

**IMAGINING THE SACRED IN VIRTUOSO CHANT AND DANCE:
THE MUSIC OF STE FOY AND THE DANCER/SINGER OF ALMIPHONA
(PARIS, BnF MS LAT. 1118, FOL. 114)**

**IMAGINAR LO SAGRADO EN EL CANTO Y LA DANZA VIRTUOSOS:
LA MÚSICA DE SAINTE FOY Y LA BAILARINA/CANTANTE DE ALMIPHONA
(PARIS, BnF MS LAT. 1118, FOL. 114)**

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SUMMARY

Focus is on the miniature of a singer-dancer and the chant written out on the same folio in the Troper-Proser, Paris, BnF MS Lat. 1118, fol. 114. The music features the untexted sequentia of the prosa *Almiphona iam gaudia*, sung for Pentecost. It describes the Holy Spirit as a voice, whose effortless song envelopes the celestial gathering in a bright aura. The melodic phrases to which this vision is sung appear in the music for vespers of another saint: Ste. Foy, where they hold a prominent place. Her Office, which carries these melodic motifs, was likely composed at Conques in the early eleventh century. What role does this quotation of melodic phrases play in shaping the presence of the saint? This research also uncovers and addresses the chronological disparity in the pairing of the singer-dancer miniature (late tenth century) on fol. 114 with the *Almiphona sequentia*, likely written down in the 1030s, sometime after the MS entered St. Martial in Limoges. How does dance relate to chant and what does it say about the paradoxical entwining of eternity with time? To explore these questions, the research draws on the tradition of the Islamic *qiyān* (singer-dancer) described in the ninth-century *qaṣida* (poem) of Ibn Rūmī.

KEYWORDS: *Almiphona sequentia* and prosa, Office of Ste. Foy, chant; *qiyān*.

RESUMEN

La atención de este artículo se centra en la iluminación de una cantante-bailarina y el canto escrito en el mismo folio en el Tropario-Prosario, París, BnF MS Lat. 1118, fol. 114. La

música presenta la *sequentia* no textual de la prosa *Almiphona iam gaudia*, cantada en Pentecostés. En ella se describe al Espíritu Santo como una voz, cuyo canto sin esfuerzo envuelve la reunión celestial en un aura brillante. Las frases melódicas con las que se canta esta visión aparecen en la música de vísperas en conmemoración de otra santa: Ste. Foy. Su Oficio, que lleva estos motivos melódicos, fue probablemente compuesto en Conques a principios del siglo xi. ¿Qué papel desempeña esta citación de frases melódicas en la configuración de la presencia de la santa? Esta investigación también desvela y aborda la disparidad cronológica en el emparejamiento de la miniatura de la cantante-bailarina (finales del siglo x) en el fol. 114 con la *sequentia* de la *Almiphona*, probablemente escrita a finales de la década de 1030, después este manuscrito fue adquirido en San Marcial de Limoges. ¿Cómo se relaciona la danza con el canto y qué nos revela sobre el paradójico entrelazamiento de la eternidad con el tiempo? Para explorar estas cuestiones, la investigación se basa en el *qiyān* islámico (cantante-bailarín) descrito en la *qasida* de Ibn Rūmī del siglo ix.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Secuencia *Almiphona* y prosa, Oficio de Santa Fe, cantico; *qiyān*.

A dancer-singer swayed in a swift forward motion lifts her arms, in which she holds two chained cups of a percussion instrument (Paris, BnF MS 1118, fol. 114r) (Fig. 1). Her mouth is wide open. She sings as she executes her steps in space. Her dress catches the eye with its bright yellow and red. Her blue cloak, covering her head and shoulders, pendulates with her step. The color contrast is picked up again by her henna-painted hands set against the whiteness of her palms. The dancer-singer moves from right to left confronting the opposite flow of an Aquitanian music notation. The latter records an extraordinarily florid melisma: a *sequentia* (untexted music) sung for Pentecost and identified with its texted prosa as *Almiphona iam gaudia* (“Blessed-sounding joys precisely now”). Paired together, dance and chant are seen as virtuoso performances that can produce joy matching the imagined celestial exaltation. The beauty and artistry in the human dance and chant also suggest the paradoxical presence of eternity in the instant of a human gesture and breath. The manuscript was produced at Sant Sadurní de Tavèrnoles, Catalonia and dated 987-996. As this research reveals, at some point in the first quarter of the eleventh century, it entered the library of St. Martial in Limoges, and in the 1030s an anonymous hand added the untexted *Almiphona sequentia*. The resulting striking combination of the miniature with the music contains a hitherto unknown story about a relationship with the liturgy of Sainte Foy at Conques.

Santa Fides was a young virgin martyr of Agen, France, who died in the early fourth century. A monastery, originally dedicated to Christ, the Virgin and St. Peter in 801, eventually embraced her as a patron. In 866 two local monks managed to steal Santa Fides’s relics from Agen and to bring them to Conques. Her skull was set in a wooden statue decorated with a gold revetment and gems. The fortunes of the monastery dwindled in the first half of the tenth century, and it was not until the late tenth and early eleventh centuries that a new wave of activity and expansion took over the community. The splendor of the statue was renewed, plans for a new stone-vaulted church were developed, and historical texts and liturgy composed.¹



Fig. 1. Paris, MS Lat. 1118, fol. 114, dated 987-996. Dancer-singer belonging to the original decoration. Music notation of the Alleluia (Almiphona) sequentia, added in the 1020s

¹ On the history of the monastery, see J. BOUSQUET, *La Rouerge au Premier Moyen Âge (vers 800- vers 1250). Les pouvoirs, leur rapports et leur domaines*, 2 vols., Rodez, 1992, I, pp. 273-345; *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Conques en Rouergue*, G. DESJARDINS (ed.), Paris, 1879, nos. 1, 580-581. On the architecture and sculpture, see E. VERGNOLLE, H. PRADAIER, N. POUSTHOMIS-DALLE, "L'abbatiale Romane de Conques", *137 Congress Archéologique de France, Aveyron*, Paris, 2011, pp. 71-160. On the golden statue, see J. TARALON, "La majesté d'or de Sainte Foy du trésor de Conques", *Revue de l'art*, 40-41 (1978), pp. 9-23; J. TARALONE, D. TARALON-CARLINI, "La majesté d'or de sainte Foy de Conques", *Bulletin monumental*, 155 (1997), pp. 1-73; J. BOUSQUET, "Conques et l'art du premier moyen âge. Trois mises au point", *Revue du Rouergue*, 52 (1997), pp. 561-580; B. FRICKE, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints: Sainte Foy of Conques and the Revival of Monumental Sculpture in Medieval Art*, Turnhout, 2015, pp. 26-45; I. FOLETTI, "Meeting Saint Faith", *Migrating Art Historians*, I. FOLETTI, K. KRAVČÍKOVÁ, S. ROSENBERGOVÁ, A. PALLADINO (ed.) Rome, 2018, pp. 295-316. For the *Passio*, *Liber miraculorum and vernacular canso*, see nn. 8-11.

The eleventh-century music for the Feast of Santa Fides (October 6) is little researched and deserves more thorough engagement.² Two eleventh-century manuscripts transmit the text and music notation: Paris, BnF MS Lat 1240, fols. 183r–88r and Paris, BnF n.a. MS Lat. 443, fols. 1–19r, 26r–27r. MS 1240 is the earliest prosier-troper from St. Martial in Limoges and dates to the tenth century.³ Yet, the liturgy of Ste Foy in this manuscript forms a separate *libellus*, whose script and music notation indicate a date in the eleventh century.⁴ Moreover, while Ste. Foy's feast at Saint Martial appears in the kalendars of the two early-eleventh-century sacramentaries (Paris, BnF MS Lat. 821, fol. 5 and MS Lat. 822, fol. 6v), it is not included in the oldest part of MS Lat. 1240, fol. 14v or in the early eleventh-century Office antiphonary, Paris, BnF MS Lat. 1085. So, the production or the acquisition of the *libellus* dedicated to Santa Fides's liturgy may have been occasioned by the adoption of her feast at Saint Martial sometime in the eleventh century.⁵ At some later point this *libellus* was bound in MS 1240. The second manuscript, MS Lat. n.a. 443 dates 1037–1065 and originally formed part of a work containing the liturgy, *Passio, Liber Miraculorum* and the vernacular *Canso* of Santa Fides. At some point in the twelfth century, it was brought to St. Benoit sur Loire, where a second hand added music using a different (Northern French) notation.⁶ Today, it is divided and kept at four different collections: Orléans, BM, MS Lat. 347, fols. 1–16 and 73–88;⁷ Paris, BnF, MS lat. n. a. 443, fols. 1–28;⁸ Vatican City, BAV, MS Reg. Lat. 467, fols. 1–56;⁹ and Leiden, University Library, Voss. Ms. Lat. O.60, fols. 14–29.¹⁰ The

² D. GRÉMONT, "Le culte de Ste-Foy et de Ste-Marie-Magdaleine à Conques au XI^e siècle d'après le manuscrit de la Chanson de Ste-Foy," *Revue de Rouergue*, 23 (1969), pp. 165–175; M. HUGLO, "Les «libelli» de Tropes et les premiers Tropaires-Prosaires", in *Embellishing the Liturgy. Tropes and Polyphony*, A. E. PLANCHART (ed.), Farnham, 2009, pp. 85–94, esp. 89–92 originally published in *Pax et Sapientia: Studies in Text and Music of Liturgical Tropes and Sequencies in Memory of Gordon Anderson*, R. JACOBSSON, G. A. ANDERSON (eds.), Stockholm, 1986, pp. 13–22.

³ On the tenth-century date of the oldest sections of the troper-proser of St. Martial MS 1240, see J. GRIER, *The Musical World of a Medieval Monk: Adémar de Chabannes in Eleventh-Century Aquitaine*, New York, 2006, pp. 7–9, 24, 35, 42–44, 49–50; IDEM, *Ademari Cabannensis. Opera liturgica et poetica. Musica cum textibus* (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis, 245, 245A), Turnhout, 2012, vol. 245, pp. xlix–l.

⁴ Email exchange with James Grier July 19, 2021. Early on, John Emerson assigned a date in the early thirteenth century for this *libellus*, which is a bit too late. But in general he recognized that the six gatherings at the end of MS 1240 are written in the eleventh century or later and bound with of the MS the rest in the early thirteenth century, see EMERSON, "Neglected Aspects of the Oldest Full Troper (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 1240)", in *Recherches nouvelles sur les tropes liturgiques*, Wulf Arlt, Gunilla Björkvall (eds.), Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Studia Latina Stockholmiensia, 36), Stockholm, 1993, pp. 193–217, esp. 194–196.

⁵ Email exchange with James Grier July 19, 2021.

⁶ GRÉMONT, "Culte de Ste Foi et de Ste Marie-Magdeleine", pp. 172–174.

⁷ <https://mediatheques.orleans-metropole.fr/ark:/77916/FRCGMBPF-452346101-01A/D18012804?posInSet=265&queryId=N-5c9dd99a-66c2-49a5-bf19-b593d74c17dc>.

⁸ <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc58846d>, and the digitized MS at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8426266x/f9.image>. *Catalogue des manuscrits des fonds libri et barrois*, L. DELISLE (ed.), Paris, 1888, pp. 15–16. The text is transcribed by A. BOUILLET, L. SERVIERES, *Sainte Foy, Vierge et Martyre*, Rodez, 1900, pp. 644–655.

⁹ https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Reg.lat.467, the MS contains the *Passio, Translatio* and *Liber miraculorum*, MS discussed in L. ROBERTINI, *Liber miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Spoleto, 1994, pp. 4–5. The Conques MS (Vatican City, BAV, MS Reg. Lat 467 starts the *Passio* with an intro which is not recorded in the Sélestat MS) but is present in MS 1240, fol. 183.

¹⁰ R. LAFONT, *La Chanson de Sainte Foi*, Geneva, 1998, pp. 11–15.

Latin text of the liturgy is printed in the late nineteenth century, but it is not edited or translated in modern languages.¹¹ Similarly, the chants recorded in Aquitanian notation have not been transcribed, analyzed, or performed.

In collaboration with Laura Steenberge, a musician and a composer of choral chant, I am directing a new project at Stanford University, “Enchanted Images: Uncovering Visions of Ste. Foy in the Interactions across Music, Poetry, Art, and Dance” with the goal to transcribe the medieval liturgy in modern notation, to translate the Latin poetry into English, to analyze this music in relation with the art at Conques and to record these chants, while simultaneously imprinting them with the acoustics of the Romanesque church at Conques.¹²

The richness of this newly recovered music allows us to explore at greater depth how the liturgy used the entire sensorium to produce a compelling vision of the saint. More specifically, this research, combining methods sourced from musicology and art history, forges new ground in exploring how liturgical song constructs sacred space both as real and imagined and how it mediates the encounter with the metaphysical through the material images and through the ethereal visions it stimulates in the imagination.¹³ The analysis of the music focuses on identifying and interpreting shared melodic phrases among chants and how they carry over meanings from earlier contexts in the new chants they appear in.¹⁴ This article explores a melodic motif that appears in the *Almiphona sequentia* and *prosa* and in the vespers chants of Santa Fides.¹⁵ The *Almiphona* *prosa* applies this shared motif to describe the Holy Spirit as a beautiful singing voice—an endless and effortless melismatic breath. Is this connection between the music and text of the *Almiphona* what made this particular chant appropriate for the context of the singer-dancer miniature? What does this pairing reveal about medieval notions of performance and the virtuoso voice? And finally, what can MS 1118 fol. 114 contribute to our understanding of the vespers chants for Ste. Foy?

THE *ALMIPHONA SEQUENTIA* IN THE SCRIPTORIUM OF ST. MARTIAL

Ste. Foy’s vespers responsory refrain, Alleluia, and *prosa Candida tu quia* carry a distinctive melodic motif—*D a a a G F G F G a a* (Fig. 2). Occurring at the onset of Fides’s

¹¹ BOUILLET, SERVIERES, *Sainte Foy, Vierge et Martyre*, pp. 644-648.

¹² <http://enchantedimages.su.domains/>

¹³ B. V. PENTCHEVA, “The Choros of the Stars: Image, Chant, and Imagination at Ste. Foy at Conques”, in *From Words to Space: Textual Sources for Reconstructing and Understanding Medieval Sacred Spaces*, S. DE BLAUW, E. SCIROCCO (ed.), Quaderni della Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome (forthcoming).

¹⁴ GRIER, *The Musical World of A Medieval Monk*, pp. 97-158.

¹⁵ R. CROCKER, “The Repertory of Proses at Sant Martial de Limoges in the Tenth Century”, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 11 (1958), pp. 149-164; IDEM, *The Early Medieval Sequence*, Berkeley, 1977; M. FASSLER, *Gothic Song: Victorine Sequences and Augustinian Reform in Twelfth-Century Paris*, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 38-57; IDEM, “Women and Their Sequencies: An Overview and a Case Study”, *Speculum*, 94/3 (2019), pp. 625-673; G. IVERSEN, *Laus Angelica: Poetry in the Medieval Mass*, Turnhout, 2010, pp. 127-159; EADEM, “Biblical Interpretation in Tropes and Sequencies”, *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 17 (2007), pp. 210-225. On *prosaes*, see; Th. KELLY, “New Music from Old: The Structuring of Responsory *Prosaes*”, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 30/3 (1977), pp. 366-390; IDEM, “Poetry for Music: The Art of the Medieval *Prosula*”, *Speculum*, 86/2 (2011), pp. 361-386. See also, J. STEVENS, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages. Song, Narrative, Dance, and Drama, 1050-1350*, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 80-109.

feast, this music phrase is attention-grabbing: a tune that will stick in the memories of the congregants. The melodic phrase is set in a double cursus; this means the motif is repeated twice, a common feature in Aquitanian chant.¹⁶ We know that this melody, and more precisely the repeated melodic motif *D a a a G F G F G a a* was designed for the liturgy of Ste. Foy because it fits perfectly the syllables of the first two verses of the prosa: *Candida tu quia supra lilia/ O alma ac sacra Fides domina*. This prosa exists in only one other version, adapted for Santa Cecilia (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 776, fol. 3, second half of the 11th cent.).¹⁷ The insertion of the name “Cecilia” no longer fits the syllabic count. Two new notes are introduced because “Cecilia” has two more syllables compared to “Fides.” As a result, the melodic pattern is modified, destroying the double cursus of *D a a a G F G F G a a* (Fig. 3). The modification necessary to adapt the name Cecilia in MS 776 evinces that *Candida tu quia* was originally composed as a prosa for Fides, opening with the double cursus of *D a a a G F G F G a a* (Fig. 2).¹⁸

D a a a G F G F G a a is a building block for melodies in modes 1 and 2. Because it appears in the Alleluia of Santa Fides and this genre (Alleluias) is well studied and catalogued, by surveying it, we can gain an understanding of what associations this motif elicited in trained audiences (medieval composers and singers).¹⁹ With some variation, it appears in the Alleluias for female virgin martyr saints like St. Praxed, apostles, martyrs, confessors, Advent, and Pentecost.²⁰ By working with this standard building block, the music for vespers at Ste. Foy places its patron saint in the powerful community of model virgin-martyr saints like Santa Praxed and the inspirited bodies of the Theotokos (Advent) and the apostles

¹⁶ C. ROEDERER, “Can We Identify an Aquitanian Chant Style”, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 27 (1974), pp. 75-99, esp. 94, 99; and GRIER, *The Musical World of a Medieval Monk*, p. 77.

¹⁷ <http://cantusindex.org/id/g03234>

¹⁸ The Cantus database only lists the Santa Cecilia prosa, unaware that it in fact derives from an original composition designed for Santa Fides’s Festal liturgy, <http://cantusindex.org/id/g03234>

¹⁹ K. SCHLAGER, *Thematischer Katalog der ältesten Alleluia-Melodien aus Handschriften des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts, ausgenommen das ambrosianische, alt-römische und alt-spanische Repertoire*, München, 1965, no. 35, henceforth SCHLAGER, *ThK* and SCHLAGER, *Alleluia-Melodien bis 1100*, Kassel 1968, henceforth SCHLAGER.

²⁰ *DaabaGaGFGaa*, SCHLAGER, no. 35, Santa Praxed; set in first part of jubilus.

FGaaaaGFGFGaaD and *DaaGFGFGaaD*, SCHLAGER, no. 105, octave of the apostles Sts. John and Paul; set in the jubilus and in the versus, on the word “*misericordiae*”; MS 903, fol. 104.

DaaGFGFGaaDaaGGFGaa, SCHLAGER, no. 99 for St. Eusebius (in the jubilus in a double cursus and in the closing melisma in the verse on *iustus*).

DaaGGFGaaD, SCHLAGER, no. 137 for the First Sunday of Advent (in the jubilus and in the verse in the melisma on *genetrix, nobis* and a variant in *Spiritus (abaGGFGabaD)*); MS 776, fol. 5v, London, BL, Harley, MS Lat. 4951, fols. 123v–124).

DabaGFGaaDabaGFGaa, SCHLAGER, no. 139, for St. Saturninus, St. George; St. Vitalis, and the Octave of St. Lawrence; set in the jubilus in a double cursus; London, BL, Harley MS Lat. 4951, fol. 228v.

aGaGFGaa, SCHLAGER, no. 398, octave of the Apostles, in the jubilus (Harley 4951, fol. 274, MS 903, fol. 104)

DabaGaGGFGFGGaDabaGaGGFGFGGa, SCHLAGER, no. 133, for Ascension and the 2-4th week after Pentecost; set in the jubilus in double cursus; MS 776, fol. 95.

DabaGaGFGFGGaDabaGaGFGFGGa, SCHLAGER, no. 51, for St. Aredii (Yrieix), in the jubilus in double cursus; MS 903, fol. 110.

DaaaGFGGa, SCHLAGER, no. 39, for St. Tiburtius (MS 776, fol. 107v, MS 903, fol. 107v).

Your of spring [the saints] are a paradise with fruits of pomegranate and apples and cinnamon with cedars of Lebanon.

Mo: 24

R

E - mis - si - o - nes tu - e pa - ra - di - sus

ma - ro - rum pu - ni - to - rum cum po - mo - rum fruc - ti - bus

et cin - na - mo - mum cum u - ni - ver - sis

lig - nis li - ba - ni al - le - lu - i - a

Come, my bride, mix my myrrh with the perfumes and cinnamon.

V

Ve - ni spon - sa mi - se - cu - i mi - ram - me - an - cum

a - ro - ma - ti - bus

G

Glo - ri - a pu - tri et fi - li - o et spi - ri - tu Sanc - to

Al

Al - le - lu - i - a

Psa

You are bright, [you] who are above the lily [i.e. whiter than the lily] / O, nourisher and holy mistress, Fides.

Cin - di - da tu qui - a so - pro li - li - a O al - ma ac san - cta fi - des do - mi - na

Glistening in your purple dress. / Among the gathering of the martyrs.

Pur - pu - re - a que co - ras cum stra - gu - la Mar - ti - rum in - ter ca - ter - vas,

You shine celestially like a star [light, torch] / Rising in effusive brightness.

Sit - te mi - cus li - li - a mi - cus ul - lam - pas El - o - a sur - ge - a - bus - da

With the new choirs of the virgins. / Singing with choir in the heavens

No - va cum vir - gi - num cho - re - ra Mo - do - lus me - li - di - a in eth - ra,

You are the bride of the immaculate lamb. / Who rules the celestial courts

Spon - sa ag - ni im - ma - cu - la - ta, Qui reg - nat hu - ra - ni - ca in au - la,

[Here are] the choirs of virgins, / by means of their concordant voice praise "Alleluia."

Vir - gi - nae coe - cae - le - gi - a ca - i jo - gi - na - te o - va - ti - tam al - le - lu - i - a

Fig. 2. Responsory, Alleluia. Verse, Doxology for vespers for the Feast of Ste. Foy, October 6, from Paris, BnF MS Nouv. Acq. Lat. 443, fol. 1. Transcription: Laura Steenberge

Gloria patri et filio et spiritui sancto in excelsis

Al - le - lu - i - a

Candida tu quia supra lilia / O alma ac sancta Fides domina

que cunctis singula maxime inter cunctas dicuntur

ut tempus auge fargens abunda

medu methu

Virgini collegit cum ipso uocantur alle lilia

V

intercedo propter / peccata populi / spiritus domini / in celis / in excelsis

Candida tu quia supra lilia / O alma ac sancta Fides domina

que cunctis singula maxime inter cunctas dicuntur

ut tempus auge fargens abunda

medu methu

Virgini collegit cum ipso uocantur alle lilia

V

Fig. 3. The *D a a G F G F G a* melodic motif repeated and perfectly fitting the first two lines of Ste. Fides vespers prosa *Candida tu quia supra lilia/O alma ac sancta Fides domina*, Paris, BnF MS n. acq. Lat. 443, fol. 1v, ca. 1030s-1075. The same melody expanded to fit the two extra syllables for the name "Cecilia," Paris, BnF MS Lat. 776, fol. 3, second half of the 11th cent.

(Pentecost). It is this last association with the descent of the Spirit that this article pursues. The melodic motif appears in several *sequentiae* written in mode 2 in the Aquitanian MSS gathered in Saint Martial at Limoges: *O Alma Trinitas Deitas* and *Almiphona iam gaudia* ('Blessed-sounding Joys Precisely Now').²¹ My focus is the *Almiphona* for two reasons: first, because it is this chant that is recorded underneath the dancer-singer figure in MS 1118, and second, because its melodic motif (*D a a a G F G F a G F G F G a a D*) is closer to the one we encounter in the liturgy of Ste. Foy (*D a a a G F G F G a a*) and it is similarly employed in a double cursus (Figs. 1, 4).²²

What is the origin of *Almiphona*? The written evidence clusters around St. Martial in Limoges, not as the place of creation, but definitely as a place of transmission and dissemination. The majority of Aquitanian MSS with the *Almiphona sequentia* and prosa were collected, edited or written out in the scriptorium of St. Martial in Limoges.²³ They appear in MSS that were consulted (MSS 1084, 1118) or written (MS 909, 1121) in part by Adémar of Chabannes (989-1034).²⁴ He collected the first repertoire of *sequentiae* at Limoges.²⁵ In addition to being both a composer and poet, he was likely a singer-soloist. As a performer, he appears to have been enthusiastic about florid chants that could display his virtuosic abilities.²⁶ Yet, he did not transcribe the *Almiphona*. All the records of this chant in the MSS collected at St. Martial in Limoges point to a time after Adémar's departure to Jerusalem in 1033.

MS 1118 was produced at Sant Sadurní de Noya, Catalonia and dated 987-996. It is the earliest extant witness of this untexted *sequentia* in Aquitanian neumes.²⁷ Yet, the

²¹ *O Alma Trinitas Deitas*, mode 2, <http://cantusindex.org/id/ah07097> MSS associated with Limoges that transmit it: MS 1240, fol. 87v; MS 1084, fol. 293v; MS 1118, fol. 193r; MS 1120, fol. 122; MS 887, fol. 120; MS 1119, fol. 181r-v; MS 1136, fol. 27v. The motif *F a G a G G F G a G a* appears in vv. 10, 12 *Maiestas eius clara est valde laeta* and *Sanctus ter nominator cum laude una*, and only in MS 1119 in the melisma after *verba rhythmica* (v. 11).

²² *Cantus* lists the prosa *Almiphona iam gaudia*, <http://cantusindex.org/id/ah53076>. The poetry of *Almiphona* is discussed by Gunilla IVERSEN, *Laus Angelica, Poetry in the Medieval Mass*, Turnhout, 2010, pp. 141–155.

²³ I thank Laura Steenberge, who discovered the presence of the *Almiphona* Alleluia in these MSS and brought them to my attention. For the collection of music MSS at St. Martial in Limoges, see GRIER, *The Musical World of a Medieval Monk*, pp. 6-17, 25-35, 48-49, 55-56, 215, 297, 300; P. EVANS, *The Early Trope Repertory of Saint Martial de Limoges*, Princeton, 1970, pp. 30-31, 37, 43-53; J. CHAILLEY, *L'école musicale de Saint Martial de Limoges jusqu'à la fin du XI^e siècle*, Paris, 1960.

²⁴ R. LANDES, *Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History. Ademar of Chabannes, 989-1034*, Cambridge, Mass., 1995, pp. 77-196; GRIER, *The Musical World of a Medieval Monk*, pp. 2-3, 296-324; IDEM, "Musical Autographs of Adémar de Chabannes (989-1034)", *Early Music History*, 24 (2005), pp. 125-168; IDEM, *Ademari Cabannensis. Opera liturgica et poetica*, I, pp. xlvi-xlvii, lviii-lix; IDEM, *Ademarus Cabannensis Monachus et Musicus* (Corpus Christianorum. Autographa Medii Aevi, VII), Turnhout, 2018, pp. 42-56 (Ms 909); pp. 58-61 (Ms 1118), pp. xxvi-xxxiii (MS 1121). Only MS 903 is not part of the Adémar group, produced in the second half of the 11th cent.

²⁵ GRIER, *The Musical World of a Medieval Monk*, 21, 67, 77-85, 159-208, 215, 273-295; IDEM, "Adémar de Chabannes and the Sequence at Saint-Martial in the Early Eleventh Century", in *Medieval Music in Practice. Studies in Honor of Richard Crocker*, J. PERAINO (ed.), Middleton, 2013, pp. 59-84.

²⁶ GRIER, *The Musical World of a Medieval Monk*, pp. 273-295.

²⁷ On the dating and provenance of MS 1118, see L. COLLAMORE, "Reassessing the Manuscript Paris, BNF MS Lat. 1118," The 17th Congress of the International Musicological Society (Leuven, Belgium), August 6th 2002, https://www.academia.edu/33627289/Reassessing_the_Manuscript_Paris_Bibliothèque_Nationale_lat_1118 (accessed July 7, 2021).

Almiphona sequentia, composite of MSS 1118, 1084, 909, 1121, and 1135
all repeats have been fully written out to visualize the entire length of the chant

Al - le - lu - i - a

Fig. 4. Music of the Alleluia (Almiphona) sequentia transcribed from Paris, BnF MS Lat. 1118, fol. 114. Transcription: Laura Steenberge

written record on fol. 114 is a latter addition done after the MS entered St. Martial ca. 1028 (Fig. 1). The *sequentia* is written out twice: on fol. 114r and then again on fol. 131v, where a caption in the margins identifies the textless *sequentia* with the syllabic *almiphona* prosa (Fig. 5).²⁸ Both versions feature more advanced notation than that of the rest of MS 1118. They use simple *custos* in the form of a dash (identifying the first pitch on the next line), which evinces a date no earlier than Adémar's residence and work at St. Martial in 1028-1029.²⁹ But the Almiphona postdates his time and this is the reason why. Adémar wrote the music and text in another MS, Paris BnF MS Lat. 909, fol. 205v.³⁰ The first two lines show

²⁸ For the sequence *Almifona iam gaudia*, see <http://cantusindex.org/id/ah53076>. See also in *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, VII, 93, no. 79.

²⁹ GRIER, *The Musical World of a Medieval Monk*, pp. 39, 53, 76.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 156-159; IDEM, *Ademarus Cabannensis Monachus et Musicus*, pp. 42-56.

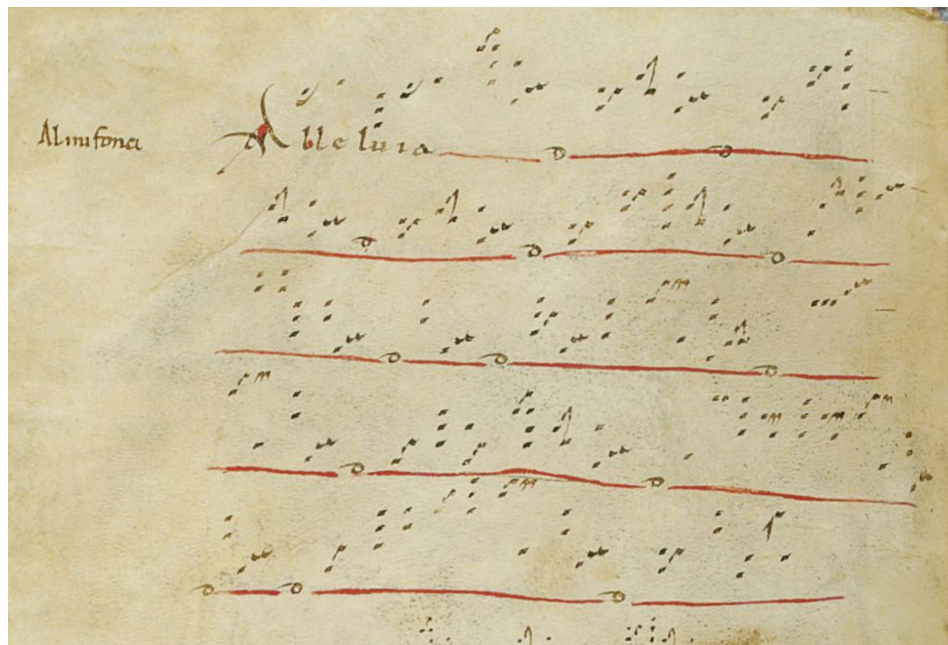


Fig. 5. Paris, MS Lat. 1118, fol. 131v, dated to 987-996. Music notation of the Alleluia (Almiphona) sequentia added possibly by Adémar of Chabannes in the late 1020s

his autograph in text and music notation. He uses a *custos* (the sign at the right margin of each line, marking the pitch on which the next line will start), which has a tail, unlike the simple dash in MS 1118, fol. 114. And his *pes stratus* (a sign designating double note) written in the form of a “w” is deeper, with more pronounced tail compared to the hand that wrote the Almiphona in MS 1118, fol. 131v. Moreover, the writing and music notation on fol. 131v resembles the later hand that erased Adémar’s writing on fol 248v in the same MS 1118.³¹ Combined, all this evidence suggests that both *Almiphona sequentiae* written in MS 1118 on fols. 114 and 131v were later additions, after Adémar’s departure in 1033 for Jerusalem.

This conclusion is confirmed in yet another record: MS 1084, a troper-proser from St. Gerald, Aurillac, dated to the late tenth century, but edited and expanded at St. Martial after 1029.³² The untexted *sequentia* appears on fol. 153 and then again, identified with the

³¹ Adémar autograph has been identified on fols. 248r-v in the same MS (*Ave pastor optime*), where another hand added the music notation. At some later point, his text on fol. 248v was erased and another Alleluia *sequentia* added, LANDES, *Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History*, p. 342; GRIER, *The Musical World of a Medieval Monk*, pp. 53, 256; IDEM, “The Musical Autographs of Adémar”, pp. 165-167.

³² Like MS 1118, MS 1084 is another manuscript produced outside St. Martial but then brought in to satisfy Adémar’s interest in melismatic chants, GRIER, *Ademari Cabannensis. Opera liturgica et poetica*, lviii-lix; IDEM, “Musical Autographs of Adémar”, 155; IDEM, *The Musical World of a Medieval Monk*, 290-295; IDEM, “Adémar de Chabannes and the Sequence at Saint-Martial”, p. 64.

prosa's incipit *Almiphona iam gaudia* on fol. 333v. Both are additions made in the second quarter of the eleventh century, ascertained by the more advanced shape of the custos with a more pronounced tail (in contrast to Adémar's hand). It is also clear that MS 1084 fol. 333v copied the untexted *sequentia* directly from MS 1118, fol. 114r, because it uses the *equaliter* signs even though there is no danger of running out of space to accommodate the leap *D a*.³³ A similar hand copied the *Almiphona sequentia* also in MS 1121, fol. 243, and again these additions on fols. 232-247 were written after the time of Adémar.³⁴

The surviving evidence in the MSS suggests that the *Almiphona sequentia* and *prosa* were entered in the MSS at Saint Martial in Limoges after Adémar's time in the 1030s. The conclusion is further confirmed by Saint Martial's repertory for Pentecost. The version transmitted by Adémar in MSS 1121 and 909 records four sequences: *Benedicta sit, Spiritus domini/Salve regnans, Nunc exultet*, and *Laudiflua/Laudam da falanx*. The appendix to MS 1121 includes also *Spiritus sanctus* and *Hanc beatam*.³⁵ There is no record of *Almiphona*. Adémar was thus unfamiliar with this chant. This might explain why Adémar never uses its characteristic melodic motif (*D a a a G F G F a G F G F G a D*) in his own compositions (both in sequences and other chants) for modes 1 and 2. He employs instead melodic phrases that often ascend *Daba* weaving *G* and *F* and climbing back to *a*.³⁶ Similarly, his compositions for the Feast of St. Valerie also do not employ Ste. Foy or *Almiphona*'s melodic motif in a double cursus (*DaaaGFGFGaa*).³⁷ A variation *DaGaaGFGaa* appears in the Fourth Responsory for the First Nocturn (*Fide et merito*).³⁸ But it is used only once and it is not transformed into a significant motif, the way we see it repeated in the double cursus in the vespers Alleluia and *prosa* at Ste. Foy or in the *Almiphona* (Figs. 2, 4). What this evidence *ex silencio* suggests is that the music of *Almiphona sequentia* and *prosa* and the liturgy of Ste. Foy (the libellus in MS 1240) reached St Martial at some point after Adémar's departure in 1033.

ALMIPHONA'S MELISMA AND THE POETRY OF ITS PROSA

The melody of the untexted *sequentia* and its related *Almiphona* *prosa* is written in the second plagal mode, final *D*; its ambitus (range) is *A-a*, an octave; it cadences often in *C D*

³³ I thank Laura Steenberge for this observation.

³⁴ GRIER, "Musical Autographs of Adémar", pp. 140-156, esp. 150.

³⁵ GRIER, "Adémar de Chabannes and the Sequence at Saint-Martial in the Early Eleventh Century", pp. 79-80.

³⁶ See for instance Adémar's final trope *Christi discipulus* in the Introit for Mass, GRIER, "The Music is the Message: Music in the Apostolic Liturgy of Saint Martial", *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, 12 (2003), pp. 1-14, esp. 5-6; IDEM, *Ademari Cabannensis. Opera liturgica et poetica*, vol. 245, pp. 26-30. Another example is the *sequentia* and *prosa*, *Arce polorum*, IDEM, *The Musical World of Medieval Monk*, pp. 250-255; IDEM, *Ademari Cabannensis. Opera liturgica et poetica*, vol. 245, 48-55, 236-42, vol. 245A, 66.

³⁷ MS 909, fols. 79-81v, GRIER, *Ademari Cabannensis. Opera liturgica et poetica*, vol. 245, pp. 283-367. Instead, he uses *Dabaabcaaaa* (*Beata Christi virgo*, 1 Antiphon 1st Nocturn; *Beata virgo Valeria* 1 Antiphon of 3d Nocturn; *Beata Virgo* for Prime; Antiphon *Sancta Dei Martir* for Sext).

³⁸ GRIER, *Ademari Cabannensis. Opera liturgica et poetica*, vol. 245, pp. 306-307. A variant appears on the name Valeria and *lampada ornate oleo* and *Gloria Patri* (*Sancta virgo*, 4Responsory 3 Nocturn), IDEM, *Ademari Cabannensis. Opera liturgica et poetica*, vol. 245, pp. 333-336.

D, which is typical for mode 1 and 2 songs. The specific motif *D a a a G F G F a G F G F G a a D* in the *Almiphona sequentia* is set in a double cursus. In addition, its presence is enhanced with a variation introduced earlier in the piece and also featured in a doublé cursus (Fig. 4). Because the untexted *sequentia* is paired with the *Almiphona prosa*, we can extract what ideas became associated with the particular melodic motif (for the text of the *prosa*, see the Appendix).³⁹ The wordlessness of the *sequentia* underscores the otherworldliness of ‘Alleluia,’ existing outside the register of human speech. It is perceived as an angelic utterance expressive of the eternal joy and praise the celestial beings perform around the divinity in heaven. It is the syllabic *prosa* that translates this extraordinary and incomprehensible angelic song into human language and understanding.⁴⁰ The specific lines of the *prosa* set to the melodic motif *D a a a G F G F a G F G a a D* describe how the Holy Spirit blesses the celestial armies (Fig. 7):

14 *Nunc ergo cuncta superna juncta phalanga benedicat sanctum pneuma voce sonora.*

15 *Cujus et munere compta testula⁴¹ rubra redimpendat vera symbola enharmonica*

14 Now with the whole celestial army gathered together,

May the Holy Spirit offer blessing with a melodious voice,

15 and with the incandescent lantern/flute, adorned with the [Holy Spirit’s] gift, may he [the Holy Spirit] offer again the true and harmonious symbols.

The verses compel the listener to visualize the gathered angelic armies, full of splendor and the Holy Spirit who blesses them with a sonorous voice. His breath/voice—*Pneuma*—produces a synesthetic visual and aural effect: a warm, radiant aura (the incandescent lantern, *testula* or flute *fistula*) encompassing the *enharmonic* symbols. The adjective “enharmonic” likely identifies the *symbola* with the cross as it is a perfect figure, symmetrical, i.e., enharmonic, across its vertical and horizontal axis.

Almiphona is sung for Pentecost and this feast traditionally envisions the Holy Spirit as fire and breath. Verse 4 of this *prosa* states that on this day the pious are inspirited with *Pneuma*’s sacred flame. But at the moment when the text comes to the verb *benedicat*, it identifies the agency of *Pneuma* with the sonorous voice, equating singing with inspiring/blessing. This idea—*pneuma* as singing voice—is a special nuance *Almiphona* adds to the imagination of Pentecost. Moreover, this focusing of attention on the melisma as an endless breath is also supported by the medieval term, *pneuma*, sometimes used to designate

³⁹ For the text of the *Almiphona*, see C. BLUME, H. M. BANNISTER, *Liturgische Prosen erster Epoche aus den Sequenzschulen des Abendlandes insbesondere die dem Notkerus Balbulus zugeschriebenen nebst Skizze über den Ursprung der Sequenz. Auf Grund der Melodien aus den Quellen des 10.-16. Jahrhunderts* (Thesauri hymnologici prosarium, 1) (Analecta hymnica Medii Aevi, 53), 1911, pp. 132-134, no. 76 and <http://cantusindex.org/id/ah53076>. The *Almiphona prosa* with its full Latin text and melody clusters in a number of manuscripts transmitting Aquitanian chant: MS 779, fols. 78v-79v, second half 11th cent. (St. Martial, Limoges?), MS 1136, fols. 24v-25r, second half 11th cent. (St. Martial, Limoges), MS1871, fol. 138rv (Moissac), second half 11th cent. The line *alia prosa Pent[ecosti]* in MS 1136 fol. 24v anchors the chant in the celebration for Pentecost.

⁴⁰ FASSLER, *Gothic Song*, p. 44.

⁴¹ *Fistula* in some MSS, which will translate as flute or tuba, see L. ELFVING, *Études lexicographique sur les séquences limousines*, Stockholm, 1962, p. 93.

untexted melodies.⁴² Meaning both breath and Spirit, *pneuma* captures the vocal virtuoso capacity of breath modulated in chant. The singing voice is singled out as the medium through which the union of celestial and terrestrial is enacted (vv. 6-7). The music dimension of this binding of human and divine through *Pneuma* is also called out with the term *diapason*, stretching like an octave to link the low and high, the mortal and immortal: “v. 8 May the divine word ring true, a diapason [octave] through both ends.”⁴³

The two earlier moments where the union of human and divine is mentioned (vv.6-7, see Appendix), the words are set to a variant of the music motif *D F a G a G F G a a a G a G F F D* of vv. 14-15 (Fig. 7 in blue). Instead of a leap *D-a*, here the motif starts with *D F a*, and the melody then weaves through *a*, *G* and *F*, coming back to the final *D* (Fig. 7). The melodic links between vv. 6-7 and vv. 14-15 are further strengthened by the use of the same repeated cadential formula *F E C D D*. The texted prosa reveals how this melodic phrase (*D F a G a G F G a a a G a G F F D*) and its variants elicits in the medieval imagination of an elite audience of singers and composers the entwining of human and divine:

6 O blessed and pure joys
[which] man together with the heav-
ens seeks

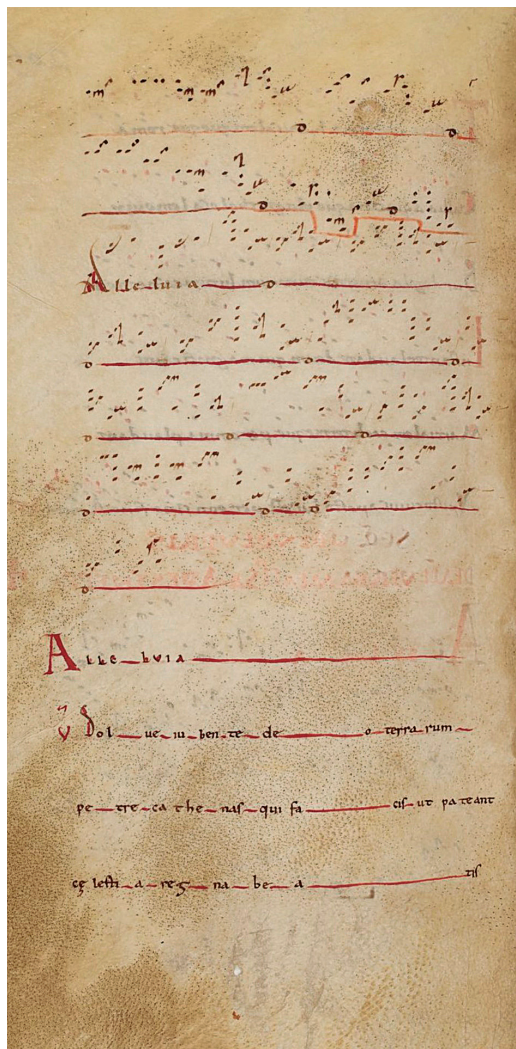


Fig. 6. Paris, BnF MS Lat. 909, fol. 205v, 1028-1033. Music notation of the Alleluia (Almiphona) sequentia written by Adémar of Chabannes in the period 1028-1033

⁴² DU CHANGE, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, consulted online, <http://ducange.enc.sorbonne.fr/pneuma>. FASSLER, *Gothic Song*, pp. 39, 43. On *pneumata* as chants, see ELFVING, *Études lexicographiques sur les séquences limousines*, 117, 243, 245. M. Bernhard conflates *pneuma* with *neuma*, BERNHARD, *Lexicon musicum Latinum medii aevi*, ed. Bernhard (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006-), consulted online <https://woerterbuchnetz.de/?sigle=LmL#4>. FASSLER, *Gothic Song*, pp. 39, 43.

⁴³ 8 *Theologia rhemata concrepet utriusque diapason vera. Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, VII, 93, no. 79.

Divine and human [linked] in the form of fire.

7 In peace today indeed the two forms of life are united: the celestial and terrestrial.⁴⁴

The Latin captures how the human striving for the divine reaches union, which is however, fleeting, in just this instant and the now. And here v. 6 echoes v. 1 (*almiphona iam gaudia*), where the adverb *iam* (“precisely now”) marks this paradoxical intersection of the instant with eternity. The poetry conveys both the ephemerality of this interlocking and the rejoicing it brings: eternity experienced in the temporal. Chant instantiates this meeting. As long as the breath lasts in singing the melisma, the eternal is sensorially perceptible to mortals.

The office of Ste. Foy uses melodic phrases reminiscent of the *Almiphona sequentia* and prosa (Fig. 2). Is this shared motif recognizable for a medieval audience? Probably only soloists and musicians would have caught the connection. The Pentecost *Almiphona* used the motif to inscribe melodically how the sonorous voice of the Spirit blesses the celestial armies (*Almiphona* vv. 14–15 *Nunc ergo cuncta superna juncta phalanga benedicat . . .*) (Fig. 7). By melodic association, the vision of Ste. Foy acquired some of the Spirit’s aura. The shared motif used repeatedly in double cursus stimulates the imagination of the elite singers and

Blessed-sounding joys precisely now. The heavens glow red in the midst of the constellations. May all good tidings be uttered.

Al - miphona iam gau-di - a Cae-li ru - ti-lant per cli-ema-ta E-lo-gi-an-tur cuncta ho-na

Today the skillfully pure hours of the pious are refilled by the sacred fire inspired by the Spirit.

Pneuma-tis af-fla-ti sac-ra fla-ma Re-ple-nur ho-di-e quo pi-o-rum Al-fa-bri cor-da pu-ra

For indeed the symbolic festivities once assigned to Moses at Sinai are [now] renewed.

Re-no-van-tur nam-que (es-la-fi-a Ty-gi-ca-li-a) dedit in Si-na Mo-y-si con-ge-ni-a-ta

O blessed and pure joys (which) man together with the heavens seeks, Divine and human [linked] in the form of fire.

O be-a-ta et ve-ra gau-di-a ho-mo cum cel-sa pe-tit de-us et i-ma In ignis for-ma

In peace today indeed the two forms of life are united: the celestial and terrestrial.

Pa-ce nam-que in ve-ra ho-di-e sunt co-pu-la-ta du-o a-ni-ma-li-a Sa-per-na i-ma

May the divine word ring true, a diapason [extended] through both ends.

The - o - lo - ga - the - ma - ta con - cre - pet - u - ti - us que di - a - pa - son ve - ra

The celestial Chelubin and Seraphin and entire fiery-haired crowd

Che - ri - bin - ae - the - re - u - se - ra - phin at - que cuncta ig - ni - co - ma tur - ma

resound with a triumphant trumpet: [for] the chains are broken

Tu - bu - ja - bi - lac - a sym - pa - ni - zet rep - ta vin - cu - la

which formerly detained the Word-begotten one, held hostage for [a bag of] coins

Pri - us ver - bi - ge - num de - ti - ne - bant quae ne - sam drach-mam

Now, you, Michael the general, [and] Gabriel giving true messages from heavens.

Nunc vos Mi - cha - el sa - tra - pa Ga - briel ve - ri - po - li - ce dans num - ti - a

bring carthens servants into the heavenly workshops.

Nos ter - ri - ge - nas ver - ma - las fer - te in ves - tras po - li - cas of - fi - ci - nas

Now with the whole celestial army gathered together, may the Holy Spirit offer blessing with a melodious voice.

Nunc er - go cuncta se-per-na jun-cta phalan-ga be-ne-di-cat san-ctum pneu-ma vo-ce So-no-ra

and through the ruddy lanterns, adorned with [the Holy Spirit's] gift, may he [the Holy Spirit] offer again the true and melodious symbolic:

Cu-jus et mu-ne-re com-pa-tes-tu-la ru-bra re-dim-pen-dat ve-ra sym-bo-la en-bar-mo-ni-ca

may we be deemed worthy to be even the smallest part of his palace.

Es - se ul - ti - ma vel pur - ti - cu - la me-re-a-mur e - jus in au - la.

Amen, may everything join the pious, with pure and now redeemed mind

A - men con - ni - a sub - iun - gant pi - um men - te pu - ra iam nunc re - demp - ta

in duly singing Alleluia.

Re - te - ca - ren-tes al - le - lu - a

Fig. 7. Transcription of the *Almiphona* prosa from Paris, BnF MS Lat. 1871, second half of the eleventh century, fol. 138rv. Melodic motif *DaaaGFGfA GFGFGaaD* on vv. 14–15 *Nunc ergo cuncta superna benedicat and cuius et munere compta testula redimpndat and cadential formula FECDD FECDD*. A variation of the motif and the same cadential formula in vv. 6–7. Transcription: Laura Steenberge

⁴⁴ 6 *O beata et vera gaudia
homo cum celsa petit*

Deus et ima in ignis forma.

7 *Pace namque hodie in vera*

sunt copulata duo animalia: superna ima. For the Latin, see <http://cantusindex.org/id/ah53076>. See also in *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, VII, 93, no. 79.

musicians to envision Santa Fides infused by the Spirit, similar to the angelic armies in the *Almiphona*. As for the general audience, the repeated use of the melodic formula in double cursus makes it a catchphrase, endowing the vespers music with specificity, stamped with identity of Ste. Foy.

THE DANCER-SINGER: SEEING THE ISLAMIC *QIYĀN* IN THE CHRISTIAN *ALMIPHONA* MELISMA

Whoever entered the *Almiphona sequentia* in MS 1118 fol. 114r, he considered it an appropriate corollary to the pre-existing image of the singer-dancer (Fig. 1). How does this figure contribute to our understanding of Aquitanian melismatic chant and its effect on the participants? The singer-dancer is the ninth and culminating figure in a succession of eight earlier vignettes depicting each of the eight modes. King David inaugurates the series, followed by musicians, jongleurs, and dancers.⁴⁵ The images have been interpreted most recently as performative, stirring the viewer to conjure up a music performance.⁴⁶ But what exactly did the encounter of the Alleluia (*Almiphona*) neumes together with the figure of the singer-dancer stir in a medieval viewer? The first line of music notation, oscillating in peaks of ascending and descending notes, meets the dancing figure and mirrors in its jagged contour the folds of her dress as she steps forward. And if the neumes playfully engage the dancing step, the chant's extended melismas find a figural expression in the open mouth of the singer—a rare feature in medieval iconography. Here the open lips, forming an “O”, channel an effortlessly sustained and seemingly infinite breath. The figural representation thus gives a pictorial form to the intangible and inexhaustible voice—pneuma—of the Holy Spirit encoded aniconically in the Alleluia and figurally (because it is described in human language as opposed to the incomprehensible angelic utterance ‘Alleluia’) in its *Almiphona prosa*.

The dancing figure stems from a Mediterranean figural tradition of the maenad and its association with pleasure. The type is frequently used in courtly culture in both Christianity and Islam.⁴⁷ When it crosses over to the monastic context, it shapes the imagination of the celestial as a ceaseless rejoicing and splendor.⁴⁸ To appreciate what the medieval spectator perceived in the virtuoso voice (the endless breath), I turn to a ninth-century Classical Arabic poetry describing the enchantment of one such performance of an elite singer-dancer, known as *qiyān*. I do not argue for a direct borrowing from the Islamic context, and only use the Arabic to shed light on a shared appreciation of the singing voice. The Arabic thus provides voice for a perception that was not recorded in a written form in Latin sources.

⁴⁵ T. SEEBASS, *Musikdarstellung und Psalterillustrations im frühen Mittelalter*, Bern, 1973, pp. 21-22, 53-56, 161-67; N. SEVESTRE, “Quelques documents d’iconographie musicale médiévale: l’image et l’école autour de l’an mil”, *Imago Musicae*, 4 (1987), pp. 23-34; K. MEYER, “The Eight Gregorian Modes on the Cluny Capitals”, *The Art Bulletin*, 34/2 (1952), pp. 75-94, esp. 89.

⁴⁶ J.-C. BONNE, E. H. AUBERT, “Quand voir fait chanter: Images et neumes dans le tonaire du MS BnF Latin 1118; entre performance et performativité”, *Problèmes d’histoire des religions*, 19 (2009), pp. 225-240.

⁴⁷ E. HOFFMAN, “Between East and West: The Wall Paintings of Samarra and the Construction of Abbasid Princely Culture”, *Muqarnas*, 25 (2008), pp. 107-132.

⁴⁸ On paradise as a space of convergence of Christian and Islamic cultures as witnessed on the Portico de la Glória, see F. PRADO-VILAR, “The Gothic Anamorphic Gaze”, in C. ROBINSON, L. ROUHI (eds.) *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Castile*, Leiden, 2005, pp. 67-100, esp. 83.

As mentioned earlier, the figure of the singer/dancer of MS 1118 quotes from a long ancient tradition of dancing maenads preserved in Roman copies of Hellenistic reliefs.⁴⁹ The legs are shown in profile; one foot straight and weight-bearing, the other flexed and about to lift and kick back. The upper torso turns and faces the viewer; the torsion creates tension and imbues the figure with life. Ancient images amplify further the animation by throwing casually a billowing veil. We see echoes of this standard iconography in the ninth-century Byzantine miniature of dance—*orchēsis*.⁵⁰ Dancing figures enliven the walls of the palace Dār al-Khilāfa (836-839) in the Abbasid caliphal capital Samarrā' (Fig. 8).⁵¹ The two girls have their hands entwined in front of them, each possibly holding a chalice, while with their other arm, from behind their heads, they skillfully pour wine from long-necked vessels. Pleasure and beauty emanates from the scene. The composition at Samarrā' recalls the Hellenistic maenad, which by a long tradition adorns princely settings where revelry and pleasure intermix with power.⁵²

The dancing figure in MS 1118 adopts the pose but not the pouring of drinks. Instead, she is shown with mouth open, singing, and accompanying her performance with the percussion instruments in her hands, likely cymbals.⁵³ The veil, rather than expanding like halo, now covers her head, hides her hair, but adds dynamism to her pose as its ends pendulate with her forward motion. The bold colors are reminiscent of Mozarabic miniatures

⁴⁹ See for instance, the reliefs of dancing maenads, 120-140 CE. Madrid, Prado Museum, <https://www.museodel-prado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/the-dance-of-the-maenads/3d3ccf36-92dd-4603-b717-850e7682cf7b> Site visited July 28, 2021.

⁵⁰ Vatican City, BAV, MS Gr. 699, fol. 63v, 9th cent., discussed in B. PENTCHEVA, *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space and Spirit in Byzantium*, University Park, 2017, pp. 26-29. Another compelling comparanda with MS 1118 is the miniature of Miriam's dance and chant in the Byzantine Psalter, Vatican City, BAV, MS Gr. 752, fol. 449v, dated 1058-1059, see PENTCHEVA, "From Dance to Chant: The Byzantine Transformation of the Concept of *Choros*," in *Bild, Ding, Kunst*, G. WOLF and K. MÜLLER (ed.), Berlin, 2015, pp. 14-154.

⁵¹ SEEBASS, *Musikdarstellung*, 164; E. HERZFELD, *Die Malereien von Samarra* (Forschungen zur islamischen Kunst, 2. Ausgrabungen von Samarra, 3), Berlin, 1927, plate I; E. HOFFMAN, "Between East and West: The Wall Paintings of Samarra and the Construction of Abbasid Princely Culture", *Muqarnas*, 25 (2008), pp. 107-132. Hoffman argues how the dancing figures belong to a shared Mediterranean princely culture. She also shows how previous analyses have only considered Herzfeld's drawings and thus exaggerated the "eastern" features of the figures. The photographs transmit evidence supporting the origins of the Umayyad and Abbasid dancer in the Hellenistic tradition of the maenad.

⁵² HOFFMAN, "Between East and West", pp. 107-132; A. GRABAR, O. GRABAR, "L'essor des arts inspire par les course princières à la fin du premier millénaire", in O. GRABAR, *Studies in Medieval Islamic Art*, London, 1976, pp. 845-892. Nadia Ali has recently complicated the reading of palatial programs as profane, uncovering religious meaning in some of the Umayyad programs, see ALI, "The Royal Veil: Early Islamic Figural Art and the Bilderverbot Reconsidered", *Religion*, 47/3 (2017), pp. 425-444; EADEM, "Qusayr 'Amra and the Continuity of Post-Classical Art in Early Islam: Towards and Iconograph of Forms", in *The Diversity of Classical Archaeology*, A. LICHTENBERGER, R. RAJA (ed.), Turnhout, 2017, pp. 161-197.

⁵³ There is still a debate about the identity of the instrument she holds: bells according to SEEBASS, *Musikdarstellung*, pp. 53-56 or cymbals in MEYER, "The Eight Gregorian Modes on the Cluny Capitals", p. 89. I believe it is cymbals; the specific way of depicting them as two half-spheres connected by a string draws on Mozarabic art (Valadolid, UB, Beatus, fol. 199v). The Mozarabic depictions differ from the representation and the type of cymbals we see in Carolingian and Ottonian sources. There each disk is set on two interconnected sticks, see for instance the Stuttgarter Psalter, Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Bibl. Fol. 23, fol. 163v.



Fig. 8. Dār al Khilāfa, Samarra, 836-839, drawing of the fresco of two dancers pouring wine, Ernst Herzfeld, *Die Malereien von Samarra* (Berlin, 1927), plate I

of the second half of the tenth century and add to the vigor of the imagined performance.⁵⁴ The attention is focused on her dance and chant and the way it projects from the music. The melisma is imagined through this figure as sung without rests, weaving the voice through continuous waves of notes.

We do not have written Latin sources that explicate the perception of virtuoso singing of extended melismas. But a compelling evidence survives in the poetry of Ibn Rūmī (836-896),

⁵⁴ Beatus of Girona, Girona, Biblioteca de la catedral, MS 7, dated to July 6, 975, see J. WILLIAMS, *The Illustrated Beatus*, London, 1994-2003, II, pp. 51-64; Conciliar Codex Albelda, Toledo, El Escorial, Biblioteca del monasterio d.I.2, K. BÖSE, *Von den Rändern gedacht: visuelle Rahmungsstrategien in Handschriften der Iberischen Halbinsel*, Viena, 2019, pp. 125-168; a bible produced in Valerianica by Florentius and his pupil Sanctius, in 960 (Leon, Real Colegiata di San Isidoro in León, MS Lat. 2, J. WILLIAMS, "The Bible in Spain", in *Imaging the Early Medieval Bible*, J. WILLIAMS (ed.), University Park, 1999, pp. 179-218. A Classical Mediterranean vocabulary is woven into the fabric of Umayyad art. When this tradition is transplanted to the Iberian Peninsula following the Arab conquest in the early eighth century, it meets Visigothic and its interpretation of Late Antique Roman art. What we call Mozarabic emerges out of this interaction of Umayyad with local Iberian art. In Mozarabic, elements of the Classical can be detected in the long durée of dancing maenads or the representations of the celestial city, see G. BOTO VARELA, "Cuidades escatológicas fortificadas. Usos perspectives en los beatos de Girona y Saint-Sever", *Locus amoenus*, 2 (1996), pp. 15-30. On adoption and transformation of Classical forms in Umayyad art, see N. ALI, "The Royal Veil: Early Islamic Figural Art and the Bilderverbot Reconsidered", *Religion*, 47/3 (2017), pp. 425-444; N. Rabbat, "The Dialogic Dimension of Umayyad Art", *Res. Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 43 (2003), pp. 78-94; F. FLOOD, *The Great Mosque of Damascus. Studies on the Making of an Umayyad Visual Culture*, Leiden, 2001.

a contemporary of the Samarrā' frescoes of the dancing girls and a participant in the Abbasid court culture. His *qaṣida* or poem brings to the imagination one such *qiyān*, a term identifying the elite singing/dancing girl.⁵⁵ Her name is Waḥīd ("unique"). She enchants all who come to witness her performance. Her voice, breath, and mouth linger alluringly in Ibn Rūmī's poem:

14. She sings so effortlessly, it seems she's not singing, and she sings beautifully.
15. You do not see her eyes bulging or her neck veins bursting from strain.
16. Because of the calm of her voice, which is unbroken, its stirring passion, which is unflagging.
- 17 When she sings, her breath always reaches the end of the phrase; it is long like the sighs of her lovers.
- 18 Her coquetry and flirtation make her voice even more delicate, and passion thins it further, till it almost dies.
19. So her voice seems to be now dying, now coming to life, delightful whether soft or raised.
20. In it are embroidery and jewelry fashioned from the melody; which the poem wears with pride.
21. Her mouth, and her voice vibrating are sweet; everything of hers bears witness to this.
22. Like cool limpid water, her kisses quench thirst, and a song from her lips evokes lost happiness.⁵⁶

Ibn Rūmī entwines seduction and desire, making us approach the *qiyān* through the intangibility of her voice—subtle, soft, delicate; it flows like a gentle stream, effortlessly in its ceaseless run. Its vibrations both gleam like jewels and create even patterns like lines of an embroidery. The live sound reifies the song albeit fleetingly, incarnating it in time and space. The performance is like a cover—a bejeweled and embroidered veil—that gives tactility to what is otherwise intangible.⁵⁷ With her voice, Waḥīd enchants, roping her listeners in. The attention focuses on the capacity of the performer to mesmerize; this is communicated by the paronomasia stemming from the root *n-f-s*: *nafas* "breath" and *anfas* "sigh"; the seemingly endless modulation of her voice stirs similar infinite sighs of longing in those who desire her.⁵⁸ The same duality of chant and enchantment can be found in the verbs deriving from the root *t-r-b* encompassing singing and delight, and inducing a state of being overwhelmed by emotions ranging from joy to grief.⁵⁹

Waḥīd's subtle and delicate voice of long duration is fugitive, like a smoke or a waft of perfume, it dances a continuous withdrawal, whetting desire. And through its modulation, her lingering breath calls up memories of lost happiness. But what is the relevance of Abbasid courtly *qiyān* to the Christian context in which we find the singer/dancer of MS 1118 and its extended Alleluia? For once, her endless modulation of breath elicits in a Christian the ceaseless chant of angels and stirs the longing for a lost paradise.

⁵⁵ A. SUMI, *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry: Wasf, Ekphrasis, and Interarts Theory*, Leiden/Boston, 2004, pp. 122-154.

⁵⁶ English tr., *Ibidem*, pp. 128-129.

⁵⁷ On song and the tactility of embroidery and jewels, see *Ibidem*, p. 150. On the relationship between poetry/epigrams and embroidery (washy), see O. BUSH, *Reframing the Alhambra. Architecture, Poetry, Textiles, and Court Ceremonial*, Edinburgh, 2018, pp. 166-227.

⁵⁸ SUMI, *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry*, p. 150.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 147.

What appears distant and irrelevant from our modern perspective, might have been much closer and meaningful for a medieval audience. Abbasid courtly culture was channeled through Umayyad Spain.⁶⁰ The Iraqi court musician Ziryab was invited to Cordoba in the mid-ninth century, where he disseminated refined poetry, dance, and courtly etiquette.⁶¹ As the Umayyad emirate transformed into a caliphate in 929, Abd al Rahman III (r. 912-961) emulated the palatial city of Samarrā' in building his new residence at Madinat al-Zahrā'.⁶² His son and successor, al-Hakam II (961-976), expanded the mosque at Cordoba, enriching it with a *maqṣura* (caliphal prayer enclosure in front of the miḥrab), adorned it with splendid gold mosaics.⁶³ These monuments impressed Christian audiences, and the encounters spurred the creation of images of Heavenly Jerusalem, carrying the distinctive imprint of the opulence of the art and architecture of the Umayyad caliphate. The Morgan Beatus produced at Tábara (New York, Morgan Library MS M 644 fol. 222v, dated to 940-945) depicts the longed-for celestial city with horse-shoe arches exemplified by the most prominent example: the Great mosque of Cordoba.⁶⁴ What these examples show is that extimacy (otherness, a longing for and appropriation of foreign motifs and in this case, Umayyad artistic forms) appears lodged at the center of Christian identity as expressed in Mozarabic art.⁶⁵ The splendor of Cordoba's court culture shapes the imagination of the Christian celestial. Through this process of convergence, the sonic waves of the *qiyān* interface with the Christian vision of the sonorous endless voice of the Holy Spirit. MS 1118 was produced in the Spanish Marches at Sant Sadurní at Tàvernols and could have channeled a fascination with the Umayyad courtly majlis (festive reception). Its singer-dancer visualizes a fascination with an ecstatic performance.

CONCLUSION

The dancer/singer and the melismatic sequentia Almiphona were brought together when an anonymous hand in the 1030s decided to pair the late-tenth-century miniature with

⁶⁰ J. D. DODDS, M. R. MENOCAL, A. K. BALBALE, *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture*, New Haven, 2013, pp. 9-43.

⁶¹ DODDS, MENOCAL, BALBALE, *The Arts of Intimacy*, pp. 18, 22-27.

⁶² D. F. RUGGLES, *Garden, Landscape and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain*, University Park, 2000, pp. 53-109.

⁶³ J. D. DODDS, "The Great Mosque at Cordoba", in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, New York, 1992, pp. 11-25.

⁶⁴ The horse-shoe arch sets an ambiguous message. On the one hand its origins appear in Visigothic architecture. On the other, by the second half of the tenth century, the most impressive buildings using this element are firmly lodged in Umayyad caliphal power, J. DODDS, *Architecture and ideology in early medieval Spain*, University Park, 1990, pp. 1-46, 83-109, 114-116; EADEM, "Islam, Christianity, and the Problem of Religious Art", in *Art of Medieval Spain A.D 500-1200*, New York, 1993, pp. 27-37. For a re-evaluation, see J. A. MORÁIS MORÁN, G. BOTO VARELA, "La construcción del canon estético e historiográfico de la arquitectura leonesa del siglo X", forthcoming.

⁶⁵ The Morgan Beatus, New York, Morgan Library MS Lat M. 644, Tábara (?) for San Miguel de Escalada, WILLIAMS, *The Illustrated Beatus*, II, pp. 21-33; BÖSE, *Von den Rändern gedacht*, pp. 230-232. A fourteenth-century hand on fol. 293v attests that the MS was held at San Miguel de Escalada. Yet, it was likely produced at San Miguel de Moreruela near Tábara, see JOHN WILLIAMS, *Visions of the End in Medieval Spain. Catalogue of Illustrated Beatus. Commentaries on the Apocalypse and Study of the Geneva Beatus*, Th. MARTIN (ed.) (Late Antique and Early Medieval Iberia), Amsterdam, 2017, pp. 29-57 on Tabara. See also, R. EMMERSON, *Apocalypse Illuminated. The Visual Exegesis of Revelation in Medieval Illustrated Manuscripts*, University Park, 2018, pp. 47-82, esp. 59, 70-72. On extimacy, see PRADO-VILAR, "The Gothic Anamorphic Gaze", pp. 67-100.

the music notation. What that person saw was a connection between virtuoso dance and chant. The sequentia with its florid melisma gave sonic expression to the virtuoso voice of the Holy Spirit. When Pneuma sings blessing, its voice, according to the words of the Almiphona prosa, creates a ruddy aura in which the sign of the cross appears. Its voice is synesthetically associated with optical brightness, and it perdures endlessly and effortlessly in singing eternal melismas. This recalls the masterful singing of the *qiyān* without the straining of her neck or the bulging of her eyes. Her voice thins and lingers, enhancing desire.

The words that describe this vision in the Almiphona prosa (vv. 14-15) are set in a melodic motif (*DaaaGFGFaGFGFGaaD*) that is attested with variation (*DaaaGFGFGaa*) in the vespers music for Ste Foy. The quotation of melodic phrases shapes the chant opening Fides's feast as a vision of the Spirit descending and bestowing grace on the patron saint. While no written sources literally attest to the meaning of this borrowing of melodic phrases, their occurrence in the new compositions, such as the eleventh-century liturgy of Ste. Foy reveals the rich pool of allusions that this process affords. With one musical gesture an entire vision of the metaphysical can be conjured up in the imagination of a trained singer or a composer. In this particular case, the association helps such an elite audience envision the celestial rejoicing and the bright voice of the Spirit. As for the regular people who witnessed the liturgy at Conques, for them the specific melodic formula (repeated in double cursus in the alleluia, untexted sequentia, and prosa) became an earworm that gave specificity and identity to the vespers liturgy at Ste Foy.

Turning back to MS 1118, the person who copied the untexted sequentia below the dancing figure was perhaps prone to link the verb 'resound' *tympanizet* (v. 10 in the prosa) with the percussion instrument and the swift steps of the depicted singer.⁶⁶ For him, the miniature showed an ecstatic figure, swirling in a joyful celebration. In pairing the dancer-singer figure with the neumes of the untexted sequentia, he established a parallel between the virtuoso voice hitting all the right pitches as gems set on the invisible lines and the dancer weaving this same pattern as steps on the floor. Voice and dancing feet as they unfold in space and time, connect invisible dots to produce a perceptible constellation in which performer and audience can discover the divine.

The pairing of the Almiphona Alleluia with the dancing figure in MS1118 further reveals the entwining of the sensual and the metaphysical. The dancer's quick-steps traversing space echo the virtuosic effortless voice singing the melisma and conjuring the eternal in the fleeting present. Paradoxically, the eternal is incarnate in a performance of a time-based medium like dance and chant. It puts enormous stress on the body demanding the impossible: to extend movement and breath forever. Eternity emerges in the fleeting moment of perfection. This is where divinity and humanity meet.

APPENDIX

Almiphona prosa
1 Almiphona iam gaudia.

⁶⁶ On *tympanizo* (play the drum) and *tympanum* (timbrel), see BERNHARD, *Lexicon musicum latinum medii aevi* and ELFVING, *Études lexicographiques sur les séquences limousines*, 162-63.

2 Caeli rutilant per climata.
 3 Elogiantur cuncta bona.
 4 Pneumatis afflata sacra flamma
 Replentur hodie quis piorum
 Affabre corda pura.
 5 Renovantur namque festalia
 Typicalia dudum in Sina Moysi consignata.
 6 O beata et vera gaudia
 homo cum celsa petit
 Deus et ima in ignis forma.
 7 Pace namque hodie in vera
 sunt copulata duo animalia: superna ima.
 8 Theologa rhemata concrepet
 utriusque diapason vera.
 9 Cherubin aetherea seraphin atque cuncta ignicoma turma.
 10 Tuba jubilaeae tympanizet rupta vincula
 11 Prius verbigenam detinebant quae nexam drachmam.
 12 Nunc vos Michael satrapa
 Gabriel vera police dans nuntia
 13 Nos terrigenas vernulas ferte in vestras policas officinas.
 14 Nunc ergo cuncta superna juncta phalanga benedicat sanctum pneuma voce sonora.
 15 [Cujus et munere] compta testula rubra redimpendat vera symbola enharmonica
 16 Esse ultima vel particula mereamur ejus in aula.
 17 Amen omnia subiungant pium mente pura iam nunc redempta
 18 Rite canentes alleluia.⁶⁷

1 Blessed-sounding joys precisely now,
 2 The heavens glow red in the midst of the constellations.
 3 May all good tidings be uttered.
 4 Today the pure hearts of the pious are skillfully inspirited by the Spirit.
 5 For indeed the symbolic festivities once assigned to Moses at Sinai are [now] re-
 newed.
 6 O blessed and pure joys
 [which] man together with the heavens seeks
 Divine and human [linked] in the form of fire.
 7 In peace today indeed the two forms of life are united: the celestial and terrestrial.
 8 May the divine words ring true, a diapason [octave] through both ends.
 9 The celestial Cherubim and Seraphin and the entire fiery-haired crowd
 10 resound with a triumphant trumpet: [for] the chains are broken;
 11 which formerly detained the Word-begotten one, held hostage for [a bag of] coins.
 12 Now you, Michael the general, [and] Gabriel giving true messages from heaven,

⁶⁷ For the use Greek terms like *pneuma*, *rhema*, as well as poetic words like *verbigena*, see ELFVING, *Études lexicographique sur les séquences limousines*, 57–130.

13 bring us, earthborn servants, into the heavenly workshops.
14 Now with the whole celestial army gathered together,
May the Holy Spirit offer blessing with a melodious voice.
15 and through the ruddy lantern/flute, adorned with [the Holy Spirit's] gift, may he
[the Holy Spirit] offer again the true and melodious symbols.
16 may we be deemed worthy to be even the humblest part of his palace.
17 Amen; may everything join the pious, with pure and now redeemed mind
18 in duly singing Alleluia