






























## OF THE FORM AND USE OF THE NOTES. EMPLOYED IN THE CHANT

The method of forming the notes of the chant, and especially of combining them, as established by our forefathers and used always and everywhere throughout the Middle Ages, is of the highest importance for correct singing, and is still the normal system for printers at the present time.

In the following table the chief forms of the notes (or neums, as they are called) are shewn, together with their names :

			
Punctum	Virga	Bivirga	Punctum inclinatum
			
Podatus or Pes	Clivis or Flexa	Epiphonus	Cephalicus
			
Scandicus	Salicus	Climacus	Ancus
			
Torculus	Porrectus	Torculus resupinus	Porrectus flexus
			
Pes subpunctis	Scandicus subpunctis	Scandicus flexus	Climacus resupinus
			
Strophicus	Pes strophicus	Clivis strophica or clivis and oriscus	Torculus strophica or torculus and oriscus
			
Pressus	Other forms of Pressus with added neums		Trigon
			
Quilisma		Longer or composite neums	

For the avoidance of error or doubtfulness in the interpretation of these forms, a few preliminary remarks are advisable ;



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1. Of the two notes which form the *podatus* the lower note is always sounded before the one standing directly above it.

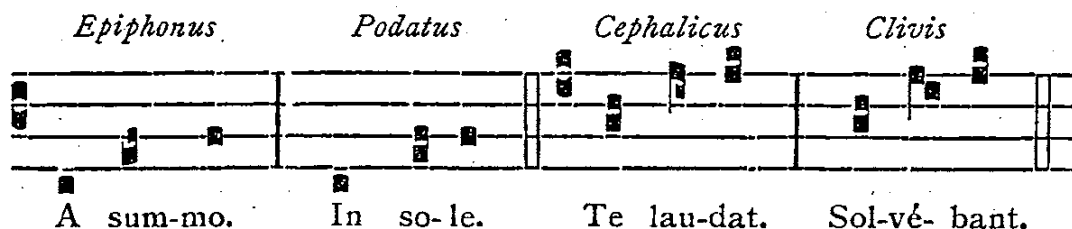




2. By the thick stroke of the *porrectus*, running obliquely, is signified only the two notes joined together by this mark, the one occurring at the top of the stroke, the other at the bottom.



3. The half-note called *cephalicus*  or *epiphonus*  is never found save at the end of a syllable when (another syllable following without a break) two vowels run together after the manner of a diphthong, as, *Autem, Eius, alleluia* : or in a group of consonants, as, *OMNIS, SANCTUS*. For the voice, governed by the nature of the syllable, floweth lightly from one note to the other ('liquescent'); so that the mouth is shut and the sound 'seemeth not to be cut off'; and it loseth about half its value not of time but of stress. (Cf. Guido *Micrologus*, chap. xv).

On the other hand, when the nature of the syllable needeth that the sound be not liquefied but 'brought out more fully', the epiphonus is replaced by the podatus, and the cephalicus by the clivis.




Sometimes liquescence is applied to two notes (or the latter of two notes) which follow a higher note or virga, as in the climacus, in which case both are written smaller , or they are changed to a cephalicus added to the virga . The neum which differeth thus from the climacus is called an *ancus*.

4. When, as in the *strophicus*, *pressus* and similar forms, several single notes are set at the same pitch in such fashion that there is only a small space between them, a delay of a distinctive character is to be

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 made on these notes, according to the number of them, whether less or more. But the *strophicus* and the *pressus* have this difference, that whereas the former is sung louder or even with a *vibrato* at discretion, the latter should be softer, unless the note fall upon an accented syllable, needing thereby a stronger stress.

5. There is one other tremulant note, the *quilisma* : this occurreth in the chant as an ornamental note, and is styled '*nota volubilis et gradata*'. Where this tremulous or fluttering voice is not customary, or where it is not sung alone by a trained singer, the note which goeth before the quilisma may be brought out with a sharper stress, so that the sound of the quilisma itself be diminished rather than overquicken.

6. The tail added to the upper note of the climacus, clivis and porrectus is proper to the form of the figure as handed down by our forefathers. A note of this kind taketh often a more marked accent ; not on account of its tail but because, not being combined with any foregoing note, it meeteth the first impact of the voice. The little line which leadeth from one note to another serveth but to join them together.

7. The rhomboid puncta (*puncta inclinata*)  which follow the highest note in certain neums signify nothing of themselves as to time. By their very form they depend upon the high note preceding, and this is shewn by their slanting nature ; they are therefore to be performed as sounds linked together.

Single neums form one single unit in singing, however their parts be conjoined in writing ; so that the notes which follow the first do altogether seem to make one family with it, issuing forth and flowing with one common movement.

And because the notes of any one neum are joined both in notation and in chant, it is requisite also that the neums themselves be distinct one from another in sound as well as in appearance : which is accomplished in divers ways by sundry devices.

1. When several neums correspond to several syllables, the latter are clearly uttered so that the former are easily perceived. If this be the case, each neum borroweth its right quality and strength from the syllable to which it is set, in such wise that a neum is brought out with greater force if its own syllable bear a strong accent ; but with less force, if the nature of the syllable require a less prominent sound.

2. If several neums be fitted to the same syllable, the series is divided

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into sundry units, in such wise that some flow together as altogether connected parts of a whole (see A below) ; while others are separated either by a broader space (B) or by a short dividing line (C) and are marked by a certain delaying of the last note in their course, giving the opportunity if need be, for a quick replenishing of the breath. For example :

D   B   A   C   D   B   A   C   A   B

Ky- ri- e                    \*                                    \*\*

e- lé- i- son.

Care must be had to leave place for a rather more marked delay, though without a breathing-pause, if a tailed note (D) happen to close the neum to which it belongeth.

Following a 'golden rule', no pause may be made at the end of any neum if there follow a new syllable of a word as yet unfinished, whatever space intervene : not even a delaying on the last note ; and still less a silence, which would unfittingly break the word.

Divisions of sundry degree are to be employed in all chanting, according as the sense, whether of word or of song, shall demand or allow. For the help of singers, several kinds of bar-signs are given in quire books to-day, for the varying degrees of divisions or of pauses, in stress or in time ; to wit -

- 1 *divisio maior.*            2 *minor.*            3 *minima.*            4 *finalis.*

1. The full bar, greater division, or *divisio distinctionis* betokeneth a moderate drawing-out of the last note of the chant, and a full intake of breath.

2. The half-bar, or 'subdistinction', is for a very slight drawing-out, together with a short intake of breath.

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3. The shortest pause sheweth the smallest delaying of the sound, allowing (in case of need) for renewal of an exhausted supply of breath. If a singer should need often to replenish his lungs, he should gather his breath as it were surreptitiously, if ever the text or the chant give a little opening, but so that no word or neum be ever broken up.

4. The double bar closeth the chant itself, or one of its chief sections.

This double bar answereth commonly another purpose in quire books as shewing also the point at which the quire followeth on after the intonation of the chant, or at which the turns of the singing change. But inasmuch as a sign of this sort thrust in the midst of the chant maketh often an harmful break, it hath been found better to replace it for this purpose by an asterisk \*, as is seen in the foregoing example *Kyrie eleison*.

Now in this and other such places the single asterisk \* is used when the one quire which had heretofore been singing rests, while the other quire singeth alone ; but the double asterisk \*\* where both quires sing together, that the chant may, as is seemly, be finished by the voices of all in consort.

It is understood that when the flat sign  $\flat$  is used, it is in force until the natural  $\natural$ , or a bar-line, or a new word, shall be met.

These rules being understood, it is needful also for those who pay the meed of divine praise to be skilled in all the canons of the chant, and carefully to obey them, that so mind and voice may alway be in accord.

And first it is requisite that the words which are being sung shall be clearly and rightly understood (*Benedict XIV*). For it is meet that the chant develop rather than diminish the letters's meaning (*St. Bernard's Ep. 312*).

In every text, whether of lesson, or of psalmody, or of chant, let due regard be paid to the question whether the words rank as accentus or as concentus ; for thereby is a marvellous fragrance shed upon the understanding (*Instituta Patrum*).

And above all things let the greatest care be had lest the sacred chant lose its value by unevenness of singing. Let no neum nor note be prolonged unduly for an instant of time, nor compressed. Let us sing with one body of tone, pause together, as if we had always careful listeners. If our song be solemn, let our pause be the longer ; and that all the voices may sound in one (which is most needful) let each strive to sink his voice lowly into the consort of the choral song. Let us abhor

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every affectation of voice, all ostentation and singularity, and whatever calls up the histrionick ; nor let us copy those who fling forth the chant too lightly, or those who utter the syllables with undue pomposity ; let us rather sing every chant with such solemnity, yet with such movement, that we sing alway with ease of voice and a full sweet tone. (*Hucbald, Nicetas, Instituta Patrum*).

Thus far from the mouths of the hallowed Fathers : some of whom have learned of Angels their song, while others (by the Holy Spirit searching their hearts) have received it in contemplation. And if we strive earnestly to follow after their examples, we also shall receive an exquisite sweetness of mind, singing unto God in our hearts, by our spirit and understanding. (*Instituta Patrum*).

It behoveth also them upon whom is laid the duty of singing in the Church of God to be duly taught concerning the customs of their office. Wherefore are appended hereto the chiefest of the rules which belong unto the *Graduale*.