

Notker

Charles, that tireless devotee of the divine liturgy, ... sad that all the provinces, regions, and cities differed from one another in the divine praises, that is, in the melodies of the chant, took care to request from **Stephen**, pope of blessed memory, that he send clerics who were greatly skilled in the divine chant. ... Stephen, benevolently disposed and inspired by his sacred studies as well, gave assent and dispatched from the Apostolic See to Charles in Francia twelve clerics who were greatly learned in the chant, according to the number of the twelve apostles. ... So they came to Charles and were received with honor and dispersed to the most prestigious locations.

Questions:

- (1) How are the differences between Frankish and Roman chanting characterized? Were the repertoires different? Are there differences in pitch content? Differences in voice production? Performance practice? This matters, because it tells us what kinds of questions the Authentic Antiphonal was expected to settle.
- (2) In John the Deacon's account, each side accuse the other of singing chants of their own that have a corrupting effect. That charge is not without basis: Ekkehard sees the greatness of Metz and St Gall precisely in the new chants they compose. But is this not in conflict with the idea of an Authentic Antiphonal?
- (3) What were the arguments exchanged by Frankish and Roman singers before Charlemagne settled the matter? Arguments of taste? Arguments of authority? Of tradition? How authoritative was the figure of Pope Gregory?
- (4) Why do the Popes merely respond favorably to requests, but do not enforce or demand compliance with Roman musical traditions? Are they relatively indifferent? Why, on the contrary, is it Charlemagne who is personally bothered by the discrepancies?
- (5) Why does each of the stories end with Metz? What point is being made about Metz? What authority can Metz boast other than the authority it receives from Rome?

Ekkehard

When Emperor Charlemagne was at Rome, and saw that the churches on this side of the Alps differed in multiple ways from the chant of the Roman church (as John [the Deacon] writes as well), he asked **Pope Hadrian** to send Romans knowledgeable in song to Francia, since those whom [Pope] Gregory had sent before were long dead. Petrus and Romanus, thoroughly steeped in the *pagina* of both chants and the seven liberal arts, were sent according to the king's petition to go to the church of Metz, like those before them.

For **Petrus** [in Metz] made jubili to sequences which he called "of Metz," and **Romanus** had composed for us the Romana and Amoena from among his jubili. **Notker** afterwards tied them with the words by which we see them. Fired up by these, he himself thought out the jubili Frigdora and Occidentana, as he called them. Yet Romanus took care, as if it were the divine will that ours be extolled over those of Metz, to bring the honor of the Roman See to the monastery of St Gall, in the following way.

There was at Rome an instrument and certain display case for the public viewing by all those who arrived of the **Authentic Antiphonal**, a repository which they named cantarium, after cantus. He himself had one placed in the likeness of that one around the Altar of the Apostles along with the Authentic Antiphonal, of which he had brought a copy. And in this [antiphonal] up to the present day, whenever there is disagreement between chants, the universal error is corrected, as in a mirror.

John the Deacon

Of the various European peoples it was the Germans and the Gauls who were especially able to learn and repeatedly to relearn the sweetness of the schola's song, but they were by no means able to maintain it without distortion, as much because of their carelessness (for they mixed in with the Gregorian chants some of their own) as because of their native brutishness. For Alpine bodies, which make an incredible din with the thundering of their voices, do not properly echo the elegance of the received melody, because the barbaric savagery of a drunken gullet, when it attempts to sing the gentle cantilena with its inflections and repercussions, emits, by a kind of innate cracking, rough tones with a confused sound like a cart upon steps. And so it disquiets the spirits of those listeners that it should have mollified, irritating and disturbing them instead.

But our patrician, Charles, the king of the Franks, disturbed when at Rome by the discrepancy between the Roman and the Gallican chant, is said to have asked—when the impudence of the Gauls argued that the chant was corrupted by certain tunes of ours, while on the contrary our melodies demonstrably represented the Authentic Antiphonal—whether the stream or the fountain is liable to preserve the clearer water. When they replied that it was the fountain, he wisely added: "Therefore it is necessary that we, who have up to now drunk the tainted water of the stream, return to the flowing source of the perennial fountain." Shortly afterward, then, he left two of his diligent clergymen with Hadrian, a bishop at the time, and, after they had been schooled with the necessary refinement, he employed them to recall the province of Metz to the sweetness of the original chant, and through her, to correct his entire region of Gaul.

Adémar

Behold, a dispute arose during the feasts of Easter [774] among the cantors of the Romans and the Gauls. The Gauls said that they sang better and more beautifully than the Romans, and the Romans claimed that they performed the ecclesiastical songs in a most learned way, just as they had been taught by Saint Gregory the pope, and that the Gauls sang corruptly and lacerated the correct song by destroying it. And this dispute occurred before the lord king Charles. The Gauls, truly because of the safety offered them by the lord king Charles, vehemently reproached the Roman cantors, and the Romans, truly because of the authority of their great learned tradition, maintained that the Gauls were stupid and rustic and unlearned like brute animals, and they preferred the doctrine of Saint Gregory to Gallic rusticity.

And because the dispute could be resolved from neither side, the most pious lord king Charles said to his cantors: "Speak openly which is purer and better, the living source or its streams running far away?" All responded with a single voice, that the source, as the head and origin, is purer, whereas its streams, by as much further from the font they recede, are by that much turbulent and corrupt with both dirt and filth. And the lord king Charles said: "Return yourselves to the source of Saint Gregory, since clearly you have corrupted the ecclesiastical song."

Soon the lord king Charles sought from **Pope Hadrian** singers who would correct the Frankish kingdom in the matter of chant. And the pope gave him **Theodoric** and **Benedict**, the most learned singers of the Roman church, who had been instructed by Saint Gregory, and he also gave him **Antiphoners of Saint Gregory** that the saint himself had noted with Roman notation.

Then, as the lord king Charles was returning to the Frankish kingdom, he sent one cantor to the city of **Metz**, the other to the city of **Soissons**, instructing the masters of the choir in all cities of the Frankish kingdom to surrender their antiphoners to the Roman cantors so that they might be corrected, and to learn to sing from Theodoric and Benedict. The antiphoners of the Franks, therefore, were corrected, which everyone, after his own judgment, had corrupted, either adding or suppressing, and all the cantors of the Frankish kingdom learned the Roman notation, which they now call Frankish notation, with the exception that the Franks could not perfectly express the tremulous or the sinuous notes, or the notes that are to be elided or separated, breaking the notes in the throat, with a natural barbaric voice, rather than expressing them. A greater mastery of singing remained in the city of Metz, and however much the Roman mastery surpassed the Messine in the art of singing, by so much did the Messine singing surpass the other choirs of the Gauls.

Notker

Thus he discovered in the course of time how those he had sent to different places had come to differ from one another, and he conveyed the matter to **Pope Leo**. ...[Leo:] "give me two very intelligent clerics of your own, in such a way as not to alert my clergy that they belong to you, and they shall acquire, God willing, the total proficiency in this skill that you seek." It was done in this way, and after a reasonable length of time Leo returned the clerics to Charles perfectly instructed. Charles kept one with himself and sent the other, at the request of his son Drogo, bishop of Metz, to that church. The second cleric's industry not only held sway in that place, but came to be spread through all Francia, to such an extent that now even among the people in those regions where they speak Latin, the ecclesiastical song is called "of Metz." Charles, moreover, the most benign emperor, sent the singer who had been assigned to him, **Petrus** by name, to stay for a while at the monastery of St Gaul; and since Charles was the powerful patron of St Gall, he made the choir a gift of an **Authentic Antiphonal** and he took care that they be instructed so that they learned to sing in the Roman manner, as they do today.