

# PREFACE.

At the present day, two notations are in use for the Plainsong melodies: the square traditional notation, and its modern transcription on the five-line staff; we give them side by side.

A musical notation must represent *melody* and *rhythm*. The melodic signs, or notes, show the relative pitch of the sounds; rhythmic signs help to indicate their length and the rhythmic movement of the melody.

## I. The melodic signs or neums.

### I. Their different forms.

#### A. SINGLE NOTES.

a. *Square punctum*



d. *Apostropha*



b. *Diamond note*



e. *Oriscus*



c. *Virga*



f. *Quilisma*



All these have the value of a single beat =

#### B. NEUMS OF TWO NOTES.

*Podatus*  
*or Pes*



*Clivis*



#### C. NEUMS OF THREE NOTES.

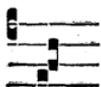
*Porrectus*



*Torculus*



*Scandicus*



*Climacus*



*Salticus*



## D. NEUMS OF MORE THAN THREE NOTES.

<p><i>Porrectus flexus</i></p>	<p><i>Torculus resupinus</i></p>
<p><i>Pes subbipunctis</i></p>	<p><i>Climacus resupinus</i></p>

## E. LIQUESCENT NEUMS.

<p><i>Epiphonus, or Liquescent Podatus</i></p>	<p><i>Liquescent Torculus</i></p>
<p><i>Cephalicus, or Liquescent Clivis</i></p>	<p><i>Ancus, or Liquescent Climacus</i></p>

## 2. Duration and value of the notes.

In themselves, all the notes in Plainsong, whatever their shape, and whether they occur singly or in groups (neums), are worth one single beat: the indivisible *unit of time*, that can be represented in modern notation by a quaver. This idea of the equal value of each note is very important, for it is the basis of rhythm.

Two signs may occur to change the length of a note:

a) **the dot** (·), which *doubles* the length of the note it follows, giving it the value of a crotchet:

b) **the horizontal episema** (-), which may affect a single note or a whole group, and indicates a slight lengthening of the note or of all the notes of the group.

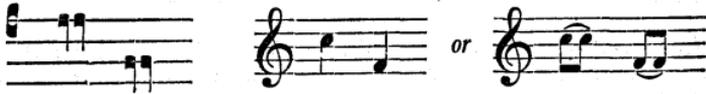
When the horizontal episema affects the last note or notes of a section or member (see below) it indicates nothing but the slight lengthening just mentioned; but if it affects a note or group *within* the section or member, it adds, as a rule, a shade of expression; in this case it is principally an expression mark.

Neither the dot nor the horizontal episema in themselves are marks of intensity.

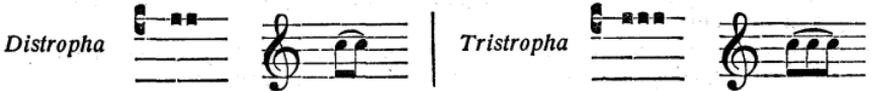
*N. B.* — **The vertical episema** (') has of itself absolutely no connection with length or intensity; it is purely a rhythmic sign, that is sometimes added to show the smallest steps of the rhythm or the rhythmic ictus that will be described below.

### 3. Remarks on some of the preceding notes or groups.

1. The *virga* is often repeated; it is then called a *bivirga* or double virga, represented in modern notation by a crotchet or two tied quavers.



2. The *apostropha* never occurs singly; it is found in a group of two (*distropha*), or three (*tristropha*), or even more.

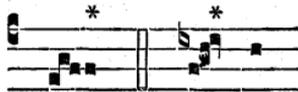


Formerly these notes were distinguished by a slight impulse or inflection of the voice. In practice, less skilful choirs are advised to sing the whole group of notes as one; though there may be a slight *crescendo* or *decrescendo* as the case may be. The ideal would be a light repercussion, as it were a fresh layer of sound, on each *apostropha*.

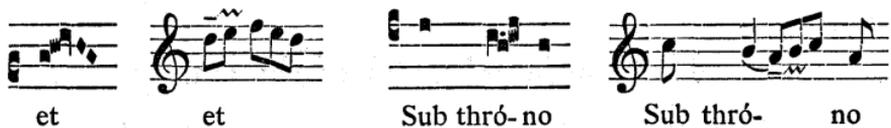
A repercussion is always necessary on the first *apostropha* of each group (*strophicus*); ex. : *a, b, c, d*; also on the first note of the following group when on the same degree of the scale; ex. *e, f*.



3. The *oriscus*, a kind of *apostropha*, ends a group on the same degree of the scale as the preceding note or a degree above : it should be sung lightly.



4. *Quilisma*. This jagged note is always preceded and followed by one or more other notes; its value is no less than that of others; but it is prepared for by a well-marked *ritardando* of the preceding note or group. When a group precedes the *quilisma*, the first note of that group is lengthened most, and the first note of a *podatus* or *clivis* is usually doubled, ex. below : *Sub throno*.



5. *Podatus*. Two notes, the lower coming first.

6. *Porrectus*. Three notes; the first and second at the two ends of the broad oblique stroke.

7. *Scandicus, climacus*. These two groups can be formed of three, four, five or more notes, without change of name.



8. *Salicus*. Not to be confused with the *scandicus*. It is marked in the Solesmes books by a vertical episema under the last note but one. Like the *scandicus*, it can be formed of more than three notes; but there is always an ictus on the note before the last.

9. *Flexus* (means : turned down). The neums are thus described which, normally ending on a higher note (e. g. the *porrectus*) are *inflected* or turned downwards by a further note.

*Resupinus* (turned up). Describes neums that, normally ending on a lower note (*torculus, climacus*), are *turned upwards* by a further note.

*Subpunctis*. Describes neums that, ending with a *virga*, are followed by diamond notes; if there are two of these, the neum is *subbipunctis*; if three, *subtripunctis*; and so on.

10. *Liquescent notes*. These are printed in smaller type. They occur where two vowels form a diphthong, or at the junction of certain consonants : to indicate that they must be sung lightly and carefully pronounced.

11. *Pressus*; two notes occurring side by side on the same degree of the scale, the second of which is the first of a group. This may happen in two ways :

a) by a *punctum* preceding the first note of a *clivis* :



b) by the juxtaposition of two neums, the last note of the former being on the same degree as the first of the latter :

<i>Podatus and Clivis</i>		<i>Climacus and Clivis</i>	
<i>Clivis and Clivis</i>		<i>Scandicus and Climacus</i>	

The two notes side by side are combined, and sung as one of double length; the ictus falling on the earlier of the two.

## II. General principles of rhythm.

### 1. Rhythm and the elements that compose it.

Rhythm, St. Augustine says, is "the art of well-ordered movement"; and Plato, "the ordering of movement". Essentially, then, rhythm is ordered movement; it results from that process of synthesis by which all and each of the

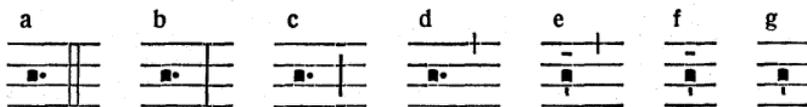
syllables of a word, all and each of the notes of a melody, surrender their individuality and enter into relation with the others, so as to form a new unity, that of the period or musical sentence.

This synthesis comprises a series of unities, each greater and more comprehensive than the last, linked together and completing one another, and which may be called respectively: elementary rhythmic units or rhythms, phrases, members, periods. The period is made up of members, the member of phrases, the phrase of elementary rhythms. These last are formed in turn of two or three single notes or beats, of equal value, as described above (p. x).

There is then, as all authorities agree, at the base of rhythm, a series of elementary rhythmic units, of small but complete steps, each formed of an *élan* or impulse and a *coming to rest*; or, as the ancient writers called them, an *arsis* and *thesis*. Thus rhythm can be compared with the movement of a man advancing step by step, or with that of the sea-waves, each step or each wave necessarily comprising a rise and fall, an impulse and a coming to rest. The rhythmic thesis or down-beat is nothing else but this coming to rest of the preceding impulse, the end of a step. Therefore it has nothing to do with intensity or force, but only with movement or *rhythm*.

It is precisely this thesis, the end of the elementary rhythm or step, that is also called the "rhythmic ictus"; and the vertical episema is merely a distinctive sign placed under (occasionally over) the note (■), to show the place of the ictus where there may be a doubt of this.

In the same way, the musical "punctuation marks", or bar-lines, form a graduated series; and thus all the rhythmical units are clearly shown, from the greatest to the smallest:



- a) marks the end of the piece, or a change of choir,
- b) » » of the period,
- c) » » of the member,
- d), e) » » of the phrase (*incise*),
- f) » » of still smaller units (as a rule),
- g) » » of the elementary unit, the single step<sup>1</sup>.

In this descending scale of signs, all alike are quite unconnected with intensity of sound; they all belong to the order of movement; each is no more than a musical punctuation-mark. Thus, at the very first glance, the progress of the rhythm is orderly and clear: steps, phrases, members, periods, are distinctly shown; and all these units respectively, clearly marked out and defined, with their individual existence, coalesce with one another to express finally *the unity of the whole piece*. — It should be noticed that, except for the horizontal episema, none of these various signs exists as such in the manuscripts, neither bar-lines, dots, nor vertical episemas.

<sup>1</sup> The comma  is only a breathing-sign, to be subtracted from the length of the preceding note. 

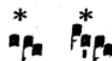


2. On all **sustained**<sup>1</sup> notes, that is :

a) dotted notes :



b) the first note of the pressus:



c) the note that precedes a quillisma:

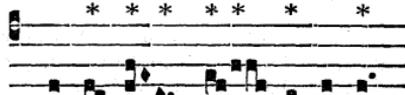


3. The first note of each group,    , unless it is immediately preceded or followed by an ictus; since two ictus side by side would produce syncopation.

N. B. — In purely syllabic chant, the ictus falls naturally on the last syllable of a word, and in the case of a dactyl (with two syllables after the accent; a spondee has only one), also on the tonic accent. But this is only a general guide, not an absolute rule; since the rise and fall of the melody and the literary context often modify the character of a particular word.

Kyrie XIII is here given as an example of the application of the above rules (each ictus is marked with an asterisk) :

I	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	*	*	*	*	*	*



Ky-ri- e e- lé- i-son.

Ictus 6 is shown by the vertical episema (1);

3 and 7 by the dotted note (2a);

5 by the beginning of the pressus (2b);

1, 2 and 4 by the first note of a group (3).

Since then it often happens that the place of the ictus is shown by the notes themselves, without need for the vertical episema, this is usually added only when the notation does not make it sufficiently clear. It must be fully understood that an ictus marked by the vertical episema is neither stronger nor more important than the rest; it is only given a special sign in order to be identified more readily.

Each ictus has its particular importance according to the syllable corresponding to it and the place it holds in the flow of the melody; and equally it is due to this syllable and this place that it has its special role in the general arsis or thesis of the phrase or member, as will be shown in the following paragraph.

### 3. The rhythmic synthesis.

All the units of rhythm enumerated above — elementary steps, phrases, members, periods — have a part to play in the general rhythm, for which alone they exist. This is why, after having made sure of the internal unity of each of them, one must co-ordinate them in relation to the whole.

<sup>1</sup> Note that the horizontal episema (—) does not imply a rhythmic ictus, since it does not always indicate a considerable lengthening of the note, but merely a shade of expression.





The sung psalm-verse, when complete, contains: *a) the intonation (initium)*; *b) the recitation or dominant*; *c) the cadences*, of which the first occurs at the end of the first half-verse, and is called *the mediant (mediatio)*; and the second, at the end of the second half-verse, called *the ending (terminatio)*.

When the first half of the verse is too long, it is divided by a half-cadence, known as *the flex (flexa †)*, because the melody is inflected; and the voice makes a very brief pause in order to take breath.

The simple or solemn forms for the eight tones and the *Peregrinus* are given complete at the beginning of each Psalm or Canticle.

*Intonation.* The *intonation* is the section of the melody which, at the beginning of each psalm, connects the ending of the Antiphon with the recitation. It is formed of two or three notes or groups, adapted to the same number of syllables.

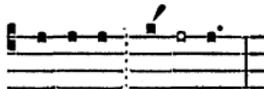
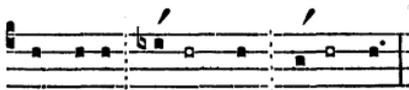
In ordinary psalmody the intonation is used only for the first verse; the others begin at once with the recitation. Where the intonation is repeated in each verse, as in the *Magnificat*, this is always shown.

When several psalms, each concluded by *Gloria Patri*, are sung under a single antiphon, the first verse of each must be intoned by the cantor as far as the mediant with the *full intonation*. (See *Compline*, p. 228). This is shown in each case.

*Recitation and Flex.* The *recitation* consists of all the notes sung on one degree of the scale between the intonation and the mediant, and between the mediant and the ending. To sing it well, the rules of good reading should be observed, above all of *accentuation*. The recitation must not be broken by any pause, except that of the flex when it occurs. In this case, the melodic interval is shown after the first verse.

*Cadences.* The melodic cadences — mediants and endings — are shown at the head of each psalm according to the mode in which it is to be sung. The choice of ending, if more than one exists, depends on the preceding antiphon.

The cadences in psalmody, whether mediants or endings, are of two kinds:

																											
A. Cadence with one accent	<table style="border-left: 1px solid black; border-right: 1px solid black; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">spondaic</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">( / . )</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">dactylic</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">( / . . )</td> </tr> </table>	spondaic	( / . )	dactylic	( / . . )	<table style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">Dómi-no</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">mé-</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">o</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">pú-e-ri</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">Dómi-num</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Dómi-no	mé-	o	pú-e-ri	Dómi-num																
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B. Cadence with two accents		<table style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">in tó-to</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">cór-</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">de</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">mé-</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">o</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">pú-</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">e-ri</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">Dómi-</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">num</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">cór-</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">am</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">te</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">fé-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">co-</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">gno-</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">ví-</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">sti</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">me</td> </tr> </table>	in tó-to	cór-	de	mé-	o		pú-	e-ri	Dómi-	num		cór-	am	te	fé-		co-	gno-	ví-	sti					me
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c) dactylic-spondaic	( / . . / . )																										
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It will be seen that wherever a *dactylic* form occurs, an extra note, (a hollow note □), on the weak penultimate (last but one) syllable, is added to the melody.

Besides this, a large number of cadences — mediants or endings — have before the last accented note or group *one, two, or three preparatory syllables*. In the psalmody of the Office these cadences are easily recognised, because they

leave the recitation note for a *lower* note (except the mediant of the solemn V mode).

Preparatory syllables before the accent of the cadence :

one syllable :		Mode 6
two syllables :		4
three syllables :		Pereg.

Some practical remarks :

1. Before each psalm will be found a brief note explaining the nature of the cadences, both mediant and ending, to which the words must be adapted.

2. The accented syllables in each cadence, whether a tonic accent, secondary accent, or some syllable that takes the accent's place, that are to be sung on the accented notes, are all printed in *heavy type*.

3. The syllable or syllables preparatory to the melodic accent are printed in *italics*.

4. The position of the notes added on weak penultimate syllables is shown by the hollow notes in the cadences, which are always given in full for the first verse of each psalm.

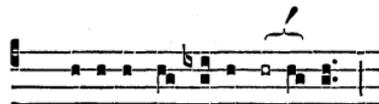
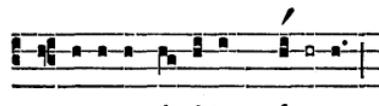
*Additional notes on the accent.* Some cadences, both mediate and final, provide a difficulty. When the last melodic accent of a spondaic cadence is a *clivis*, **A**, the *dactylic* cadences are treated as shown in line **B** :

<b>A</b>	
Spondaic Form	<p>séde a <i>dextris</i> <b>mé</b>-is in <b>córde</b> <b>mé</b>-o</p>
<b>B</b>	
Dactylic Form	<p>órdirnem <i>Melchí</i>-<b>se</b>-dech ópe-ra <b>Dó</b>mi-ni</p>

In this case the accent of the text is not sung on the *clivis*, as for a spondaic cadence, but on an *anticipated additional note*; and the *clivis* takes the weak penultimate syllable. This is to preserve the smoothness of the melodic cadence.

How is one to recognise these cadences and where the additional note on the accent falls? Attention is drawn to them before each psalm in which they occur; and in the music they are shown by a bracket over and including the *additional note* and the *clivis*. The place of the additional note itself is shown at the beginning of each psalm. In the text, the anticipated accent and the penultimate syllable on the clivis are both printed in *heavy type*. See line **B**, above.

*Solemn psalm-tones.* The solemn forms of each tone are given at the beginning of the *Magnificat*, p. 218-223. They all fall into the same classes as the simple forms. The solemn cadence of I and VI modes is, in the Vatican Edition, included among mediants of two accents; but one is now authorized by Rome to consider this at choice as *a cadence of one accent with three preparatory syllables*<sup>1</sup>. If this is done, all the cadences of the same melodic pattern are treated in the same way, thus avoiding an extra difficulty<sup>2</sup>:

	<b>Tones</b>  <b>1, 6</b>
	<b>2, 8</b>
	<b>4</b>

*Tonus peregrinus.* One is also allowed to add a *sol* before the *si* to the mediant of this tone: the older form of cadence. It will then conform to the general rule, having one accent with three preparatory syllables.

*N. B.* In spondaic cadences one could, if preferred, double the length of the tonic accent; but it is much better merely to sing it more broadly, leaving it *on the up-beat of the rhythm*.

<sup>1</sup> This cadence is not derived from the simple form of 1st tone, but from a simple form of 6th with one accent and three preparatory syllables.

<sup>2</sup> When this authorisation was given, one of which all can take advantage, it was pointed out that this procedure is in the spirit of the *Motu proprio* of 25 April 1904, and also in accordance with the Decree of 8 July 1912 on the singing of monosyllables and Hebrew words in the Lessons, Versicles and Psalms.