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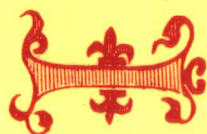
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MUSIC OF THE MIDDLE AGES I

GIULIO CATTIN



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Abbreviations

<i>AcM</i>	<i>Acta Musicologica</i>
<i>AfMw</i>	<i>Archiv für Musikwissenschaft</i>
<i>AH</i>	<i>Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi</i>
<i>AnnM</i>	<i>Annales Musicologiques</i>
<i>CCM</i>	<i>Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale</i>
<i>CMPT</i>	Colorado Music Press Translations
<i>CSM</i>	Corpus Scriptorum de Musica
<i>EG</i>	<i>Etudes Grégoriennes</i>
<i>EL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Liturgicae</i>
<i>EMH</i>	<i>Early Music History</i>
<i>GkK</i>	K. G. Fellerer (ed.): <i>Geschichte der katholischen Kirchenmusik</i> , vol. 1: <i>Von den Anfängen bis zum Tridentinum</i> (Kassel, 1972)
<i>JAMS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Musicological Society</i>
<i>KmJb</i>	<i>Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch</i>
<i>MD</i>	<i>Musica Disciplina</i>
<i>Mf</i>	<i>Die Musikforschung</i>
<i>MgB</i>	<i>Musikgeschichte in Bildern</i>
<i>MGG</i>	<i>Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> , ed. F. Blume (14 vols. and supplements, Kassel, 1949–68)
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
<i>MMB</i>	<i>Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae</i>
<i>MMMA</i>	<i>Monumenta Monodica Medii Aevi</i>
<i>MMS</i>	<i>Monumenta Musicae Sacrae</i>
<i>MQ</i>	<i>Musical Quarterly</i>
<i>MSD</i>	<i>Musicological Studies and Documents</i>
<i>NG</i>	<i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> , ed. S. Sadie (20 vols., London, 1980)
<i>NOHM</i>	<i>New Oxford History of Music</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina</i> , ed. J. P. Migne (225 vols., Paris, 1844–64)
<i>PM</i>	<i>Paléographie Musicale</i>
<i>PSM</i>	<i>Princeton Studies in Music</i>
<i>RdM</i>	<i>Revue de Musicologie</i>
<i>RISM</i>	<i>Répertoire International des Sources Musicales</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Römische Quartalschrift</i>
<i>SE</i>	<i>Sacris Erudiri</i>
<i>SM</i>	<i>Studi Musicali</i>
<i>SMUWO</i>	<i>Studies in Music from the University of Western Ontario</i>

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I

THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP; LITURGY AND CHANT

I The evidence of the early Christian sources

No musical material from the early centuries of Christianity has survived to the present day, with the exception of an incomplete fragment of a hymn in Greek alphabetical notation (*homou pásai . . .*) discovered in the Oxyrhynchus papyrus 1786 and attributed to the second half of the third century AD.¹ It is, therefore, impossible to gain a complete picture of the first developments in Christian chant from direct examination of sources.

It is the study of the earliest forms of liturgy which offers the only means of obtaining information on the distant origins of chant, and the broad outlines of such liturgy are familiar to us from the writings of the New Testament and the apostolic period, though in an incomplete and far from coherent form. Moreover, no other source can throw light on a phenomenon – that of primitive Christianity – which appears as such an anomaly in relation to the historical traditions of the Western world. The movement has often been called a ‘graft’, an image which expresses neatly the complete originality and novelty of a doctrine which arose and developed in the East according to cultural and religious traditions altogether foreign to those of the West, that is, to the synthesis of Greco-Roman civilisation. Past writers who have claimed that Christian chant derived in unbroken succession from Greco-Roman precedent were either unaware of, or else underestimated, the immense gulf created by the radical opposition between the Gospel (and the consequent new vision of God, man and the world) and pagan thought, even in its loftiest and most noble formulations, those of the philosophers.

Christianity – even if, at first, it was mistaken by the Romans for one of the many cults which flooded in from the East – carried within itself such a force for renewal that it brought about the bursting of the

The origins of Christian worship

'old wine-skins' (the image is Christ's: cf. Matthew 9, 17); and this was true even in comparison with Judaism, of which the new doctrine appeared to be an offshoot. The first missionaries of the Gospel, the Apostles, themselves all Jews, had their own individual methods of preaching and also brought with them new forms of worship, some deriving from Jewish practice, others previously quite unknown and modelled on the word and example of the Master. Those who had followed Christ from the beginning (John 15, 27), who had seen his works and heard his message, were in a position to become witnesses to his life and teaching. Their proclamation (*kérygma*) was concerned above all with the death and resurrection of Christ; but they went on to give a faithful account of his life, and repeated his words with a more perfect understanding of events which was bestowed on them after the resurrection of Christ and their illumination by the Spirit of truth (John 14, 26). 'Devoted to the service of the Word' (Acts 6, 4), they adapted its message to the understanding of their audience, owing a duty 'to Greeks as much as to barbarians, to the educated and the uneducated' (Romans 1, 14). And so in their preaching various elements can be identified: catechesis, narration, testimony, hymns, prayers and similar literary pieces which, at first handed on orally and later written down, were eventually incorporated into the four authentic Gospels. According to the prevalent modern view,² the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles preserve the flavour of the Apostles' preaching, filtered through the experience of early liturgical congregations and arranged by the individual authors to suit either their own purposes or those determined by the needs of the communities for whom the written Gospel was intended.

What is most relevant to our subject is that the evidence of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke, written in the period AD 65–80) and that of John (about AD 100) reflects customs introduced into the liturgy by the early Christian communities. Apart from material intended for use in prayer, readings and catechesis, it preserves certain rhythmical passages whose structure tends to suggest that they pre-date the Gospel text itself and may, at least on occasion or in certain places, have been sung. The celebrated 'canticles' which appear in the early chapters of Luke (*Magnificat*, Luke 1, 46–55; *Benedictus*, Luke 1, 68–79; and *Nunc dimittis*, Luke 2, 29–32, if this is not by the evangelist himself) may have originated in the liturgy of Jerusalem. But other, more obvious examples of hymnody (not in the technical sense applying to Western hymns) are to be found in the letters of Paul and Peter and in the Revelation of St John. Some texts are clearly associated with the rite of baptism and speak of the

light (Christ) received by the baptised, for example Ephesians 5, 14; 1 Peter 1, 3–5 may have been chanted by the whole congregation at the end of the baptismal ceremony; and 1 Thessalonians 5, 16–22 was probably an opening hymn.³ Other passages are short acclamations or doxologies, such as 1 Timothy 1, 17, while to the same letter (1 Timothy 3, 16) belongs a group of three distichs which the author has certainly drawn from a liturgical hymn. The primacy of Christ is the theme of the long composition inserted into the letter to the Colossians (1, 13–20), and frequent references to a prophetic text (Isaiah 53) make 1 Peter 2, 21–5 particularly interesting. A deservedly famous example is the hymn in the letter to the Philippians (2, 6–11) which is well suited to an Easter-night service. The president exhorts the congregation 'In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus', and those present reply with a chant.

As will be apparent, these are not strophic compositions following the principles of Greek or Latin metrics. The ground-rules of composition are those of Hebrew poetry (as in the Psalms), which will be further discussed below. Since we possess no evidence drawn directly from sources about the melodies which accompanied these texts, it will be useful to make the comparison with Hebrew precedent on this point as well.

The New Testament sources not only preserve fragments of chants taken from early Christian liturgy, but some of them, taken as a whole, display a structure which is clearly liturgical and sacramental. One such is the Gospel of John, in which the chapters which recount the conversation with Nicodemus, the cure of the cripple at Bethsaida and that of the man born blind would be catechisms used at baptism, the feeding of the five thousand would be an introduction to the liturgy of the eucharist, and so on. The letter of James is thought to be a homily and its content portrays a congregation of the years AD 56–7; the first letter of Peter is astonishingly rich in its treatment of liturgical and baptismal themes; and in Revelation, finally, the heavenly liturgy described in the various visions is built on the model of a Christian liturgy, not to mention the fact that its language is rich in allusions to the liturgical diction of early Christianity.⁴ All this shows the liturgical practice of the Church in its earliest stages, the background against which Christian chant was heard for the first time.

2 The Jewish roots of Christian worship

The study of early Christian liturgy enables us to return to the concept of worship, and to the Jewish liturgy of the Temple and the synagogues which, ever more clearly, appear as the root of Christian liturgy. Certain characteristics which touch the very nature of Jewish worship are to be found, somewhat developed, in Christian liturgy. They include the sense of community, which before Christ had been confined to the Hebrew nation alone, but is now enlarged to take in all the peoples of the earth (universalism); the inward dimension of worship, once a theme of the prophets who urged inner purification and a conversion of the heart, and now carried by Christ and the preaching of the Apostles to make the most extreme demands (consider Stephen's declaration in Acts 7, 48: 'Even so the Most High does not live in a house that human hands have built', that of Peter (1 Peter 2, 4-5): 'so that you too . . . may be living stones making a spiritual house', or that of Paul (2 Corinthians 6, 16): 'We are the temple of the living God'); and thirdly, eschatological awareness which, based on God's promise to deliver his people and call them to communion with him, is offered again to Christians living out their worship in faithful expectation of the *parousia* or second coming of Christ.

So the early Church did not break with Jewish tradition, but introduced a new element into its worship: the Gospel as proclamation of the kingdom of God and of the death and resurrection of Christ.

From an objective point of view the nucleus of the faith shifted from the covenant of Sinai, on which were based the authority and efficacy of the Mosaic law (Torah), towards the new covenant realised by Christ, and from the old rites which were powerless to sanctify towards the unique sacrifice of Christ, accomplished once and for all (see the letter to the Hebrews). Subjectively the Christian life became the practice of 'the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God' (1 Peter 2, 5). The religious vocabulary of the Old Testament could thus be used to express Christian spirituality through a change of meaning which adapted the rites of Jewish liturgy in a new direction, that of the redeeming act of Christ and of the Christian life as a glorification of the Father.

It will be understood that the message of Christ had great affinities with certain elements of the religious spectrum of Judaism. The

closest were the Pharisees (although Jesus often attacked their tendency to concentrate on the outward show of faith) and, especially, the Essenes, who lived in communities following a rule of strict asceticism, and with whom were connected the communities of the Qumrân caves on the Dead Sea where scrolls containing Biblical and extra-Biblical writings were discovered in 1947.

The outward sign of the spiritual relationship between Jews and Christians was found in the Christians' regular attendance at prayers in the Temple, where the Apostles themselves went to pray and to teach. 'They went as a body to the Temple every day' says Acts 2, 46, but adds immediately 'but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously'. Although here the expression 'breaking of bread' may refer simply to a meal at which broken bread was offered to the guests, in Christian usage it very soon took on a more technical meaning, referring explicitly to the eucharist.¹ How long did Jewish worship co-exist with early Christian rites in this way? It had ceased to do so even before the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70), as may be deduced from the clashes which took place between the two communities (such as the persecutions in the year 44) and from the decision of the Council of Jerusalem (49) not to impose the Jewish law on converts from paganism.² However, if direct contact between the two groups came to an end, the Palestinian Christians were mostly Jews and brought with them their own traditional inheritance; and they must have been mindful of Christ's declaration 'I have come not to abolish, but to complete' (Matthew 5, 17). It may be added that Paul and Barnabas, on their early missionary journeys, always headed first of all for the synagogues in the cities of the diaspora.

Any estimation of the debt owed by Christianity to Jewish tradition from a liturgical standpoint must include the following points: (1) baptismal rites, in the broad sense (in this case the mediation is due to John the Baptist, 'he who baptises'); (2) the first part of the celebration of the eucharist, including readings, prayers and chants on the model of Jewish services: this is what is nowadays called the 'liturgy of the Word' and corresponds to the didactic portion of the mass; (3) in the liturgy of the eucharistic sacrifice, certain prayers and the 'eucharistic prayer' itself (the *anaphora* or *canon* of the mass) are modelled on the Jewish *beracoth* or prayer of blessing, with the addition of the formulas of consecration of the bread and wine used by Christ (see the earliest accounts in I Corinthians 11, 23-6 and in the Synoptic Gospels); and indeed the structure of the liturgical sacrifice itself recalls the pattern of the Jewish sacrificial banquet, especially

that of Passover which was the commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt and in the context of which Jesus chose to celebrate his own Passover (death and resurrection) and that of the disciples (liberation from the enslavement of evil); (4) the adoption of the Jewish calendar based on the seven-day week, with the gradual transference of the celebration of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday (*dies dominica*, the day recalling the resurrection of the Lord, the creation and the second coming) and with the beginnings of the annual celebration of Christ's Passover which formed the first focal point of the Christian liturgical year; (5) the practice of fasting in connection with worship (according to the rules of the early Church the days prescribed for fasting were Wednesday and Friday); (6) the complementary function of communal and personal prayer, following Jewish practice and the example of Jesus and the disciples; the Jews had special prayers for morning and evening which were to become the Lauds and Vespers of the Christian office, and were exhorted to make the day holy by praying at the third, sixth and ninth hours (compare the prayers in the Roman Office for the so-called minor hours: Terce, Sext and Nones) and even during the night (cf. Nocturns); (7) similarity between buildings used for worship; at Dura Europos the synagogue and the *domus ecclesiae* are two identical buildings differing only in their pictorial decoration and the symbols used in it.

There were of course influences from other sources on the developing liturgy of the Christian Church. The presence of hellenistic elements, for example, is undeniable; and this is due partly to the fact that Greek was the language used in the earliest liturgies, even in the West. The switch to Latin took place first in the African provinces and, naturally, affected catechesis and the didactic section of the mass. Towards the end of the third century Latin appeared in Rome as well, as an official language (used for such purposes as papal correspondence), but in the field of liturgy there was a long period in which both languages were used, a period which lasted, in such examples as the eucharistic prayer, into the fourth century and beyond. This survival forms the origin of the Greek lexical forms which remain in liturgical Latin (such as *kyrie eleison*). Other elements reveal their derivation from mystery-cults, such as the celebration of night-time vigils, the completion of baptism as an initiation rite (exorcism and unction), the *Disciplina arcani* (discipline of the occult), and so on. But such borrowings are not comparable in scale and scope with the inheritance drawn by Christian liturgy from its Jewish counterpart.

If these results emerge from the history of liturgy, what conclusions can be drawn from them for that of music? It has been widely assumed, understandably enough, that a large-scale transfusion took place, involving customs and melodies from Jewish tradition passing into that of Christianity. And yet – and this is an essential preliminary to any further discussion – the discovery of proof or even of clues in this field is very difficult, largely because the Jews, like the Christians (and this coincidence should not be overlooked), used no form of musical notation. They treated music as a solemn and privileged vehicle for the Word and the sacred texts, and considered the very function – or rather ministry – of the cantor to be sacred in itself. Furthermore, any melodic comparison of the heritage of Christian chant with that of the Jews must be undertaken with extreme caution, not only because the Jewish tradition was written down much later than the Christian, but also because of the possibility – which seems to have been verified in some cases – that it was the Jewish tradition which was influenced by the Christian in the course of centuries. Moreover, the dispersion of the Jews caused considerable diversification in the melodies of their ritual chants.

This is not to say that affinities and even coincidences between melodic fragments of Jewish and Christian chant are not to be found; every history of music³ compares this or that passage to show their relationship (psalmodic intonations or similar recitatives such as the 'lamentations' are most often used). Too often, however, this involves literal quotation of Jewish models belonging to widely scattered communities, perhaps dispersed into the furthest reaches of the Western or Asiatic worlds; and there is always considerable scope for coincidence, given the basic nature, or rather the melodic poverty, of the cited texts.

Fortunately, direct comparison between the two repertoires in their present form is not the only valid method of conducting this enquiry. Valuable help can be provided, for example, by an acquaintance with the development and the history of the Jewish repertory.⁴ It is important to remember that it was only after the Babylonian exile, in the fifth century BC, that the ethnic and religious unity of the Jewish people was re-established around the figure of Esdras, and that neither the occupation of Palestine by Alexander the Great nor the vicissitudes endured under the *diádochoi* (Seleucids, Ptolemies, etc.) until the arrival of the Romans were able to damage significantly the sense of adherence to a unique community of religion and worship. This sense survived, to some extent, even among the Jews of the diaspora, resident in Rome and in almost every part of the Empire,

and in the richest commercial and manufacturing cities of the mediæval and modern ages. In the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth, several scholars devoted themselves to the transcription of Jewish melodies,⁵ though labouring under the disadvantage of having to imprison within bar-lines and tonal scales a music which enjoyed an extraordinary rhythmic and melodic freedom. Better results have been obtained from more recent research,⁶ thanks to recordings and to the application of the techniques of ethnomusicology. Even chants emanating from the most distant areas reveal two types of relationship. The more important is that they are related to each other, for beyond local differences there exists a strong tradition which has preserved intact certain forms even where the melodies are different; while the second connection – a foreseeable one – is with the musical practice of the place where the community has made its home. This evidence is much more interesting than individual and problematic melodic coincidences with Christian chant. And it is precisely on the level of form that the comparison of the two traditions can show itself to be extremely significant.

3 The early forms of Christian chant

The same conception of the 'Word' in its sacred, mystical sense unites Jewish and Christian spirituality; but among Christians its semantic value is greater because the word (*logos, verbum*) is also the Son of God, Christ. In both systems it is an essential part of worship, to the point where – in Jewish ritual – the word is always chanted in order to extract richness and solemnity from the musical sound; nor, indeed, does Christian practice differ, in that the word is 'proclaimed' to the congregation and not merely spoken or pronounced. This premise explains why chanting, along with psalmody, is one of the universal and distinctive traits of Jewish religious music. These are its essential elements, according to Edith Gerson-Kiwi:¹ chanting is an amplification of the word in a restricted number of sounds, governed by the verbal rhythm, in phrases devoid of any metrical structure. It is not, therefore, a melodic ornament, and still less a genuine musical composition, since the text is pronounced rapidly, to the degree of flexibility permitted by the nature of the language involved. In the rabbinical schools future cantors (*hazam*, plural *hazamîn*) are taught the recitative formulas (*ta'am, ta'amîn*) shown in their books by

conventional signs which have nothing to do with musical notation. *Ta'amîn* come in many different varieties, but each type has to be reproduced with absolute fidelity; and in them are found vocal passages, sometimes short and sometimes of reasonable length, based on an archaic musical scale familiar from other Middle Eastern sources and containing intervals of less than a semitone and frequent passages *glissando* from one note to another. In Christian practice the recitatives of the celebrant and the readings of the other ministers (Epistle, Gospel, Lamentations and so on) are based on this scheme. Differences include the disappearance of micro-intervals and other details (for example, in these Christian chants punctuation is more varied and more frequent), but the principle of construction is the same.

As for the psalms, the Old Testament and the tradition which survives today in Jewish communities reveal a considerable diversity in performance. H. Avenary² identifies the following variations: (1) single verses of the psalm are sung by the cantor and then repeated unchanged by the congregation (a simple teaching method); (2) the psalm is intoned by the soloist and sung as a whole by the congregation (rarely found); (3) the psalm is performed by the soloist, while the congregation responds with a given verse of the psalm as a refrain; (4) the psalm is performed by the soloist, the congregation singing *alleluia* after each verse; (5) the soloist chants the first half of each verse, and the congregation replies with the second; (6) the psalm is sung by the soloist, and the congregation joins in with certain verses only; (7) the psalm is sung with fresh text or music interpolated. In this variety of modes of performance (some of which presuppose rehearsal) one element is constant: the solo cantor who leads the congregation. He adapts the melodic formulas to the varying nature of the text, following that technique of variation which presided also over the formation of Western liturgical chant (the psalms follow the rules of a proper poetic form, but one completely different from those based on our metrical criteria of quantity or accent; the basic constructive principle is that of parallelism between the verses). In such chants, obviously, there is no room for polyphony, and the human voice, considered the most malleable and perfect of instruments, finds its fullest application in solo performance.

Was there unbroken continuity in the change from Jewish tradition to that of primitive Christianity? The unanimous opinion of scholars, especially of those who start from liturgical evidence, is that there was; they see in type 3 above the prototype of the responsorial psalm of the Christians, and in type 4 the model of alleluiatic psalmody,

while type 6 is taken to be the precursor of antiphonal psalmody. It is true, however, that in recent years attention has been drawn to the absence of positive evidence for the existence of the responsorial psalm before the third century.³ But the global scale of subsequent developments is such that the argument *e silentio* seems very weak, the more so because the Biblical precedents for psalms with a refrain are particularly notable (see Psalms 117 and 136 in the Vulgate numeration), even if their plan is not exactly that of the Christian responsorial psalm.

The *psalmus responsorius*, as it appears in Christian sources, obeys the following rules of repetition (where A indicates the refrain, B and C the verses of the psalm): soloist A, congregation A, soloist B, congregation A, soloist C, congregation A, and so on. In practice the response given by the soloist and repeated by the congregation is taken up by the congregation after every verse.

Evidence of the alleluiatic psalm is found as early as Tertullian (d. 220) and in the contemporary *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus; as we have seen, it consisted of an acclamation (*alleluia*) after each verse chanted by the soloist. Traces of this kind of performance may be detectable in the ancient Ambrosian psalmody of Milan;⁴ and it was re-introduced into the liturgy of the Hours as part of the reform ordained by the Second Vatican Council in 1970.

Antiphonal psalmody (formerly simply called antiphon) consisted of the alternation of the verses of a psalm between two semi-choruses, with or without a form of refrain, either taken from the same psalm or from elsewhere. Some scholars hold⁵ that it was introduced somewhat reluctantly into the West and rather later than the responsorial psalm. In present-day usage 'antiphon' is the name given to the short phrase sung at the beginning and at the end of the psalm.

Another form which should not be overlooked is that in which the psalm is performed by a cantor without additions or verses used as a refrain. From this type of psalmody is derived the Gregorian *tractus* (called *cantus* in the Ambrosian rite), a meditative chant after a reading, originally performed by a soloist.

Another melodic form with its roots in Jewish tradition is the *jubilus*.⁶ This consists of the joyful explosion of a vocal melisma, sometimes very long, without accompanying text. The fullest and most enthusiastic account of this musical form – a kind of contemplation – is given by St Augustine (354–430), who rarely misses an opportunity to discuss it, especially in his *Enarrationes in Psalmos*. He describes it as a chant much used in connection with the responsorial psalm, and thereby refutes the opinion of those who see in the *jubilus*

no more than the direct ancestor of the *alleluia* in the mass. (It is noteworthy that the *alleluia* is compared by Augustine and others to the *kéleuma*, originally an oarsmen's song and therefore strongly rhythmical.) Furthermore, from certain other passages of Augustine⁷ it might be inferred that the performance of the *jubilus* was not the exclusive preserve of the soloist, but that the congregation joined in; and one must therefore imagine simple or even standardised forms of *jubilus*. Among earlier authors, the *jubilus* is mentioned by St Ambrose (339–97) and by poets and other writers of classical Latinity (such as Varro, Silius Italicus and Marcus Aurelius) – a sign that the custom of performing the prolonged vocal passage was widespread even among the Romans, especially as the particular slogan of a given social or military group. This seems to be the meaning also of the Jewish *t'ru'āh*, a shout which in the oldest translations of the Bible is always rendered in words of similar etymology (*jubilatio*, *jubilare*). Given the evidence for its existence in the Latin world, it cannot be maintained that the *jubilus* is derived exclusively from the Jews; it is in fact a related phenomenon which the Christians, because of Biblical precedent, felt able to develop and thereby make more common.

A chronological list of some pieces of indirect evidence for ancient Christian chant forms a continuous testimony to what can be perceived clearly as a rich and multiform reality. Towards AD 50 St Paul, imprisoned at Philippi, sang with Silas during the night, perhaps a Jewish evening prayer, and the other prisoners listened (Acts 16, 25). In his writings St Paul refers to 'psalms, hymns and spiritual songs' (Ephesians 5, 19; Colossians 3, 16). Such words do not indicate a division of the repertory into three genres, as was once thought to be the case; and this is confirmed by the fact that in both cases an exhortation is accompanied by the words *in cordibus vestris* (in your hearts), which seem to act as a spur to inward adoration. If some kind of external reference is demanded at any price, it can only be to the melic forms of the Old Testament, certainly excluding hymns understood as strophic and metrical compositions.

It is certain that towards the end of the first century the *Sanctus* (*trisagion*) was sung, as can be seen from Revelation, from the letter of Pope Clement I to the Corinthians, and from the *Didaché* or *Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles*⁸ (an invaluable little book which, among much else, contains the earliest description of a eucharistic gathering outside the New Testament). Indeed the *Sanctus* already had a place in Jewish ritual. The *Didaché* also provides information on prayers accompanied by a litany, and thus by acclamations from the congregation, after every intention pronounced by the celebrant. Among the

rudimentary 'hymnodic' forms the *Gloria in excelsis* (*Laus angelorum* in the Ambrosian rite) should be mentioned, a doxology intended for use at morning prayer whose oldest version, in Greek, dates back to the second or third century.

In the year 112 Pliny the Younger, Governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor, sent a report on the Christians to the Emperor Trajan, requesting advice on the attitude he should adopt towards them. In the letter he writes that the Christians used to 'stato die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem' ('meet on a designated day [a Sunday] before dawn and sing among themselves a song to Christ as to a god': Letters x, 96). Ignoring the ambitious attempts made in the past to identify the *carmen* mentioned here, it is enough to note that the Christians sang among themselves (does *secum invicem* mean 'antiphonally'?) verses in honour of Christ.

The writings of the philosopher Justin, a convert from paganism, in his *Apologia* of about 150, are valuable for the history of the eucharistic liturgy, but on the present subject they reveal only that the congregation joined in the *amen*. More interesting is a passage from the *Apostolic Tradition* written in about 210 by a Roman priest, Hippolytus, in which all the elements that even today make up the preface are to be found. These include the dialogue between celebrant and congregation: 'The Lord be with you', 'Lift up your hearts', 'Let us give thanks to the Lord', 'It is right', etc., to which are added the common conclusion *amen* and the reference, mentioned above, to psalms sung by the deacon with *alleluia* as the refrain. Hippolytus and Clement of Alexandria (d. before 215) furnish information on the role of the *lector* and on the existence of formulas for the chanting of readings. Then for a long period there is discussion of the *schola lectorum* (the *lector's* ministry was a sacred one, which was conferred in a special rite of ordination), which was to be the forerunner of the *schola cantorum*. Originally *lector*, *cantor* and *psalmista* were almost synonymous.

In the light of this evidence certain opinions about the state of Christian chant before the Edict of Milan (313), in which the Church gained its liberty, can be critically evaluated. One common view⁹ has it that certain gnostic currents of thought ('gnosis' was a heretical movement which tended to give a rationalistic interpretation to the Christian revelation) were responsible for the introduction of poetry and chant as a means of disseminating their own doctrines. The documents mentioned above compel a total reversal of this position; it was the gnostics who entered the battle with weapons which the