

THE VATICAN EDITION OF THE 'KYRIALE' AND ITS CRITICS *

NO sooner had the Vatican edition of the *Kyriale* appeared when, to the surprise of many, it was met with immediate and stormy opposition. This has had the effect of disturbing the minds of many as to the authority of this edition ; and, although the official acts of the Holy See stand in no need of defence before the Catholic faithful, it seems, however, advisable that some reply should be made and the real worth of all this opposition be carefully weighed. In Italy and Germany the outcry has perhaps been the loudest ; and it has now spread to our islands. Father Beverunge, in his article, 'The Vatican Edition of Plain Chant' (whose inspiration was sought at Appuldurcombe), published in the I. E. RECORD, January, 1906, has now ranged himself among the opponents of the *Vaticana*. As far as I can judge, his criticisms are the most detailed and searching that have yet appeared ; and I should like to pay him the compliment of saying that if we can offer a satisfactory answer to his objections, we have answered all.

Before entering upon the main argument, it may be as well to correct a few errors of fact. On page 44, Mr. G. Bas is described as 'one of the Consultors of the Commission.' This is not the case, and the statement has caused a good deal of amusement among those who took special pains that this gentleman should be kept out of the business. If Mr. Bas states that 'the cases in which the Vatican differs from "the authentic" (that is, the Appuldurcombe) version, number 135,' he is rendering a very dubious service to his friends, for this information could only be obtained by a violation of the Pontifical secret. But a much more serious error, and one which underlies the whole article, is the statement that Dom Pothier was made 'the sole judge of the version of the new edition' (page 47), and the assumption throughout that Dom Pothier is responsible for all variants and corrections. Thus, we read that 'Dom Pothier shows

a strange predilection for the German tradition of the Chant ; another correction is supposed to bear 'testimony to his amiability, but what about his critical judgment ?' (page 51). In another part 'Dom Pothier changes the *c.* . . . Could anything be more discreditable to an editor ?' Another passage is due to 'his whim' (page 61), and finally the official edition is termed 'his edition' (page 62). There is not a single passage, as far as I can see, in which the Pontifical Commission is mentioned, the whole brunt of the attack falls upon Dom Pothier, and on him alone.

Now, this is a serious and fundamental error on the part of the critic, which vitiates the whole of his contention. Dom Pothier was not 'sole judge,' was *not* solely responsible for the changes. By the direction of the Holy Father, Dom Pothier was 'entrusted with the delicate mission of revising and correcting the edition, and in this work he will seek the assistance of the other members of the Commission';¹ and with that 'amiability' which distinguishes him, we may be sure that Dom Pothier did seek and accept the aid and suggestions of the other members of the Commission. There is not a single correction, not a single one of the versions that Father Beverunge condemns, that has not been fully discussed and approved, by the *major pars* in many cases, and in *every case* by the *sanior pars*, of the Commission. When we find such men as Dr. Wagner, Dom Janssens, members of the Pontifical Commission ; M. Moissenet, Canon Grossellier, M. Gastoué, Consultors, publicly extolling and defending the versions of the *Vaticana*, it is not difficult to gather that they have thrown in their lot with Dom Pothier, and accept the responsibility for the character of the edition. Against such a weight of authority and learning, we have but one opponent, the Archæological School of Appuldurcombe, from whom all the attacks, directly or indirectly, emanate.

This attribution by the critic of the whole of the revision of the *Kyriale* to Dom Pothier alone gives rise to some unpleasant reflections. Did Father Beverunge learn this at

¹ Letter of Cardinal Merry del Val, June 24, 1905.

* From the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, Volume XIX, January to June, 1906, pp. 324-345.

Appuldurcombe, where he repaired for the material of his article? But at Appuldurcombe, if anywhere, the true facts of the case were well known, and the share of the other members of the Commission in the corrections well understood. If, then, they gave their champion this false impression, and allowed him to hold up Dom Pothier *alone* to the scorn and derision of the public, it gives rise, I say, to many unpleasant reflections. But the whole statement is inaccurate, and the other members of the Commission are not at all grateful to Father Beverunge for the manner in which he completely ignores their share of the work.

What, then, is the fundamental position that Father Beverunge has taken up in his criticisms? It is that the Pontifical Commission has not followed in every minute detail the reading of the majority and of the oldest MSS. I need not cite passages from the article, for I fancy the author will not object to this statement of his position. Now, if we can show that this principle is unscientific, inartistic, and at variance with the terms of reference of the Commission, the whole of his objections must fall to the ground.

Father Beverunge, in his article, the material of which he declares were gathered at Appuldurcombe, has enrolled himself as a disciple of that school, whose cry is Archæology, and nothing but Archæology, in the Chant. Perhaps we can put the position more clearly in the form of question and answer.

'Is there not such a thing as art in the Gregorian?'—'No,' is the reply, 'archæology is the only art.' 'But is there no possibility of an improvement in details?'—'No; such a statement is an archæological absurdity.' 'Is there no place for a development in tonality and music in general?'—'Absolutely none.' 'Still the universal practice has surely some title to recognition?'—'None whatever.'

This little dialogue will give us some idea of the uncompromising position taken up by the School of Appuldurcombe.

And what is this archæology that embraces the whole

truth, and nothing but the truth, of the Gregorian? Dom Mocquereau describes it for us in the article, 'L'Ecole Grégorienne de Solesmes.'¹ You must first obtain, at very heavy cost, a large number of copies of the ancient MSS.; only those who can afford the expense of obtaining these reproductions are entitled to enter upon the study. After obtaining a sufficient number of copies, you proceed to take a given piece of chant and number its groups and neums. Write underneath in horizontal columns all the versions of each group. Count up the agreements and the differences, which are further sub-divided according to the age of the MSS. Tabulate these and the votes of the oldest MSS. carry the day. If, however, the votes are equal, you may toss up for it, or, as Dom Mocquereau euphemistically puts it, 'follow the proceeding in the election of Matthias.' All this is excellent and valuable work, and I am far from any wish to disparage it. But, we may ask, is this science? On such a system as this anyone could undertake to restore the Gregorian. It is unnecessary to have any artistic gifts; an array of statistical tables would be all the equipment necessary for determining the text of the music. Nay, a man might not have a note of music in his composition, be unable to sing the most common interval, and yet might, on this theory, claim the right to reconstruct the Gregorian with his arithmetic against the most artistic and learned master of Plain-song. Surely this argument alone should be a *reductio ad absurdum* of the claim of the Archæological School to have the sole voice in the correction of the Chant. Such mechanical proceedings are very useful and meritorious, but they cannot be raised to the dignity of a science.

It is an assumption to say that the true Gregorian Chant is contained in the oldest codices alone. Our oldest MSS. are certainly not older than the ninth century. A good two hundred years yawns between them and the work of the great Pontiff. Are we sure that our MSS. faithfully represent the reform of St. Gregory? Some very eminent historians are strongly of the opposite opinion. In any case,

¹ *Rassegna Gregoriana*, April, 1904.

there is no proof for the assertion of our archæologists ; it amounts to little more than a probable guess. Is this a scientific basis on which to claim the right to reform Church music in the name of archæology ? It is still possible that some day the libraries of Europe may disclose a MS. of the seventh or eighth centuries, and then what would happen ? The whole of the statistical tables, the whole of the conclusions hitherto come to, would have to be revised and brought into conformity with each new discovery. Is this a scientific basis to rest a claim so proud that archæology puts forth ? And must the music of the Church be dependent upon every fresh discovery of archæology ?

But there is something more. Is it quite certain that the tradition of the Chant flowed with pure and undefiled stream from the days of St. Gregory to the ninth century ? The archæologists affirm it. But this is far from certain. Dr. Wagner, in his recent work, *Neumenkunde*, was the first to point out that in the centuries immediately after St. Gregory some very decided attempts were made to make the Chant learned and accurate, by bending its forms to the prosody of classic times, or the *Chronos* of the Greeks. Different kinds of ornaments and *floriture* were also introduced about this time, and, under Greek influence, not only half-tones, but even quarter-tones, began to be cultivated. All this, of course, was exceedingly distasteful to the ordinary singer of the Latin Church, and a struggle ensued, which ended finally in the Latinization of the Chant, not only in the melody, but also in the execution. Had it not been for this successful resistance against the designs of the experts and theorists, the *cantus planus* would have disappeared from the Church by the twelfth century.

Until these doubts relating to the composition and execution of the melodies by the masters of the ninth century can be dispelled, we must be allowed to suspend our judgment as to perfection of the ancient MSS. in their smallest details. A scientific basis for the reform of the Chant can hardly be erected on such unsteady foundations.¹

¹ One of the most eminent historians of France thus expresses himself on this question : 'If historical research is directed solely to the discovery

The claims of archæology seem to ignore the point of view with which the Church regards the Chant, which, after all, is a collection of compositions of all times and countries, of all degrees of art ; but all distinguished by one particular style. Thus, we have productions of the later Middle Ages, those of the Renaissance, the compositions for modern and new offices, all forming the body of song that passes under the name of the Gregorian Chant, and all receiving the stamp of the Church's authority, as 'possessing in the highest degree those qualities which are proper to the liturgy of the Church.'¹ But the archæologists would have us believe that there is a certain aristocracy in the Church, that the MSS. of the ninth century are alone of pure blood, all the rest of low degree, with no claim to associate with those who can trace back their descent to Charlemagne. We often wonder how the archæologists can resign themselves to the chanting of these later barbarisms, which they are compelled so frequently to meet with in the course of the Divine Office. But the Church has to deal not with savants, but with the large body of the faithful, to whom all such questions are a matter of supreme indifference, and she will continue to add to, to revise, to complete, choral books, and to give to modern melodies a place of honour in her liturgy equal to that of the oldest chant. For the Plain Chant is a living energy, not a musty old parchment, an energy that, like the coral insect, is ever battling with the demands of the day and ever building upon the old foundations.

What does all the indignation, all the pother of the archæologists really amount to ? That perhaps one note in three hundred has been corrected ! It really comes to little more. And even this is an exaggerated estimate, if we confine ourselves to the oldest MSS. of all. For the *Kyriale*, as is well known, is quite in a different condition from that of the Proper of the Time of the old Offices. The *Kyriale* chants, on the whole, are of very much later composition. In fact,

of the ancient documents of the past just as they were ; the *traditional practice* is not bound meekly to assimilate the results of this investigation ; it ought to show in a certain measure due respect for the work of time.'—Gevaert, *Mélopée antique*, p. 211.

¹ *Motu Proprio*.

the triple invocation of the *Agnus Dei* was not introduced into the liturgy until after the ninth century. Many of the melodies are compositions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. And still, although these compositions are acknowledged to be distinctly inferior to those of the earlier centuries, yet we are invited to draw up statistical tables, to count up the number of agreements, and to adopt towards the corrupt precisely the same methods to be employed with the incorrupt, under penalty of being branded as arbitrary, whimsical, and unscientific, if we disagree. As if any amount of concordances of a corrupt version could establish a correct reading! This, I maintain, is an unscientific method of dealing with the revision of the Chant.

But if this claim to reform music by archæology alone be unscientific, it is also *inartistic*. To judge from the writings of the archæologists, one would conclude that there is no art in the Gregorian. But, in turning again to Dom Mocquereau's article above mentioned, 'L'Ecole Grégorienne de Solesmes,' we come across a delightful passage on Gregorian art, which quite made our mouths water at the prospect of the interesting discoveries that the archæological process seemed to offer.

Sometimes [he says], and not uncommonly, we may come across some very curious secrets of the old notation, notably certain equivalences, which, far from contradicting some teaching, go far to strengthen it. Above all, we may discover the laws of adaptation of the same melody to different texts, and we recognize how often these rules have been ignored in the adaptations made in modern times.

It is here that we can probe to the quick the methods of composition of the ancient Gregorian artists, we can admire the delicacy of their taste, the variety of the resources at their command, the deftness with which they know how to expand or contract a melody in order to clothe the text with grace. The art which they display in these circumstances is inimitable, and the æsthetic rules which they obey are lost to those who have not the means that our statistical tables offer of analysing patiently and curiously their methods.

Nothing could be more fascinating than these prospects of unfolding *the art* of the Gregorian. The secrets of the neums, the methods of composition, the art of equiva-

lences, of adornment and development of melodies, are precisely the points on which the musical world is most anxious to have a systematic exposé, for the chapter has not yet been written. The articles regularly contributed by Dom Pothier for a number of years to the *Revue du Chant Gregorien* have also revealed to us many of the secrets of the art of the Chant, the laws of cadences, the characteristics of the different kinds of Gregorian melodies, the combinations and formulas of the different modes, the relation of accent to text, the evolution of tonality, its relations with evolution of the accent and rhythm of the language, these have been unfolded to us with rare skill and insight by Dom Pothier. We feel here that we are being admitted into the arcana of the Chant, that an order and beauty here reigns which excludes all question of arbitrary proceeding. Surely, if there is any criterion by which we should proceed to the editing of the correct text, it should be that which applies these delicate and subtle laws, that can only be grasped by those who are equipped with rare musical gifts and knowledge.

After Dom Mocquereau's happy indication of the discoveries that had followed the compilation of the statistical tables, one naturally looked to see some of these principles applied to the elucidation of a Gregorian text. In this we were disappointed. Dom Beyssac, of Appuldurcombe, in his study of the *Kyrie, Fons bonitatis* (which Father Beverunge terms 'masterly'), proposes to restore to us the best reading of this melody. Is there any application of the principles of art, so charmingly sketched by Dom Mocquereau, bestowed upon this task? Absolutely none. It is nothing but a counting of MSS., the number of agreements, the determination of the majority of the votes; but as far as the writer of the article is concerned, the art of the Gregorian might be non-existent. The same remarks will apply to the whole of Father Beverunge's criticism; it is again merely a question of enumerating MSS., of pitting one nation against another, while of the principles of Gregorian art, of its claims in any recension of a text, not a word! If Dom Mocquereau has made the important

discoveries of the principles of Gregorian art, which he professes to have made from his statistical tables, he seems to have taken great pains to lock the secret up in his own breast. In any case the Archæological School have let it be clearly understood that they recognize no claims of the voice of art of the Gregorian in the preparation of the critical edition.

Now, having endeavoured to show that the methods favoured by the Archæological School are neither scientific nor artistic, let us examine how far they are in harmony with the wishes and commands of the Holy See. It has long been recognized as a dictate of practical wisdom that, when a Commission is appointed, terms of reference must be imposed, otherwise there would be great danger of the members wandering off at their own sweet will into the most opposite directions. Nor did the Holy Father neglect to take this precaution when he appointed the Commission for the Restoration of the Gregorian Chant, on April 25, 1904. The terms of reference of the Pontifical document are: 'The melodies of the Church, so-called Gregorian, shall be restored in their integrity and purity, according to the testimony of the more ancient codices, but in such a manner that particular account shall be taken of the legitimate tradition contained in the later codices and of the practical use of modern liturgy.'

The three points which the Commissioners are directed to observe in their recension are: (1) The more ancient codices; (2) the legitimate tradition contained in *later codices*; (3) the practice of the modern liturgy. These terms of reference indicate a perfectly intelligible line of procedure, but they completely exclude the platform of the archæologists. The latter admit no 'legitimate tradition,' beyond the ninth century; in their eyes 'later codices' have no more value than the evolution of the Gregorian art which they represent. It is clear that those who, holding such views, entered the Commission, would find themselves bound to struggle against the terms of reference imposed by the Holy Father. If the archæologists could not see their way to accept the Papal instructions, an impasse was bound to result. And

so it happened, in point of fact. The history of the deadlock is too well known to require re-telling.

It was hardly to be expected that the Holy Father would yield. Nothing then remained for him but to override the objections of the opponents and give Dom Pothier, who was loyally carrying out his wishes, the supreme direction of the work. It was hoped that after the Head of the Church had given such a decided mark of his disapproval of the views of the archæologists, the latter would have had the good grace to yield to such authoritative decisions. It is disappointing to have to state that this is far from the case. Discomfited in the Commission, they have now transferred their opposition to the *Vaticana* to the public Press, and the numerous attacks on the typical edition all proceed from one source, the School of Appuldurcombe. There is no use in mincing matters; by their attitude they have placed themselves in direct antagonism to the Holy Father and to ecclesiastical authority. It is true they claim the right to hold their views on a theoretical question; but the public will note that all the same they are attacking principles which the Holy Father and the Sacred Congregation hold very strongly, and that the archæologists are striving their utmost to discredit these principles in the eyes of the Church.

Let us put the question fairly: Is the Plain Chant to be restored for the sake of its antiquity, or because it is an admirable vehicle for the expression of the faith and piety of the people? Or, in other words: Is the Plain Chant made for man or man made for the Chant? To most minds the framing of this question brings its own answer. And yet the archæologists do not hesitate to state that *man was made for the Chant*, and not *vice versa*. Dom Mocquereau maintains¹ that the Chant 'must be taken just as it is with *its good and bad points*.' Even if it is a question of restoration, it must not be an adaptation or improvement, but the restoration of the original.' No consideration is to be shown to the feelings or needs of the singers. If the old forms are

¹ 'L'évolution dans l'esthétique et la tradition Grégorienne,' *Rassegna Gregoriana*, 1904.

harsh and uncouth, so much the worse for the singers. They must leave the Plain Chant alone. The same writer says: 'Let us hope we have done for ever with mutilations in order to make the Chant easier to sing everywhere and by everyone. Nobody is obliged to sing the Gregorian melodies.'¹

It is unmistakably the case of 'man for the Chant,' and not 'the Chant for man.' We seem to see a reproduction of the old Pharasaism that jealously guarded the forms and overlooked the spirit which had given these forms their life and being.

In any case, this is not the object of the Holy Father. In his *Motu Proprio*, he has given public and official expression to his wish that 'this Chant (Gregorian) should especially be restored for the use of the people, so that they may take a more active part in the services, as they did in former times.'² This is again a case where the Holy See lays down the principle that the Chant is meant for the people, to which the archæologists reply that they see no reason why attempts should be made 'to make the Chant easier to sing by everyone and everywhere.'

I might here bring my article to an end, as I have adduced abundant proof that the principles upon which the archæologists have founded their objections to the *Vaticana* are supported by neither science, art, nor authority. However, it may be as well, in order to avoid all suspicions of shirking the question, to follow the critic in his patient

¹ This is one of the stock objections to the *Vaticana*. Another critic says: 'Dom Pothier has evidently been inspired by the wish to come to the aid of choirs whose artistic aspirations are very limited, and whose means of execution restricted.' It is rather amusing to note the inconsistency of the archæologists on this point. These lovers of antiquity have invented certain rhythmic signs, with which their editions are 'adorned,' in order to meet the wishes of these very singers of aspirations and execution so limited. Not that there can be any objection to such a proceeding, but it is curiously inconsistent with those sneers at Dom Pothier playing, so to speak, to the gallery. The amusing part is, that these rhythmic signs have absolutely no claim whatever to antiquity. No author of medieval times can be quoted in support of their theories of binary and ternary rhythms. And yet these sticklers for antiquity do not hesitate to introduce into their notation all sorts of hybrid modern signs precisely in order 'to make the Chant easier to be sung everywhere and by everyone.'

² *Motu Proprio*, ii. 3.

enumeration of the examples which he finds so faulty. On page 49, the critic offers two general reflections. The first is that 'Dom Pothier shows a strange predilection for the German tradition of the Chant.' I need not again enter into the persistent misrepresentation which makes Dom Pothier the 'sole judge' of the revision. If the critic had been better informed, he would have discovered, with some surprise, that the so-called German readings of the *Kyriale* are met with in MSS. of very different origin. The editors would be the last to admit that they have shown 'predilection' for any special group of MSS.; they have carefully weighed the claims of any notable portion of the Gregorian tradition.

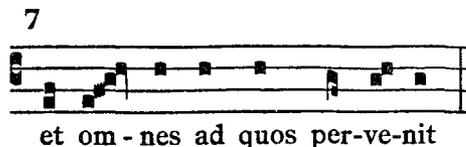
If Dom Pothier had 'Germanized' the *Kyriale*, many more *e*'s and *b*'s would have disappeared to make place for *f*'s and *c*'s. But if the editors weigh the claims of the general voice of tradition, as expressed in German, French, Italian, and English MSS., it then becomes a question of making a selection. Our critic dreads such an idea and sounds a note of alarm. 'On what principle, then, is this selection to be made? The æsthetic taste of an individual?' And he quotes Dom Gaisser to point out the danger and instability of such a criterion. He is ever recurring to this point of 'the taste of one individual,' meaning, of course, Dom Pothier, until we shall begin to believe he is as much haunted with Dom Pothier as Mr. Dick was with King Charles' head. This perpetual fear of anyone venturing to make a selection, this marked distrust of the ability and science of any person whatsoever to form a critical judgment is characteristic of the School of Archæology. It is fortunate that the Holy Father believes that there are still artists and erudite men in the world to carry out the reform he has so much at heart.

One of the examples over which the critic waxes merry is No. 7. Referring to the change of the reciting note from *b* to *c*, he says:—

As the change was almost universal, I could understand the position of those who claim that it should be maintained. But what does the Vatican edition do? It evidently goes on the

principle of 'pleasing both parties,' and gives half the recitation

to *c*, half to *b*, thus:—



Three syllables on *c*, three on *b*, nothing could be fairer, and nobody has any right to complain! The procedure is a great testimony to Dom Pothier's amiability, but what about his critical judgment? (page 51).

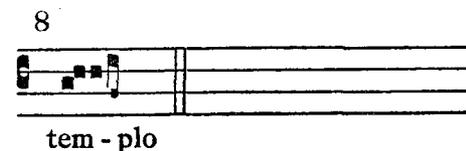
We can hardly expect the archæologists to enter into the niceties of Gregorian art that are displayed in the disposition of the notes over *ad quos* and *pervenit*. The first accentuate and determine the reciting note, while the two *b*'s in *pervenit*, the ancient reading, constitute a modulation properly so-called; the second serves as a binding to the following note. It is thus an improvement of the old reading of the *Liber Gradualis*



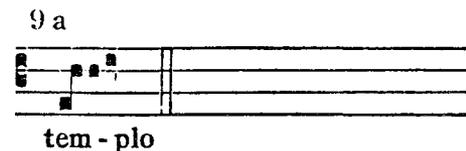
which gave, so to speak, a jolt to the melody, perhaps not a very grave fault, but certainly not very perfect. The editors thus combine the vigour and clearness of the reciting note *c*, which was an improvement of the medievalists, with the smoothness of the ancient version. It is, therefore, a test, not of 'Dom Pothier's amiability, but rather of his critical judgment.' We can hardly expect those who are pledged to the archæological party to appreciate such matters of art, but others will gain therefrom renewed confidence in the skill and taste of the revisers.

The critic never tires of repeating that the different corrections are not found in any MSS. To this I can only reply that in not a single case has any correction been adopted which is not justified by one or more MSS. I will, however, take one of the critic's own examples, and show the method he adopts to prove that the Vatican version 'is not found in any single one!' In order to still

further impress the reader with this charge, he makes a special appeal to his eyes by printing the last words in italics. Turn to example 8, on page 50, he says: 'In the *Vidi aquam* we find the following:—



'The MSS.' he says, 'are divided as to the figure on the last syllable of *templo*; some have



etc. The version of the Vatican is *not found in any single one!*' The reader will see at once that the only difference between the two versions is the liquescent note *la*! Now, it is well known, both by the teaching of the ancient masters and from the MSS. themselves, that there was a good deal of latitude allowed in the use of liquescent notes. As Guy of Arezzo lays down: 'Si autem eum vis plenius proferre non liquefaciens, nihil nocet.'¹ In the example 9 (a), the liquescent is omitted, in the *Vaticana* it is inserted. For this grave tampering with the MSS. the editors are accused of introducing a version *not found in a single MSS.!* I feel sure this is quite an oversight on the part of the critic, otherwise such an accusation might give rise to unpleasant rejoinders.

Example 10 of the *Kyrie (Fons bonitatis)* has, as I have remarked above, been the subject of a special study by the archæologists, and the Vatican version differs in one or two points from that favoured by Appuldurcombe. The Vatican



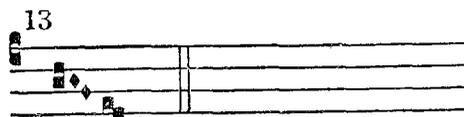
¹ Gerbert, *Scriptores*, t. ii.

The recension favoured by Dom Beyssac (*supra*) and Father Beverunge omits the two *a*'s marked with asterisk, and changes the *e* into *d*. The reasons which induced the editors to change the *d* into *e* seem to have been somewhat of this nature: In the primitive version the *d* would be followed by *b*, *tristropa*. When the *b* was early changed to *c*, to give more precision and vigour to the melody, certain copyists felt the necessity of changing the *d* into a *clivis*, *e d*, with stress on the *e* and not on the *d*. The *d* then became superfluous, and the editors of the Vatican suppressed it, thus restoring to the ancient phrase the freedom of the primitive attack. This same phrase has long been under consideration, and Dom Pothier in discussing it some years back held that the *d* was still possible. The Commission, however, voted its suppression. These views will not commend themselves to the archaeologists, but they will show the impartial reader the scrupulous care and art that the editors lavished over every phrase of the Chant.

In examples 12 and 13, Dom Pothier is reproached with changing the melody of *all* the MSS.



glo - ri - am



glo - ri - am

into

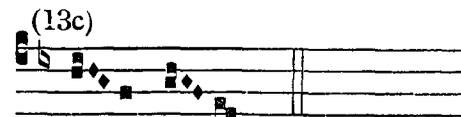
But the critic has omitted to place before his readers the whole of the passage, or they would quickly see the reason why the editors changed it. The oldest MSS. have



ma- gnam glo - ri - am

This is a case where the 'variety of resources at the

command of the ancient Gregorian artists' were evidently exhausted. The editors very cleverly corrected this to



ma-gnam glo-ri-am

a correction to which none but those with archaeological 'bees in their bonnets' could object.

In example 14, the critic complains that the *Sanctus* of Mass III. does not follow any MSS.



San - ctus

The older version put a *b* instead of a *c* for the third note, and inserted another *b* after the third note. The editors, he complains, have omitted both *b*'s. The reason is a most obvious one. If the first *b* was changed into *c*, according to the traditional demand for a more decided note, it must not be left behind, but suppressed. The second *b* would induce that position of the tritone against which nearly eight centuries of musicians have protested.

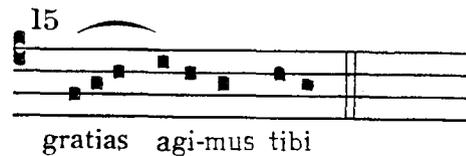
This will lead us to the discussion of the views of the critic on the nature of the 'tritone.' On page 54, after citing the above example, he goes on to say:—

The reason for this change is easy to guess. It is to avoid that *diabolus in musica* of the medieval theorists, the tritone. I admit that the tritone sometimes causes a little difficulty to modern ears. But if we are to eliminate all the tritones from the Gregorian melodies what is to become of them? . . . I think that the full tone under the tonic causes far more difficulty to the modern musician than a few tritones.

Let us take this last statement first. It is strange that Father Beverunge should maintain this with the Irish melodies ringing around him. One of their great charms is the presence of the flattened seventh, and the humblest son and daughter of Erin in England and Ireland is not known to experience any special difficulty in singing 'a full tone below

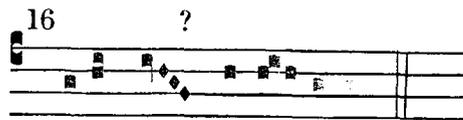
the tonic.' But with the tritone it is different. For centuries the European ear has developed a decided objection to certain positions of the tritone. This is one of those cases of 'legitimate tradition' which the Holy Father has directed the editors to respect. In the Vatican edition some of these repulsive intervals have accordingly been removed. It is somewhat surprising that Father Beverunge has not called attention to these departures from the *most* ancient MSS. in his eagerness to establish their monopoly. It was, perhaps, more prudent to pass them by, or he would have badly damaged his case before the impartial reader. I will, however, supply the omission. In some old MSS. we

find the following :



gratias agi-mus tibi

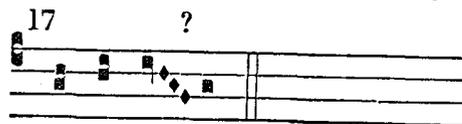
Had the archæologists had their way, we should have had this forced down our throats :



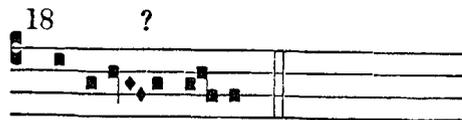
Hosan-na in ex-cel i

Again in the *Agnus* of Mass IV. (*Cunctipotens genitor Deus*) the archæologists tried actually to impose on us these

horrors :



Ag-nus De - i



mi-se-re-re no-bis

We must remember that these melodies are intended to be sung by the ordinary singer whose ear is almost entirely educated by modern tonality. To propose such things to modern singers is only to implant in them a deep hatred of the Chant.

It is quite intelligible that these archaic intervals could be rendered more or less familiar to a community of religious who are accustomed to no other style of music. But the Chant is intended, not for the chosen few who can give to it an undivided attention, but for the ordinary singer nurtured in modern tonality, in order to induce him to 'take a more active part in the services of the Church.' Here, again, we see that archæology, in crying 'Hands off' to the average chorister, is opposing the wishes and directions of the Sovereign Pontiff.

Are these objectionable intervals, however, really primitive? It is allowable to doubt it. It is not at all unlikely that in these instances the *fa* was sharpened. But what is certain is that in some MSS. the *Agnus* is found written a tone lower, showing that in the Middle Ages it was felt that, with the traditional method of execution, the notation was faulty. It was therefore written thus :



Ag-nus De - i

And Dom Pothier, yielding to the strong feeling on the point, expressed by many members of the Commission, agreed to write it in the sixth mode in the *Vaticana*, whereby the objectionable interval is avoided. In the face of these examples, we recognize the prudence, and are grateful for the intervention, of the Holy Father, who has delivered us from the 'Chamber of Horrors' of the archæologists. This is not the only passage where the rendering seems to be at variance with the notation. It gives rise to a well-founded suspicion that some of the old MSS. did not correctly give the intervals that were actually sung. We know that the most ancient MSS. were written in neums-accents, which gave no idea whatever of the intervals. It was only by degrees that the intervals came to be represented in diastematic notation, first with one line then with two or more. But for a long time the outlines of the melody were, so to speak, in a very nebulous state, and it was

impossible that under these circumstances errors and variations in small matters should not creep in. And yet we are asked by the archæologists to believe, that in these long periods of tentative gropings after diastematic perfection, not a secret was lost, not a note misplaced.

The critic produces nearly fifty more passages for reprobation, and it is surely unnecessary to enter into a detailed discussion on each, to say nothing of the expense of furnishing musical examples, a very pressing difficulty. Of these fifty, eleven are distinctly erroneous. The critic complains that in the *Gloria* of Mass VII. the editors omit the $b\flat$ and sharpen the leading note. As a matter of fact, there are only two b 's in the piece and *both of them are flattened*. In the *Cantus ad libitum*, Kyrie II., he says there are only two *Christe*. I have examined three editions, and in all I find *three Christe*. In *Gloria III.*, the MSS. give a double d at *Te in Laudamus Te*; the critic declares 'Dom Pothier' only gives one. As a matter of fact, the editors have given the double d . Seven other statements are erroneous in their assertion that 'Dom Pothier's' version is unsupported by any MSS. This, as I have shown above, is altogether inaccurate, and an imputation on the venerable Abbot's honesty of purpose. Nearly forty out of the incriminated passages are condemned for the guilt of not following the statistical tables of Appuldurcombe. I have at length, in the previous part of the article, discussed the value of this archæological criterion. While giving it all due importance, I have endeavoured to prove that it has not the right to claim to be 'the sole judge' of revision of Gregorian melodies. Moreover, *every one of the changes* are such manifest improvements from a practical and artistic point of view that I wonder the critic's well-known musical taste did not rise in judgment against his archæological prejudices. I cannot resist the temptation to give an extreme example of this. He complains (page 55)

that while the MSS. give



the editors write



'It is hard,' he says, 'to suppress one's indignation at this.' What it is that has so stirred the critic's bile we cannot understand. For years he has probably sung the Vatican version without a qualm, and even with pleasure. But now that the version of the MSS. appears (and what a clumsy one, too), he is filled with holy indignation against those who have hidden from him such a pearl of melody!

I think that I have now trespassed quite enough upon my readers' patience, but I have some confidence that they will admit that we have good and solid reasons for supporting the Vatican edition against the attacks directed against it. These attacks, we hold, are bound to fail, for on the scientific side their principles are so feeble, and still more from the point of view of authority, in that they are in direct antagonism to the directions of the Holy See. It is gratifying to be able to record that the new *Kyriale* is spreading at a most extraordinary rate throughout the world, and it will soon be a question of the ancient dictum: '*Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*'

The critic indulges in some melancholy reflections on the 'procession of "reformers," as they pass through the centuries, although they are headed by a St. Bernard.' Is not the critic at fault here? Has he not been guilty of a most important omission? Most people are under the impression that the procession of reformers was 'headed' by St. Gregory the Great. Such a procession was far from a melancholy sight in the Church, as the centenary celebrations in honour of St. Gregory, held in Rome in 1904, can testify. St. Bernard hardly deserves to be included in the same category as the Medicean reformers, as his reform was chiefly confined to his own Congregation, a very small body in the Church.

There is, however, one aspect of the critic's case, which has caused a good deal of pain in his readers, and that is the

style in which he has allowed himself to speak of the official acts of the Holy See. Certainly the authorities at Rome would be the last in the world to attempt to stifle discussion on theoretical and scientific questions of the Chant ; but the antagonists should surely refrain from dragging in the official acts of the Sacred Congregation. I am sure that the critic hardly realizes how distressing it is to a loyal son of the Church to come across such passages as these : ' One thing is certain to me, the *Vaticana* cannot stand. Dom Pothier has, indeed, already got a considerable number of authoritative pronouncements in favour of his edition ' ¹ (page 62).

How has Dom Pothier got these pronouncements ? Are we invited to believe that the Abbot has only to walk into Cardinal Tripepi's office, and go forth with the documents desired, much in the same way as we get passports from the Foreign Office, just for the asking ? The whole situation would be too amusing to those who know something of Dom Pothier's retiring and humble ways, were it not that the respect and authority of the Sacred Congregation are at stake. It is neither correct nor respectful to insinuate that Cardinal Tripepi issues decrees for the whole world on a most far-reaching matter, simply at the dictate of another, without any sense of responsibility of his exalted position. Had the critic known something of the personal holiness and integrity of this Prince of the Church, he would have realized how singularly unhappy are the suggestions that anyone could ' get ' at him.

But this is not all. The critic goes on to say : ' No, this question cannot be settled by decrees. If the *Vaticana* cannot stand on the strength of its intrinsic excellence, no artificial propping up by decrees will prevent it from tumbling down ' (page 62). This is really going too far. If the direction of the Chant of the Church is not to be determined by official decrees of the Holy See, by what is it then to be determined ? By archæology ? God forbid ! There is always danger that controversialists, in their eagerness to score points, lose a sense of the proportion of things. Surely

¹ *His* edition.' This is, perhaps, one of the most offensive forms of this persistent misrepresentation.

if there is one thing clear, as the Holy Father has declared more than once, it is that the Gregorian Chant is ' the patrimony of the Church,' and it belongs to the Sovereign Pontiff, and to him alone, *to settle all questions relating to the Chant by his decrees*. If another Pope thought fit some day to cut down and shorten the melodies of the *Gradual* (an act which some people would gladly welcome), the Church would not hesitate to obey. It is surely a startling proposition to put before the faithful, that the settlement of the Plain Chant must be dependent upon the studies and decisions of a school of archæologists, and not upon Rome. Even if, by supposition, the archæologists were to succeed in impressing upon the Holy See their views and contentions (*quod Deus avertat !*) how would the ' question then be settled ' for the Church except by the issue of ' official decrees ' ? As well might we expect the Atlantic to retire before the labours of Mrs. Partington, as to expect that the faithful of the Church will disregard ' official decrees,' in favour of an unscientific, inartistic school of archæology. This is the only distressing part of a study that is distinguished by most careful research and a thorough grasp of all the details of the edition, and our regret is all the keener that these reflections should have proceeded from a Professor of Maynooth, a College always distinguished for its almost exuberant loyalty to the Holy See.

Who but must laugh, if such a man there be ?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he ?

T. A. BURGE, O.S.B.