Plainsong and Medieval Music, **34**, 1, 11–23
doi: 10.1017/S096113712500004X

Eastern Elements in Western Chant: *a second look over a changed landscape*

PETER JEFFERY

ABSTRACT. *Egon Wellesz's* Eastern Elements in Western Chant *(1947, repr. 1967) is outdated but topical in that the resemblances he adduced between Eastern and Western chant continue to invite explanations. An assessment of his book and research since then on the topics of simple vs. complex melody, melodic resemblance, historical frameworks, musical communities and Semitic antecedents of Christian chant lead to the conclusion that the comparative study of medieval Christian chant repertories and of Jewish melodies from post-medieval sources cannot be shaped by simplistic assumptions, such as that simpler melodies are earlier or more primitive than more complicated ones, or that Christian practices must have had Jewish origins. Nor can melodies that resemble each other be assumed to be historically related. Studies of oral traditions show that what is transmitted is often a more abstract contour that can be realised in more than one way. Most importantly, no music can be studied apart from the community that makes or made it, and musical evidence must be interpreted within a framework of verifiable historical fact, especially when contacts between different communities are alleged.*

Eastern Elements in Western Chant was the title of a book published by Egon Wellesz in 1947, reprinted 1967.[1] The project evidently began in the 1930s, when René-Jean Hesbert, a monk of Solesmes, was preparing a facsimile edition of a Latin chant manuscript from Benevento in southern Italy. Since the manuscript included some bilingual chants with both Latin and Greek texts, Hesbert wrote to Wellesz, asking if these chants were known in the Byzantine repertory. Wellesz took up the challenge and, as a result, the core of his wide-ranging book is a study of one of the chants in Hesbert's manuscript, known in Latin as the antiphon *O quando in cruce*, in Greek as the idiomelon *Ὅτε τῷ σταυρῷ*.[2]

Email: pjeffery@nd.edu
A version of this article was presented at the International Musicological Society Congress, 22–26 August 2022, Athens, Greece on the session 'Translation, Transformation, and Mediation in Christian Music of the Eastern Mediterranean Region'.

[1] Egon Wellesz, *Eastern Elements in Western Chant: Studies in the Early History of Ecclesiastical Music*, Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae, Subsidia 2, American Series 1 (Oxford, 1947; repr. Copenhagen, 1967). See also some closely related writings: Egon Wellesz, 'Eastern Elements in English Ecclesiastical Music', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 (1942), 44–55; Egon Wellesz, 'Epilegomena zu den "Eastern Elements in Western Chant"', *Die Musikforschung*, 5 (1952), 131–7; and Egon Wellesz, 'Recent Studies in Western Chant', *Musical Quarterly*, 41 (1955), 177–90.

[2] René-Jean Hesbert, ed., *Le Codex 10 673 de la Bibliothèque Vaticane fonds latin (XI^e siècle): Graduel Bénéventain*, Paléographie Musicale 14 (Solesmes, 1931–7; repr. Bern, 1971), 308; Wellesz, *Eastern*

However, Wellesz (1885–1974), who had studied composition with Arnold Schönberg[3] and Baroque opera with Guido Adler,[4] and who knew most of the important musicians of his time,[5] had long been interested in the possibility of 'oriental' influence on Western music. His curiosity began, he said, when he visited the Armenian church in Vienna.[6] As early as 1916, Wellesz was speculating about the possible near-eastern origins of Gregorian chant, and about the impact of Arab and Turkish music and instruments on more recent European music – this at a time when 'one has for the longest time viewed oriental music, like all non-European [music], as a primitive art, which for us possesses only a curiosity-value, without being of deeper importance for the understanding of our western music'.[7]

Given Wellesz's openness to non-European music, *Eastern Elements in Western Chant* seemed groundbreaking in its time, as the reviews demonstrate.[8] Seventy-five years later, however, the book seems hopelessly outdated – yet paradoxically very topical. What is outdated is the methodology, in which every melodic similarity between Greek and Latin chants is interpreted as evidence of a common origin, and then placed in a historical framework that leaps over all boundaries of time and space, in a mad dash back to locate that common origin in a presumed early Christian, or even pre-Christian, context – neither Latin nor Greek, but Semitic.[9] What is topical is the musical material itself. Even now, many of the resemblances Wellesz adduced between Eastern and Western chant cannot be explained away, and therefore continue to raise questions about the historical relationships between regional chant traditions.

Simpler vs. more complex melodies

For example, the Latin manuscripts that contain the bilingual text of *O quando* present the melody in at least two different forms – a south Italian form, from the region of

Elements, 4, 31; Patrick Hala, 'Egon Wellesz (1885–1974): Un compositeur et musicologue viennois en rapport avec Solesmes', *Études grégoriennes*, 42 (2015), 151–76, at 151 n. 1, 163–4.

[3] Wilfrid Mellers, 'Egon Wellesz: An 80th Birthday Tribute', *The Musical Times*, 106, no. 1472 (1965), 766–67 and Bojan Bujić, *Arnold Schoenberg and Egon Wellesz: A Fraught Relationship* (London, 2020).

[4] Philip Ward, 'Egon Wellesz: An Opera Composer in 1920s Vienna', *Tempo*, n.s. 219 (2002), 22–8.

[5] For biography and bibliography, see Rudolph Reti, 'Egon Wellesz: Musician and Scholar', *Musical Quarterly*, 42 (1956), 1–13. Caroline Cepin Benser, *Egon Wellesz (1885–1974): Chronicle of a Twentieth-Century Musician*, American University Studies ix/8 (New York, 1985). A collection of Wellesz's papers is preserved in the Gotlieb Center at Boston University, accession number 1194.

[6] Miloš Velimirović, 'Egon Wellesz and the Study of Byzantine Chant', *Musical Quarterly*, 62 (1976), 265–77, at 266; and Egon Wellesz, 'Studien zur orientalischen Kirchenmusik', *Musica Divina*, 6/1–2 (1918), 'VII. Die armenische Kirche und ihre Musik', 16–19, 'Die armenische Kirchenmusik', 54–59 and 'Das armenische Hymnar', 99–100.

[7] Egon Wellesz, 'Orientalische Einflüsse in der Musik des Abendlandes', *Österreichische Rundschau*, 47/2 (1916), 103–6, at 104.

[8] See the reviews by Hans F. Redlich in *Music & Letters*, 28 (1947), 384–6; and Manfred Bukofzer in *Speculum*, 23 (1948), 520–3.

[9] 'But two souls dwell in the author's breast: purely tracing the western chant back to the eastern doesn't satisfy him fully, and so he ultimately desires to explain the analogies between western and eastern chant by going back to a common early Christian source', according to Jacques Handschin, review of *Eastern Elements* in *Acta Musicologica*, 24 (1952), 199–202, at 199. A concise expression of Wellesz's opinion is Egon Wellesz, 'Origins of Byzantine Music', *Bulletin of the American Musicological Society*, 11/12/13 (1948), 25–6.

Benevento,[10] and a north Italian form preserved in one manuscript now in Modena, but written in the area of Ravenna.[11] Wellesz assumed the Ravenna melody was closer to the original, because it was 'simpler and more vigorous', showing fewer signs of editorial reworking. Therefore 'it seems that Codex Mod[ena] represents the original version and Codex Benevent[o] a later adaptation'.[12] Then, after comparing these two Latin melodies with a Byzantine melody in a manuscript from the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos,[13] Wellesz concluded that, since 'the Ravennatic version … is the simpler', the somewhat more ornamented 'melodic version of the Vatopedi codex shows a very developed state of the music written down … in Codex Modena'. Yet earlier Byzantine manuscripts that transmitted the simpler Ravenna melody must once have existed, Wellesz believed, for though '[w]e do not possess any Byzantine codex containing the melody in just this state … [p]robably a Byzantine manuscript of the end of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century – if by chance a manuscript of this period should reappear – would contain the melody in a form parallel to that of the Ravennatic version'.[14]

Why 'probably'? Because 'the Ravennatic versions [*sic*] preserved in a higher degree the primordial character of the melody, which originated either somewhere in the Byzantine Empire or on Syro-Palestinian soil. In this case the Italian and Byzantine versions of the melody would represent parallel developments from a common source, leading back to the Church of Jerusalem'.[15] All this made sense to Wellesz because he believed, without saying why, that 'Ravenna was one of the places through which Byzantine and Syrian ecclesiastical art and liturgical customs entered Italy'.[16]

[10] Benevento, Biblioteca capitolare, VI. 38; Wellesz, *Eastern Elements*, 72–3 and plate II; also in Egon Wellesz, *Byzantinische Music: Ein Vortrag*, ed. Gerda Wolfram (Vienna, 2000), 27.

[11] Modena, Archivio capitolare, O. I. 7; Wellesz, *Eastern Elements*, 75–6 and plate III; also in Egon Wellesz, *Die Musik der byzantinischen Kirche* (*The Music of the Byzantine Church*), Das Musikwerk (Anthology of Music) 13 (Cologne, 1959), 14.

[12] Wellesz, *Eastern Elements*, 76.

[13] Ibid., 105–9. The Vatopedi melody and the beginning of the Benevento melody are also presented in parallel (with some errors) in Wellesz, *Musik der byzantinischen Kirche*, 44–5, and in Wellesz, *Byzantinische Music: Ein Vortrag*, 28–9.

[14] Wellesz, *Eastern Elements*, 109–10. In spite of this opinion, Wellesz's first musical example, in *Eastern Elements*, 69–70, presents the melody from Benevento VI. 38 with the Greek text, even though this manuscript has the Latin text (see plate II). It would have been more consistent with his theory to have given the (allegedly earlier) Modena/Ravenna melody with the (transliterated) Greek text that it already has in the manuscript (see plate III).

[15] Ibid., 110.

[16] Ibid., 69. Wellesz's views regarding Syrian influence on the West seem to have been shaped by the controversial art historian Joseph Strzygowski. See Egon Wellesz, 'Some Exotic Elements of Plainsong', trans. Paul England, *Music & Letters*, 4 (1923), 275–81, esp. at 80; and Velimirović, 'Egon Wellesz and the Study of Byzantine Chant,' 266–7. Strzygowski had been the teacher of Wellesz's wife, Emmy, see Dorothea Duda, 'Obituary: Emmy Wellesz', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 79 (1989), 339–42. On Strzygowski's work and influence, see Julia Orell, 'Early East Asian Art History in Vienna and Its Trajectories: Josef Strzygowski, Karl with, Alfred Salmony', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 13 (2015), 1–32.

Wellesz wrote about the possible role that oral transmission may have played in the formation of the medieval chant repertories before the controversy that broke out in the 1970s.[17] But we now know from tune family studies that what is transmitted is not necessarily a melody, but something that can be conceived as a deep structure or background melodic contour – sometimes described as a 'skeleton' – which can be realised, whether in performance or in written form, with varying amounts of foreground ornamentation and other nuances.[18] This means that a simpler version of a melody is not necessarily older than a more elaborate one, for the same reason that the simplest version of a folktale is not necessarily the original, because some narrators embellish more than others.[19] When we do have examples of traditional tunes becoming more melismatic over time, deliberate editing is not the only possible explanation.[20] Focusing on contour as the datum of transmission may be particularly appropriate with medieval Christian liturgical chant, since it was first committed to writing in staffless neumes, which encode melodic contour without specifying pitches or intervals.

Melodic resemblances

In a subsequent chapter,[21] Wellesz pointed out that the phrases of the Byzantine melody of *Ὅτε τῷ σταυρῷ* can be analysed into stock melodic cells or formulas that are widely shared by Byzantine heirmoi and stichera of the second mode. In a further step, he noted that skips of a fourth, which occur 'four times in the Ravennatic and three times in the Beneventan version',[22] are also common in both the Byzantine chant and

[17] The conversation was begun largely by Leo Treitler, whose essays are collected in *With Voice and Pen: Coming to Know Medieval Song and How It Was Made* (Oxford, 2003). Other contributions include David G. Hughes, 'Evidence for the Traditional View of the Transmission of Gregorian Chant', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 40 (1987), 377–404; Peter Jeffery, *Re-Envisioning Past Musical Cultures: Ethnomusicology in the Study of Gregorian Chant* (Chicago, 1992), reviewed by Leo Treitler in *The World of Music*, 35/3 (1993), 111–15; with my response in 37/1 (1995), 86–90; Leo Treitler, 'Sinners and Singers: A Morality Tale', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 47 (1994), 137–71; with my response in 49 (1996), 175–9; Kenneth Levy, *Gregorian Chant and the Carolingians* (Princeton, 1998); Kenneth Levy, 'A New Look at Old Roman Chant', *Early Music History*, 19 (2000), 81–104; 20 (2001), 173–98; and Kenneth Levy, 'Gregorian Chant and the Romans', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 56 (2003), 5–41.

[18] Charles Seeger, 'Versions and Variants of the Tunes of "Barbara Allen"', *Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology*, 1/1 (1966), 120–67, at 126–8. See also 'the outlining principle' in James R. Cowdery, 'A Fresh Look at the Concept of Tune Family', *Ethnomusicology*, 28 (1984), 495–504. Jeffery, *Re-Envisioning*, 99, 111, 117.

[19] See 'The Comparative Method in Folklore', a special issue of *Journal of Folklore Research*, 23/2–3 (1986); and Simon J. Bronner, 'Practice Theory in Folklore and Folklife Studies', *Folklore*, 123 (2012), 23–47.

[20] Jeffery, *Re-Envisioning*, 110–15. Oliver Strunk's comparison of the syllabic and melismatic beginnings of the Ὅτε τῷ σταυρῷ melody in *Essays on Music in the Byzantine World* (New York, 1977), 193–4 could serve as the starting point for a theory about the differences between written and oral transmission in the Byzantine repertory.

[21] Wellesz, *Eastern Elements*, 113–40.

[22] Ibid., 118.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S096113712500004X Published online by Cambridge University Press

the Latin chant of the Ambrosian rite of Milan.[23] This was convenient, for Wellesz believed

> that the Ambrosian melodies represent the oldest form of Plainchant, as they have not undergone the process of artistic transformation made or ordered by Pope Gregory the Great and his successors. But the transformations did not affect what I should like to call, in the Platonic sense, the *idea* of the melodic phrases, and we learn from the comparison of Byzantine melodies on one side, and Ambrosian and Gregorian on the other, that a great number of the formulae and cadences of which both are built up are identical, or, if identity cannot be proved, through lack of manuscripts of an earlier date than the end of the ninth century or from the fact that Byzantine notation of an earlier date than the twelfth century cannot be deciphered, the analysis of these formulae and cadences still makes it evident that they are closely related and that they must derive from a common source. The results of comparative liturgiology show this to have been the Church of Jerusalem.[24]

Identical and similar melodic phrases, however, do not prove a historical relationship. Since '[i]n the vast majority of vocal musics, the chief melodic interval appears to be something in the very general range of a major second', and 'most musical utterances tend to descend at the end',[25] chance similarities between melodies from different contexts and cultures are bound to occur. Everyone knows the Eroica Symphony theme that recalls Mozart's juvenile operetta *Bastien et Bastienne*,[26] the Bach fugue that sounds like the tune 'London Bridge',[27] or the Beethoven quartet movement that somehow resembles both a French Christmas carol and the synagogue chant *Kol nidre*.[28] Without evidence of 'detailed intent on the part of the composers, any resemblances discovered in their music would seem more coincidental than significant'.[29] Moreover, the act of chanting traditional ritual texts involves some basic behavioral similarities that are common to many sects and religions, and these also can produce coincidental musical resemblances that are not evidence of actual historical relationships.[30] Among the alleged parallels between Jewish music and Gregorian chant, I would place many of Abraham Zvi

[23] Readers should take note that, from the bottom of p. 122 to p. 125, the clefs on the Benevento and Modena examples are misplaced. They should have been printed on the third staff line (from the bottom), not on the fourth (top) line.
[24] Wellesz, *Eastern Elements*, 126.
[25] Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-Three Discussions*, 3rd edn (Urbana, 2015), 34.
[26] J. Peter Burkholder, 'Musical Borrowing or Curious Coincidence? Testing the Evidence', *Journal of Musicology*, 35 (2018), 223–66.
[27] BWV 1005. The 'London Bridge' tune did not appear in print until 1879, according to James J. Fuld, *The Book of World-Famous Music: Classical, Popular, and Folk*, 5th edn (New York, 2000), 337.
[28] Quartet 14 in C♯ minor, opus 131, movement 6. Scott Messing, 'An Examination of Two Proposed Models for the Melody of the Sixth Movement of the String Quartet in C-sharp Minor, Opus 131: An "Old French Song" and the *Kol Nidre*', *The Beethoven Journal*, 11/2 (1996), 2–10.
[29] Jan LaRue, 'Significant and Coincidental Resemblance between Classical Themes', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 14 (1961), 224–34.
[30] Jeffery, *Re-Envisioning*, 57–8, 96–8.

Idelsohn's examples in the 'coincidental rather than significant' category,[31] while I judge most of Eric Werner's parallels to be simply illusory.[32]

Historical frameworks

The parallels or resemblances identified by Wellesz, however, cannot be dismissed as merely coincidental or illusory. The medieval Greek and Latin cultures share a common background in Greco-Roman late antiquity. Their liturgical structures, though different, were built from similar principles, and they have some texts in common. And there were certainly some cultural contacts, even as Latin speakers and Greek speakers increasingly grew apart, due to theological disagreements, competitions over ecclesiastical jurisdiction, politics and wars, and cultural changes that made them more different from each other. Surely there is some historical relationship; the question is how we should understand and describe it.

Christian Troelsgård has pointed out some of the issues. Melodies can be compared according to their degree of elaboration, on a scale from syllabic (one note per syllable) to melismatic. They can be compared by their treatment of text accents, taking account of the limitations of early neumatic notation.[33] Every manuscript variant must be included in the consideration.[34] More than one relationship between text and melody is possible: some melodies are 'idiomelic', or unique to a single text, as if composed to fit it; other melodies are flexible melody-types that can be adapted to multiple texts. In the latter case, the entire melodic group should be studied, not just a single instance.[35] Similarities between different traditions might be interpreted as 'influences', outright 'borrowings', derivation from a specific source (the 'tree model'), or survivals of a widely shared tradition (the 'network model').[36] Considering all this, Troelsgård finds Wellesz's book 'more suited as a catalogue of inspiration than of reliable results'.[37]

[31] For example, Abraham Z. Idelsohn, 'Parallelen zwischen gregorianischen und hebräisch-orientalischen Gesangsweisen', *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, 4 (1921–2), 515–24. However, I am more open to the possibility of historical relationships between Jewish music and the non-liturgical music of Christian cultures, both because cultural interactions between the two groups may have been possible before the creation of the Jewish ghettos and because (at least in recent centuries) Jewish cantors have been known to borrow melodies from the surrounding gentile culture. For example: Abraham Z. Idelsohn, 'Parallels between the Old-French and the Jewish Song', *Acta Musicologica*, 5 (1933), 162–8, 6 (1934), 15–22; and Ellen Koskoff, 'Contemporary Nigun Composition in an American Hasidic Community', *Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology*, 3/1 (1978), 153–73.

[32] Peter Jeffery, 'Werner's *The Sacred Bridge*, Volume 2: A Review Essay', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 77/4 (1987), 283–98.

[33] Christian Troelsgård, 'Methodological Problems in Comparative Studies of Liturgical Chant', *Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Anton Baumstark (1872–1948): Acts of the International Congress, Rome, 25–29 September 1998*, ed. Robert F. Taft and Gabriele Winkler, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 265 (Rome, 2001), 981–96, at 982.

[34] Troelsgård, 'Methodological Problems', 984.

[35] Ibid., 985.

[36] Ibid., 984–5, 991.

[37] Ibid., 983.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S096113712500004X Published online by Cambridge University Press

It did not help that Wellesz placed his musical evidence within a historical framework that we can recognise as uninformed. No one would now say 'that the Ambrosian melodies represent the oldest form of Plainchant, as they have not undergone the process of artistic transformation made or ordered by Pope Gregory the Great and his successors'. First, there is scant evidentiary support for the traditional belief that Gregory the Great did exercise a creative or editorial role in the formation of Gregorian chant.[38] Second, there is no real reason to think the Milanese or Ambrosian repertory is more primitive or chronologically earlier than Gregorian chant; the manuscripts are certainly later, dating mostly from the twelfth century onwards.[39]

Wellesz's weak grasp of the history of Latin chant is particularly noticeable when he introduces musical examples from the 1930 edition of the Processional of the Dominican order,[40] which he imagined to preserve 'the old Gallican tradition', which (of course) 'would explain the occurrence of elements of the Syro-Palestinian liturgy' – though even Wellesz is uncertain whether these elements came by way of Metz, Lyons, the Praemonstratensian order, 'from Constantinople via Burgundy at a very early date, or directly from Rome in the second half of the eighth century'.[41] A study published only two years after Wellesz's book found that the Dominican Graduale was indebted to an earlier recension made for the Cistercian order,[42] and differs significantly from the Praemonstratensian (for which, in any case, Wellesz cited no sources). The Dominican Graduale melodies may also owe something to local musical traditions in Paris, where the Dominicans had a substantial presence as teachers and students in the leading medieval university.[43] The chant traditions of Metz,[44] Lyons,[45]

[38] Recent publications on Gregory's relationship to medieval chant include Don Michael Randel, 'Leander, Isidore, and Gregory', *Journal of Musicology*, 36 (2019), 498–522; Marcel Ziljstra, 'Cantus Romanus und Gregor der Grosse', *Erklingendes Wort: Festschrift für Stefan Klöckner zum 60. Geburtstag* (Münsterschwarzach, 2018), 201–9; and Constant J. Mews, 'Gregory the Great, the Rule of Benedict and Roman Liturgy: The Evolution of a Legend', *Journal of Medieval History*, 37 (2011), 125–44.

[39] Michel Huglo, *Fonti e paleografia del canto Ambrosiano*, Archivio Ambrosiano 7 (Milan, 1956); Ernesto T. Moneta Caglio, 'Manoscritti di canto Ambrosiano rinvenuti nell'ultimo ventennio', *Ambrosius*, 52 (1976), 27–36.

[40] *Processionarium juxta Ritum Sacri Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Rome, 1930), 68–9, 92.

[41] Wellesz, *Eastern Elements*, 61–2 n. 2, 123.

[42] Dominique Delalande, *Le Graduel des Prêcheurs: Recherches sur les sources et la valeur de son texte musical: Vers la version authentique du Graduel Grégorien*, Bibliothèque d'Histoire dominicaine 2 (Paris, 1949), esp. 72–7, 220–1, 227–8, 241. Wellesz favourably reviewed this book in 'The Origins of Dominican Chant', *Blackfriars*, 31/359 (1950), 75–9. A more recent study is Robert B. Haller, 'Early Dominican Mass Chants: A Witness to Thirteenth Century Chant Style', PhD diss., Catholic University of America (1986).

[43] Kenneth Levy, 'A Dominican organum duplum', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 27 (1974), 183–211.

[44] Walther Lipphardt, *Der karolingische Tonar von Metz*, Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 43 (Münster, 1965); Yves Chartier, 'De la Seille à Irlande: Le manuscript Re. I.8.93 de Leipzig et le chant liturgique messin au X^{e} siècle', in *Musique et musiciens en Lorraine: Milieux, acteurs, sources: Actes du colloque d'Épinal*, ed. Yves Ferraton (Langres, 2009), 189–216; and Marie-Noël Colette and Christian Meyer, 'Le tropaire-prosaire de Metz', *Revue de Musicologie*, 96 (2010), 131–79.

[45] See Robert Amiet, *Les manuscrits liturgiques du diocèse de Lyon: Description et analyse*, Documents, études et repertoires publiés par l'Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes 43 (Paris, 1998).

and the Praemonstratensians[46] each have their own distinctive histories that have little direct relationship to the Dominican tradition, while Gallican chant barely survives at all.[47]

Musical communities

The difficulty here is not hard to see, from our perspective. No music can be studied apart from its context in the community that makes and performs it, even if that was a historical community that no longer exists. And any comparative study must be well-informed about the known history of contacts between the communities involved. After all,

> a context-sensitive analysis will reveal that the surface relationships between tones … are only part of deeper systems of relationships which can be described when music is regarded as humanly organized sound … we shall not be able to investigate these problems until analyses of music include the deep, as well as the surface structures, and we pay as much attention to man the music-maker as we do to the music man makes.[48]

To put it another way, 'Musical analysis is a discipline that we learn, above all, from musicians… . Wherever we turn, we can find skilled performers engaged in the exercise of their musical knowledge'.[49] What this means, when it comes to medieval chant, is that we cannot say two similar-sounding melodies are historically related, without first learning everything we can about the histories of both their individual communities and the details of when and how they could possibly have been in contact with one another. Fortunately, we have learned quite a lot in the three-quarters of a century since Wellesz's book.

To begin with, we now understand that the Greek-speaking Christian world was multi-polar. Constantinople was important as the imperial capital, but the most influential liturgical center was Jerusalem, which was visited constantly by pilgrims from all over the Christian world, even after the Muslim conquest of the seventh century. Wellesz had a point when he said that 'the Church of Jerusalem' was the

[46] Martin J. M. Hoondert, 'The "Restoration" of Plainchant in the Premonstratensian Order', *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, 18 (2009), 141–61; Placide Fernand Lefèvre, *La liturgie de Prémontré: Histoire, formulaire, chant et ceremonial*, Bibliotheca Analectorum Praemonstratensium 1 (Louvain, 1957); and Norbertus Iosephus Weyns, *Antiphonale Missarum Praemonstratense*, Bibliotheca Analectorum Praemonstratensium 11 (Averbode, 1973).

[47] Some of these issues were pointed out by Bruno Stäblein in his review of Wellesz's book, in *Die Musikforschung*, 5 (1952), 60–3. Manfred Bukofzer's review in *Speculum*, 23 (1948), 520–3 is unpersuaded by some of the relationships Wellesz alleges between chants of different traditions, and he calls attention to Wellesz's 'indiscriminate use of liturgical terms', which 'aggravates possible confusion' (523).

[48] John Blacking, 'Deep and Surface Structures in Venda Music', *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council*, 3 (1971), 91–108, at 93, 108.

[49] Stephen Blum, 'Analysis of Musical Style', in *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction*, ed. Helen Myers (New York, 1992), 165–218, at 213.

'common source'[50] of the 'Ravennatic', Beneventan, and Byzantine traditions, for he knew that the Greek text of *Ὅτε τῷ σταυρῷ* could be found in a Greek manuscript of the year 1122, containing a Typikon for Holy Week and Easter Week as celebrated in Jerusalem.[51] In the decades since we have recovered the entire liturgical year of the Hagiopolite Order, as it was known, including the fifth-century lectionary in Armenian translation, the sixth-century hymnal in Georgian translation, and later stages in Greek manuscripts dating as early as the ninth century.[52] The rite of Jerusalem, was, in fact, the place where the Oktoechos system, or the eight 'church modes', originated.[53]

We now know that the text of *Ὅτε τῷ σταυρῷ* was included in the sixth-century Jerusalem hymnal (since it survives in the Georgian translation), to be sung on Good Friday afternoon.[54] How it came west should be investigated within the larger context of the western cult of the Holy Cross. Indeed there were other chants found in early Jerusalem sources that circulated in the Latin world.[55] A relic of the True Cross was venerated on Good Friday in Jerusalem from the fourth century until the city was conquered by the Persians in 614 CE. The recovery of this relic by the Emperor Heraclius in 629 CE caused multiple additional feast days to be celebrated in honor of the Cross.[56] All this suggests one possible avenue by which Jerusalem chant melodies

[50] Wellesz, *Eastern Elements*, 110, 126.

[51] Jerusalem, Hagio Stavros, gr. 43; and Wellesz, *Eastern Elements*, 21–3. On this manuscript, see Daniel Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem* (Oxford, 2018), 140–4, 427. Galadza is working on a new edition.

[52] Peter Jeffery, 'The Sunday Office of Seventh-Century Jerusalem in the Georgian Chantbook (Iadgari): A Preliminary Report', *Studia Liturgica*, 21 (1991), 52–75; Peter Jeffery, 'The Earliest Christian Chant Repertory Recovered: The Georgian Witnesses to Jerusalem Chant', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 47 (1994), 1–39; and Stig Simeon Frøyshov, 'Rite of Jerusalem', *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*, Canterbury Press, www.hymnology.co.uk/r/rite-of-jerusalem (accessed 21 August 2022).

[53] Peter Jeffery, 'The Earliest Oktōēchoi: The Role of Jerusalem and Palestine in the Beginnings of Modal Ordering', in *The Study of Medieval Chant, Paths and Bridges, East and West: In Honor of Kenneth Levy*, ed. Peter Jeffery (Woodbridge, 2000), 144–206; Charles Renoux, 'Jérusalem dans le Caucase: Anton Baumstark vérifié', in *Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Baumstark*, 305–21 and Stig Simeon R. Frøyshov, 'The Early Development of the Liturgical Eight-Mode System in Jerusalem', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 51 (2007), 139–78.

[54] *Užvelesi Iadgari*, ed. Elena Metreveli, C'ac'a Čankievi and Lili Xevsuriani (Tbilis, 1980), 201 lines 15–22; Andrew Wade, 'The Oldest *Iadgari*: The Jerusalem Tropologion – 4th to 8th Centuries, 30 Years after the Publication', in *Σύναξις καθολική: Beiträge zur Gottesdienst und Geschichte der fünf altkirchlichen Patriarchate für Heinzgerd Brakmann zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Diliana Atanassova and Tinatin Chronz, Orientalia – patristica – oecumenica 6.1–2 (Vienna, 2014) 2: 717–50, at 735 n. 101.

[55] In addition to *O quando in cruce*, there have also been studies of: (1) *Crucem tuam*: Rosemary Thoonen Dubowchik, 'A Jerusalem Chant for the Holy Cross in the Byzantine, Latin, and Eastern Rites', *Plainsong & Medieval Music* 5/2 (1996) 113–29 and Neil Moran, 'Palestinian Chants in Medial Modes in Old Roman, Ambrosiana, Beneventan and Frankish Sources', in *Psaltike: Neue Studien zur Byzantinischen Musik: Festschrift Gerda Wolfram*, ed. Nina-Maria Wanek (Vienna, 2011) 243–56; and (2) *Dicant nunc judaei*: Christian Troelsgård, 'The Musical Structure of Five Byzantine Stichera and Their Parallels among Western Antiphons', *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin*, 61 (1991), 3–48.

[56] Louis van Tongeren, *Exaltation of the Cross: Towards the Origins of the Feast of the Cross and the Meaning of the Cross in Early Medieval Liturgy*, Liturgia Condenda 11 (Leuven, 2000), 1–39; Louis van Tongeren, 'The Cult of the Cross in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: A Concise Survey of Its Origins and Development', trans. Nikki Idema, *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana*, 38 (2007/2008), 59–75; and Constantin Zuckerman, 'Heraclius and the Return of the Holy Cross', *Constructing the Seventh Century*, ed. Constantin Zuckerman, Collège de France Travaux et Mémoires 17 (Paris, 2013), 197–218.

could have found their way west: in the mouths of western pilgrims, returning home after visiting the holy places in Christendom's holy city.

Western celebrations honoring the Cross continued for centuries to look towards an imagined Jerusalem, as if shaped by a belief that the original Cross was still located there. Hence the fact that the Roman Church's own collection of relics of the Passion was housed in a basilica known as Holy Cross in Jerusalem (the present Santa Croce in Gerusalemme). In fact our earliest account of the Roman Good Friday celebration says that a reliquary containing wood from the Cross was carried to this very basilica from the Lateran baptistery, placed on the altar, and opened by the pontiff so that the Precious Wood could be kissed by all.[57] The bilingual Trisagion with which Wellesz began his study[58] was not part of the early Roman celebration, but entered the Roman rite in northern Europe,[59] where it had earlier been part of the Gallican rite of Mass.[60] Since the Trisagion did not figure prominently in the Jerusalem ritual for Good Friday, its presence in the northern French Good Friday rite looks like an attempt to evoke the Christian East by people who had no specific knowledge of what was sung in Jerusalem itself.

The transmission history of chants honouring the Cross seems rather different from that of 'the *Hodie* antiphons',[61] which begin with the Greek or Latin word for 'today'. These seem to be associated with celebrations of the Incarnation – Christmas, Epiphany and feasts of the Virgin Mary – while the Georgian hymnal of Jerusalem contains over 160 chants beginning with the word 'today', which are spread widely across the liturgical year, apparently not limited to incarnational feasts. If indeed the western transmission underwent a kind of theological narrowing, the reason for this remains unknown.

We can now say more about the other traditions as well. In southern Italy, the Latin chant traditions associated with the Archdiocese of Benevento and the great Benedictine monastery of Montecassino were in contact with the many Greek monasteries of southern Italy, which followed monastic practices that owed something to both Palestinian and Constantinopolitan traditions, even though they were canonically within the Patriarchate of Rome.[62] Contact here was more sustained, and so Latin and Greek influences passed in both directions.

[57] Ordo Romanus XXIII: 9–17, in *Les Ordines Romani du Haut Moyen Age* 3, ed. Michel Andrieu (Louvain, 1951), 269–73, at 270–1.

[58] Wellesz, *Eastern Elements*, 11–18.

[59] It is not found in Ordo Romanus XXIII, or in any other Ordo until Ordo XXXI (Andrieu, ed., *Ordines Romani* 3, 498), which Andrieu dates to around 900 CE in northeast France. Of the six early manuscripts of the Graduale published in René Hesbert, *Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex* (Brussels, 1935; repr. Rome, 1968), the Trisagion appears only in the two latest (97), written in northeast France (Corbie and Senlis) in the second half of the ninth century.

[60] *Expositio Antiquae Liturgiae Gallicanae*, ed. Edward Craddock Ratcliff, Henry Bradshaw Society 98 (-London, 1971), 4, 7.

[61] Wellesz, *Eastern Elements*, 141–9; Wellesz, *Musik der byzantinischen Kirche*, 39; and Christian Troelsgård, 'Σήμερον and Hodie Chants in Byzantine and Western Tradition', *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin*, 60 (1990), 3–48. An entire issue of *Ecclesia Orans*, 16/1 (1999) is devoted to the use of *hodie* in liturgical texts.

[62] Miguel Arranz, ed., *Le Typicon du monastère du Saint-Sauveur à Messine: Codex Messinensis gr. 115, A.D. 1131*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 185 (Rome, 1969); and Katherine Douramani, *Il Typikon del monastero di S. Bartolomeo di Trigona*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 269 (Rome, 2003).

Ravenna was the seat of the Byzantine Exarchate from the sixth to the eighth centuries. Its churches full of Byzantine mosaics, including the depictions of Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora in the church of San Vitale, make the city seem to us very Byzantine indeed. But the few traces we have from the local liturgy that antedate the adoption of the Roman rite during the Carolingian era are in Latin, not Greek,[63] and the archbishops generally aligned themselves with the pope of Rome; the influence of Byzantine music there seems to have been much more limited.

Milan, which was an imperial capital in the fifth and sixth centuries, managed to retain much of its local liturgy and never fully adopted the Roman rite. Its relationship to the Greek east is both more complicated and less researched. In the fourth century, under St Ambrose (339–397, archbishop from 374), psalms were chanted in both Latin and Greek.[64] The Milanese daily psalter is appended with the same Old Testament canticles as in the Byzantine rite, though distributed differently across the daily hours. The texts of some of the communion chants, known as *transitoria*, have been identified as Latin translations of Greek hymns, but musical relationships have not been identified.[65]

Semitic antecedents

The common assumption that Christian texts and practices must descend from some Jewish antecedent is basically an echo of supersessionism, the religious idea that Christianity is the direct continuation of Judaism or indeed its successor. But the more one actually knows about early Jewish and Christian liturgies and texts, the harder it is to hold such simplistic notions. Rabbinic Judaism – the ancestor of most modern Jewish denominations – emerged with the completion of the Mishnah (*c.*200 CE), that is, after Judaism and Christianity had already separated. Many other kinds of Judaism existed before the destruction of the Temple by the Roman army in 70 CE: their histories and interrelationships are about as complicated as the early history of Christianity.[66] Resemblances between Jewish and Christian texts, like resemblances between melodies, have too often been promoted without sufficient research on the communities that

[63] Kenneth Levy, 'The Italian Neophytes' Chants', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 23 (1970), 181–227; and Kenneth Levy, '*Lux de luce*: The Origin of an Italian Sequence', *Musical Quarterly*, 57 (1971), 40–61.

[64] Helmut Leeb, *Die Psalmodie bei Ambrosius*, Wiener Beiträge zur Theologie 18 (Vienna, 1967), 59.

[65] Terence Bailey, *The Transitoria of the Ambrosian Mass: Compositional Process in Ecclesiastical Chant*, Musicological Studies 79 (Ottawa, 2003), 165–6. The Milanese melodies will be found in Terence Bailey, *The Transitoria of the Ambrosian Mass Edited from Three Sources*, Collected Works 21 (Ottawa, 2002).

[66] The bibliography is vast, but one can start with Neil S. Fujita, *A Crack in the Jar: What Ancient Jewish Documents Tell Us about the New Testament* (New York,1986); Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green and Ernest S. Frerichs, *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, 1987); Jacob Neusner, *Three Questions of Formative Judaism: History, Literature, and Religion* (Leiden, 2002); Ruth Langer, *Cursing the Christians? A History of the Birkat Haminim* (New York, 2012); and Mariusz Rosik, *Church and Synagogue (30–313 AD): Parting of the Ways*, European Studies in Theology, Philosophy and History of Religion (Berlin, 2019).

created and used these texts, and on historically verifiable evidence of actual contacts between communities.[67]

However, there is a real possibility that early Christian hymnody in Greek owes something to Jewish Biblical or liturgical texts in Hebrew, and/or to Jewish or Christian hymnody in Syriac, the Christian dialect of Aramaic, which was the vernacular language of Jews, Christians and polytheists in the early centuries of the Common Era. By the fourth century, Greek metrical poetry based on syllabic quantity was being replaced by a different kind, based on syllable counts and accent patterns, which incorporated features common to Semitic poetry, such as acrostics and the use of dialogues between characters. These innovations are often casually ascribed to 'Semitic influence', as indeed they were by Wellesz himself.[68] But is it really possible for Semitic techniques to have overwhelmed classical Greek conventions that had been established for centuries? Recent research has shown that much of this had to do with changes that were occurring in the Greek language itself, and thus can be explained without invoking Semitic influence.[69] On the other hand, there was a corpus of Greek translations of Syriac poetry, now known as Ephraem Graecus, though only some of the originals were by Ephrem (*c.*306–373).[70] Future research needs to focus more attention on these texts. In addition, there is the towering figure of Romanos the Melodist (fl. 491–518), who is said to have had Jewish ancestry, and whose poetry reveals that he understood the correct pronunciation and accentuation of Hebrew names.[71] Unfortunately, we do not have either the fourth-century melodies of Ephrem or the sixth-century melodies of Romanos, nor Jewish melodies of the same periods to compare them with.

Conclusions

In short, the comparative study of medieval Christian chant repertories, and of Jewish melodies from post-medieval sources, cannot be shaped by simplistic assumptions, such as that simpler melodies are earlier or more primitive than more complicated ones, or that Christian practices must have had Jewish origins. Nor can melodies that resemble each other be assumed to be related to each other historically. Studies of oral traditions show that what is transmitted is often not a note-for-note melody but a more abstract contour that can be realised in more than one way. Most importantly, no

[67] See Gerard Rouwhorst, 'Review of Stéphane Verhelst, *Les traditions judéo-chrétiennes dans la liturgie de Jérusalem, spécialement la Liturgie de saint Jacques frère de Dieu*, Studies in Liturgy 18 (Leuven, 2003)', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 62 (2008), 90–4. Also, Gerard Rouwhorst, 'Jewish Liturgical Traditions in Early Syriac Christianity', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 51 (1997), 72–93.

[68] Wellesz, *Eastern Elements*, 38, 48–9, 72, 196–7, *passim*.

[69] Marc D. Lauxtermann, *The Spring of Rhythm: An Essay on the Political Verse and Other Byzantine Metres*, Byzantina Vindobonensia 22 (Vienna, 1999).

[70] Ephrem Lash, 'The Greek Writings Attributed to Saint Ephrem the Syrian', in *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West: Festschrift for Bishop Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia*, ed. John Behr, Andrew Louth and Dimitri Conomos (Crestwood, NY, 2003), 81–98, esp. 92–4.

[71] Paul Maas and C. A. Trypanis, eds., *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica: Cantica Genuina* (Oxford, 1963; repr. 1997), 516.

music can be studied apart from the community that makes or made it. One cannot hypothesise historical relationships based on resemblances alone. Musical evidence must be interpreted within a framework of verifiable historical fact. In particular, when contacts between different communities are being alleged, we need confirmed evidence of what kinds of contact took place, where, and when. Otherwise, we are only 'singing in the dark'.[72]

[72] 'Wenn der Wanderer in der Dunkelheit singt, verleugnet er seine Ängstlichkeit, aber er sieht darum um nichts heller'. Sigmund Freud, *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* (Vienna, 1926), 20. The word 'singt' is translated 'whistles' in Sigmund Freud, *The Problem of Anxiety*, trans. Henry Alden Bunker (New York, 1936), 23.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S096113712500004X Published online by Cambridge University Press