

## Burying of the alleluia

On Saturday before Septuagesima Sunday all choir boys gather in the sacristy during the prayer of the None, to prepare for the burial of the Alleluia. After the last *Benedicamus* [*i.e.*, at the end of the service] they march in procession, with crosses, tapers, holy water and censers; and they carry a coffin, as in a funeral. Thus they proceed through the aisle, moaning and mourning, until they reach the cloister. There they bury the coffin; they sprinkle it with holy water and incense it; whereupon they return to the sacristy by the same way.<sup>24</sup>

In Paris, a straw figure bearing in golden letters the inscription "Alleluia" was carried out of the choir at the end of the service and burned in the church yard.

With the exception of these quaint aberrations, however, the farewell to alleluia in most countries was an appropriate addition to the official ceremonies of the liturgy. The special texts (hymns, responsories, antiphons) used on that occasion were taken mostly from Holy Scripture, and are filled with pious sentiments of devotion, like the following unusual personification collected from a farewell service of the Mozarabic liturgy of Spain (ninth or tenth century):

*Stay with us today, Alleluia,  
And tomorrow thou shalt part.  
When the morning rises,  
Thou shalt go thy way.  
Alleluia, alleluia.*

*The mountains and hills shall rejoice, Alleluia,  
While they await thy glory.  
Thou goest, Alleluia; may thy way be blessed,  
Until thou shalt return with joy.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*<sup>25</sup>

Thus the Alleluia is sung for the last time and not heard again until it suddenly bursts into glory during the Mass of the Easter Vigil when the celebrant intones this sacred 'word' after the Epistle, repeating it three times, as a jubilant herald of the Resurrection of Christ.<sup>26</sup>