

Ireland's Cultural Empire

Ireland's Cultural Empire:

*Contacts, Comparisons,
Translations*

Edited by

Giuliana Bendelli

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PREFACE

IRELAND: THE MYTH OF A COLONY

This volume springs from research carried out on the relationship between Ireland and England and pays special attention to the concept of colony. Traditional adjectives such as *colonial* and *post-colonial*, however, have been purposely avoided in the title. When referring to Ireland, they reinforce a prejudicial perspective and blur the relevant influence of its cultural heritage and identity. Instead, the concept of an Irish cultural empire counterbalances this bias and highlights Ireland's deep cultural and linguistic influence in the world.

In the decades after independence, Ireland was predominantly defined in terms of separatism and isolation, and in a contrasting, antagonistic relationship with Britain. Recent studies have instead explored the essential connectedness of Irish culture. Not only have the well-established contributions of Medieval Irish writers and scholars to the European recovery of Classical culture come to be valued in a way that was not previously possible, but so too have the positive achievements of the modern Irish diaspora, sometimes even working through the structures of the former British Empire. Hence, the slightly provocative reference to an "Empire" in the title of this book, situates it within a live and continuing debate.

The study of Ireland was at one time limited to native Irish scholars, with some almost "naturalized" foreigners also permitted to take part. The American interest in Anglo-Irish literature of course rendered this academic isolationism obsolete. Scholars from various European countries, including Italy, have made important contributions to Irish literary studies, and the cultural impact of Ireland in other countries, studied partly by international scholars, has come to be increasingly valued, not least for its capacity to enhance Ireland's understanding of its own cultural output. And the international dimension of culture has come to be seen as more than an export business; for example, the Italian influences on Joyce, Beckett and Yeats are now seen as an immensely enriching component of their own

cultural identity. In this volume, the same will be shown to be true of Brendan Kennelly, who not only uses Greek myths and Biblical echoes in his works, but also titles one of his books in homage to Dante's *Comedy* and Boccaccio's *Decameron*. These are instances of Ireland widening its local horizon and coming to know itself better while revealing its peculiar universality. Hopefully, this book, wholly conceived by Italian scholars, will continue this process of interactive understanding.

The wide-ranging choice of authors and topics sets the essays in a broader context which outlines a chronological thread starting by dealing with Ireland's major cultural impact in Europe during the Middle Ages and the influence of classic motifs in Anglo-Irish culture. The following essays focus on 18th, 19th and 20th century Irish writers (not always famous ones) who export their legacy abroad, to England and even to the Far Eastern Japan. In addition, the volume offers new perspectives on Irish emigration to Australia and the USA.

The order of the chapters listed in the table of contents follows this thread, though, perhaps I should speak of a jigsaw puzzle whose pieces I have tried to assemble in such a way that the puzzle conveys a sense to the reader. I am not suggesting that the given order is artificially obtained, I rather realize it may appear arbitrary without a few words of explanation to fill in the gaps. Actually, the picture here represented is incomplete in so far as the final puzzle still contains many gaps. However, it would have been impossible to create a global net pinpointing the cultural presence of Ireland worldwide covering its long history as a colony.

The volume is the embryonic development of a neutral, serene reflection on Irish cultural inheritance and on its multiple interactions with international culture. An idea apparently sprung all of a sudden, though the result of a long meditation. The initial attention paid to the relationship between Ireland and England has slowly adjusted its vision to an exact focus magnifying the centrality of Ireland. I have caught from the other contributors aspects of their research particularly illuminating in this respect and, together with them, I have finalized the study in this perspective.

Thus, the six chapters of the volume, if not exhaustive, provide engaging hints at meaningful "contacts, comparisons, translations" dealing with the significant influence of "Ireland's cultural empire" in the world, starting with the first chapter, placed as a necessary introduction to Ireland's contribution to the development of Western Civilization. The following five chapters are chronologically arranged from Oliver Goldsmith moving to London in the middle of the 18th century, Lafcadio Hearn to Japan and George Fletcher Moore to Australia in the second half of the 19th century, Josephine Donovan's heroine, an Irish American pioneer

woman, settling in the Iowan prairies in the second half of the 19th century, to finish with Brendan Kennelly's autobiographical hero moving to Leeds, England, in the second half of the 20th century. They all revolve around the theme of encounter.

Chapter 1, *Latin, liturgy and music in Early Mediaeval Ireland: from Columbanus to Drummond Missal*, reminds the reader of the fact that Irish erudition was already a sort of scholarly myth in the Carolingian age. A belief later emphasized by Thomas Cahill in his popular book *How the Irish saved civilization*, the first of a seven-volume series devoted to pivotal moments of the development of Western Civilization. This volume, though criticized by many, thanks to its popularity has revived the scholarly debate about the role played by the Irish scholars in the transmission of the Latin Classics along with the debate on the presumed autonomy of Irish liturgy. Guido Milanese investigates our knowledge about the sound of the ancient Irish liturgy. The monastic liturgy as described in Columbanus's rules was chanted and probably made use of hymns and other texts similar to those witnessed by the Antiphony of Bangor; but we do not have any idea of the music of those liturgies. Manuscripts of the 11th–12th centuries transmit the most ancient music performed in Ireland: but do these manuscripts provide any evidence of a local musical practice? A close examination of the neumes contained in a liturgical book of the 12th century, the *Drummond Missal*, shows that these neumes, far from transmitting a trace of ancient local repertoires, are an early Irish attempt to write down the standard Western European liturgical music, using a rather crude Northern French, or possibly English, neumatic script.

Chapter 2, *Oliver Goldsmith: An Irish Chinese Spectator in London*, deals with *The Citizen of the World* by Oliver Goldsmith, a famous 18th century Anglo-Irish novelist, playwright and poet, who is best known for his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), his two plays *The Good-Natur'd Man* (1768) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1771) and his two poems *The Traveller, or a Prospect of Society* (1764) and *The Deserted Village* (1770).

In 1761 a series of letters by a "Chinese philosopher" started to appear on the pages of "The public Ledger", a newly born mercantile daily paper. One year later the author, Oliver Goldsmith, collected the letters in a volume that was anonymously published under the title of *The Citizen of the World or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher, residing in London, to his friends in the East*. This fictional outsider's perspective is a device, whose model the author borrowed from Montesquieu's earlier *Persian Letters* to comment both ironically and moralistically on British society and manners. The Irish author, hidden behind the mask of a Chinese

traveller, feels free to question Britain's mercantile and colonial expansion without being suspected of prejudices.

The Chinese traveller in England by the name of Lien Chi, offers the reader a precise account of his sojourn in London, depicting a city that, characterized by poverty, squalor and corruption—at both a moral, social and political level—is undoubtedly far from his expectations since, as he affirms, he had undertaken such a journey “in order to examine its opulence, buildings, sciences, arts and manufactures [...] so much talked of abroad.” Epistles written from abroad, on the one hand highlight differences and on the other hand overcome distance. The aim of Simona Cattaneo's essay is then to analyse in detail the picture of 18th century London that emerges from the letters and to understand whether the images and stereotypes there proposed are simply part of a recurring and shared idea of the city at that time or are they somehow influenced by the author's Irish point of view? In order to reach this goal, a series of non-literary works of that period, such as newspapers, letters and diaries—both English and not—are taken into account and their vision of the capital is compared to that presented in *The Citizen of the World*.

The philosophical traveller as social critic is a fictional device Goldsmith employed in *The Traveller, or a Prospect of Society* and in *The Deserted Village* as well. The three works share the presence of a lone outsider in the guise of a solitary traveller or a foreign observer, a figure that embodies comparison and contrast.

Chapter 3, *George Fletcher Moore: Geographical and Linguistic Translation of Western Australia*, with a jump of one century in time and of thousands of kilometres in space, investigates a *sui generis* Scots-Irish settler/translator in colonial Australia, and one of the first published documentations of Aboriginal languages. Laura Olcelli scrutinizes George Fletcher Moore's *Diary of Ten Years Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia* (1884) and the attached *A Descriptive Vocabulary of the Language in Common Use Amongst the Aborigines of Western Australia*, which originally appeared in 1842. By focusing on the migrant's perceptions of the Antipodean landscape and people, and by semantically classifying the Noongar-English vocabulary, her study suggests that Moore responded to the spatial and linguistic disorientation in similar ways. He explored both the Western Australian territory and the Indigenous tongue and culture, and in his “geographical and linguistic translation” he displayed control over both fields.

Chapter 4, *Ghosts and Butterflies: Lafcadio Hearn between Ireland and Japan*, looks at a selection of short stories from Lafcadio Hearn's *In Ghostly Japan* (1899) and *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things*

(1904). Lafcadio Hearn was born in and named after the island of Lefkada, one of the Greek Ionian Islands where his Irish father, married to a Greek woman, was stationed as the highest-ranking surgeon in his regiment during the British occupation of the islands. When he was promoted to Staff Surgeon Second Class and reassigned from Lefkada to the British West Indies, he arranged to send his son and wife to live with his family in Dublin. Before definitely moving to Japan, where he took the Japanese name of Koizumi Yakumo (小泉 八雲), he got married and taught English Literature at University; Lafcadio kept being moved from Greece to Ireland absorbing both cultural traditions later conveyed in his books about Japan, especially his collections of Japanese legends and ghost stories.

Nicoletta Asciuto investigates the use of supernatural elements in these short stories set in Japan as partly derived from Irish folklore and compares them with William Butler Yeats' collection of short stories *Fairy and Folk Tales of Ireland* (1888–1892) and *Mythologies* (1893). She begins by considering Hearn's first impressions of Japan upon his arrival in the Far Eastern country in 1890, which already appear to borrow much from the literary tradition of Irish fairy tales, to move on to study Hearn's own involvement with Irish folklore elements in the re-writing, translation, and adaptation of Japanese supernatural stories.

Chapter 5, *Irish-American on the Western Frontier: The Uncommon Case of Josephine Donovan's Black Soil*, through a brief historical overview of the fortunes of the Irish in the United States, gives evidence of their manifold and elaborate experience in the New World primarily adopting the thesis of the historian Lawrence McCaffrey that the life of the Irish in northern-eastern cities is not at all representative of the entire nation and the more west the Irish moved the more chances they had to improve their conditions and become successful. Together with other scholars like Margaret Connors and James P. Walsh, McCaffrey rejects the Bostonian and, in general, the eastern hegemonic perspective on the Irish American experience and its load of desolation, failure and despair.

Adopting the point of view of David Emmons, who analyses the experience of the Irish in western rural America through the myth of the American frontier, Paola Nardi will take into consideration a specific text, *Black Soil*, written by Josephine Donovan and published in 1930. Through a discussion of this novel—an account of the arrival and settlement of an Irish American pioneer woman in the Iowan prairies in the second half of the 19th century—she will first of all give voice to the little-known endeavour of the Irish on the American frontier. In the middle of nowhere, in close contact with American Natives and subject to the extremities of an unforgiving nature, this book tells a completely different story from the

“porvertiresque” narrations of the “disproportionate numbers of impoverished immigrants from Catholic Ireland” in eastern American cities.

Of course, Irish history, among far off countries, is much more interconnected with the USA, a land which has hosted a huge number of Irish people as a consequence of the sadly, well-known potato famine, commonly referred to as “the Great Hunger”, that hit Ireland between 1845 and 1849 causing a million deaths and forcing millions others to leave their native land to survive. As Nardi points out, the huge and intense flood of Irish immigrants invading the New World has come to represent almost exclusively the history of the Irish American which is instead a complex matter difficult to categorize and pin down as Timothy Meagher claims in the *Columbia Guide to Irish American History* concluding that one cannot be surprised if historians attempting to make sense of the history of Irish Americans have rarely agreed. Nardi highlights the several elements to be taken into consideration such as the area of origin in Ireland of the immigrants, their religion, the time and the place of immigration, the social classes involved, the gender and the age of the immigrants.

In Chapter 6, *Classic Irish Odysseys. Trans-Navigatio (Sancti) Brendani*, my aim is to show the presence of classical epic topoi in two novels by a contemporary Irish writer, Brendan Kennelly. In *The Crooked Cross* (1963), the microcosm of a typical Irish village with its oral tradition, its folkloric and legendary material, supplies a fertile soil of cultural, literary and stylistic interrelations suggesting an interesting underlying cross-cultural communication. The novel is also an interesting example of the last century's emigration to England by Irish young people in search of a job.

In *The Florentines* (1967), Ireland is portrayed while getting to know with other cultures and languages, mainly with some linguistic varieties of the “foreign” English world; these encounters are a chance offered to Ireland to widen its “local” horizon and know itself better while revealing its peculiar universality. The focus of this analysis is on the theme of the sea voyage. The description of the short sea voyage from Ireland to England in *The Florentines*, reminds the reader of Ireland's own traditional Odyssey: one of the chief types of ancient Irish literature, shared by other orally based literatures, is in fact the *imram* or voluntary sea expedition story.

Besides, the process of translating Kennelly's novel *The Florentines* into Italian has implied a continuous confrontation between the two languages and cultures. The translation has offered a chance to unearth

shared literary and cultural links that trace back to Ireland's own historical and mythological past.

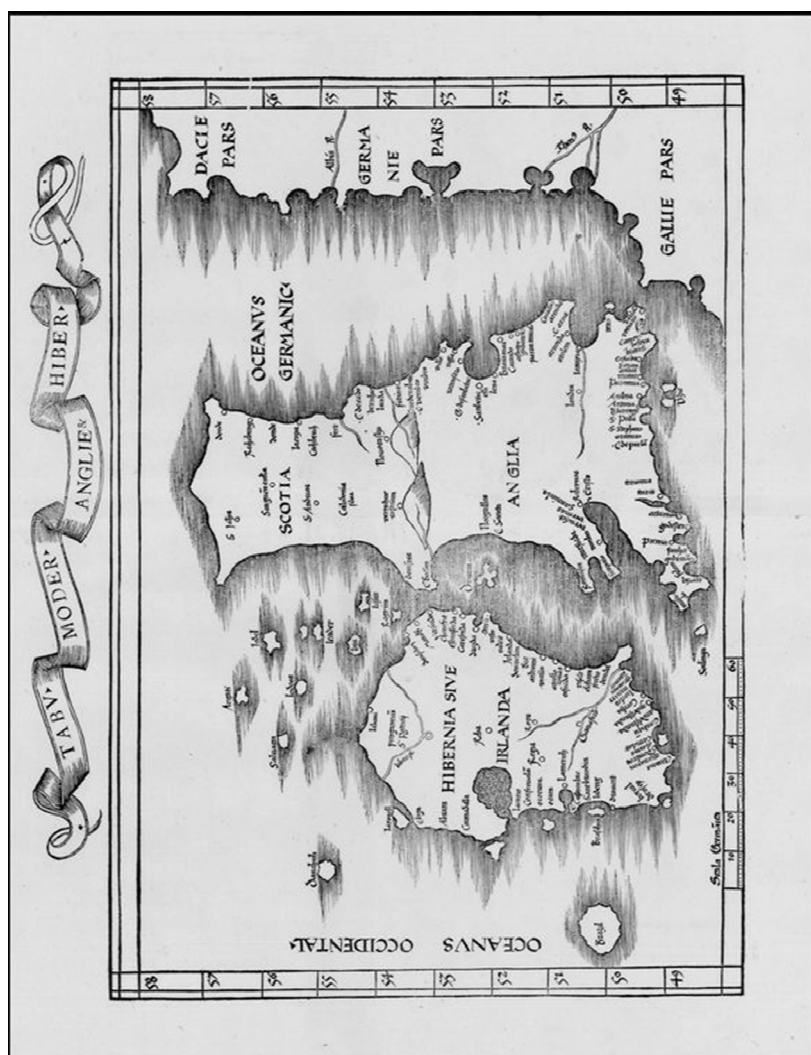
As editor of this new publication, I hope it will contribute to advancing the perception of international strands in Irish identity. I also trust in the academic interest the book might generate in the field of Translation Studies, which in recent years has come to embrace large questions of identity, cultural interaction, and the place of linguistic transactions in broad historical movements. Ireland has been prominent in this expanding area of interdisciplinary research, both as a centre of scholarship and as a revealing case study.

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I wish to express my sincere gratitude to each contributor for their genuine interest and the special care given to this volume.

A special thank goes to Nicoletta Asciuto and Laura Olcelli who enthusiastically joined the project from the very beginning offering to share the first results of their research carried out abroad as PhD Students. I also thank them for their patience in waiting for the final publication which occurs six years after the first submission of their papers. The delay is due to many reasons, above all to the continuous process of selection in order to identify the pieces that proved the most convincing in shaping the final puzzle.

I am very grateful to my University for its generous contribution to the funding of this research project and its publication.



Antique map of the British Isles by Lorenz Fries, 1535

CHAPTER ONE

LATIN, LITURGY AND MUSIC
IN EARLY MEDIAEVAL IRELAND:
FROM COLUMBANUS
TO THE DRUMMOND MISSAL

GUIDO MILANESE¹

Twenty years ago, the American writer Thomas Cahill published the first volume of his highly fortunate collection *Hinges of History*, a seven-volume series devoted to pivotal moments of the development of Western Civilisation. This first volume, *How the Irish saved civilization*, was a long-seller both in English and in translation; its very impressive title is consistent with the narration of the book. Cahill's work was sharply criticised by not a few unsympathetic reviewers²; but it is worth noticing that the reactions to this popularly acclaimed book reflect, *mutatis mutandis*, the scholarly debate about the role played by the Irish scholars in the transmission of the Latin Classics and also the debate on the autonomy—if any—of Irish liturgy: the Irish erudition was a sort of scholarly myth already in the Carolingian age, according to Francesco Stella's brilliant essay³; and the "Celtic liturgy" was almost completely

1 Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, IT-20123 Milano – Università della Svizzera Italiana, CH-6900 Lugano. I would like to express my gratitude to Andrea Balbo, Gaetano Conte, Mirella Ferrari, Marco Gozzi, and Maria Luisa Maggioni for their kind help and valuable suggestions. My warmest thanks to Giuliana Bendelli for her support, encouragement, and enduring patience.

2 See for example Lisa M. Bitel, "Review", in *The Catholic Historical Review*, 83:2 (1997), pp. 299-300 (review of *How the Irish saved civilization: the untold story of Ireland's heroic role from the fall of Rome to the rise of medieval Europe*, Hinges of history 1 (New York: Anchor Books, 1995)).

3 Francesco Stella, "Il mito dell'Irlanda nella cultura carolingia", in *L'Irlanda e gli irlandesi nell'Alto Medioevo: Spoleto, 16-21 aprile 2009*, Settimane di studio del

denied any autonomy by Hen's recent seminal works⁴. One cannot but recall Mario Esposito's 'palinody' about the role played by Irish learning in the transmission of the Latin classics⁵.

In an article on the historical and musicological importance of the second Council of Cashel (1172), Frank Lawrence aptly asked, "*What Did They Sing at Cashel in 1172?*", and answered that «the twelfth-century Irish Church was already open to a wide range of musical and liturgical influences from England (principally Winchester) and continental Europe»⁶. About the earliest stages of Irish chant we do not have any musical

Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 57 (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2010), pp. 431-464. On the "Irish myth" the most influential book was probably Ludwig Bieler, *Irland: Wegbereiter des Mittelalters, Stätten des Geistes* (Olten: Urs Graf-Verlag, 1961), trans. *Ireland harbinger of the Middle Ages* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); see the well-balanced remarks of Michael Lapidge, "L'Irlanda e gli irlandesi nell'Alto Medioevo", in *L'Irlanda e gli irlandesi nell'Alto Medioevo*, pp. 1-32.

4 Yitzhak Hen, "The nature and character of the early Irish liturgy", in (ed.), *L'Irlanda e gli irlandesi nell'Alto Medioevo*, pp. 353-380. On the Bobbio Missal, understood for decades as a witness of Irish liturgy, and now (reasonably, I believe), moved to the generic "Gallican" shelf of liturgical books, see Yitzhak Hen and Rob Meens (eds.), *The Bobbio Missal: liturgy and religious culture in Merovingian Gaul*, Cambridge studies in palaeography and codicology, 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2004). The sad but undeniable consequence is that any historical consequence drawn from the alleged Irish nature of the Bobbio missal must be obviously disregarded as groundless speculation. Hen's lecture at the 2009 Spoleto conference was criticised by David N. Dumville (see Hen, "The nature and character", p. 379). Michael Lapidge's comment is worth quoting: «i libri liturgici che sono sopravvissuti [...] proiettano, com'è inevitabile, un quadro piuttosto distorto, e creano l'impressione che la liturgia irlandese fosse molto eccentrica rispetto alla liturgia romana. Eppure, potrebbe essere stata ancora più 'romana' di quanto si possa pensare» (Lapidge, "L'Irlanda e gli irlandesi nell'Alto Medioevo", pp. 12-13.)

5 See Mario Esposito, "Dicuil: an Irish monk in the ninth century", in *The Dublin Review*, 137 (1905), pp. 327-337 (Reprinted in *Irish books and learning in mediaeval Europe*, ed. by Michael Lapidge, Variorum collected studies series (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990)), p. 327 and compare with Mario Esposito, "An Irish teacher at the Carolingian Court", in *Studies*, 3 (1914), pp. 651-676 (Reprinted in *Irish books and learning in mediaeval Europe*, ed. by Michael Lapidge, Variorum collected studies series (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990)), p. 651.

6 Quoting from the abstract of Lawrence's article, <http://www.music.ucc.ie/jsmi/index.php/jsmi/article/viewArticle/24>.

witness. We know that in monasteries following Columbanus's rules most of the time was spent chanting the Psalter. The monks were due to chant eight services, one service every three hours—an extremely demanding scheme, thus explained by Jane Barbara Stevenson:

Columbanus arranged the 150 psalms into groups of three, which he refers to as *chori*. Within each group, variety was achieved by the singing method: the first two were sung straight through, and the third antiphonally, that is, with the congregation divided into two and singing verses alternately⁷.

Stevenson refers also to Caesarius's *Regula*, imposing a part of the office *directaneum* and another part *in antiphonas*. I think that Caesarius is here saying that some psalms are to be chanted *without a preceding antiphon*, while some other psalms are chanted *after an antiphon*, as in Benedict's *Regula* (CSEL, LXXV, 1977, ed. Hanslik2, XII 1: *In matutinis dominico die, in primis dicatur sexagesimus sextus psalmus, sine antiphona, in directum*), and XVII 6 (*Si maior congregatio fuerit, cum antiphonas [sic], si vero minor, in directum psallantur*). This is common liturgical and monastic technical language: see e.g. the *Regula Magistri*, SC, 105-106, 1964, ed. de Vogüé: *sine antiphana [sic] directanei dicantur; sed in Dominica vel in diebus festis cum antiphana vel alleluia*. I would therefore propose that Columbanus was not ordering to chant two psalms «straight through, and the third antiphonally»⁸, but that the first two psalms of each *chorus* were chanted *in directum*, and the third with an antiphon. This explanation is simpler, and fits very well with the language both of Benedict's *Rule* and with other texts as Caesarius's *Regula*⁹.

How were these endless psalms performed? They were chanted audibly, because Columbanus's *Rule* (IX, p. 158-9 Walker) requires that after each

7 Jane Barbara Stevenson, "The monastic rules of Columbanus", in Michael Lapidge (ed.), *Columbanus: studies on the Latin writings*, Studies in Celtic history, 17 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), pp. 203-216, p. 209.

8 *ibid.* See also San Colombano, *Le opere*, Introduzione di Inos Biffi e Aldo Granata; analisi e commento delle singole opere di Aldo Granata; cartografia a cura di Costante Marabelli; indici a cura di Antonio Tombolini, Di fronte e attraverso 555 (Milano: Jaca Book, 2001), 294 n. 66.

9 The correct explanation was understood by Michael MSC Curran, *The Antiphonary of Bangor and the early Irish monastic liturgy* (Blackrock: Irish Academic Press, 1984), p. 167. Also, the partition of the Office hours in *chori* of three psalms finds an obvious correspondence in Benedict's *Rule* (see e.g. the arrangement of the "minor hours", XVII 5: *ternos psalmos*); and also the traditional Roman Office of the night comprises three cycles of three psalms, three reading and three *responsoria*: see again *ibid.*

psalm the monks repeat the verse (ps. 69.1) «Make haste, O God, to deliver me! O Lord, make haste to help me!»:

In commune autem omnes fratres omnibus diebus ac noctibus tempore orationum in fine omnium psalmodiarum genua in oratione, si non infirmitas corporis offererit, flectere aequo animo debent, *sub silentio dicentes*, “Deus in adiutorium meum intende, domine ad adiuvandam me festina”. Quem versiculum postquam ter in oratione *tacite decantaverint*, aequaliter a flexione orationis surgant, excepto diebus dominicis et a prima die sancti paschae usque ad quinquagesimam diem, in quibus moderate se in tempore psalmodiae humiliantes, genua non flectentes, sedule dominum orent.

The text distinguishes among the body of the psalm, that is to be chanted, and the silent prayer (*sub silentio dicentes*, «silently saying»—or even *tacite decantare*, literally «to sing silently»). The monks were not mumbling the psalms, they were really chanting—with or without antiphon. When prayer was silent, it was clearly specified¹⁰.

Insofar as texts are concerned, the Bangor Antiphony is an obvious source¹¹, but we do not know anything about contemporary music. Martin Czernin’s study on the musical fragments in Continental “Irish” monasteries (i.e. monasteries founded by Irish monks) is very interesting, even if, to the best of my knowledge, the major publication announced in Czernin’s article of fifteen years ago is still a *desideratum*¹². The Wien Schottenstift, founded in the mid-12th century, was the first monastic foundation in Vienna and maintained solid links with the Irish tradition until 1418, when the last Irish abbot died¹³. Several musical fragments now in the Schottenstift archive are older than the monastery itself, and are probably the relics of the liturgical books «brought by the first monks who came to Vienna from Regensburg»¹⁴. The fragments (12th-13th centuries)

10 On the silent prayer at the end of Psalms *ibid.*, p. 168.

11 See (particularly on *Precamur patrem*) Michael Lapidge, “Columbanus and the Antiphony of Bangor”, in *Peritia*, 4 (1985), pp. 104-116 and more recently Michael Lapidge, “*Precamur patrem*?: an Easter hymn by Columbanus?”, in Lapidge, *Columbanus*, pp. 255-263.

12 Martin Czernin, “Fragments of Liturgical Chant from Medieval Irish Monasteries in Continental Europe”, in *Early Music*, 28:2 (2000), pp. 217-224. I tried to contact Dr Czernin writing to the Wien Schottenschrift, but I did not receive any reply. See recently Ann Buckley, “Peregrini pro Christo: the Irish Church in Medieval Europe as reflected in Liturgical Sources for the Veneration of its Missionary Saints”, in *De musica disserenda*, 4 (2008), pp. 93-105.

13 Czernin, “Fragments of Liturgical Chant”, p. 218.

14 *ibid.*, p. 220.

show definitely some Irish features, such as the double clef, unusual clefs as *b*, *D*, *h*, and the offices for the two most typical Irish saints (St Patrick and St Brigid). The discovery of these “Irish traces” in continental Europe arose a great interest—was it the “most ancient Irish music”¹⁵?

Czernin does not refer to Françoise Henry’s works on Irish manuscript illumination, particularly to “A century of Irish illumination,” an important work written by Fr. Henry and Geneviève Marsh-Micheli. In this work, Henry and Marsh-Micheli trace a very clear framework of the manuscripts (mainly liturgical) produced in High Mediaeval Irish continental foundations (pp. 206-207, with bibliography). “Irish symptoms” are frequently mixed with Continental features: see for example London B.L. Add. 36929, an Irish psalter of the late 12th/early 13th century, featuring (f. 59) the colophon of the copyist, the undoubtedly Irish Cormach, treated as a three-part motet¹⁶.

15 I refer to Dagmar Ó Riain, “Ireland’s Oldest Music Manuscript?”, in *History Ireland*, 5 (1997), pp. 11-13, that I know through the abstract provided at the url <http://www.historyireland.com/medieval-history-pre-1500/irelands-oldest-music-manuscript/>

16 Cassiodoro, *Expositio psalmorum. Tradizione manoscritta, fortuna, edizione critica*, ed. by Patrizia Stoppacci, Edizione nazionale dei testi mediolatini 28, 1. Serie 1, 17/1 (Firenze: SISMEL. Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2012), vol. 1, p. 136 dates the manuscript to the 13th century, as well as the entry in the RISM (I 2, 416): «early 13th century». Fr. Henry, in “A century of Irish illumination”, publishes a facsimile of the polyphony, without commenting; on the music see Frank Llewelin Harrison, “Polyphony in medieval Ireland”, in *Festschrift Bruno Stäblein zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. by M. Ruhnke (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1967), pp. 74-78, and the debate among Peter Downey and Ann Buckley (Peter Downey, “Early Music in Ireland”, in *Early Music*, 18 (2000), p. 510). More recently, see David Howlett, “The Polyphonic colophon to Cormac’s psalter”, in *Peritia*, 9 (1995), pp. 81-91, Susan K. Rankin, “Between oral and written: Thirteenth-Century Italian Sources of Poliphony”, in *Un millennio di polifonia liturgica tra oralità e scrittura*, ed. by Giulio Cattin and F. Alberto Gallo, Quaderni di ‘Musica e storia’ 3 Papers presented at the seminar «Un millennio di polifonia liturgica tra oralità e scrittura», Venezia, Fondazione Levi, 2-4 maggio 1996, (Bologna – Venezia: Società editrice Il mulino – Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi, 2002), pp. 75-98, who aptly discusses the musical meaning of this written music. The most recent contributions are due to Ann Buckley: see “Music and Musicians in Medieval Irish Society”, in *Early Music*, 28 (2000), pp. 165-190, p. 179, “Music in Prehistoric and Medieval Ireland”, in *A new history of Ireland*, vol. 1: *Prehistoric and early Ireland*, ed. by Daibhi Ó Croinin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 744-813, p. 788, and “Celtic chant”, in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press): Buckley’s works provide the best general treatment of early Irish music. Excellent colour photographs are available thanks to the DIAM

The Add. 36929 shares the “Irish symptoms” of the Vienna fragments, particularly the very unusual clef. But what about the music notation as such? The London motet, says the RISM entry, is written «in a very delicate but clear square notation»—but the excellent image made available by the DIAM shows clear “Metz symptoms”: the *tractulus* is often shaped as the *uncinus* of the Metz script—as in the “Graz Gradual,” studied forty years ago by Dom Froger¹⁷. Also, other graphical forms, such as the *porrectus*¹⁸, are definitely “Metz neumes,” which again links this manuscript also to the Vienna fragments, where the Metz-style *uncinus* is fairly common (see the photographs in Czernin’s article).

Therefore, this very ancient music, written by Irish hands, does not use any peculiar system of musical notation. Still to be considered for a better understanding of the “Continental” liturgical manuscripts is the role played by religious centralised orders, such as the Cistercians or the Augustinians. But there are still two manuscripts that may shed light on the history of musical notation—and of music—in Ireland. The first manuscript is the “Corpus Gospel” (Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS. 122, an Irish evangeliary, 11th century according to Coxe’s catalogue). The beginning of Matthew’s Gospel, the Genealogy of Jesus, is a long text that called the attention of early medieval *cantores*¹⁹, who used to chant this text at Christmas and other solemnities of the year. The structure of the text is very simple, e.g.: *Phares autem genuit Esrom. Esrom autem genuit Aram. Aram autem genuit Aminadab*. In ancient continental manuscripts, the reader/chanter was helped by adding some very simple musical “hints” above the syllable: one of the most celebrated example is Autun, Bibliothèque Municipale, 4, (sem. 3), 9th century, from St Pierre in Flavigny²⁰. At f. 25 the conjunction *autem* is notated with a *pes* and a *virga*: two ascending notes on the first syllable and one on the second one. Many more examples and a deep analysis are available in Leo Treitler’s seminal work, whence I

(Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music): see

<http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=393> and to the British Library

(http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_36929_fs001r).

17 Cfr dom Jacques Froger, *Graduel de Klosterneuburg*, Introduction et Tables par dom Jacques Froger, Moine de Solesmes, Paleographie musicale 19 (Berne: Editions Herbert Lang, 1974), 33*-35*. Froger called this notation «notation de Klosterneuburg».

18 Three notes, high-low-high, such as, for example, *DCD = re ut re*.

19 See the splendid examples from Spanish manuscripts published by Susana Zapke in *Hispania Vetust*, pp. 370, 392, 420, with bibliography.

20 See Solange Corbin, *Die Neumen*, Paläographie der Musik I 3 (Köln: Arno Volk-Verlag - Hans Gerig KG, 1977), Taf. 3a.

reproduce a table (see fig. 2).²¹

If we have a careful look at the Corpus Gospels, we will notice that near *autem*, both when written using the traditional Irish shorthand (line 2 in fig. 1) and when written using the standard abbreviation *au* (line 3), a sign is added, most similar to a *pes*²²:

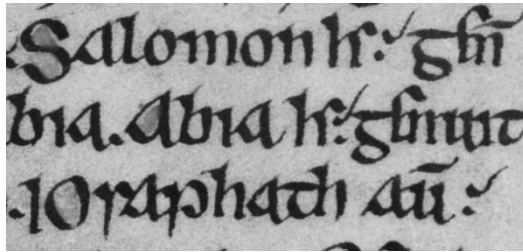


Figure 1: Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS. 122, f. 10r (detail)

We cannot know how this was “translated” into actual performance, but the similarity with the continental versions is meaningful: it must have been a sign for the reader²³. Even if we cannot reproduce the sound

21 I refer here to Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat.8898, fol. 26v; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 11958, fol. 14r (Corbie, 9th century), and the above-mentioned manuscript of Autun. See Leo Treitler, “Reading and Singing: On the Genesis of Occidental Music-Writing”, in *Early Music History*, 4 (1984), pp. 135-208, reprinted with modifications in Leo Treitler, “Reading and Singing: On the Genesis of Occidental Music-Writing”, in Leo Treitler, *With voice and pen: coming to know medieval song and how it was made* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 396-428.

22 To the best of my knowledge, the most significant essay on the abbreviation for *autem* is still W.M. Lindsay, *Notae Latinae: an account of abbreviation in Latin MSS. of the early minuscule period* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1915), pp. 13-25.

23 But are they two notes, as said above, or a liquescent neum? A liquescent syllable is formed by a vowel + e.g. a liquid consonant or a semi-vowel is called *liquescent* by the ancient treatises of Latin linguistics, and is marked in musical manuscripts with special signs. See the general *mise au point* of the issue in Guido Milanese, “Il “nuovo latino” carolingio: alcune testimonianze”, in *Dal mondo antico all’universo medievale: nuove modulazioni di lingue e di culture*, ed. by Rosa Bianca Finazzi and Paola Pontani (Milano: EDUCatt, 2013), pp. 73-91. The *locus classicus* is dom Cardine’s *Gregorian semiology*, pp. 215-223. Treitler (“Reading and Singing”) rightly refers to the ancient descriptions of Latin phonetics (see particularly Heinrich Freistedt, *Die liqueszierenden Noten des gregorianischen Chorals: ein Beitrag zur Notationskunde*, Veröffentlichungen der Gregorianischen Akademie zu Freiburg (Schweiz); Heft 14 (Freiburg (Schweiz):

pointed at by this sign, we know that (1) it is an “aid to reader/*cantor*”, and (2) it has close analogues in very ancient continental manuscripts. Is it a punctuation mark or a musical sign? Insofar as this kind of text is concerned, there is no difference: a punctuation sign means a change of pitch, therefore *ipso facto* conveying a musical meaning²⁴. *Quod perditum vides, perditum ducas*, but these two points are much better than nothing. Again, Treitler gives us the clue towards a meaningful reading of these very simple musical signs added above readings: they are—if I may use a word not used by Treitler himself—“placeholders,” for example for the beginning of a cadence: better, any situation where the reader must «know when to move off the monotone recitation»²⁵. Treitler deals mainly with cadences, but in the case of the genealogy *autem* was pivotal in the structure of the text; a sign called the reader’s attention to the word, that may have been signalled in the recitation by two ascending notes²⁶.

St. Paulusdruckerei, 1929).) And what is the meaning of the dot below the curved neume? In several continental neumes, a dot in a similar position points to a liquescent syllable – and *au* is an obvious candidate. Treitler’s table (fig. 2) shows some instances of the like. As a consequence of the particular, “opaque” nature of liquescent neumes, we cannot know what was the real meaning of this repeated mark: if it is really a liquescent sign, as I am inclined to believe, it can mean either one “full” syllable, or two sounds on the same syllable.

24 Mirella Ferrari (*per litteras*) rightly points out that it is difficult to classify this sign as a neum, because it is placed not in the interlinear space but on the line itself, which would be extremely unusual. I think that this sign is technically speaking indeed not a neume—we are not dealing with a neumed text—but an “aid to reader”, to refer to Lindsay’s words (see W.M. Lindsay, “Collectanea varia”, in *Palaeographia latina*, 2 (1923), pp. 15-20): and this “aid” has a musical meaning because this is a chanted text. Compare Jean Vezin’s study on the beginning of the question mark, another “aid to reader” that was to become both a standard component of neumatic notations, the *quilisma*, and our question mark. See Jean Vezin, “Le point d’interrogation, un élément de datation et de localisation des manuscrits. L’exemple de Saint-Denis au IXe siècle”, in *Scriptorium*, 34:2 (1980), pp. 181-196: Vezin does not say anything about the musical meaning, but see e.g. dom Eugène Cardine, *Gregorian semiology* (Sable-sur-Sarthe [France]: Solesmes, 1982), p. 199.

25 Cfr Treitler, *With voice and pen*, p. 394.

26 The text of the Genealogy called the interest of Irish exegetical tradition: on Ailerán’s *Interpretatio mystica* see recently Lucia Castaldi, “La trasmissione e rielaborazione dell’esegesi patristica nella letteratura ibernica delle origini”, in (ed.), *L’Irlanda e gli irlandesi nell’Alto Medioevo*, pp. 393-429, pp. 408-412. The most recent edition is Ailerán, *Ailerani Interpretatio mystica et moralis progenitorum Domini Iesu Christi*, ed. by Aidan Breen, Celtic studies (Blackrock, Co. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995).

1 1 1 - 1 - - β -
1 1 1 \downarrow \uparrow - 1 - 1 β -
A-bra-ham autem ge-nu-it I-sa-ac
(a) Ja-cob

. . 1 \downarrow \uparrow \downarrow 1 1 β -
1 1 1 \downarrow 1 - 1 - β -
(b)(c) I-sa-ac autem ge-nu-it Ja-cob

1 1 - 1 - 1 - - - - β - -
1 - \downarrow - \downarrow 1 1 1 1 - 1 β - -
Ja-cob autem ge-nu-it Iu-dam et fra-tres ei-us

. 1 \downarrow \uparrow \downarrow 1 1 - - - - 1 β -
1 1 \downarrow 1 - 1 - - 1 1 1 - 1 β -
Iu-das autem ge-nu-it Fra-tres et Za-ran de Tha-mar

1 1 \downarrow \uparrow - 1 - β -
1 1 \downarrow 1 - 1 - β -
Fra-tres autem ge-nu-it Es-rom

. 1 \downarrow \uparrow \downarrow 1 1 β -
1 - \downarrow 1 \downarrow 1 - 1 - β -
Es-rom autem ge-nu-it A-ram

1 1 \downarrow \uparrow - 1 - - - β -
1 - \downarrow 1 - 1 - 1 1 β -
A-ram autem ge-nu-it A-mi-na-dab

Figure 2: Treitler, "Reading and Singing", p. 171

To return again to Frank Lawrence's words, «the twelfth-century Irish Church was already open to a wide range of musical and liturgical influences from England [...] and continental Europe»: the remarks offered above square with Lawrence's assumption. But can we know something about a "local" Celtic music of the early Middle Ages?

One promising source for those who hope to reconstruct the ancient Celtic liturgical music is the Drummond Missal²⁷. While the origin of the manuscript is generally attributed to Glendalough, the date of the Missal is controversial: some scholars are confident in an early date (11th century), others prefer a later one (12th century)²⁸, but at any event it is regarded as «the oldest Irish notated source»²⁹. Since Forbes's edition it was known that some pages of the manuscript feature musical notation: the notated repertoire is very homogeneous—Prefaces with one complete *Sanctus* and the beginning of another one. Of the five pages of examples printed by Forbes I reproduce the first two: the first and second Preface (better, a variant ending of the first) and the *Sanctus* (see fig. 3 and fig. 4).

27 New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 627.

28 See Françoise Henry and Geneviève Marsh-Micheli, "A century of Irish illumination", in *Studies in early Christian and medieval Irish art*, vol. 2: *Manuscript illumination* [Originally published in "Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy", 62C (1962), 101–65], (London: Pindar Press, 1984), pp. 181-290, pp. 204-206 («a few decades» after the death of Tigernach Bairrcech, 1061), followed by Frank Lawrence, "What Did They Sing at Cashel in 1172? Winchester, Sarum and Romano-Frankish Chant in Ireland", in *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland*, 3 (2007–8), pp. 111-125; Sara Gibbs Casey, "Through a Glass, Darkly": Steps towards Reconstructing Irish Chant from the Neumes of the Drummond Missal", in *Early Music*, 28 (2000), pp. 205-215 suggests the second half of the 12th century. The date of the Drummond Missal has been discussed by Pádraig Ó Riain, *Four Irish martyrologies: Drummond, Turin, Cashel, York*, Henry Bradshaw Society, 115 (London: Published for the Henry Bradshaw Society by The Boydell Press, 2002), pp. 10-12, who moves the origin of the manuscript to Armagh; «first half of the twelfth century» according to the leading specialist in this area, Ann Buckley, "Music in Prehistoric and Medieval Ireland", p. 809; see also Richard William Pfaff, *The liturgy in medieval England: a history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 152: «third quarter of the twelfth century». The standard edition is still George Hay Forbes, *Missale Drummondense, the ancient Irish missal: in the possession of the Baroness Willoughby de Eresby, Drummond Castle, Perthshire* (Burntisland, Edinburgh: Pitsligo Press, D. Douglas, 1882).

29 Buckley, "Music and Musicians", p. 176.

Sara Casey's article "Through a Glass, Darkly" raised hopes to catch sight of the ancient Irish music, even if the staffless neumes do not allow a melodic reconstruction of this ancient repertoire. Casey refers to «Aloys Fleischmann's *New Grove* entry on "Music of the Celtic Rite." This allows that the missal contains the earliest known instance of notation in an Irish manuscript, but goes on to say that the neumes are not decipherable»³⁰.

This is how Casey outlines the main features of the Drummond Missal neumes³¹:

The neumes are all in a style similar to those used at St Gall. Those used most frequently [...], are the punctum, virga, porrectus, clivis and pes. Of these, the predominant types are the punctum and virga, which frequently alternate. The number of neumes always exceeds the number of syllables of text, sometimes by a very large margin [...], and by a smaller margin in the other neumed passages. This indicates that the chant they represent was not syllabic, but was more ornate, either neumatic – that is, with two or three notes per syllable – or melismatic, with more than three notes per syllable.

Some observations are necessary. First of all, the script is definitely not "similar" to St Gall neumes. The shape of what seems to be a *clivis* is the same used by many families of French neumes—and sometimes also in Britain. While the St Gall style *clivis* has a roundish top, the *clivis* used here features a narrow angle, which is most typical of French neumes³². For example, see fig. 3 line 1, above syllable *i* in the word *omnia* and syllable *se* in the word *secula*, and compare with fig. 5, a manuscript written by the monks of Fleury during a visit to St.-Martial di Limoges³³.

30 See A. Fleischmann, "Celtic Rite, Music of the", in *New Grove* (London: Macmillan, 1980), vol. IV, p. 53. This article is replaced, in the current (2015) edition of *Grove Online*, by Ann's Buckley's excellent article ("Celtic chant").

31 Casey, "Through a Glass, Darkly", p. 209. From Casey's text, I bracket the internal references to her own article.

32 See e.g. the tables in Corbin, *Die Neumen*, that offers the most detailed classification I know of French neumes.

33 See Véronique Dubois, "La notation française du tropaire-prosaire de Saint-Martial (Paris, BnF lat. 1240, Xe siècle)", in *Etudes grégoriennes*, 39 (2012), ed. by Marie-Noël Colette and Catherine Massip, pp. 105-123, and Jean Vezin, "Les manuscrits témoins des relations entre Fleury et Saint-Martial de Limoges, IX-XIe siècles", in *Abbon: un abbé de l'an Mil*, ed. by A. Dufour and G. Labory (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 405-414.

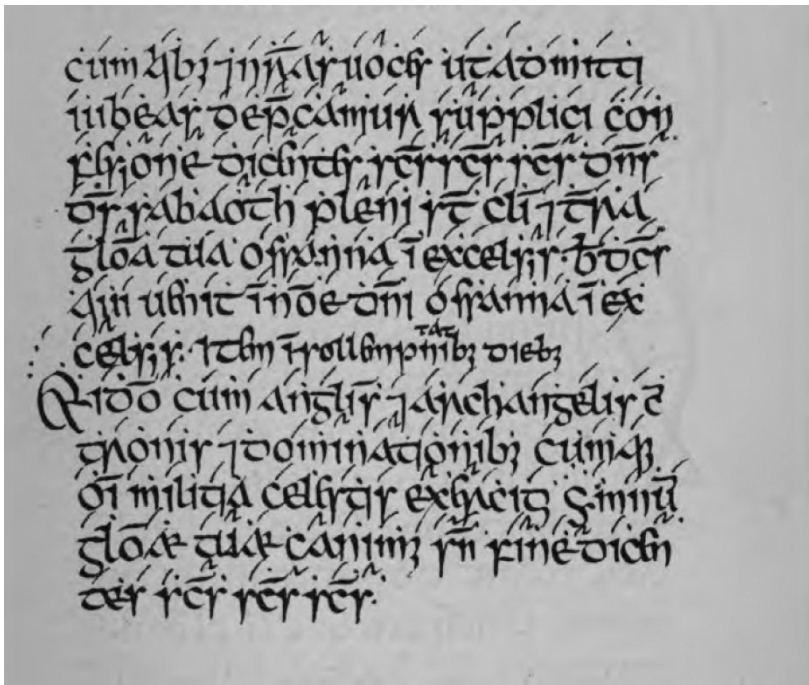


Figure 4: Drummond Missal, f. 37b (from Forbes, *Missale Drummondense*)

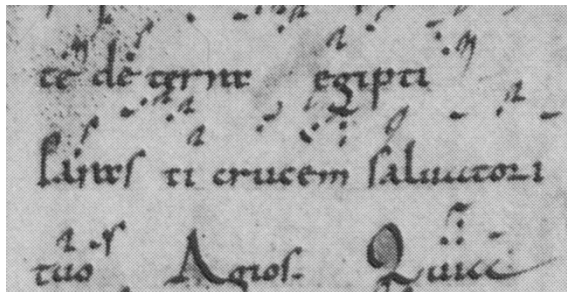


Figure 5: Paris, B.N.F. lat. 120, f. 24v. From Corbin's *Die Neumen*, Taf. 19

Moreover, the database offered by the excellent project *Manno*³⁴ shows that this form of the *clivis* was extremely common, particularly in Central–Northern French manuscripts.

Changing the label from St Gall to France or Britain does not change the problem of the musical meaning of these signs—even if the presence of a St Gall notation in an Irish missal should have raised some meaningful questions. Knowing that these neumes are French is much more reassuring, but a further question is unavoidable. These musical compositions, described by Casel as «not syllabic, but [...] more ornate, either neumatic [...] or melismatic», are Prefaces of the Mass—this is sure because the first and second Preface are followed by a complete *Sanctus* and by the first words of the *Sanctus*. The Preface is a recitative chanted by the priest, not an elaborate chant as the ones of the *Schola*: a neumatic or even melismatic Preface would be a remarkable exception, paralleled only by a possibly Gallican–style preface³⁵.

The mystery is easily solved: the points in the Drummond missal musical notation are not musical signs, but dots used to separate “entities.” The use of dots to separate words is a well-known feature of Irish and sometimes Anglo-Saxon manuscripts³⁶; moreover, the Irish work *Expos(s)itio Latinitatis* of the so-called *Anonymus ad Cuimnannum* emphasises the need

34 <http://sapat.ephe.sorbonne.fr/manuscrits-notes-en-neumes-en-occident-manno-26.htm>

35 See John Boe, “Preface”, in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press), ex. 3, from Paris, B.N.F. lat. 2293 f. 18r, from Moissac or Figeac. The *Catalogue général des manuscrits latins* (II, 1940, pp. 392–393) dates the ms to the 11th century.

36 See Paul Henry Saenger, *Space between words: the origins of silent reading*, *Figurae. Reading medieval culture* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 53: “In certain manuscripts and inscriptions of Irish and Anglo-Saxon origin, points were used often, but not always in conjunction with space, to separate words”, and p. 83 for the importance of word separation in Irish liturgical manuscripts. See also M.B. Parkes, “The Contribution of Insular Scribes of the seventh and eighth Centuries to the ‘Grammar of Legibility’”, in *Grafia e interpunzione del latino nel Medioevo*, ed. by Alfonso Maierù, *Lessico intellettuale europeo*: 41 (Roma: Ateneo, 1987), pp. 15–30, and M.B. Parkes, *Pause and effect: an introduction to the history of punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1992), pp. 23–26. Lindsay’s note *Separation of words by dots* is obviously still worth reading (“*Collectanea varia*”, pp. 16–17) as well as *Early Irish Miniscule Script*, p. 23, where Lindsay refers to dots used to separate abbreviation symbols (·ñ· non).

of a clear command of word and sentence articulation by the reader/cantor of liturgical texts³⁷:

Spiritus sanctus docet nos psallere sapienter, et lector in aeclesia catholica ordinari non sinitur, nisi qui legere et scire potest syllabas et accentuum rationem et species et naturas dictionum et distinctiones sententiarum.

The Holy Spirit teaches us to sing competently, and the Catholic Church does not allow anyone to be ordered a reader if unable to read and to control syllables, varieties of accents, kinds of words, and sentence articulation.

I write “entities” and not simply “words” for an obvious reason. When a manuscript was planned in advance for musical writing, the copyist left interlinear space enough for the neumes, either using smaller size letters for the text or leaving more space between lines. As remarked by Saenger,

in texts written for musical notation, the musical portion is more intensely aerated and consequently contains more free-standing syllables and words than the normal prose sections written by the same scribe in the same codex³⁸.

and this was the standard situation in those liturgical books, such as the Missals that contained both texts simply chanted, as prayers or readings, and therefore, not requiring musical notation, and real musical pieces performed by *schola* or soloists.

In the Drummond missal, the text was not planned in advance to host music: neumes were added later, and clearly by a not very expert copyist. The copyist used a device well known for word separation (points) in order to “mark the boundaries” of the combination syllable/neume. See for example fig. 4: in the first line the conjunction *ut* has one sound, as well as the following syllables *ad-mit-ti*. The position of the musical signs (called *virga*) is not careful: for example, the copyist has correctly placed a sign above *ut*, but signs referring to *admitti* are not correctly placed exactly over the syllables—and this happens as a general rule. Therefore, the dots help the reader separate the [syllable + neume] entities. Interesting, and possibly a long-lasting heritage, is the practice to use a dot, called *punctus divisionis*, in Mediaeval and Renaissance music in order to separate

37 Anonymus ad Cuimnannum, *Expositio latinitatis* 1, 531, ed. B. Bischoff / B. Löfstedt, 1992, *CC SL*, 133D. The importance of this passage is remarked by Saenger, *Space between words*, p. 83.

38 *ibid.*, p. 37.

musical entities³⁹. The Preface of the Drummond Missal does not feature any unknown melismatic version: its setting of the Preface is a syllabic recitative, as in “standard” Roman liturgy.

If this is really the case, could we try to make sense also of the mysterious *Sanctus*? Casey did not find any convincing correspondence in Thannabaur’s catalogue. But if the dots have no musical meaning, and for the sake of easier reading we cancel them from the photograph, this is what we obtain:

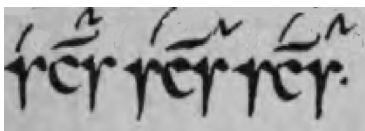


Figure 6: Drummond Missal: second *Sanctus*

The first musical sign is a simple *virga*, the second a *clivis*. Casey interprets this sign as a three-note neume (e.g. a high-low-high, as in *DCD* or *re ut re*, called a *porrectus*) but the higher end of the sign does not have any particular significance, as proved by the comparison between the first and second *Sanctus* (fig. 8), where the longer termination at the right is a graphical variation common in French neumes, as aptly shown thanks to the *MANNO* database. For example, see Paris, B.N.F., lat. 989 (Normandie, abbaye de Fécamp [?], add. neum. XIe et XIIe s.: fig. 7)⁴⁰:

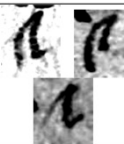


CLV	TOR	POR
		

Figure 7: Paris, B.N.F. lat. 989: shapes of *clivis*, *torculus*, and *porrectus*

39 Willi Apel, *The Notation of Polyphonic Music, 900-1600*, Revised with commentary, 5th ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1961), pp. 115-120.

40 From the *MANNO* database:

<http://saprat.ephe.sorbonne.fr/media/c5c5272f11967f3a2e441ea1cd2a56f4/neumes-latin-989.pdf>