The Politics of Plainchant in fin-de-siècle France

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Unsurprisingly, Dom Mocquereau was ultra-sensitive to anything that threatened that 'value-added'. When, in January 1905, he discovered that the Vatican printer Scotti was planning a commercial edition using the Solesmes rhythmic signs he raged at De Santi in terms that precisely accord with Combe's account of the 23 March 1904 meeting, while also emphasizing the financial imperatives at stake and the sense of betrayal. For him and for the abbey, the entire system and its signs were 'our only means to . . . . . .' [seul moyen pour nous . . . . . .].[25] And an annotation to an incoming letter of the previous year speaks volumes about abbey policy. When Clément Gaborit warned Dom Mocquereau that, because of the vacuum created by the absence of a Vatican 'recommended edition', Pustet would be at liberty to prepare his own edition from original sources, someone (not Dom Mocquereau) wrote: 'Put as many rhythmic signs as possible in the Gradual and the Antiphoner.'[26] Given the situation of all French Benedictine communities in the wake of 1901, the exclusion clause for the rhythmic signs was a move born of necessity. Nonetheless the entire deal was a model of financial and political acumen. In return for its concession of the basic copyright, Solesmes offered the Holy See free labour on the edition itself, thereby ensuring enhanced control of the editing process. In addition, having established the abbey's copyright claims over those of Dom Pothier to the satisfaction of both De Santi and Pius X, Solesmes collectively removed any basis for continued activism over the question of whether Dom Pothier or indeed anyone else – for the Abbot Primate had designs of his own – had legitimate copyright claims over existing Solesmes texts.[27] Among the principal actors no one, after all, would be likely to complain that their copyright had been offered to the Pope, and Dom Pothier had in any case already offered up what he considered his own copyright.

[24] Combarieu in his own journal, *Revue musicale*, 4/1 (1 January 1904): pp. 14–15, at p. 15.

[25] Typed copy of letter to De Santi, 19 January 1905. *SO (paléo.)*: 'Commission Vaticane 1905, XIII'. The dots, which are original, might either be an intentionally deafening silence or a private breaking off from copying, Mocquereau having no need to explain to himself what was patently obvious. The former interpretation seems more plausible, given that no other letter I have seen contains such a gesture.

[26] 'Mettez le plus possible de signes rythmiques dans le Graduel et l'Antiphonaire'. Annotation to a letter from Gaborit to Mocquereau, 20 January 1904. *SO (paléo.)*: Corr. Mocquereau.

[27] New ventures such as Pothier's *Cantus Mariales* published by Mme Poussielgue were, however, a different matter. Noetinger, for one, viewed them as theft. *SO (paléo.)*: undated note to Mocquereau. It is also interesting that, in a section preceding his account of the transfer of copyright to the Vatican, Combe leaves the copyright question in limbo, claiming that it belonged to Solesmes but only while Pothier remained there (*Histoire*, p. 268; *Restoration*, pp. 235–6). Such an interpretation is inconsistent with the resolutions of the Chapitre Général in 1894.