

O come, O come, Emmanuel:

The “O” Antiphons and the Music of Advent

65 (or 30)

# Veni, veni Emmanuel.

ADVENT.

From a French Missal in the  
National Library, Lisbon.

MATT. i., 23. \* \* \* "They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is,  
God with us."

**D**   
RAW nigh, draw nigh, Em-man-u-el, And ransom captive Is-ra-el,

*Veni Emmanuel*

*Hymnal Noted*

London: Novello, 1856



et umbra mortis. evo vae. **O** rex gentium et desideratus earum lapis qui angularis qui facis utraq; unum veni salua hominem quem de limo formasti. evo **O** emanuel rex et legifer noster expectatio gentium et saluator earum veni ad saluandum nos domine deus noster. evo vae. **O** uirgo uirginum

"O" Antiphons

14th-century

Swiss antiphonary

CH-E 611

# The “O” Antiphons

*O Sapientia,  
quae ex ore Altissimi prodiisti,  
attingens a fine usque ad finem,  
fortiter suaviterque disponens omnia:  
veni ad docendum nos viam prudentiae.*

*O Adonai,  
et Dux domus Israel,  
qui Moysi in igne flammae rubi apparuisti,  
et ei in Sina legem dedisti:  
veni ad redimendum nos in brachio extento.*

*O radix Jesse,  
qui stas in signum populorum,  
super quem continebunt reges os suum,  
quem Gentes deprecabuntur:  
veni ad liberandum nos, jam noli tardare.*

O Wisdom,  
coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,  
reaching from one end to the other mightily,  
and sweetly ordering all things,  
come and teach us the way of prudence.

O Adonai,  
leader of the house of Israel,  
who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush  
and gave him the law on Mount Sinai:  
come and redeem us with outstretched arm.

O Root of Jesse,  
standing as an ensign among the peoples,  
before you kings will shut their mouths,  
to you the nations will make their prayer;  
come and deliver us, and delay no longer.

*O Clavis David, et sceptrum domus Israel;  
qui aperis, et nemo claudit;  
claudis, et nemo aperit:  
veni, et educ vincitum de domo carceris,  
sedentem in tenebris, et umbra mortis.*

*O Oriens,  
splendor lucis aeternae, et sol justitiae:  
veni, et illumina sedentes in tenebris, et umbra  
mortis.*

*O Rex Gentium, et desideratus earum,  
lapisque angularis, qui facis utraque unum:  
veni, et salva hominem, quem de limo formasti.*

O Key of David and scepter of the house of Israel;  
you open and no one can shut;  
you shut and no one can open;  
come and lead the prisoners from the prison house,  
those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of  
death.

O Morning Star,  
splendor of light eternal and sun of righteousness:  
come and enlighten those that dwell in darkness and  
in the shadow of death.

O King of the nations, and their desire,  
the cornerstone making both one,  
come and save the human race whom you fashioned  
from clay.

*O Emmanuel, Rex et legifer noster,  
expectatio Gentium, et Salvator earum:  
veni ad salvandum nos, Domine, Deus noster.*

O **S**apientia...

O **A**donai...

O **R**adix Jesse...

O **C**lavis David...

O **O**riens...

O **R**ex gentium...

O **E**mmanuel...

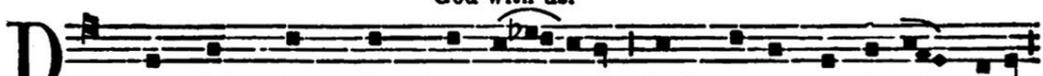
O Emmanuel, our King and our lawgiver,  
the hope of the nations and their Savior;  
come and save us, O Lord our God.

***ERO CRAS***

# O Come, O Come Emmanuel

- 18th-century paraphrase of the “O” Antiphons
- Hymn text history and evolution
  - *Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum* (Cologne, 1710): 5 stanzas, Latin
- Tune (*Veni Emmanuel*)
  - Pairing of text and tune not until 1851: Thomas Hellmore’s *Hymnal Noted*
  - Plainsong-inspired, but murky origins for many years
  - 1966: source connected— 15th-century French processional manuscript

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# The “O” Antiphons and O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

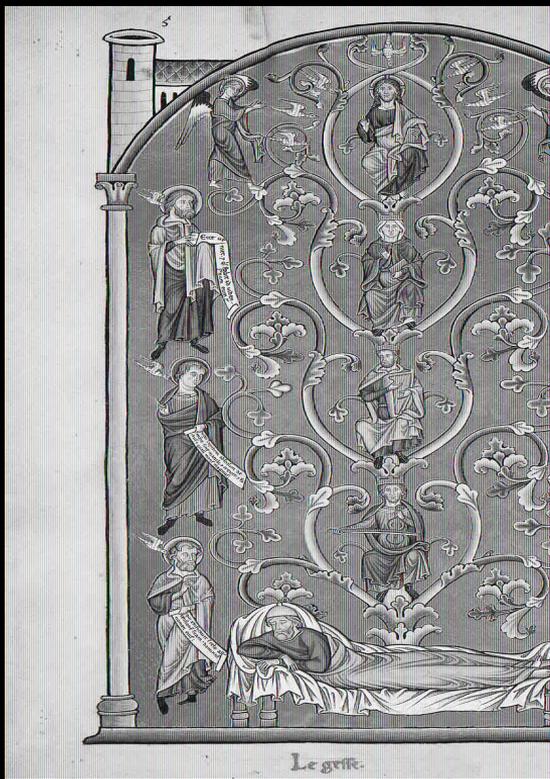
<i>O Sapientia</i>	→	2 O come, thou Wisdom
<i>O Adonai</i>	→	3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might
<i>O Radix Jesse</i>	→	4 O come, thou Branch of Jesse’s tree
<i>O Clavis David</i>	→	5 O come, thou Key of David
<i>O Oriens</i>	→	6 O come, thou Dayspring from on high
<i>O Rex gentium, et desideratus earum</i>	→	7 O come, Desire of nations
<i>O Emmanuel</i>	→	1, 8 O come, O come, Emmanuel

# Alice Parker: O Come, O Come Emmanuel

- Alice Parker
  - Longtime collaborator of Robert Shaw
  - Extensive body of folksong and spiritual arrangements
- Mensuration canon
  - Tenors and basses in augmentation



# O radix Jesse



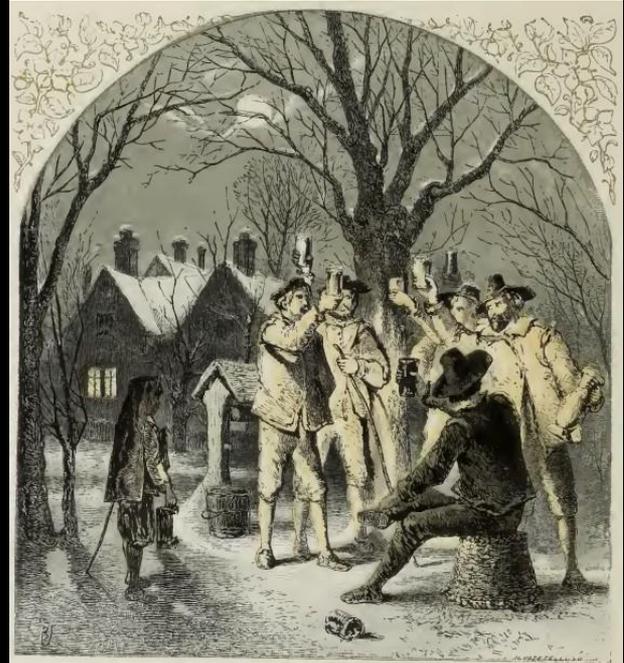
Ingeborg Psalter, Northern France, ca. 1195  
Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 1695. fol. 14v

*O radix Jesse,  
qui stas in signum populorum,  
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quem Gentes deprecabuntur:  
veni ad liberandum nos, jam noli tardare.*

O Root of Jesse,  
standing as an ensign among the peoples,  
before you kings will shut their mouths,  
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come and deliver us, and delay no longer.

# Jesus Christ the apple tree

- Anonymous 18th-century text
- Root of Jesse
- Song of Solomon 2:3
  - As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among young men
- Tree of life
  - Genesis
  - Luke 13:18-19
- Historical English winter tradition of orchard-wassailing



“ HERE’S to thee, old apple-tree,  
Whence thou may’st bud, and thou may’st blow !  
And whence thou may’st bear apples enow !  
Hats full ! caps full !  
Bushel—bushel—sacks full !  
And my pockets full too ! Huzza ! ”

Henry Vizetelly’s *Christmas with the Poets*  
Published by David Bogue, 1855

# Elizabeth Poston: Jesus Christ the apple tree

1 The tree of life my soul hath seen  
Laden with fruit, and always green:  
The trees of nature fruitless be  
Compared with Christ the apple tree

...

3 I'm weary with my former toil  
Here I will sit and rest awhile:  
Under the shadow I will be  
Of Jesus Christ the apple tree

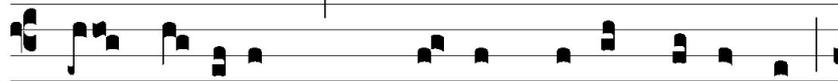


# O Oriens

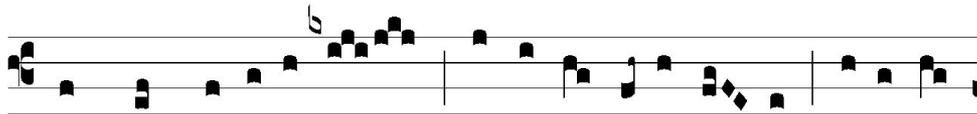
*Sap. 7, 26; Mal. 4, 2; Lc. 1, 78-79*

Ant.  
2 d.

O



O-ri-ens, \* splendor lu-cis æ-térnæ



et sol iustí-ti-æ: ve-ni et illúmi-na sedéntes



in té-nebris et umbra mor-tis. E u o u a e.

O Morning Star,  
splendor of light eternal  
and sun of righteousness:  
come and enlighten  
those that dwell in darkness  
and in the shadow of death.

# Melissa Dunphy: *O Oriens*



nae, et sol ju- sti- ti- ae : véni, et illúmi- na sedénte

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of several measures of music, including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The lyrics are written below the staff, aligned with the notes. The text is: "nae, et sol ju- sti- ti- ae : véni, et illúmi- na sedénte". The word "nae" is at the end of the first measure, and "véni" starts the second measure. The rest of the lyrics are spread across the subsequent measures.

*O Oriens*, plainchant

# Melissa Dunphy: *O Oriens*

Dunphy - O Oriens

The image shows a musical score for the piece "O Oriens" by Melissa Dunphy. It consists of five staves. The first four staves are vocal parts, and the fifth is a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are arranged in a four-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The lyrics are in Latin: "so - des - ter, so - des - ter, in te - so - ber." The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 4/4. The piece is marked with a common time signature (C) at the beginning of the first staff.

so - des - ter, so - des - ter, in te - so - ber.

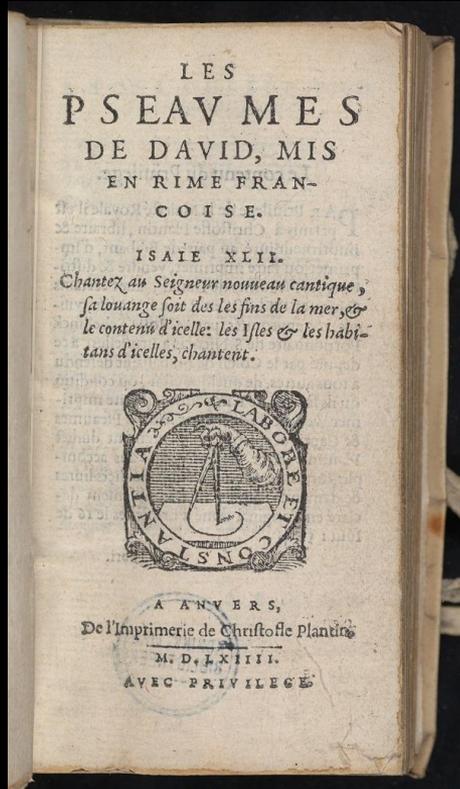
so - des - ter, so - des - ter, in te - so - ber.

so - des - ter, so - des - ter, in te - so - ber.

so - des - ter, so - des - ter, in te - so - ber.

so - des - ter, so - des - ter, in te - so - ber.

# Comfort, comfort ye my people (*Genevan Psalm 42*)



The Hymnal 1982, #67

1 Comfort, comfort ye my people  
speak ye peace, thus saith our God  
Comfort those who sit in darkness  
mourning 'neath their sorrows' load.

