

# Analysis of Variants in Liturgical Pistoiese Sequences

Evan Chan, Andrea Klassen, Dr. James Maiello\*

University of Manitoba, Desautels Faculty of Music, Department of Theory and Musicology



## ABSTRACT

Sequences were an important genre of Latin plainchant that flourished throughout the Middle Ages. Prose and poetic texts were set to music and sung at Mass immediately after the Alleluia. This research aims to analyze the sequences used at the cathedral in Pistoia (Italy) by comparing them to concordances in other Italian sources. Distinctive variants were cataloged and notated using standard editorial practices in the discipline. Noteworthy trends include the ornamentation of basic melodies and the reorganization of verses among sources. This research will contribute to James Maiello's critical edition of the Pistoiese sequences, the first systematic study of this repertory. The analysis will benefit scholars across the humanities, particularly those investigating the aesthetics and transmission of plainchant, liturgy, and palaeography.

## BACKGROUND

### Sequences

- Text-melody relationship: generally one note per one syllable
- "Decorations" of the music and additional florid melodic lines at the ends of phrases are common
- The musical range can vary depending on the melody and performer skill level
- Found in liturgical manuscripts using various types of neumatic notation

## METHOD

**Transcribe** Transcribe the Pistoiese sequences to modern musical notation and underlay the accompanying Latin text with *Finale* software

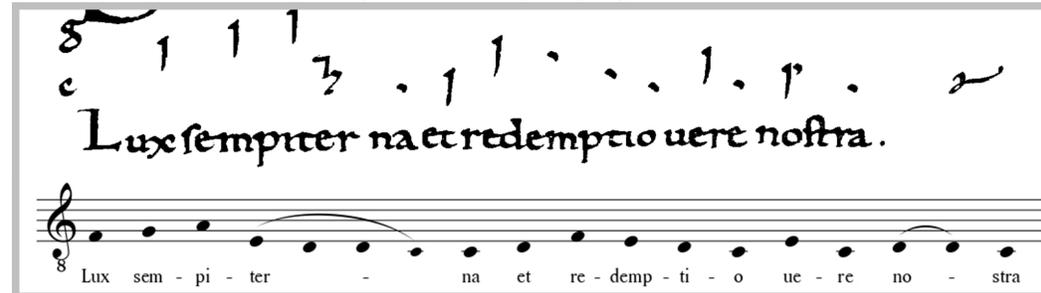


Fig. 1 Sequence *Salus Aeterna* line 1b in Pistoia 121 (f. 9r) manuscript and modern notation

**Compare** Compare the same set of sequences from other selected manuscripts (Modena 7, Oxford 222, Padua 47, Angelica 123, Voltera 39, Verona 107) to the Pistoiese sequences

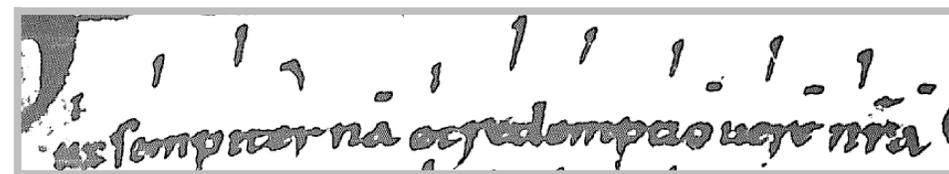


Fig. 2 Sequence *Salus Aeterna* line 1b in Oxford 222 (f. 82r) manuscript

**Analyze** Identify and catalogue distinct melodic and textual variants following a set of general editing practices in the discipline. Make notes of any interesting creative findings and musical writings

**Notate** Notate variants using a similar format in Lance Brunner's *Early Medieval Chants from Nonantola, IV: Sequences*

### Significant Variants

#### Textual Variants

Ox 222 [2b] *exelsa* for *excelsa* [4a] *animae* for *animas* [4b] *possideane* for *possideas*.

#### Melodic Variants

Ox 222 [2a] *(pe)ri(re) Fa*; *se(c)la* F [2b] *(a)di(sti) Fa*; *i(ma) F*.

Fig. 3 Notation of variants for Sequence *Salus Aeterna* Oxford 222 to Pistoia 121 manuscript

## CREATIVE FINDINGS

- The **reorganization/restructuring** of musical verses impacted melodic flow
- Variants often included **additional ornaments** to fill intervallic leaps (fig. 4)
- The **transposition** of melodies lead to questions about musician skill and scribe accuracy

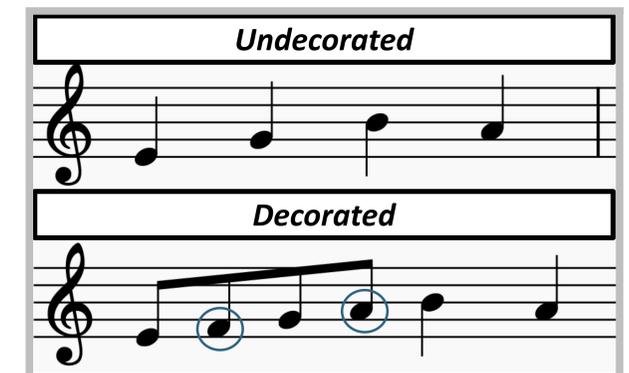


Fig. 4 A comparison between decorated and undecorated melodies

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. James Maiello graciously welcomed, nurtured and mentored my research experiences. In learning paleographical and musicological techniques quickly disappearing from the graduate-curricula, Dr. Maiello pieced together a learning path that has no textbook.

To Dr. James Maiello and the University of Manitoba, I am forever grateful for these immersive research experiences.