Notations in Carthusian liturgical books: preliminary remarks

Contrary to the usual approach towards music notation of the Middle Ages from a geographical point of view (the type of notation, its birth and its expansion in a specific area with several monastic orders), or a stylistic and historical one, notation will be approached here by considering the question from another point of view. Can the unity of a monastic order — a very strong reality for the Carthusians — determine a paleographical homogeneity in terms of notation and calligraphy, independently of geographical or stylistic area?

CARTHUSIAN CONTEXT

It is a common assertion to say that the Carthusians sang their melodies according to a local tradition from the Dauphiné (near Grenoble in French Alps), and that their manuscripts were written in Aquitanian notation whose expansion had reached the Rhone valley into Valence and Grenoble by the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but the detailed picture is not so clear. In fact, Carthusian monks sang daily the totality of the choral Office, following specific melodies that the founders of the order borrowed from local rituals, to which contemporary Carthusians are still strongly connected, as often presumed. As I demonstrated in my electronic edition of the Premonstratensian Gradual of Bellelay¹ (middle of the twelfth century), the birth and the expansion of a new monastic order, such as those of the Premonstratensians and Carthusians, rests on loose liturgical and musical uses until an ordo organizes and stipulates what is part of its identity. Until that moment, however, a great diversity exists and many uses can cohabit together. Accordingly, Carthusian books, which monks took with them when they established their foundations, were not truly Carthusian until it had been corrected, like the Gradual of Bellelay for the Premonstratensians. This fact explains why and how Carthusian books became so complex,² but it is not the only one.

¹. CULLIN 2005.
². On this aspect, see DEVATÉ 1995-1.
Another reason lies in the fact that the Carthusians follow an eremitic way of life in which the practice of the chant is not as developed as in other orders. In the silence of the monastic cell, many offices are and were read rather than sung. This aspect explains in part the liturgical specificities of the Carthusian rite, especially in the establishment of a distinct Sancular. For this reason, Carthusians form a special part of Gregorian chant history as usually described for this time, as belonging to a period of decadence, on the model provided by histories of Latin Christian literature. Gregory manuscripts always post-date the composition of their melodies. Despite the fact that melodies transmitted from mouth to ears can be transformed or corrupted, the eleventh century was a great time for Gregorian creativity, as seen in the Kyrie. Thus many original Carthusian compositions could not be replaced by more authentic Gregorian (Solemnian?) ones or by their Aquitanian counterparts.

The silence of the Carthusian cell, its highly symbolic square shape: these have been called the development of the *nota quadrata*. This is the point of view maintained by John Haines in his recently published paper, *Perspectives multiples sur la note carrée*. As Haines writes, ‘ce sont les mêmes chartreux qui ont copié la *notas quadrata* dans leurs cellules au courant des xii° et xiii° siècles. Ils ont adapté le carré des vieux livres liturgiques aquitains, et l’ont ensuite transmis aux nouveaux ordres mendicants émergents à l’aube du xiii° siècle, les dominicains et les franciscains’. As Haines goes on to state, like the square note, a Carthusian monk’s *cella* was designed as a small square within the larger one of the surrounding monastic walls, a space which had to be domesticated by the meditation of the monk in order for it to become his own *celum*. To argue this point, Haines relies on the texts of the priors Guigues I and Guigues II. Even if the symbolism of the square existed in the Middle Ages in a shape representing the rise of the soul towards the divine perfection during his human life, however, can we admit from an anthropological point of view so strong, and perhaps so Manichean a determinism? It is true that Guigues insists in a chapter of his *Consuetudines* on the art of copying as a necessity for every Carthusian monk. However, as Haines himself observes, we do not know ‘jusqu’à quel point le *notator* chartreux voyait la note carrée qu’il dessinait comme étant en miniature le carré de sa cellule qui, à son tour, était le microcosme du cloître, et ains de suite’. Finally, the reality of handwritten musical Carthusian sources sufficiently contradicts this idyllic vision.

4. See for example, HALEY 1993, p. 613-614.
5. See HAINES 2001. My thanks to John Haines for letting me see this article before its publication.
6. The formula used by Guigues, *cella tua, clausuro meo* (*Consuetudines*, 20.6) and pointed out by Haines does not necessarily imply that the first word is a metaphor of the second. Besides, Guigues specifies that on Sunday after None, the monks come together to the cloister and after Mass the monks come together to the cloister and *in hoc spacio incaustum, pergamenum, pennas, cerasum*.
9. GUIGUES I, *Consuetudines*, 28, 2-6. He describes with a lot of precision all the equipment used for the copy.

Even though the order appeared in the eleventh century, no books from this time have survived. In 1132, a large avalanche completely destroyed the first monastery of the Grande Chartreuse with all its books. Nevertheless, regarding the specific organization of the Carthusian *ordo, some books written after the avalanche seem to have been copied on old models, so before 1132. To sketch out the history of the main Carthusian manuscripts in a critical way we can organize the main and oldest sources following important events to the Carthusian order: the avalanche of 1132, the apparition of several feasts (Saint Hugh, Trinity, the Solemnity of Marie Magdalene, etc.) as shown in table 1. By checking these events against the origins of each book, we can by scrupulously studying the liturgical and musical repertory of each, this can be accomplished. X 1, 2, and 3 in table 1 represent books or models lost in the avalanche of 1132 according to Dom Augustin Devaux who finalized this classification and presented it in the critical edition of the Chartusian gradual (see table 1). A brief introduction to each manuscript can help us understand their specific characteristics within the broader context of Carthusian book production.

The oldest source is Parkminster A. 33 as listed in table 1. This is a Carthusian gradual linked to a short treatise of music published in the first volume of Martin Gerbert’s well-known collection of medieval writers, and an incomplete toary which is not Carthusian. Except fols. 9-16 with a later square notation and fols. 17-18 with another (but less) square notation put on the initial and erased notation, its idiomatic notation on staves lines with a red F-line shows its origin to be near Lyon (fig. 1). In many places, the text was erased, but even this text originated in Lyon. Initially, the Sancular was mostly not Carthusian, with Carthusian compositions added as an annex by a second hand. This manuscript can be dated from before 1140, given the prescription for the unity of the liturgy by Saint Anselm – assuming that prescriptions were adopted more or less immediately. The melodies of A. 33 so closely resemble those of the Portes 44 version that Portes can be considered the original exemplar of the former book.

Sélignan 23 is a whole Carthusian gradual. It was written around 1160 – unquestionably after the avalanche given the location of the Dedication mass – for a Provencal Carthusian monastery, known as the Abbaye Basile, modelled on the Grande Chartreuse. Except the first folios rewritten in a recent square notation on the erased origin of all, one is beautiful Aquitanian notation is written on a three-line stave with a red line for F (fig. 2). Other hands, one of them clearly from the late twelfth century, added B flat and rhythmic strokes. We easily recognize all the neumes typical of the Aquitanian area – pes, clivis, scandicus, quilmis, etc. – and the specific left-to-right horizontal *ductus* for ascending neumes and vertical one for descending neumes. The manuscript was in Montreuil library during the seventeenth century. With relation to the twelfth century, we observe in the book an addition by a second hand of stereotyped cadences for many responsories similar to the version of the Marseille, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 150. Both it and Sélignan 23 likely came from the same Provencal house, probably Montreuil.
Table 1. Carthusian repertory and sources.

Grenoble 84 (395) is a whole gradual with a purer Aquitanian notation on three staff lines, a red-lead line for F, and the letters A or C for these pitches (fig. 3). Its Sanctoral gives complete masses for feasts which never were in the Carthusian ordo. Perhaps this book was used by an eremitic institution that combined local and Carthusian traditions in its choice of certain texts. The place of the Dedication mass further suggests that it was inspired by a book from before the avalanche of 1132. The revision of the Sanctoral ends with the feast of S. Ursula introduced in 1352. This probably points to the monastery of Les Écôuges as the book’s provenance, an eremitic institution linked to the Carthusian order in 1116 and suppressed in 1390.

London, B.L. Add. 31384 is a Carthusian gradual originating in the Abbey of Le Reposoir. This book dates from before the introduction of both the votive mass of the Trinity and the two first feriae in 1222, and followed a Grande Chartreuse model posterior to 1132. Its notation on staff lines is rare in the Carthusian tradition, easily identifiable by its mostly rectangular writing. However, a second and later hand wrote over the first one with a clumsy square notation (compare in fig. 5 the end of communion Fili quid fecisti and the intrins Omnis terra).

The last source in Aquitanian notation is Marseille 150, an incomplete gradual from the twelfth century (fig. 4). It is notated in Aquitanian neumes with a red-lead line for F or C and a yellow one for A, with added flat. Its calligraphy for descending neumes, both compound and ‘simple’ ones, is especially elegant; witness the clivis and climacrum and the dextrorotundus of the pen combining dot, lozenge and square forms in a rhythmical intention. Based on the location of the Dedication mass, it appears this manuscript followed an exemplar from the Grande Chartreuse predating 1132.

The diagram and figure are not transcribed but can be described as follows:

- The diagram shows relationships between various Carthusian sources and their locations.
- The figure is a page from Parkminster A 33, fol. 85, with the hymn “Deus in nomine tuo.”
Grande Chartreuse 801 is a complex source. Only one hand wrote the liturgical texts; the list of Alleluias after Pentecost is that of Valence. Two hands wrote the music. Up until the point of the Triduum in the book, there is only one notation derived from an Aquitanian typology of staff lines, with a red lead line for F and a yellow one for C. The manuscript preserves certain Aquitanian forms (the *quilisma* and *prorectus*, for example) but elsewhere offers a new style (the *pes*, for example). In the case of descending neumes, we notice that the first square has something new: an upper thin stroke, a feature increasingly common in later Carthusian sources (fig. 6). The second musical hand is later and has a more squared manner. The melodies from the first part of the manuscript are not Carthusian.

With Avignon 181 we come to one of an exceptional pair of manuscripts originating in the same monastery, Durbon, near Gap in the Haute-Provence. This gradual was copied between 1222 (as seen by the introduction of the mass of the Trinity) and 1258 (the introduction of the feast of S. Hugh) on a model itself from before the avalanche of 1132, as the place of the Dedication Mass makes clear. Its notation is made up of little squares on a staff, with a red lead line for F and a yellow one for C. The disposition of the squares clearly reveals either an Aquitanian influence or that of an Aquitanian model which our source revised. The stylization of the *pes* makes this obvious, while the descending neumes still retain the fluidity of their Aquitanian counterparts. Avignon 181 still has the Aquitanian *ductus* and *pes* and *clivis* are in Aquitanian forms.

London, B.L. Add. 17303 is the second of this pair of sources from Durbon, written at the same time as Avignon 181 and also copied from a source from before 1132. The
notation is made up of little squares on coloured staff lines with F, C or A keys, and reveals its Aquitanian influence in both ductus and general appearance of neumatic forms. Here, however, they are very stylized: pes and clivis have their new forms and descending neumes have exchanged their flexible texture for a succession of little and uniform squares. Fine little vertical strokes written in the original hand indicate separations between melodic groups; later hands added heavier strokes.

With this exceptional pair, we can approach the question of the evolution of the Aquitanian model comparatively taking, for example, the incipit of the gradual Ego dixi (fig. 7a-b). Both Durbon sources were conceived at a time when the Aquitanian model of notation was being pared down to a more square and stylized writing. We easily recognize the stylization of the pes as two opposite squares (-go of dixi) with London 17303’s marked tendency to be more vertical, as opposed to Avignon 181 which preserves some of the Aquitanian ductus. Both notations transform into compound neumes the small, uniform and disconnected Aquitanian squares. Both sources adopt a new clivis written in a left-right axis with two opposite squares (-xi of dixi). Both reveal the same tendency of gradually uniting disparate elements of a neumatic group into a single and long neume (zibi at the end of the gradual, or -it in Domine at the beginning) separated by a stroke as it is today in the modern notation used in the Carthusian books (see fig. 8). Between strokes, the melodic movement is clear: combining neumes in larger neumatic groups than usual which would have helped singers retain the movement of the chant; strokes signify a pause and chant in between them must be fluid.

Portes 44 was written in the monastery of Portes between 1258 (the feast of S. Hugh) and 1271 (S. Marie Magdalene), using a Grande Chartreuse source posterior to 1132. Its notation is square on a staff with F and C keys.

Other manuscripts should at least be mentioned here: Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ms. 70, a gradual from the end of the twelfth century originating in Scillon (near Bourges), with notation similar to Parkminster A.335; Grande Chartreuse, ms. 751, a gradual from the Carthusian house of Moniales de Prebayon (in the Vaucluse), with little 15. A compromise between Aquitanian and Messine neumes, according to Devaux 1991, p. 230.
Aquitanian squares: Loches 16 from the monastery of Le Liget (a royal foundation due to King Henry II Plantagenet in 1178, near Loches) with what Dom Devaux states are little 'French' squares; in my opinion, these are simply *notae quadratae* with no specific French influence. Table I summarizes the above information, in an attempt to show the age of a source independently from its geographical and notational features.

To finish this brief overview, these Carthusian sources seem to follow more general developments of musical notation in the Middle Ages. Independently of the three manuscripts in Aquitanian notation and of the Carthusian musical addenda in Parkminster A.33, we find at the beginning of the thirteenth century a book from Le Reposoir, London, B.L., ms. Add. 31384; it has a rectangular notation without the finer distinctions that neumatic notation provided especially for melismas. Twenty-five years later, in Durbon, one of the pair of manuscripts mentioned above (London, B.L., ms. Add. 17303), has lost in its notation the legacy of the accents of the Aquitanian notation. Twenty-five years later, Portes 44 and Loches 16 have both eliminated neumatic distinctions with their rendering in square notation the neumes from Lyon found in their exemplar, Parkminster A.33. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Durbon completes this process of squaring notes, as seen in the second part of Grande Chartreuse 801. Yet Carthusian notation cannot be summarized as a simplistic progression from Aquitanian to square notation. If the Aquitanian model remains dominant, it is not the only one; the advent of square notation in Carthusian circles follows roads with more complex meanderings.

**Instability of notation as a common trend**

Turning to the notation of the sources themselves, a major problem still remains for any study that attempts to discuss the nature of Carthusian music calligraphy. The fact is that, very often in any one given book, the same composition can be notated in several ways. To appreciate this point, we can take the first Carthusian manuscripts and choose, for a clear comparison, compositions sung on a *santo* melody: *Dies sanctificatus* sung at Christmas, as well as at the Feasts of S. Stephen (*Alleluia Vide caelos*), S. John the Evangelist (*Alleluia Hic est discipulus*), and Epiphany (*Alleluia Vidimus*). For a short example, compare *Alleluia Dies sanctificatus* and *Alleluia Vidimus*. The variants occur not only from one codex to the other but even within the same book, as Parkminster A.33 shows in a different way and not on the same neumes than Salignac 23 (fig. 9 a-b: pes and clivis at the end of the melisma in *Alleluia Vidimus* instead of torculus in *Alleluia Dies sanctificatus* and fig. 10 a-b, inside the ending neume). The award for the greatest melodic

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16. *Ibid.*, p. 229. The Liget manuscript has as model the Portes manuscript.
19. And for *Alleluia Video caelos* and *Hic est discipulus too.*
Figure 9. Parkminster A.33. a: fol. 36'. All. Vidimus stellam; b: fol. 30. All. Dies sanctificatus.

Figure 10. Selignac 23. a: All. Dies sanctificatus; b: All. Vidimus stellam.

Figure 11a. London B.L. add. 17303, fol. 19'. All. Dies sanctificatus.

Figure 11b. London B.L. add. 17303, fol. 50. All. Hic est discipulus.

Figure 11c. London B.L. add. 17303, fol. 11. All. Vidimus stellam.
digression goes to Marseille 150, which has for the five last compositions based on alleluia \textit{Dies sanctificatus} five different notations! Only Grenoble 84 has a very coherent neumatic reading and with, Milan 70 too with only one exception. Continuing this investigation to other sources, more variants can be observed. For example, in the Durbon source, London, B.L., ms. Add. 17303, we see not only different writings for one neumatic group but also different notations for the same sign (fig. 12a-c). In the Le Reposoir source (London, B.L., ms. Add. 31384), the notator clearly hesitated to use unfamiliar differentiations for the same neume (fig. 12a-b - a of Alleluia before the cadence). The later notator who 'corrected' this passage with square notes apparently chose the second version, that of Alleluia \textit{Vidimus stellam} (fig. 12c). Finally, the source Grande Chartreuse 801 (fig. 6) presents an interesting contrast and a remarkable fact: the same notator made two \textit{clivis} in different notations and, most interestingly, two \textit{scandicus} for the cadence – one in stylised format, the other with an improper old-fashioned Aquitanian \textit{quilisma}, like a doubtful remorse (fig. 13a-b).

Apparently, Carthusian monks were not interested in a very precise and detailed notation. They did not need to note for themselves whether to sing three \textit{clivis}, or a \textit{aporrectus} and a \textit{clivus}, or a \textit{clivus} and a \textit{scandicus} followed by another \textit{clivus} in one given passage. Does this mean that nothing can be understood from their notation and that one musical sign is equivalent to another? As I demonstrated in my edition of the Premonstratensian Gradual of Bellelay, one composition can be notated in several ways, a fact that can be chalked up to scribal whimsy rather than specific musical intention. Such notational details matter less than the more general idea of melodic mood and movement, captured by the eyes and held in musical memory, a potent memory trained by years of solid aural practice. Rather than in the specific shapes of neumes, the essence of Carthusian musical calligraphy lies in the specific way of indicating the movement of the melody – even though the story of Carthusian notation is that of a kind of stylisation. How this stylisation evolved is a question we need to ask.

\section*{FROM NEUMES TO SQUARE}

Using notation is one thing, but having a grasp on the exact character of a melody and its calligraphy is quite another. This phenomena can be observed in sources with different notation that reveal another side of Carthusian calligraphy, running contrary to the both a tendency towards stylisation and a preoccupation with melodic movement. In the Gradual of Le Reposoir, London, B.L., ms. Add. 31384 (fig. 5), we can make the same observations as above for the Durbon manuscripts regarding the writing of the \textit{per} as two opposite ascending squares (l. 5, \textit{et omnis terra}), the \textit{clivus} as two opposite descending squares (l. 5, \textit{ret of adoret}), and neumatic groups linking compound elements between two strokes (l. 6, \textit{altissime}). These tendencies are confirmed in the later revision of the manuscript with a thick square notation (fig. 5, l. 1, for example).

Although this notation is 'classical', like that of later Carthusian sources such as Portes 44, we can still identify its salient elements as seen in the books just mentioned.
These elements endure in the modern edition of the Carthusian antiphonary (fig. 8); the same writing of the pes, of the clivis, of the porrectus and of a neumatic articulation in a group made of linked square elements. Still today, Carthusian monks regard this kind of notation as essential to their identity; it profoundly influences the way they sing Gregorian chant. It almost goes without saying that, regarding its general calligraphic style, these signs are increasingly uniform and quadratic in their appearance compared to earlier notations.

As mentioned above, most of the music in Carthusian manuscripts is written in either pure Aquitanian notation or one derived from it. As has been rightly claimed, the original neumatic dots were lengthened in this diastematic writing to form little squares. This point of view implies that such an evolution is a common feature of Aquitanian notation rather than a specific Carthusian attitude and, in fact, it's not obvious. Yet Carthusians adopted square notation in remarkable ways. In the first folios of Parkminster A.33 later added to the manuscript in a notation mainly from Lyon, we see some fascinating examples which are obviously the result of sheer pragmatism (fig. 14). Here, the notator uses little squares but with a certain flexibility: line 2, on mirabile we respectively find, a torculus made up of three squares, and of two squares with a pressed dot, showing that the notator did not want to lift his hand and stop the neumatic movement to draw a square; we see the same phenomenon in other non-Carthusian sources.

In Parkminster A.33, different signs occur for one neume (fig. 14, for the clivis, l. 3 on dictus; notice here the little stroke on the left beginning the first clivis as it is in Portes 44). Neumatic groups seem to be very pragmatic gatherings of squares, each one with its own stroke as if it was a succession of 20. Zapke 2007-1, p. 22-23 and for an example, p. 55. Here, in a fragment of a Carthusian book, we didn't remark the pes and clivis in two opposite squares of pointers. See also Zapke 2007-1, p. 189-243, and examples p. 436-423. In a fragment of a thirteenth-century missal from Compostela (p. 387), we note a pes with a little tendency to be in two opposite parts like it is in Avignon 181, but it remains a neume and not a square written in a neumatic form.


The gradual of Le Reposoir, London, B.L., ms. Add. 31384 (fig. 15) features a first layer of rectangular notation later corrected to a more square appearance: some remarkable neumes singled out on -ra of *vrate x -prin of principes; the Carthusian form for the porrectus (-pot of potatis), for the pes and the clivis (same place). The little stroke at the right of the square and at the end of a melodic group (portae) indicates a light pause. The balance of similar squares in one little neumatic group is clearly a Carthusian idiom. As already mentioned, the modern Carthusian antiphonary preserves the forms and the neumatic organization of the melody that we have gradually seen in medieval books (fig. 8). Later corrections in square notation occur in the Le Reposoir manuscript (fig. 16). The basic neumatic forms of pes and clivis follow traditional Carthusian writing. The interesting form of the square or punctum is one again one bordered by two little strokes. Not a specific character of Carthusian notation, it can be found in contemporary (i.e., thirteenth-century) monastic sources such as the Premonstratensian Gradual of Bellelay that also occasionally reveal the tendency to laboriously update Messine notation to a square form. Another example that I recently found of replacing neumatic notation with its square counterpart comes from the Mistel of Tours Paris, BnF, lat. 9435. Here, square notes are sometimes written over thin French neumes, also during the first part of the thirteenth century.
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The specific forms of the Carthusian squares mark the Carthusian area as a special one in the history of square notation. The Carthusian pes and all the neumes derived from it are led with a square on left, followed by a stroke and an opposite square on right. This form in three gestures comes from the Aquitanian pes (however itself in two gestures) and presents a kind of abstraction of the Aquitanian sign. It is not the same shape as we encounter in other notations like Norman calligraphy (from Rouen), or like the signs and presents a kind of abstraction of the Aquitanian sign. It is not the same shape as we encounter in other notations like Norman calligraphy (from Rouen), or like the signs explained by Anonymous IV in the thirteenth century (fig. 17).

CONCLUSIONS

Carthusian books have notational unity despite their predominantly Aquitanian origin but it is a long process. This is a fairly normal situation: monastic affiliations do not necessarily determine the identity of a notation. Moreover, what does it mean when we call a manuscript Carthusian? Among the oldest sources, Marseille 150 has corrected melodies, GC 801 has no Carthusian melodies and in GC 801 many texts do not come from the Carthusian rite. Grenoble 84 has a Sanctus unrelated to that of the Grande Chartreuse, in the same way that Loches 16 relates to Le Liget. All these sources predate any liturgical unity or statement intended to be that of the Carthusian order. Rather, the actual situation was that the first true Carthusian houses (Portes, Les Écognes and probably Montreuil) were eremitic institutions that adopted Carthusian uses after having been independent. Only Durbon had monks from the Grande Chartreuse from its very beginning. Which is why both manuscripts of Durbon are exceptional, not only for notational reasons, but for historic-liturgical ones as well.

Another reason for the lack of unity is the independence of each source. The first general chapter in 1140 under St. Anselm went after a liturgical union, which was pursued twenty years later under Dom Basile. These oldest manuscripts (M 150, 70, Add. 33384, Sélignac 23) were still in use until 1222 despite so-called corrections. To take another example, Grenoble 84 remained as a choir book until the suppression of Les Écognes at the end of the fourteenth century.

In itself, the word 'Carthusian' cannot explain the extremely complex and specific nature of these manuscripts, their liturgical and musical content and, most importantly for us, their specific calligraphy. How amazing, therefore, that unrelated to the calligraphy of the notation itself, we can observe a given notational trend, at a given time and in different Carthusian books; namely, a trend towards a heavier and more vertical quadratic writing.

In other contemporaneous notations, this presents itself as a more angular writing whose forms are still stylized and heavy. As Haines has written, the transition from neumes to squares was more of a slow and inexorable story than a sudden transformation. Indeed, square notes do not entirely define Carthusian calligraphy. Its essence lies on the fact that Carthusian notators were scrupulous, preserving original gestures modelled on melodic movement. For this reason, it is false to claim that the note quadrata put an end to a well-moulded and precise neumatic notation. The Grande Chartreuse 801 source is highly revealing in this regard. For in its second part, a Carthusian music copyist at the beginning of the fourteenth century completed the twelfth-century part (GC 801) using as his exemplar either London, B.L. Add. 17303, or an equivalent. He wrote in disconnected square notes where basic neumes were joined, as in the notation of the modern Carthusian antiphonary. He also cut out the longest melismas in rhythmical and melodic groups, as it is done in all modern Carthusian books of chant. This distinction is not the sign of a presumed decadence of Gregorian chant. Rather, it represents a specific calligraphy, itself reflecting a highly original way of writing chant. In their oldest books, Carthusians sought to express the melodic mood of their own chant by organizing their notation — be it Aquitanian, square or something else — into articulated groups. The strokes added later stressed a former practice. They were a later written expression of a rhythmical tradition formerly handed down by aural practice and already represented in notation as a specific musical identity. Still today, Carthusians are deeply linked to this identity of which their musical calligraphy is an obvious and clear testimony.

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