

Some Things to be Noted in Advance

taken from the *Liber Hymnarius* (1983)

Some Rules to be Observed in Chanting

as put forth by the Monks of Solesmes

I. Concerning Neumes

For this edition of the revised Roman Antiphonal, the typographical figures of musical notation received in common use have also been revised.

A neume, which consists of all the notes sung on the same syllable, can be extended to a greater or lesser degree.

These are the different figures of which neumes are composed:

NEUMÆ AUT NEUMARUM ELEMENTA	EXEMPLA FIGURARUM		
	FIGURÆ RECTÆ	FIGURÆ LIQUESCENTES	
		AUCTÆ	DEMINUTÆ
1. PUNCTUM	• •	• • •	•
2. VIRGA	┆		
3. APOSTROPHA	’	’	
4. ORISCUS	•		
5. CLIVIS	↗	↗ ↘	↘
6. PODATUS	↖	↖ ↗	↗
7. PES QUASSUS	↗	↗	
8. QUILISMA-PES	↖	↖	
9. PODATUS INITIO DEBILIS	↖	↖	
10. TORCULUS	↖↗	↖↗	↗↖
11. TORCULUS INITIO DEBILIS	↖↗	↖↗	↖↗
12. PORRECTUS	↖↗↖	↖↗↖	↖↗↖
13. CLIMACUS	↖↗↖↗	↖↗↖↗	↖↗↖↗
14. SCANDICUS	↖↗↖↗↖	↖↗↖↗↖	↖↗↖↗↖
15. SALICUS	↖↗↖↗↖↗	↖↗↖↗↖↗	
16. TRIGONUS	↖↗↖↗↖↗↖		

II. How Much Value the Different Notes Have

A. Concerning the value indicated by the notation itself

When any average syllable has one note attached to it, this note represents the fundamental value applied in Gregorian chant (i.e. the medium syllabic value).

When, however, a certain syllable has several notes attached to it, the sound of each note rightly becomes shorter than the syllabic value described above, because of course it is lightened by the enunciation of the consonants (diminished value). Nevertheless the last note of a neume, as especially so if it is again rising in pitch, tends toward regaining the syllabic value.

A horizontal *episema*, when it affects the singing of a single note on a given syllable, indicates that the syllabic value must be increased (augmented value). On the other hand, the last syllable of any word, when affected by one note alone, tends towards this increased value by the weight of the syllable itself.

On the contrary, when an *episema* falls within a neume of several notes, the diminished value that note has must be brought back to the normal syllabic value.

The first note of any neumes that have a weak initial note and the *quilisma* note is *per se* of diminished value: these weak notes are written in combination with other notes.

B. Concerning the compensation of value in syneresis

In whatever [melodic] formula [that is] subject at one time to dieresis, at another time to syneresis, a horizontal *episema* indicates the syneresis of notes; a vertical *episema*, however, demonstrates the prior note of a dieresis. With the use of both these signs combined, it can be understood either that the syllabic value remains in the syneresis or that the integrity of the [melodic] structure is preserved in dieresis.

C. Concerning the interpretative force of [these] values

A vertical *episema*, the smallest disjunctive sign, is used for signaling the endings of a text or of the elements of a melody, from which [it] does not necessarily follow [that there is] any increase of the values [of these notes].

The dot employed after certain notes for the delay of the voice is used for indicating interpretative time at the end of clausal units.

IV. Concerning the Repercussion and the Uniting of Vowel Sounds

In accordance with the primitive gregorian notation it is agreed that two or more notes of the same pitch in the same syllable are never joined into one sound: wherefore let each one of the notes in [a combination of] stropha, in the trigon or in every combination of this sort be reperculated.

When there is a transition from one word to another on the same vowel, if [it occurs] on the same pitch, [the notes] are reperculated; if however [it occurs] on different pitches, [the notes] are combined into one [vowel sound] (crasis).

The principles of this proem flow out of the polished matching of a sacred text with a gregorian melody. For that reason whoever gives attentive effort to Latin diction in singing, by that very fact already possesses very many of the requisites for executing Gregorian chant properly.

The following example is a summary of the rhythmic guidelines given above in this Prenotanda:

de quo ipse testatur: * Nullus maior

- Neuma exsignis excussis: 8 – 10;
- neumae elementum ex signis ligatis: 3 – 6;
- diremptio neumatica ascendens: 11;
- diremptio neumatica descendens: 28;
- diremptio neumatica neutralis: 10;
- valor syllabicus medius: 1, 2, 21;
- valor syllabicus recuperatus:
 - per episema transversum: 8, 17 – 19, 23 – 24, 27 – 28,
 - per diremptionem neumaticam: 11, 28,
 - ante vel post quilisma: 12 – 14, 16,
 - in ultima notula neumae: 6, insuper 16 ac 24;
- valor syllabicus auctus:
 - in fine verbi: 7,
 - in fine membri: 33,
 - in fine periodi: 20;
- valor syllabicus deminutus: 3 – 5, 9 – 10, 25 – 26, 29 – 32;
- valor syllabicus deminutior: 15, 22.

Translation of the terms used in the preceding example:

- a neume element composed of separate signs: 8-10;
- a neume element composed of signs joined together: 3-6;
- ascending neumatic separation: 11;
- descending neumatic separation: 28;
- neutral neumatic separation: 10;
- normal (“medius”) syllabic value: 1, 2, 21;
- recovered (“recuperatus”) syllabic value:
 - through the use of the horizontal episema: 8, 17-19, 23-24, 27-28,
 - through neumatic separation: 11, 28,
 - notes before or after the quilisma: 12-14, 16,
 - on the last note of a neume: 6, as well as 16 and 24;
- increased syllabic value:
 - at the end of a word: 7,
 - at the end of a member phrase: 33,
 - at the end of a period unit: 20;
- diminished syllabic value: 3-5, 9-10, 25-26, 29-32;
- even further diminished syllabic value: 15, 22.

Remarks about the “Punctum Mora” (cf. end of Page 2)

The medieval scribes used a dot system of punctuation based on Greek rhetorical theory, which divided written works – meant to be read aloud – into rhythmic sections of different lengths. They marked the end of a short section, known as a *comma*, with a dot placed after the middle of the last letter. A longer section – a *colon* – was marked by a low dot, and the longest section, or *periodos*, by a high dot. This has evolved into our period at the end of a complete sentence with only one of these three meanings — to indicate the end of a complete thought!

Beginning with this (1983) edition of the *Liber Hymnarus*, the Solesmes monks are attempting to restore a richer and more nuanced meaning to the use of the dot (the “Punctum Mora”) after certain notes in the chant editions. On the other hand, they intend it to be used only for indicating interpretative time at the end of clausal units that demand **varying degrees** of “delay of the voice” as suggested by the text — not for a particular note within a neume of several notes (cf. the first note – a virga with a dot – over the final syllable of *Chri-ste* in Mass XI)!