

thesis, ictus, etc.; and as to the respective positions and functions of length and intensity, both Dom Pothier and Dom Mocquereau are in exact accord, and that if there is anything to choose between them, it is the latter who leaves most freedom of interpretation to the singer. Next, Signor Bas takes the specimen pieces, *Ave maris stella*, *Tantum ergo*, and *Dies irae*, selected by Father Burge for special reprobation, and proves from Dom Pothier and Father Lhoumeau that Dom Mocquereau treats them precisely in the same way as these two distinguished Gregorians, whom the English monk professes to admire. Lastly, he shows that as to polyphony and harmony Father Burge's strictures lay himself open to the very criticisms which he passes upon his confrère, and then concludes with a defence of the rhythmical signs.

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Are the signs, then, a hindrance rather than a help? Do they confuse the singers and lead to a mechanical rendering? Surely this is a point on which the opinion of an ordinary choirmaster is entitled to be heard before that of anyone else, and although it might be difficult to find a confused choir singing mechanically, yet if choirmasters, who were previously accustomed to the Gregorian, made such charges against the Solesmes rhythmical editions, no one would be likely to buy them. However defective their system may be, the fact remains that it is the best that the monks had been able to devise, and that those who have urged the Fathers to undertake this work have been able to point to its success as justifying their demands. It is for this reason that the Bishop of Verdun has adopted the editions with rhythmical signs for use in seminaries and churches throughout his diocese, quoting in support of his action a former pronouncement of the President of the Pontifical Commission, as follows:—

“ This superabundance of written signs or of practical hints may have its uses, and even become a kind of necessity for certain classes of singers or readers, and may be allowed in certain books, such as primers, manuals, or little ‘Paroissiens.’ ”

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The above sentence was written in 1902, i. e. about the date of the first Solesmes editions with rhythmical signs, which is a needful reminder that they are nothing new, and that they were

first officially approved by the Sacred Congregation long before the appearance of the Vatican Kyriale, so that it is labor in vain for Father Burge and M. Ch-M. Widor to attempt to make out that they are being advocated to the disadvantage of the Typical text, instead of being intended to help on its circulation. The need of some attempt to show the rhythm has not only been noticed by Professor Riemann, as quoted in the last issue of CHURCH MUSIC, but it is being rapidly more and more widely recognized. Thus, in the *Cecilia*, Dr. Mathias, the eminent organist of Strasburg Cathedral, writes as follows:—

“Among the numerous editions of the Kyriale, either published or in course of publication, those which attract most attention from church musicians are the ones which exhibit rhythmical signs or show the harmony. This is not to be wondered at. Indeed, this sort of edition, when it really provides what is wanted, is of the greatest assistance both to singers and to organists, in that it makes it easier to understand the melodies far better than the most elaborate theoretic disquisition.”

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It is, indeed, a great pity that controversialists on either side do not steer clear of saying anything which may have an appearance of involving an appeal to authority or of stricture upon work which bears the stamp of its approval. On both sides there is no doubt that the writers are loyal and enthusiastic Catholics, and it is suspiciously significant of the weakness of the reasoning when anyone tries to fall back upon charging an adversary, who sticks to his guns, with disregard for authority. On the other hand, such an enterprise as bringing out an ideally artistic and truly traditional version of the original chant after the best MSS. is rendered more difficult, if those who call for it assume an attitude towards the Vatican Edition now in course of preparation, which enables an opponent of the earliest records to throw dust in the eyes of the general public by creating an impression that the supporters of the original *Motu proprio* are in conflict with later official utterances. The Solesmes Fathers have never published a word in criticism of the Vatican Kyriale since its appearance, and certainly will not bring out a scientific edition, if its text were to put obstacles in the way of the adoption of what the Holy See has recommended to the faithful. The line taken by our editor is, therefore, one which should commend itself to all lovers of the sacred chant.