*, is not assigned to any of the major Marian feasts, but clearly shares the same melodic material as *Exaltata est sancta*, a chant proper to the feast of the Assumption. Given its text, it is curious that the second example is not assigned to a feast day such as the Annunciation (*Dom. VI Adventus*).

If we consider the *psallendae* with scriptural references (particularly those which derive their texts from the psalter) to be older than non-scriptural *psallendae*, then we can hypothesize that *Sapientia edificavit* entered the repertory first, followed eventually by *Exaltata est* and its respective termination formula. The common Marian theme shared by the texts may have warranted a sharing of melodic material.

5.4 Special Case

Exultavit spiritus meus in domino quia respexit humilitatem ancille sue ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes. Evovae.

[My soul rejoices in the Lord who has regarded the lowliness of his handmaid, and henceforth all generations will call me blessed.]

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a Latin text. It is organized into three systems, each with two staves: a soprano staff (labeled 'Beder0') and an alto staff (labeled 'M99'). The music is written in a simple, linear style with a treble clef and a 7/8 time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first system covers the text 'Exultavit spiritus meus in domino quia respexit'. The second system covers 'humilitatem ancille sue ecce'. The third system covers 'enim ex hoc bea tam me dicent om nes' on the soprano staff and '(ecce) enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes' on the alto staff. There is an asterisk above a note in the third system.

- ❖ Bedero “mane psl’...v” p. 274 “In nat virgini”
- ❖ Vimercate C and D “ps” 114r (Assumption) incipit only “Exultavit sps”
- ❖ M99 Supp 48v “matu ps...vi” “In nat v(ir)ginu(m)”
- ❖ Assigned to Nativitas de BMV (PSA), Annunciation (PSA), Assumption (PSA) and **Com virginum** (PSA)
- ❖ Finalis: G
- ❖ Range: G to g
- ❖ Evovae formula: c c b c a g

This piece differs considerably in musical character from the other *psallenda* examined in this study. It is markedly more ornate and involves the transposition and repetition of

melodic fragments, similar to the Ambrosian *melodiae*. The text comes from the *Magnificat* in Luke’s gospel. The two versions presented here are from Bedero and M99 Supplemental. A fascinating divergence occurs at the word *beatam*: the first source ascends a minor third (from B to D) and continues with the rest of the piece, the second source however, ascends a perfect fourth (from B to E), and continues with the exact same melodic material presented in the first source, just transposed up one tone. Despite a very small difference in this one interval, the two sources still contain essentially the same melodic profile. Given that the second source ends on a B⁸⁵, it is probable that this difference was merely a scribal error.

5.5 Differentiae

Differentiae, also known as *saeculorum amen* formulas, are assigned to individual *psallendae*. The letters “evovae” represent the final words of the *Gloria Patri*, that is, *saeculorum amen*. The musical fragment provided to set the differentia changes from one *psallenda* to the next.

The work of Merkley and Bailey on melodic theme in Ambrosian Office antiphons has led to the discovery that *differentiae* are very often embedded in the initial pitches of the chant to which they are assigned. This theory will be tested with a selection of Marian *psallendae* and their respective *differentiae*.

Group 1 psallendae: core melodic opening “F F F G F G A G”
Nesciens mater differentia “G F G A G F”
Gaudeamus omnes differentia “A A G F G A G”
Virgo hodie differentia “F F D”
O admirabile – no differentia assigned

⁸⁵ Not shown in the excerpt provided on page 85.

The Merkley-Bailey theory works with 2/3 of psallendae with *differentia* assignments. The closest match is *Nesciens mater*. The *differentia* for *Gaudeamus omnes* is an inversion of the core melodic opening, and the *differentia* for *Virgo hodie* contains an interval entirely absent from the core melodic opening.

Group 2 psallendae: core melodic opening “G C B C A G”
Beata es maria <i>differentia</i> “C C B C A G”
Beatus ille venter <i>differentia</i> “C C B C A G”

The Merkley-Bailey theory works with both *differentiae* (they are identical). The *differentia* is an exact statement of the core melodic opening, save for the first note, which is C in the *differentia* and G in the *psallenda*.

Group 3 psallendae: core melodic opening “C D E F F E D C”
Virgo dei genitrix <i>differentia</i> “D A A G F E F D”
Virgo verbum concepit <i>differentia</i> “D A A G F E F D”

The Merkley-Bailey theory does not apply here. The core melodic opening outlines the interval of a fourth, rising from C to F and returning back down to C in stepwise motion. The *differentia* (which is common to both *psallendae*) outlines the interval of a fifth, beginning on D, rising to A and descending to D with some neighbour motion.

Group 4 psallendae: core melodic opening “D D E F G G”
Sub tuam misericordiam <i>differentia</i> “DA G F E F D”
Sub tuam protectionem <i>differentia</i> – none assigned

The Merkley-Bailey theory does not work here.

Group 5 psallendae: core melodic opening “D D G D E E D C D”/ “C F F D E D C D”
Beata progenies <i>differentia</i> “F F F F D”

O virgo virginum differentia “DA G F E F D”

There seem to be a set number of *differentiae* patterns that are assigned to individual *psallendae* according to their finals. This theory accounts for the discrepancy between the core melodic openings and *differentiae* in *psallendae* such as those in Group 3 (*Virgo dei genitrix* and *Virgo verbum concepit*). Although the *differentia* does not relate whatsoever to the opening melodic phrase of the *psallenda* melody, it consists of a cadential outline that begins on the final (D) and accentuates the melodic profile of the last fragment of the *psallenda*. This particular assignment creates a smooth transition from the *psallenda* to the *differentia*, but may imply a conflicting modal assignment upon the repeat of the *psallenda* melody. The *differentiae* assigned to *psallendae* examined in this study are shown in Figure 5-9 on the following page,

Figure 5-9: Final and penultimate notes and their respective termination formulas⁸⁶



Each system exhibits possible final and penultimate notes of *psallendae* (e.g., in the first system, “C D” and “A D”), followed by the termination formula(s) that are assigned to the same chants. The first two systems contain finals and *differentiae* for D-final *psallendae*, the third and fourth contain the same for E-final *psallendae*, the fifth for F-finals and the sixth for G-finals. Interestingly, the final note of the *differentia* is not always the same as the final of the *psallenda* (e.g., the fourth system: penultimate note “C”, final “**E**”, *differentia* “E E F D F E **D**”).

We are reminded that modes were imposed on the chant repertory much later, and that it was the final, not the opening, melody that determined the *differentiae*. In chapter 11

⁸⁶ This selection of finals and *differentiae* is by no means exhaustive. These particular examples are derived from the Marian *psallendae* examined in the present study, and are provided here to show possible assignments of termination formulas to finals in the *psallendae*.

of his celebrated *Micrologus*, Guido of Arezzo describes the *finalis* as the “chief note” of a chant.

When we hear someone sing, we do not know what mode his first note is in, since we do not know whether tones, semitones or other intervals will follow. But when the chant has ended, we know clearly from the preceding notes the mode of the last one...So if you wish to add to your chant either a verse or a psalm or anything else, you should adjust it most of all to the final note of the former, not go back and consider the first note or any of the others.⁸⁷

Guido’s instruction is clear and concise. It is likely that he was addressing a practice common among his pupils of assigning *differentiae* according to the melodic *incipit* or general ‘modality’ of a chant. His advice of using the final note to determine any additional musical appendages (such as a doxology setting or psalm tone formula) is a practical solution to a potentially troublesome issue.⁸⁸ At any rate, it is especially pertinent to Ambrosian chants, which existed for many centuries as an oral tradition, prior to the idea that a chant should conform to one particular mode from start to finish. The latter was imposed on chants during later reforms with the adoption of the *octoechos*, which often resulted in conflicting modal assignments and the modification of chants to fit within a modal system.

5.6 Psallendae vs. Office antiphons

Following the initial comparison of the groups of chants, the chants were compared to the Ambrosian Office antiphons to check for concordances in other chant genres. This was made possible by the work of Merkley and Bailey, who strategically organized the entire repertory of Ambrosian Office antiphons into charts according to their respective finals and termination formulas. Thus after locating the “D final” section of Office antiphons, it was a simple task to search for concordances with the Group 4 melodies, for example. The task

⁸⁷ Guido of Arezzo, “Micrologus,” in *Hucbald, Guido and John on Music*, translated by Warren Babb and edited by Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 66-7.

⁸⁸ It is possible that Guido was referring to the mode, and so his advice here could be interpreted as a push to use the same mode in the antiphon and the psalm tone for musical fluidity.

proved to be fruitful, with an inexact match of the Group 4 melodies to a chant labeled ‘425’ in the Merkley-Bailey taxonomy of Ambrosian antiphons. A number of other *psallendae* were found to share melodic themes with Office antiphons. Of these, two examples will be examined presently.

Chant 425 is located on folio 17 *recto* of M99 Sup., on page 38 of Bedero and folio 24v of Vim D. The text of the antiphon reads:

*Dominus regit me et nihil mihi deerit;
in loco pascuae ibi me collocavit, alleluia, alleluia.*

[The Lord rules me and nothing will lead me astray;
He makes me dwell in pastures, alleluia, alleluia.]

Dominus regit me is derived from Psalm 23—an indication that the psalm tone like qualities (such as the streams of repeated notes) found in the chant are by no means coincidental. It is classed as an *antiphona in baptisterio*, which is similar in function to the *psallendae*. Of these antiphons, Merkley and Bailey write:

On ordinary feriae, after the conclusion of the parts of Matins and Vespers that took place in choir...there were additional solemnities in the women’s and men’s baptistries, including additional psalmody; four or five verses of a psalm sung with an antiphon (*antiphona in baptisterio*) and the Gloria Patri...It seems most likely that the general rule called for concluding solemnities in the baptistries whenever there was not to be a procession to one or more of the other Milanese churches.⁸⁹

The *Dominus regit me* is assigned as a ferial (as opposed to a feast day) chant for Tuesdays from Easter to Pentecost. This is clearly indicated in the manuscript edition, *In cotidianis diebus a pascha usque ad pentecostem feria ii*. The three versions are not exact matches, however. Melodic variants between the sources are shown in Figure 5-10 on the following page. Variants are depicted with parenthesis.

⁸⁹ Bailey and Merkley, *The Antiphons of the Ambrosian Office*, 15.

Figure 5-10: Melodic comparison of *Dominus regit me* in three early sources

M99
 Dominus regit me et nichil michi deerit in loco pascue ibi collocavit alleluia alleluia

Bedero
 Dominus regit me et nichil michi deerit in loco pascue ibi collocavit alleluia alleluia

Vim D
 Dominus regit me et nichil michi deerit in loco pasue ibi collocavit alleluia alleluia

evo vae

The three sources diverge at the same two places, on an ascending motif from D to F or E to G. The *incipit* of *Dominus regit me* from Bedero matches that of Vimercate D, which both differ from the version found in M99, which begins one note lower. All three sources coincide for the recitation-like portion extending from *regit* to *dicent*. Following this, the ascending motif re-appears (*in loco*), and this time M99 and Vimercate D coincide, leaving Bedero as the odd one out.

In order to compare the *Sub tuam psallendae* with the presumed match, *Dominus regit me*, all three chants were arranged in a table. Certain figures, such as the opening motif, “D E F G F A G” are unquestionably concordant. Additionally, the long stretches of repeated notes in melody 425 are immediately perceived, and certain gaps appear in the Office antiphon melody when compared to the *psallendae*. It would seem that the antiphon melody is constructed with a more limited sense of melodic divergence in preference for psalm tone like recitation on certain pitches. Of the three available versions of this chant, Vim D alone contains a termination formula (GGGFGD, see Figure 5-9). However, the version found in M99 was the closest match to the melodic profile of Group 4, as it is the only one that contains the melodic outline of a fourth that characterizes the *incipit* of this

chant. The only termination formula specified for the *Sub tuam* group is that which is assigned to *Sub tuam misericordiam*. The manuscript source (Vim B) presents the two *Sub tuam* chants consecutively, perhaps implying that the termination formula for the first chant was to be re-used for the second.

Figure 5-11: Comparison of Group 4 *Psallendae* with Office Antiphon *Dominus regit me*

S.T.M	dd	e f	gggg	f a	gg	d f	g ff	d cc	dddd	fff	gggg	f a	gg	d	e f	g
S.T.P	ddd	e f	ggg	f a	ggg	f g	d			f	g	a	ggfg	dd	e f	g
425	d	e f	ggg	f aaaaa	g	e	f				ggggggggg	f	g	dddd		

Continued:

S.T.M	f e	d e	d e	d e	c	d f	d f	e d	e cc	f e	f d	c d	e		f dd	dagfef
S.T.P	f e	d e	d ee	d e	cc	d f		e d				c d		g f	d g	f d
425					ce	d f		e d	c	e	d					

S.T.M.: *Sub tuam misericordiam*

S.T.P.: *Sub tuam protectionem*

425: Merkley-Bailey 425, *Dominus regit me*

The melodies of Group 4 appear in the figures above; the pitches are according to a transcription from Vimercate B. Clear melodic concordances are evident by this format of presentation, which aligns the individual pitches of respective chants vertically. Long streams of repeated notes in one chant may be matched with a single utterance of the pitch in the other chant, but this does not disprove the melodic concordance. Rather, instances where several pitches are repeated in one chant frequently correspond with a longer text, much like psalm tone recitation.

Likewise, the chants of Group 6 are very similar in melodic profile to the *Miserere* antiphon, *Auditui meo, Domine*. That all three melodies were derived from one core, melodic theme is indisputable. A comparison of the two *psallendae* and one *antiphona in miserere* is presented in Figure 5-12, below.

Figure 5-12: Comparison of Group 6 *Psallendae* with *Auditui meo, Domine*

Auditui meo Domine dabis gaudium alleluia

Exaltata est sancta dei genitrix super choros angelorum

Sapientia edificavit sibi domum in maria virgine

alle - luia evo va e

ad celestia regna evo va e

desponsata ioseph

The text of chant 137 Merkley-Bailey reads,

Auditui meo, Domine, dabis gaudium, alleluia, alleluia.

[Hear me, Lord, you give me joy, alleluia, alleluia.]

The chant itself is located in Vimercate D, folio 27 *verso*, and in Bedero page 43. Although it is far from an exact, note-for-note match with the *psallenda* melodies, the core melodic material is clearly the same. As we saw in the previous example, differences arise according to genre. An antiphon's type warrants a specific 'type' of melodic setting: some more ornate, and others less so. In the case of *Auditui meo*, the *Miserere* antiphon is fairly brief and set simply.

We must then consider how these chants come to be sung with these particular melodic themes. The two *Sub tuam psallendae* are obviously assigned the same melodic theme because of textual parallels. Considering the long oral tradition of chant, the opening words may have exercised great importance in providing a cue to use one melodic theme or another to the cantor who intoned it. The general theme alone was insufficient for providing this information, so a more specific cue was necessary. To say that the text was proper to the feast of the Assumption did not imply that all of the *psallendae* assigned to it followed the same melodic theme. Rather, chants that exhibit blatant textual parallels in their respective *incipits* often employ the same melodic theme. There is no apparent connection between the texts of the *Sub tuam* pair and of the *Dominus regit me*, however. The *psallendae* are prosaic, non-scriptural petitions addressed to the Blessed Virgin Mary, while the Office antiphon is an excerpt from Psalm 23 bearing no textual or thematic relation to the *psallendae* texts.

From the analysis conducted in this chapter, we have found that the *psallendae* melodies relate not only to each other, but also to other Ambrosian Office antiphons. While it appears that there are some *psallenda* melodic themes that are proper to the processional

genre, many others are shared with other items of the Office. Variants in specific cases include pitch repetition or exclusion of melodic fragments according to a chant's text and use in the liturgy. These differences are classed as 'soft,' however, and do not discount a theory of oral transmission of chant from the earliest Christian times. Rather, they strengthen the notion that a limited number of melodic themes were composed for liturgical use, and that according to text and function, they were elaborated or modified.

5.7 Conclusions

Many interesting conclusions can be drawn from this study of the Ambrosian *psallendae*.

Through examining the primary source materials, interesting details were discovered about the way these chants were preserved, and the translation of a long oral tradition into a written one in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Through internal evidence in the manuscript editions, it was clear that the melodies were well established in form before the development of notation, and the musical staff. Other factors, such as illuminations or a particularly large number of processional antiphons were in some cases indicative of the popularity of a saint or feast day. Such is certainly the case with St. Ambrose, father of Ambrosian hymnody, and with the feast of the Annunciation on the sixth Sunday of Advent. The popularity of the procession in Milan and surrounding areas reveals an ancient practice rooted in division: the two sects of the Christian church in the fourth century, and the triumph of the orthodox over the Arians. The Virgin Mary's role in Christian worship led to the composition of new texts and chants, but also included a marked connection to texts from the Old Testament, through which the prophecy of the Christ is revealed. Examples of both are found in the processional chants of the Ambrosian rite, side by side.

Musically speaking, many *psallendae* are deliberately grouped together, often appearing in succession in the order of procession on the same feast day. This ‘deliberate grouping’ was a practical way of connecting chants that shared melodic and textual material. Topical connections such as Mary’s motherhood, her perpetual virginity, and of her place as an intercessor for Christians arise in the *psallenda* texts. The opening words, or *incipit*, of a chant appear to have exercised great deal of importance in providing a cue to use one melodic theme or another to the cantor who intoned it. Examples such as the *Sub tuam misericordiam/protectionem* pair or *Virgo dei/Virgo verbum psallendae* demonstrate this very clearly.

As François-Auguste Gevaert suggested, and as Bailey and Merkley demonstrated in their analysis of the Office antiphons, there are a limited number of melodic themes, or families, that are used throughout the Ambrosian chant corpus. Through careful transcription and comparison of the melodies, a number of melodic families arose from the selection of Marian *psallendae* examined in this study. Many of these themes in turn have ‘siblings’ in the Office antiphons, modified according to their texts and function in the liturgy. Such modifications are relatively minor, however, and do not imply that the chants in question were completely re-composed at each performance, as Leo Treitler suggests. In examining a variety of sources (Vimercate, Bedero, M99), we have noted considerable consistency among these editions of the same *psallendae*. It appears that the chants of the Ambrosian rite were carefully composed, drawing from a limited number of melodic themes, and passed down through the process of oral transmission for centuries before actually being notated. The earliest examples of written Ambrosian chant are actually polished final versions, not first drafts. Liturgical books containing the same texts exist from an even earlier period, though without musical notation. This strengthens the notion that the chants

(text *and* music) existed and were performed in the liturgy from as early as the fourth century. The groups examined in chapter 5 show a number of core melodic themes that contribute to the foundation of an entire repertory of Ambrosian chants for the Mass and Office.

When we consider the ancient practice of religious processions in Milan, and the close adherence to melodic theme and formula we have seen in the *psallendae*, it is easy to conclude that they form, at their core, some of the oldest Christian chants.

Appendix
Marian Psallendae transcribed from Vimercate and Bedero

Virgo Dei genitrix quem totus non capit orbis in tua se clausit
 viscera factus homo vera fides geniti purgavit crimina
 mundi et tibi virginitas. inviolata manet evovae

Vimercate B 41 verso

Virgo verbum concepit virgo permansit virgo genuit regem
 omnium regum evovae

Vimercate B 42 recto

Beata progenies unde Christus natus est quam gloriosa
 est virgo quae caeli regem genuit evovae

Vimercate B 84 recto

In flore mater in partu virgo gaude et laetare virgo mater Do -
 mini evovae

Vimercate B 83 verso

Dignus es Domine Deus noster accipere gloriam et hon -
no-rem e v o v a e

Vimercate B 84 recto

Laudabilis virgo quae meruisti portare in tuo utero
salvatorem mundi e v o v a e

Vimercate B 84 recto

Beatam me dicent gen - ne - ra - ti - o - nes
qui a an - cil - lam hum - ilem re - spe - xit Deus
e v o v a e

Vimercate B 86 recto

Maria autem conservabat omnia verba hec conferens in
corde suo e v o v a e

Vimercate B 76 verso

xxx. Sub tu-am misericordiam confugimus Dei genitrix ut no-
 -stram deprecationem ne inducas in temptationem sed de
 periculo libera nos sola casta et benedicta e v o v a e

Vimercate B 46 recto

xxxj. Sub tuam protectionem confugimus ubi infirmi susce-
 perunt virtutem et propter hoc tibi psallimus dei ge-
 ni-trix vera

Vimercate B 47 recto

Senex puerum portabat puer autem senem re-
 -ge-bat quem virgo concepit et post partum virgo per-
 -man-sit ip - sum quem genuit ad-o-ra-vit e v o v a e

Vimercate B 114 verso

xxviii. O virgo virginum quo modo fiet istud qui a nec primam
 te similem visa es nec habere sequentem filiae Ierusalem
 quid me admiramini divinum est mysterium hoc
 quod cernitis evovae

Vimercate B 45 verso

Beatus ille venter quem te portavit criste et beata ubera
 quem te lactaverunt dominum et salvatorem mundi quem
 pro salute generis humani carnem assumere dignatus es

P

Vimercate A 41 recto

Magnificamus te dei genitrix qui a ex te natus est (cristus
 qui salvans omnes qui te glorificant

p. Dans voti

Vimercate B 41 verso

xxviii. Nesciens mater virgo virum peperit sine dolo-re salvatorem
 seculorum ipsum regem angelorum sola virgo lacti-
 -tabat ubera de celo plena evo va e

Vimercate B 46 verso

xxxvii. Virgo hodie fidelis etsi verbum genuit incarnatum virgo man-
 -sit et post partum quem laudantes omnes dicimus be-
 nedicta tu in muli-er-i-bus

Vimercate B 46 recto

xx
 iii Gaudeamus omnes fideles salva-tor noster nat(us) est in
 mundo hodie p(ro)cessit p(ro)les et magnifici germinis p(er)
 severans pudor virginitatis

Vimercate B 46 verso

in
mag

Respon - sum acce - pit symeon a spi - ri - tu sancto
non visurum mortem nisi prius videret cristum dominum
e v o v a e

Vimercate B 114 recto

ps Revertere revertere suna - mi - tis revertere rever - te - re
ut in - tue - tur te e v o v a e

Vimercate C 114 verso

Hodie maria virgo celos ascendit gaude - te quia cum cristo
regnat in eternum fundamenta eius)

Vimercate C 114 recto

Exaltata est sancta dei genitrix super choros angelorum ad celestia regna
e v o v a e

Vimercate C 114 recto

Portam hanc quam videtis solus dominus veniet et egredie-
-tur per eam et erit semper clausa evovae

Vimercate B 40 verso

Erit radix yesse et qui exurget regere gentes in eo gen-
-tes sperabunt evovae

Vimercate B 27 verso

De radice yesse exiet virga et regni eius non erit finis evovae

Vimercate C 113 verso

In flore mater in partu virgo gaude (et) letare virgo mater domini
evovae

Vimercate B 83 verso

Beata p(ro)genies unde cristus natus est quam gloriosa est virgo
que celi regera genuit evovae

Vimercate B 84 recto

Super salu-tem et omnem pulchritudinem electa es adomino sancta dei
genitrix evovae

Vimercate C 114 recto

Ortus conclusus dei genitrix ortus conclusus et fons
sygnatus evovae

Vimercate C 114 verso

Maria virgo semper letare qui tantam gratiam meru-
-isti celi et terre creato-rem de tuo utero gener-
-are

Vimercate B 86 recto

Exultavit spi — ritus meus in domino quia respexit
 humili-ta — tem ancille sue ecce
 enim ex hoc bea tam me dicent om —
 -nes genera-tio — nes evocae

Bedero page 274

*S^{va} Exaltata es sancta dei genitrix super choros angelorum ad celestia
 regna

Bedero page 184

Hodie maria virgo celos ascendit gaude te quia cum christo regnas —
 in eternum

Bedero page 184

Ortus conclusus dei genitrix ortus conclusus et fons signatus evoc

Bedero page 184

Super salu-tem et omnem pulchritudinem electa es adomino sancta dei
genitrix evo

Bedero page 184

al' Reverttere reverttere sunamitis reverttere reverttere ut
intueat' te

Bedero page 184

al' Surge aquilo et veni auster perfla ortum meum ut fluant
aromata evovae

Bedero page 184

Spiritus sanctus in te descendit maria ne ti- me - as habes
 in utero filium dei e v o v a e

Vimercate B 40 verso

Beata es maria que credidisti perficientur in te que dicta
 sunt a domino e v o v a e

Vimercate B 49 recto

Magnificamus te dei genitrix quia ex te natus est christus salvans omnes
 qui te glorificant sancta domina dei genitrix sanctificationes
 tuas transmittite nobis

Vimercate B 41 verso

xxxvi. O amirabile commercium creator generis humani animatum corpus summens
 de virgine nasci dignatus est et procedens homo sine semine →

largitus est nobis suam deitatem

Vimercate B 46 recto

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