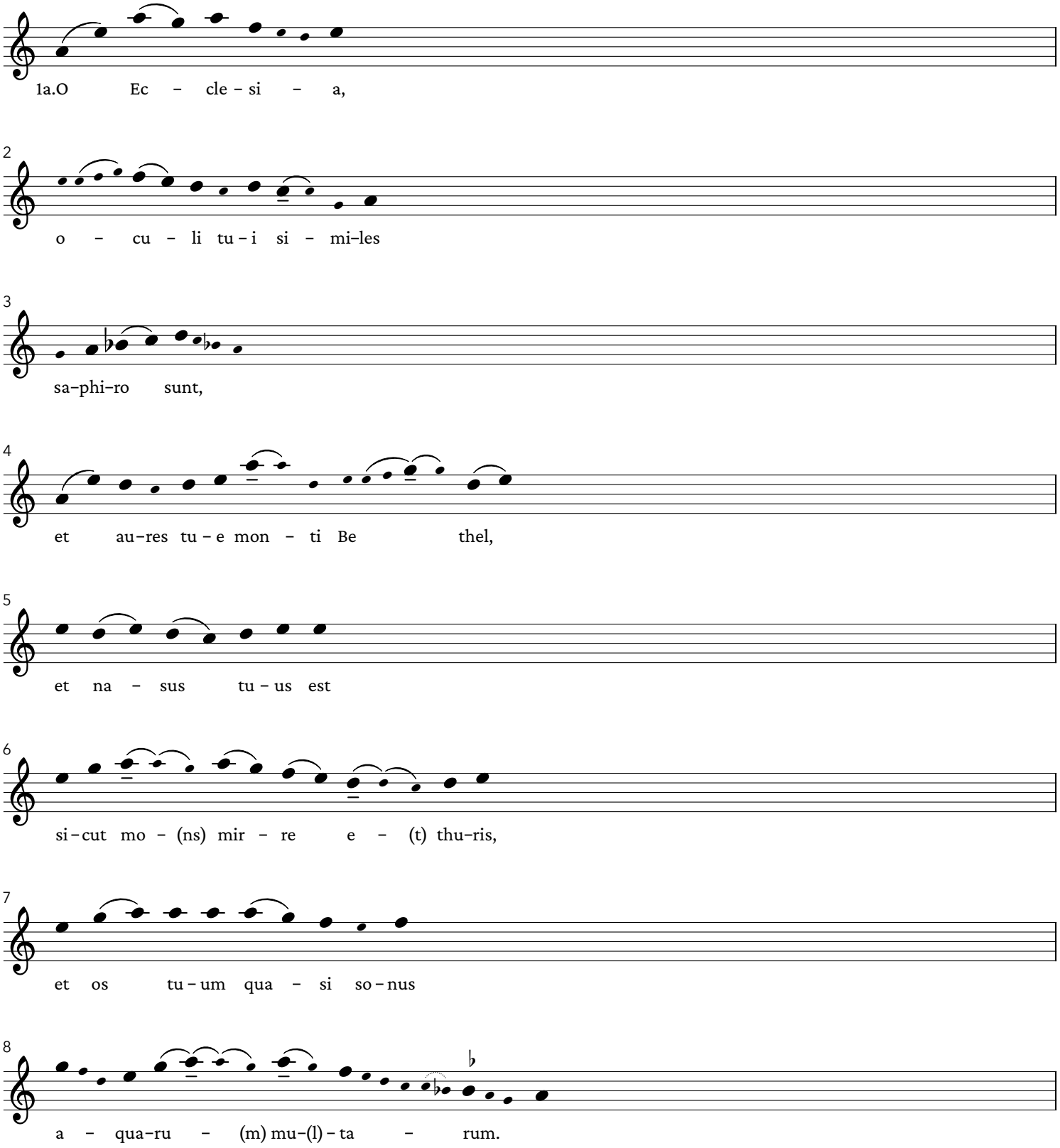
O Ecclesia

Sequence for Saint Ursula

Transcribed by Allison Mondel

Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179)

R f.477r



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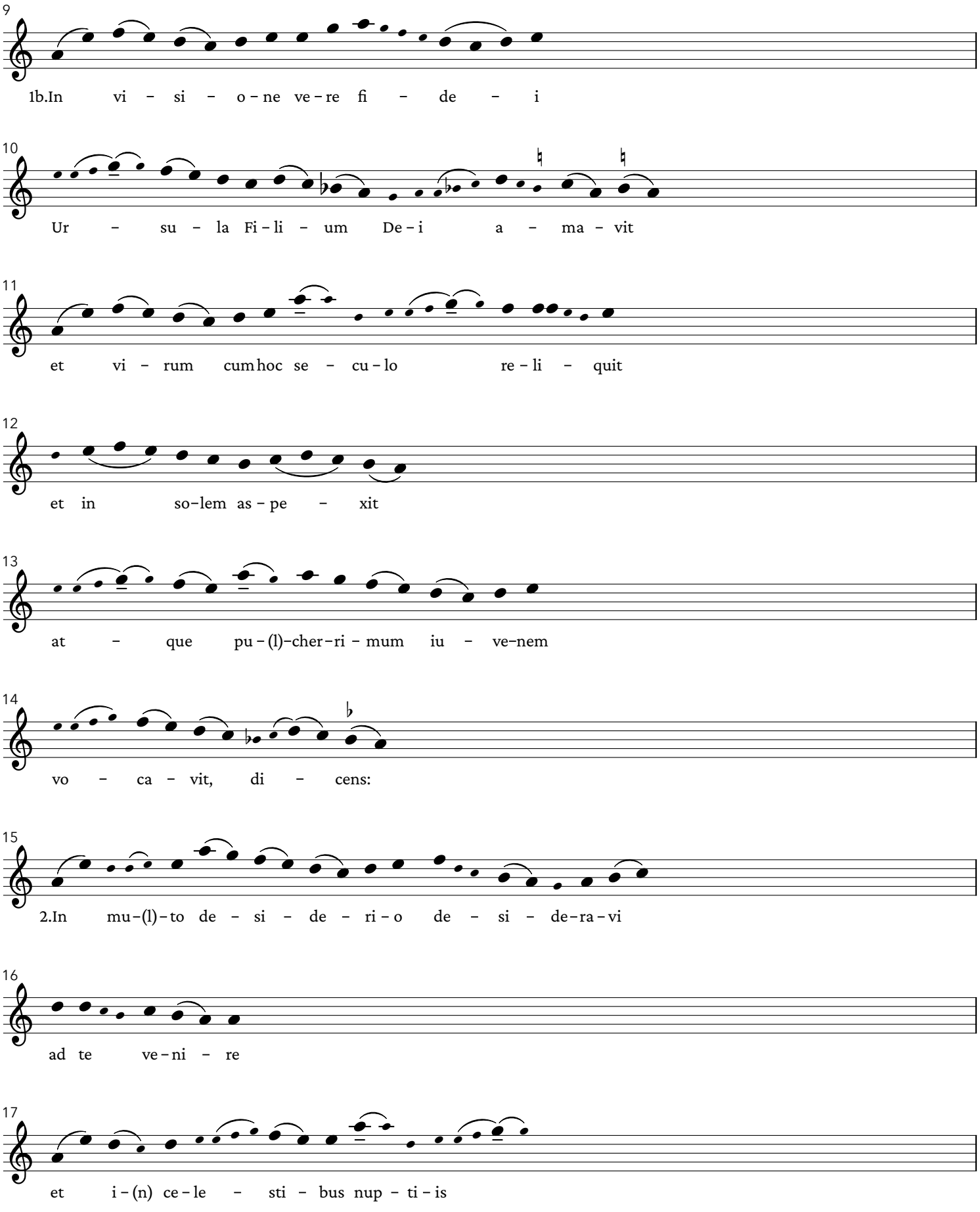

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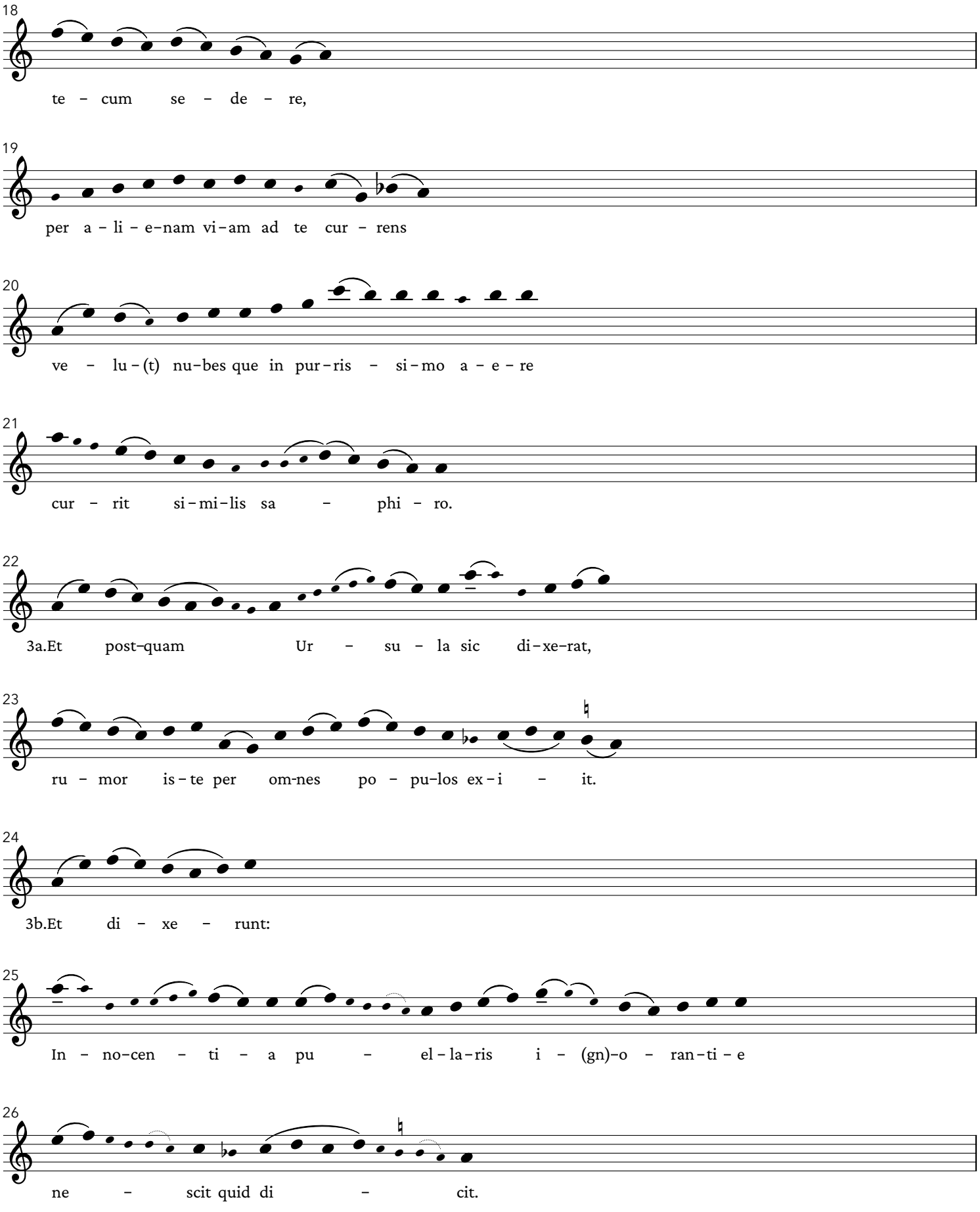

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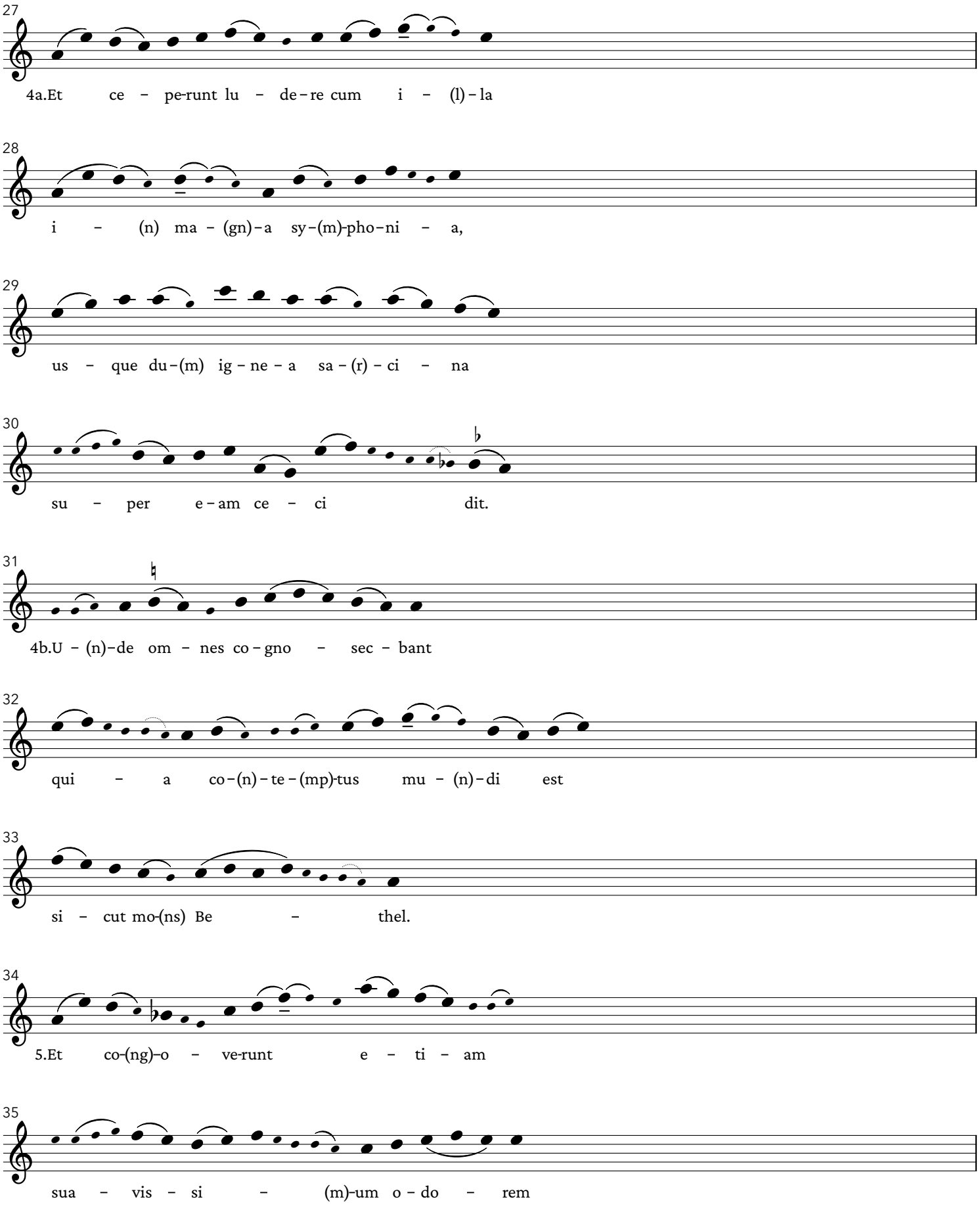

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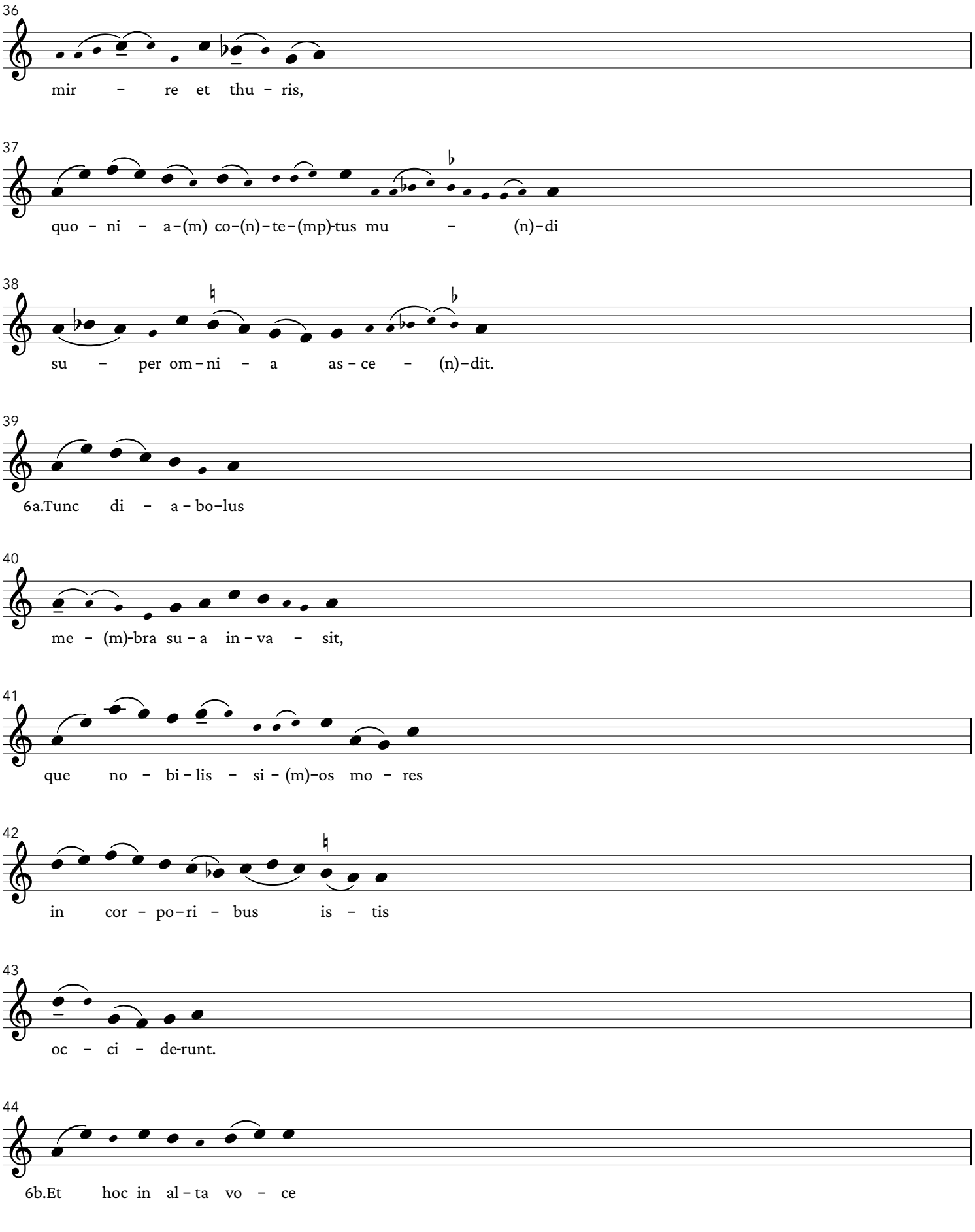

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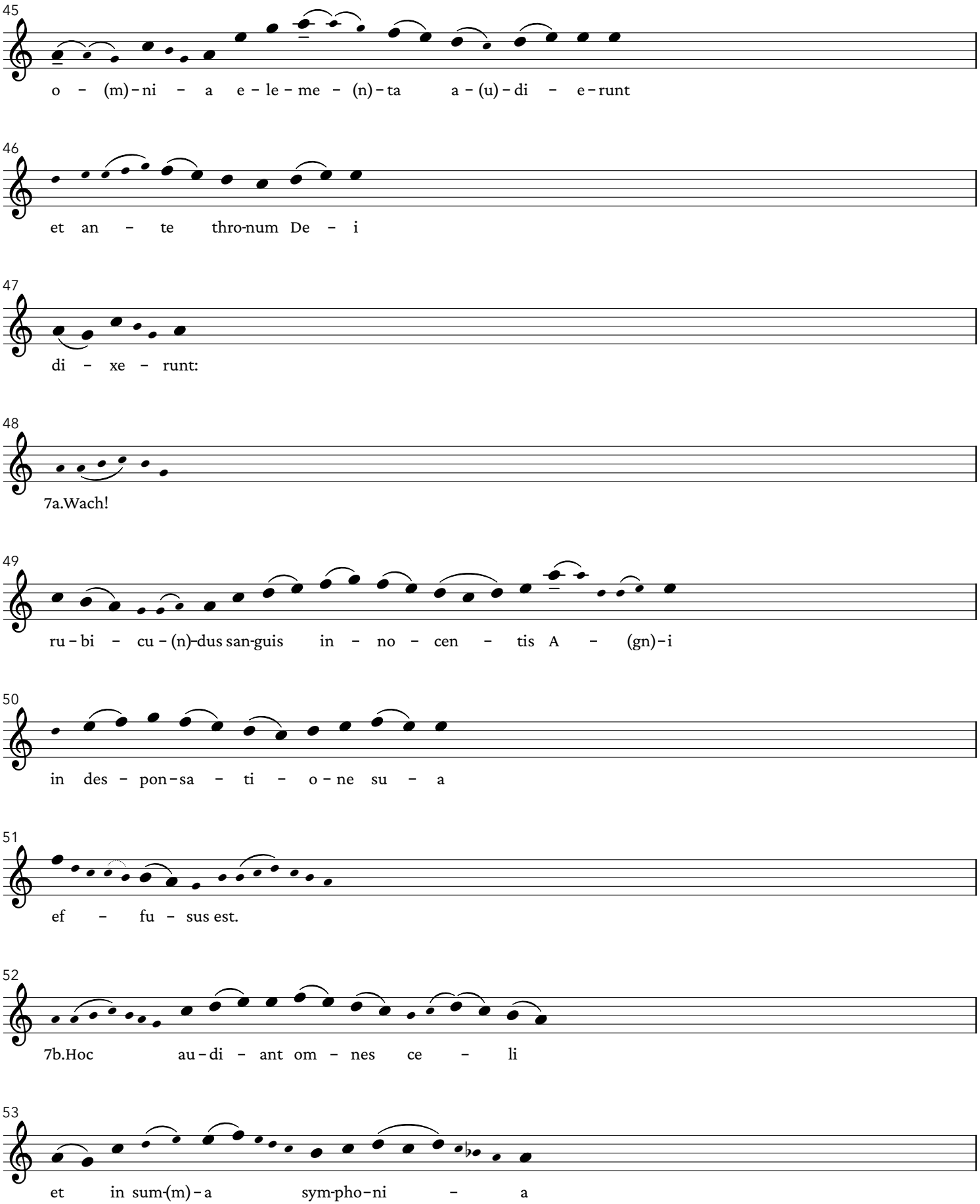

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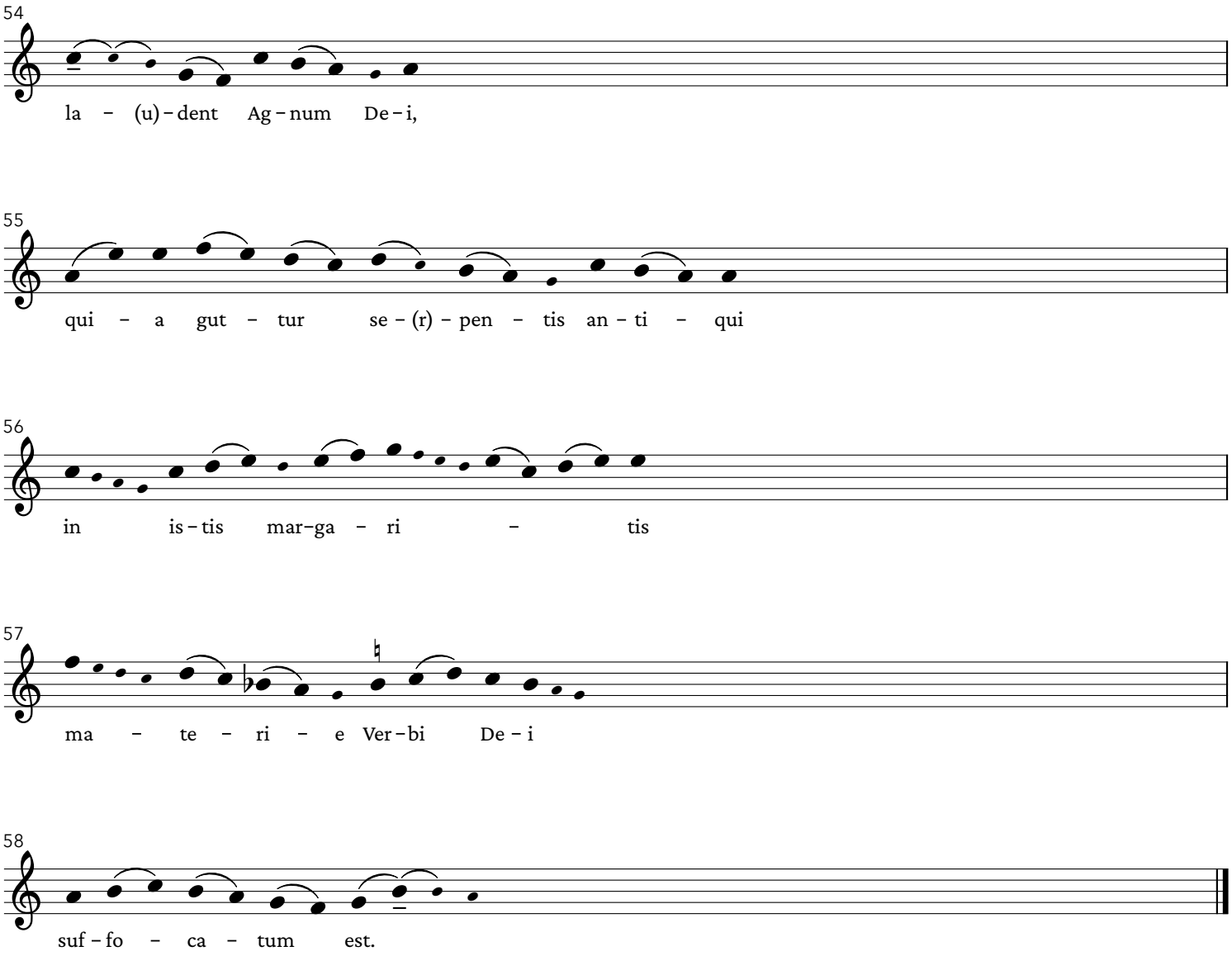

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O Ecclesia

1a. O Ecclesia,
oculi tui similes
saphiro sunt,
et aures tue monti Bethel,
et nasus tuus est
sicut mons mirre et thuris,
et os tuum quasi sonus
aquarum multarum.

1b. In visione vere fidei
Ursula Filium Dei amavit
et virum cum hoc seculo reliquit
et in solem aspexit
atque pulcherrimum iuvenem
vocavit, dicens:

2. In multo desiderio desideravi
ad te venire
et in celestibus nuptiis
tecum sedere,
per alienam viam ad te currens
velut nubes que in purissimo aere
currit similis saphiro.

3a. Et postquam Ursula sic dixerat,
rumor iste per omnes populos exiit.

3b. Et dixerunt:
Innocentia puellaris ignorantie
nescit quid dicit.

4a. Et ceperunt ludere cum illa
in magna symphonia,
usque dum ignea sarcina
super eam cecidit.

1a. O Church
your eyes are
like sapphires
and your ears like Mount Bethel
and your nose
like a mountain of myrrh and incense
and your mouth like the sound
of many waters.

1b. In a vision of true faith
Ursula loved the Son of God
and she left man behind with this world
and looked into the sun
and called to that most beautiful young man,
saying:

2. “In great desire have I longed
to come to you
and to settle with you
in heavenly marriage,
running to you by an unfamiliar path
like a cloud that runs
in the purest, sapphire-blue sky.”

3a. And after Ursula said this,
a murmur spread around all the people.

3b. They said:
“In the ignorance of her girlish innocence,
she knows not what she says.”

4a. And they began to mock her
in a chorus of jeers
right until a burning heap
fell on top of her.

4b. Unde omnes cognoscebant
quia contemptus mundi est
sicut mons Bethel.

5. Et cognoverunt etiam
suavissimum odorem
mirre et thuris,
quoniam contemptus mundi
super omnia ascendit.

6a. Tunc diabolus
membra sua invasit,
que nobilissimos mores
in corporibus istis
occiderunt.

6b. Et hoc in alta voce
omnia elementa audierunt
et ante thronum Dei
dixerunt:

7a. Wach!
rubicundus sanguis innocentis agni
in desponsatione sua
effusus est.

7b. Hoc audiant omnes celi
et in summa symphonia
laudent Agnum Dei,
quia guttur serpentis antiqui
in istis margaritis
materie Verbi Dei
suffocatum est.

4b. That is how they came to know
that the rejection of this world is
like Mount Bethel.

5. And they made the acquaintance
of the gorgeous scent
of myyrh and frankincense,
since the rejection of this world
rises above everything.

6a. Then the devil
crept into their limbs
which killed
the righteous habits
in those bodies.

6b. And all flesh and matter heard this
in a lofty voice
and before the throne of God,
they said:

7a. “Woe!
The crimson blood of the innocent lamb
is poured out
in this engagement.”

7b. The whole heavens heard this
and honored the Lamb of God
in the celestial choirs,
because the throat of the ancient serpent
was stopped up
with these pearls
of the substance of the Word of God.

Latin translation by Hugh McElroy
For notation guide, resources, community, and more, visit: eyamedievalmusic.org

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