

GREGORIAN NOTATION

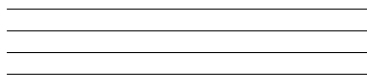
Note: The isolated musical mark which is the basis of the melodic structure.

Neume: A melodic figure composed of several *notes* chanted in one emission of breath on one single syllable.

Group: Several *neumes* on the same syllable which come together to be considered as one larger element.

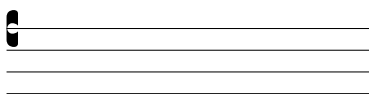
FOUR-LINE STAFF

The Gregorian staff has four lines; the first line is on the bottom, the fourth on the top. With the interline spaces, the scale has nine degrees; one line above and below the staff are also possible. Nowadays, we use the usual diatonic scale (Do, Re, Mi...Si, Do) with the half-steps between Mi and Fa as well as Si and Do, but the pitch is relative, and the scale never begins on Do.

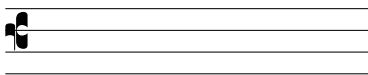


CLEFS

The Do or Ut clef indicates Do.

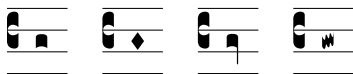


This clef indicates Fa and is only on the second or third line.



NOTES AND NEUMES

The *punctum* (“point”) is the basic indivisible note. All *puncta* carry an equal weight, with nuance coming from the text and the melody. Certain descending notes are represented by a diamond, those with a stem are known as *virga*, and the *quilisma* with its sawtooth shape slightly lengthens the preceding note. The *punctum* is transcribed by an eighth note.



The dot yields a *punctum mora* that is doubled (transcribed by a quarter note).



In chant, Si alone can be flattened. The flat continues to the next bar line, the end of a word, or the natural sign as well as to line breaks. Some chants have a flat marked on the staff.

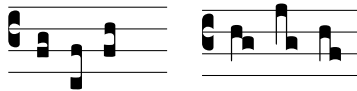
tu so- lus sanctus.

The *custos* provides the first pitch of the next line or the pitch following a movement of the clef.

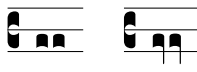
cru- cis. ¶. Propter quod et De- us ex-al

Notes placed together form neumes, simple neumes of two or three notes, and compound neumes are several neumes and additional notes placed together or special forms of the simple neumes.

The *podatus* or *pes* (“foot”) is sung from top to bottom, and its opposite is the *divis* (“inclined”) or *flexus* (“curved”).



The *bistropa* and *bivirga* are two *puncta* or *virga* on the same scale degree and without separation on one syllable. They are fused for two pulses; tied eighth notes are used to represent these neumes in modern notation. The second note receives a light crescendo.



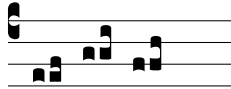
The *scandicus* (“ascent”) and its cousin the *salicus* (“jump”) are ascending groups of three neumes. The classic form of the scandicus is the first, but one

often finds the second; in either case, the *podatus* is not separated from the *punctum*.

In the Solesmes editions, the second note of the *salicus* is marked by the *ictus*, which brings a nuance of expression to the note; the *podatus* is slightly separated.



The *salicus* of the Vatican Edition must be taken into account.



The inverse form is called the *climacus*, as it resembles a ladder.



Like the *bistropa*, the *tristropa* is composed of three *puncta* sung as one unified ternary pulse; there is no form with the *virga*.



The *torculus* (“twisted”) is a neume which ascends and then descends, whereas the opposite neume, the *porrectus*, (“extended”) stands out with the extension of the first note to the second.



The *climacus*, the *scandicus*, and the *salicus* can have additional notes.



Compound neumes take several forms. Firstly, descending neumes rise (a neume *resupinus*), affecting the *climacus* and the *torculus*. Note that the second more common form of the *torculus* is not a *porrectus*.



Secondly, ascending neumes descend (a neume *flexus*), affecting the *scandicus*, of which there are two forms, the *salicus*, and the *porrectus*.



Finally, additional descending neumes are referred to as *subpunctis* (*subbipunctis*, *subtripunctis*, and rarely *subquadripunctis*) These are not to be confused for a *climacus*. For example, the *podatus*, the *bivirga*, the *porrectus*, and the *scandicus* can all be followed by additional *puncta*.



Neumes may be both *flexus resupinus* at once like this *torculus resupinus flexus*, or be *subpunctis* and *resupinus*; a *porrectus subbipunctis resupinus* is given.



The *pressus* takes two forms. The *pressus major* is formed by a note preceding a *clivis* on the same degree. Two neumes or a *punctum* and any other neume — virtually all of the above — form the *pressus minor*. The note is sung as one sound of two pulses in either case.



However, the first note of a neume is *repercussed* when a *bistropha* or *tristropha* and the *bivirga* precede a neume.

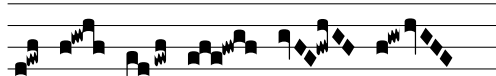


Like the *pressus*, the *oriscus* forms at the meeting of a *punctum* and a neume, which in this case comes first, and they are sung in the same way, the only difference being that this note is sung lightly, being the end of the neume.

Notice that the *virga* exceptionally receives the same treatment.



The basic form of the *quilisma* (“action of rolling”) has been treated. However, it is always in the middle of a neume, never first, never last, never alone, and one sings lightly onwards to the higher third note. When analyzing a chant, the first note is a *punctum* or a neume of multiple notes, then we take the next notes as they come, e.g. a *quilisma podatus*, *quilisma torculus*, etc. The combination of notes and neumes form a *group*. One finds very rarely a *quilisma* on the same degree as the preceding *punctum*. A shake (or mordent) having almost the same form but rotated ninety degrees is employed when transcribing.

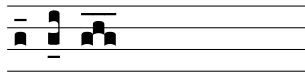


Finally, the *liquescent* can be found on virtually all neumes. When found on the *podatus*, it is called an *epiphonus*; on the *clivis*, the *cephalicus*; and on the *climacus*, the *ancus*. The relevant note curls, though more usually in the case of the *climacus*, smaller notes are used, which is how it is transcribed in round notation. Its use is apparently due to pronunciation, but nothing changes in the melodic interpretation.



INTERPRETATION AND RHYTHM

The *punctum mora* doubles the length of a note; the note before a *quilisma* is lengthened. In like manner, the horizontal *episema* lengthens the note, although the choirmaster must always study the context.



The *ictus* (“pulse”) is both a marking and something which is unseen. It can refer to the vertical tick sometimes referred to as the *vertical episema* found on some notes as well as to something of which the choirmaster is aware when conducting. It is the moment where the movement falls again after having

been launched, connecting the arrival and departure of the chant.

This pulse is thus the end and the beginning, and it applies to:

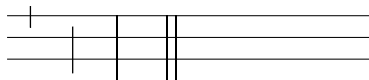
1. All notes marked as such.
2. All long notes
 - *Puncta mora*
 - The first note of the *pressus*
 - The note before the *oriscus*
3. The first note of a neume, unless it is immediately preceded or followed by an *ictus*:
 - The second note of the *salicus* in the Solesmes editions is ictic.
 - The note before the *quilisma* is ictic.
 - A *punctum* before a neume such as a *torculus*, not belonging to another neume or group, is ictic. (Some are marked by Solesmes.)

The rules are modified for syllabic chant, notably psalmody and certain hymns or sequences.

1. Choose the last syllable if possible.
2. Place the *ictus* on the accent of a dactyl.
3. Try to avoid placing the *ictus* on the accent of a ternary group.
4. Try not to avoid placing the *ictus* on the penultimate syllable of a dactyl.

BARS

The text determines the melodic movement and the singing, which is informed by the following guidelines, in order to put the text in relief.



- Quarter bar = Comma, marking a dependent part of the text. No rhythmic stop; in principle, no breath is taken except as needed individually.

- Half bar = Semicolon, marking a more complete but subordinate text. No rhythmic stop; if the preceding note lacks an *episema* or is an ordinary *punctum*, not a *punctum mora*, one must not breathe.
- Whole bar = Colon, bringing one sentence or complete thought to its conclusion.
 - If the following note is the first pulse of a binary or ternary count, the breath is taken over two pulses (indicated by a quarter note in some transcriptions). If it is instead an isolated *punctum* before a marked rhythmic *ictus*, then only one pulse is taken to breathe (indicated by an eighth note in some transcriptions).
 - The conclusion of a phrase suggests a ritardando or at least a decrescendo.
- Double bar = End, period. The final rhythmic stop is made here, and breathing is taken as it is the end of the chant or of a series of phrases. Ordinarily, one should slow down at the end of the piece.

In the case of alternating chants such as the Ordinary of the Mass and the hymns of the Office, the double bar is equivalent to a whole bar; in the latter case, the half bar is like a whole bar. The bar itself is the first time in cases where an isolated neume follows immediately.

OTHER INDICATIONS

These textual markings guide the chanter.

- The asterisk (*) indicates the entrance of the entire schola or choir. At the end of certain chants like the *Kyrie* and the solemn Marian antiphons, the choirs switch mid-phrase and finish as one, marked by * and ** respectively.
 - In some pieces, only the quarter bar tells the choir to enter, and in responsories, a single * marks the repetition of part of the chant by the whole schola.
 - The * in psalmody indicates the entrance in doubled antiphons sung in full before and after the psalm, and it also indicates the *mediant*. A pause of two pulses (about the length of “Ave”) is made by the cantors. Either, a) the cantors continue, and the whole choir sings “even” verses or b) one side (or male or female

chanters) continues, followed by the other side (or the other sex or the congregation); in any case, at subsequent verses, it indicates the pause alone, as the text passes from one thought to the next.

- Roman or Arabic numerals from I to VIII to the left of a score indicate the *mode*, which gives us the note that begins the scale — Re, Mi, Fa, or Sol — as well as the *dominant* degree.
 - The mode followed by letters, stars, or numbers indicate the psalmodic endings.
- The syllables of psalms are often marked with a pattern of bold and italics to indicate the changes of pitch at the mediant and the *final* (the end of a verse).
 - A dagger (†) indicates that the pitch changes in the usual eight tones by a second (I, IV, and VII) or, if this be a half-step, a minor third (modes II, III, V, and VIII).
- Repeats are indicated by *bis* or, more often, *ij.*; the *Kyrie* uses *ijj.* when each strophe is sung three times.
- *ψ.* and *ϣ.* mean *verse* and *response*. Sometimes, *ψ.* means the versicle following a chant, sometimes it indicates the strophes (the verses) sung by a cantor, such as in the Tract or in the responsories of Matins.
- Exceptional breaths are indicated by)^{b} (like in modern music), and a select few chants use ~ to unite two phrases in between which would ordinarily be a pause.

Finally, in psalmody, a *punctum cavum* or hollow note represents the scale degree on which to sing additional syllables in longer phrases of the psalm, whether before the mediant, that is, before the asterisk, or before the final.

