

PREFACE.

Modern notation is used in this book in response to requests which have reached us from all parts for some time past. France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, England, Canada, the United States and other regions abound in colleges, schools, choirs, missions, whole dioceses even, where rightly or wrongly it is maintained that the sacred chants will never come into popular use, if they are written in square notation. In such places we frequently hear of plain-song being entirely neglected, and too often replaced by the most commonplace melodies. Thus the taste and appreciation of true sacred music have finally disappeared in even thoroughly catholic quarters.

How are they to be revived? How are we to get catholics to appreciate and love the chosen chant of Holy Church, unless we meet their wishes and do our best to help them, by giving them under the well-known forms of modern music the ancient plain-song of the Roman Church?

The love of archæology for its own sake may be carried to extravagance. There is no need to imitate the monks of St Gall, who, up to the XVth century, refused to adopt the progress shown in the Guidonian notation, and carefully preserved their own neumatic lineless notation, so difficult to understand. The event proved the unreasonableness of their conduct. On the other hand both wisdom and charity are shown in yielding to the progress of different periods, and in sacrificing one's personal preferences in order to conform to the needs and disabilities of a large number of people.

Gregorian notation, completed and brought to the ancient perfection of the Romanian period, must remain the official ecclesiastical notation; but side by side with it, modern notation, despite its less imposing claims, may still be very highly useful.

But can Gregorian melodies be transcribed into modern notation with faithfulness?

Undoubtedly : nor can anything be easier than so to transcribe them. To ensure strict fidelity, it is enough to employ the signs used in the same sense as the Gregorian characters. This is just the point. For in reality, in spite of the tones, the modes, the gamut, the rhythmical groupings, the length of the notes, remain the same : there is no change either in the melody or the rhythm ; so that it matters little whether the note is represented by a round sign or a square one, by a letter or even by a figure. A choir, singing the same piece in the two notations, will not fail to keep perfectly together, provided that the whole has been correctly transcribed. Do we not constantly find that organists, in their anxiety to accompany plain-song correctly, write their harmonies in modern notation, while the choir makes use of square notation ?

It has been said that to transcribe plain-song in modern notation is to copy the method of learning to speak a modern language by changing the spelling of the words and indicating the pronunciation by the use of figures. It is easy to point out the difficulties arising from such transcriptions in spite of their practical advantages. They accustom the eye of the pupil to faulty spelling and to a pronunciation which may be approximate but can never be exact.

But this analogy is less true than apparent. If we are to take a comparison from modern languages, there is only one which is possible. It is when the same language is printed in two different types : as when a word or

phrase is represented in both ancient black-letter and in modern characters *e. g.* ordinary Long Primer, without making any difference, the sense and sound remaining unchanged. So it is with the two notations, Gregorian and modern.

It may be supposed that the precision of modern notation is inconsistent with the freedom of movement that characterises the Gregorian recitative. But this is a mistake : for modern notation has its recitative *ad libitum*. It does not then make use of another notation : it only does away with bars, leaving the performer an even greater freedom than is found in the liturgical melodies. Nor must the freedom that characterises Gregorian rhythm be misunderstood. Certainly neither time nor time-bars, in the sense in which they are too often understood in modern music, are adapted to the suppleness of plain-song. Yet this suppleness is not without a precision of its own : for old authors while teaching the measure of musical oratory (*in modum soluta oratione legentis — in modum historię recto et tranquillo cursu*), in order to make it better understood, did not shrink from borrowing their comparisons — though they were comparisons only — from a very exact science, viz : metrical science.

Furthermore Hucbald (IX-X centuries) considered rhythmical precision absolutely indispensable. In his *Commemoratio brevis* he does not hesitate to recommend the choirmaster to mark the march of the rhythm by a beat of the hand or foot, so as to impress on children from the earliest age the theory and practice (*disciplina*) of rhythm (*canendi æquitas sive numerositas*).

Hence the rhythmical precision we have adopted is in no way inconsistent with genuine tradition as to the execution of plain-song. But the most exact notation cannot dispense with artistic taste, nor, since the liturgical chants are prayers, can it do without piety and love.

I.

Notes and signs
used in transcribing into modern notation.

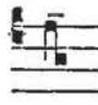
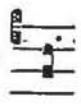
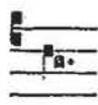
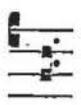
A. SIMPLE NOTES.

Ordinary plain-song notation comprises eight forms of single or simple notes.

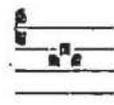
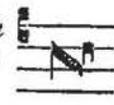
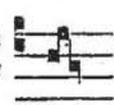
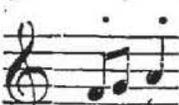
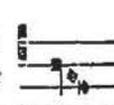
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|---|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Punctum</i> or square note : ■ 2. <i>Punctum</i> or diamond note : ◆ 3. <i>Virga</i> : 4. <i>Apostropha</i> : 5. <i>Oriscus</i> : | } | <p>These five are represented in modern notation by one sign : <i>i. e.</i> a quaver </p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. <i>Square note with episema</i>
or <i>ictus of subdivision</i> : ■ 7. <i>Diamond note with episema</i> : | } | <p>are shown by a point over a quaver thus :  or </p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. <i>Quilisma</i> : | } | <p>is indicated by  along with a quaver  or </p> |

NOTE. — The point, following a gregorian note, indicates a *mora vocis*, and nearly doubles the length of the note. Thus a note with a point after it is shown by a crotchet : = 

B. NEUMS OF TWO NOTES.

<i>Pes or Podatus</i>			<i>Clivis</i>		
<i>Pes Ritard.</i>			<i>Clivis ritard.</i>		
<i>Pes with one point</i>			<i>Clivis with one point</i>		
<i>Pes with two points</i>			<i>Clivis with two points</i>		

C. NEUMS OF THREE NOTES.

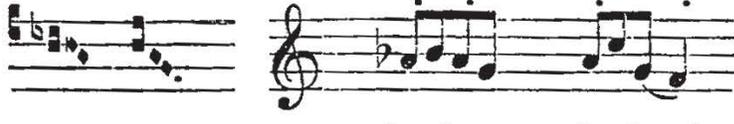
<i>Porrectus</i>			<i>Torculus</i>		
<i>Porrectus with a point</i>			<i>Torculus with a point</i>		
<i>Porrectus with episema on the last note</i>			<i>Torculus with episema on the last note</i>		
<i>Scandicus</i>			<i>Climacus</i>		
<i>Scandicus with a point</i>			<i>Climacus with a point</i>		
<i>Scandicus with episema on the last note</i>			<i>Climacus with episema in the last note</i>		

NOTE. — Observe the difference in the plainsong notation between the *Salicus* and the *Scandicus*. The first note of the *Salicus* is separated from the next note, which means that the *ictus* is on the second note, not on the first, as in the *Scandicus*.

Salicus




D. NEUMS OF MORE THAN THREE NOTES.

<i>Porrectus flexus</i>	
<i>Scandicus flexus</i>	
<i>Salicus flexus</i>	
<i>Torculus resupinus</i>	
<i>Climacus resupinus</i>	
<i>Pes subbipunctis</i>	
<i>Scandicus subbipunctis</i>	

E. LIQUESCENT NEUMS.

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

F. PECULIARITIES.

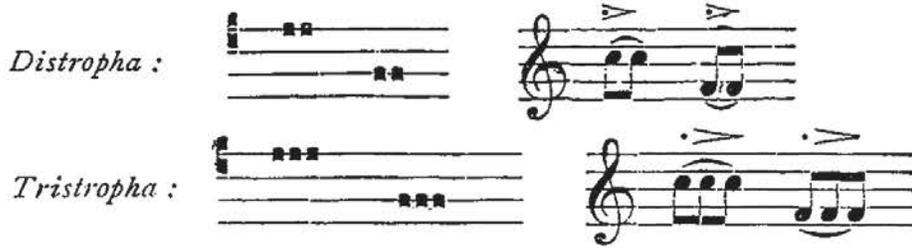
In our transcriptions we have made use of modern notation as far as possible; but nevertheless we have tried to give them a stamp which might recall some of the peculiarities of plain-song notation

They are as follows :

1. *The double virga.* — The *virga* shows a note which is relatively higher. It is often doubled, and is then called *bivirga*. It is represented by two quavers united by a slur.



2. The *apostropha* is never found alone and may be repeated twice — *distropha*, or three times — *tristropha*, or even more often.



The distinction of the notes in the *distropha* and *tristropha* is kept as in plain-song, but the slurs above or beneath the notes show they must be slurred in practice. This at any rate is our interpretation. Possibly these notes were formerly distinguished by a slight impulse or stress in the voice. In practice we advise choirs to join the notes. The sign < or > shows that according to circumstances they may be sung lightly *crescendo* or *decrescendo*. The sign adds nothing to the strength of notes over which it is found. Their strength, like the strength of all Gregorian notes, is determined by their relation to a given syllable, or by their place in the melody.

3. *Oriscus*. — This is a kind of *apostropha* which is found at the end of a group, most frequently between two *torculi*.



It has the same notation and execution as the *distropha*, but it must be sung very lightly.

4. *Pressus*. — This is when two notes meet on the same pitch, which may occur thus :

a) when a *punctum* precedes the first note of a *clivis* :



b) when two neums meet, the last note of the first corresponding with the first note of the second.



The two notes in juxtaposition in the Gregorian notation combine in practice only making one, of double length, with a strong *ictus*. The transcription of the *pressus* into two joined quavers equalling a crotchet has the advantage of retaining some likeness to the Gregorian notation. The point with *sforzato* (\wedge) over the first of the two quavers shows the place of the *ictus*, making the singing quite easy.

5. *Quilisma*. — This indented note is always preceded and followed by one or more notes. Its value is the same as that of other notes, but it has a retrospective effect : its execution is always prepared for by a light *ritardando* of the note or group which precedes it. In modern notation this is indicated by the little line placed above such notes. When a group precedes the *quilisma*, it is the first note of the group which is lengthened and emphasised : thus the first note of a *podatus* or *clivis* may be looked upon as doubled e. g. *sub throno Dei* below :

The image shows four musical staves. The top two staves are for the phrase 'et super'. The left staff shows Gregorian notation with square neumes on a four-line staff. The right staff shows modern notation with quarter notes on a five-line staff, featuring a 'quilisma' (a note with a small line above it) and a 'podatus' (a group of notes with a wedge-shaped accent over the first note). The bottom two staves are for the phrase 'Sub throno Dei'. The left staff shows Gregorian notation. The right staff shows modern notation with a 'quilisma' and a 'clivis' (a group of notes with a wedge-shaped accent over the first note).

II.

Pauses, *Moræ vocis*, Breathing.

It has been noted that, in transcribing notes and neums, all notes whatever their position in a group, are represented by a quaver. Therefore double notes in the Gregorian notation, *distropha*, *oriscus*, *pressus*, are the same as crotchets, or two joined quavers, and triple notes (*tristropha*) are like dotted crotchets, or three joined quavers. In reality, the syllabic chant has every note of a length and stress corresponding to the syllable to which it belongs : but the average value of a syllable may be reckoned as a quaver.

Nevertheless this reckoning of notes and syllables is often modified by their position in the textual or musical phrase, specially at the end of passages, phrases, *incisa* (*) and, all rhythmical divisions in general. These divisions are marked by a lengthening of the final note or notes (*moræ vocis* as they were formerly called), and pauses proportioned to the importance of the rhythmical divisions.

A truly practical notation has to mark plainly every *incisum*, every phrase, every passage or period, and to indicate with exactness where the *mora vocis* should come. This is very important because the rhythm largely depends on the attention paid to these divisions. The value of each rhythmical division must be shown by a sign specially fitted to indicate its worth.

Here are the signs used in this edition to indicate the *moræ vocis* and the various pauses.

The *crotchet* marks the *mora vocis* for all the divisions, *incisa*, phrases, and passages or periods.

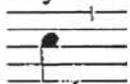
(*) *Incisum* = a part or section of a phrase.

The crotchet is intended not only to help those who are unacquainted with Latin, but to determine the execution of some passages, where even Latinists may feel some hesitation. Very often, especially in the smaller *incisa*, the *mora* is quite undetermined: the singer may mark or ignore it according to his feeling, fancy or taste. In singing alone he may choose as he pleases. But this will be an exceptional case, for plain-song is generally performed by numerous choirs; and it is therefore necessary, in order to secure completeness, to fix the execution to be followed by means of the notation. This exactitude in the notation and its general effect cannot possibly injure the freedom, ease and suppleness of the Gregorian rhythm. The use of the crotchet is only the choice made by the choir-master between two possible alternatives.

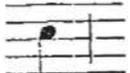
The crotchet then is made use of, whenever a division occurs in a passage, to indicate the *mora vocis*.

But it must be clearly understood that the length of the *mora vocis* varies in proportion to the importance of the rhythmical divisions, which are indicated as follows.

a. — Simple *mora vocis*, or unimportant short *incisa*, which do not, or scarcely, allow time for a breathing, are adequately marked by a crotchet at the end of such a section.

b. — More considerable *incisa*, which are really small phrases are indicated by a crotchet followed by a quarter of a bar 

This sign is often only the mark of a rhythmical division which does not admit of a breathing, especially in short antiphons.

c. — Phrases, properly so-called, composed of one or two parts, are indicated by half a bar 

Here breathing is generally necessary: and the time required may be taken from the length of the preceding crotchet.

d. — Passages or Periods are closed by a full bar,  where a breath must be taken, or by a double bar at the end of a piece. There the *mora vocis* are longer: and they are indicated by a half-rest: ♯ before or after the bar.

e. — The *comma* is only the sign of a breathing taken from the length of the preceding crotchet  or quaver 

Of course there is no attempt to mark all the breathings which may be taken in a passage of music: the interpreter must be allowed, according to his powers, such freedom as does not in any way mar the melody or the rhythm, provided that such breathings are taken rapidly (quarter breaths). The study of the melody and its parts shows where these must be taken.

In the same way breathings marked by *commas*, especially after quavers, are not always obligatory.

f. — The *little line* above or below a note shows that it must be slightly lengthened. This *little line* may extend over a whole *clivis* or *podatus*. Then both the notes in the neum will be *slightly* lengthened. These shadings give much suppleness and grace to the melody. They are not our

invention. We merely borrow them from the Romanian notation which is so supremely valuable.

g. — We have abolished the double bar showing where the choir takes up the chant after the intonations, and at the end of Graduals, after Alleluias, Tracts, etc. This double bar had the grave disadvantage of always causing a heavy and often clumsy interruption of the melody. The close of the intonation and the commencement by the choir are henceforward indicated in the text by a *star*. The double bar is replaced by the rhythmical punctuation suited to the circumstances. Sometimes no sign is necessary, as the melody requires no break.

The following examples of the various pauses may be useful.

a c b a a c

Agnus Dé- i, * qui tol- lis peccá-ta mún- di, mi-se-
a fb a a d

ré- re nó- bis.

The precision of modern notation makes matters still plainer.

A- gnus Dé- i, * qui tól- lis pec- cá-
ta mún- di, mi- se- ré- re nó-
bis.

III.

Notes on the rhythmical punctuation used in this edition. (*)

Only such hints are given as are essential to the use of this transcription.

Since Gregorian music is based, not upon time but upon rhythm, time-bars have to give way to indications purely rhythmical. For this purpose we have made use of points over the score in our edition in modern notation.

(*) The question of Rhythm is fully dealt with in vol. VII of the *Paléographie Musicale*, a quarterly review edited by Dom A. MOCQUEREAU (Desclée and Co., Tournai), and will be further treated in the *Méthode Théorique et Pratique de Chant Grégorien* shortly to appear.

We shall use the expressions *arsis* and *thesis* to signify *rise* and *fall* respectively. The exact point where the movement touches ground is also called the *ictus*. We indicate this point by an *episenia* or little line found with the note ♯ * in Gregorian notation, and by a dot over the note in transcriptions into modern notation.

Application of the above notes to Plain-song.

A. ELEMENTARY RHYTHM. WORDS AND NEUMS.

WORDS. — Every Latin word of two or more syllables, taken by itself and pronounced in the ordinary way, is a *rhythm*, * that is to say, it consists at least of a *rise* or *arsis* and a *fall* or *thesis*.

Merely putting two syllables together does not make a word. The word owes its unity to the accent which characterises it, to the single act whereby it is uttered, in fine, to its rhythm. In fact, to become a whole, each word in the syllabic chant, must be uttered with a single impetus, performed with a single movement.

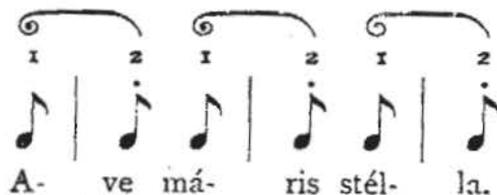
This movement is divided into two parts or beats: the part which rises, called *arsis* or *impetus* (*elan*): the part which falls, called *thesis* or *rest* (*repos*).

The accent in a Latin word is always in the rising or *arsis* portion of the movement. It is just the accent which gives this portion its characteristic impetus, for it is itself the culminating point of the impetus: but its place in the *arsis* is determined by its place in the word.



A rhythm consisting of one *arsis* and one *thesis* is *elementary*.

Elementary analysis of a succession of binary rhythms.



Place assigned to *length* and the part it plays in Rhythm. — In words, as in rhythms, length inclines towards the last distinct syllable of a word (the rule of the *mora vocis*). If then some breadth is given to this *mora vocis* we get a simple ternary rhythm.



* *Rhythm*: we use this word in a concrete sense to signify a *rhythmical unit*, either *elementary* or *compound*.

In natural rhythm, length belongs so essentially to the *thesis*, that it is impossible to give it only one beat. In fact the following rhythm is lame and must be banished from plain-song, which requires a smooth and natural flow. This is shown by singing.

Wrongly

A- ve má- ris stél- la.

This produces a syncopation in the music, causing a jerkiness which is antagonistic to the even flow of plain-song melody. The syncopation consists in the fitful fusion of the second beat of the thesis with the following beat of the *arsis*. Below we indicate this by an asterisk.

Right

A- ve má- ris stél- la.

Wrongly

A- ve má- ris stél- la.

NOTE. — True syncopation has in itself nothing to do with stress : it is purely a matter of rhythm, and interrupts its even flow though sometimes quite legitimate in modern music.

Cannot then more than one beat be given to the *arsis*? Yes : it may be found as follows :

a) made up of a *compound binary beat* :

b) or a *compound ternary beat* :

Example : *Dactylic trisyllables*.

Dó-mi-nus Dó- mi- nus or Dó- mi- nus

The *arsis* consists of two syllables, and is *binary*.

So it is if a monosyllable is added to a spondaic word :

Dé-us es Dé-us es or Dé-us es

The thesis *us* disappears, being carried on to the final monosyllable : the two words are pronounced with one action as if they were one.

In plain-song the suppression of a final thesis occurs pretty often in the course of a passage, when words are closely linked together, when they are nearly bound to each other by their meaning, or swept along in the movement of the melody.

The same phenomenon occurs if we add a monosyllable to a dactylic word. In this case we have a *ternary arsis*.

Dóminus es . Dó-mi-nus es. or Dó-mi-nus es.

In a succession of such rhythms as these, the *thesis* should always comprise two or three unities.

Dó-mi-nus Dé-us Sá-ba-oth.

For the same reason as the one given above, the following rhythm is inadmissible in plain-song : it produces a syncopation.

Sál-ve má-ter Dé-i.

NOTE. — What has been said above shows there are two ways of dealing with words : they either are *rhythms* or they become *compound beats*. The context of the passage of music must determine which.

They are treated as *rhythms* when their last syllable coincides with the *thesis* : they are not so treated when their dactylic or spondaic ending is included in a *compound beat*.

NEUMS. — Neums in elementary rhythm are treated in exactly the same way as words. They can be treated as *rhythms* or as making a *compound beat*.

Neums treated as rhythms :



Neums not treated as rhythms :



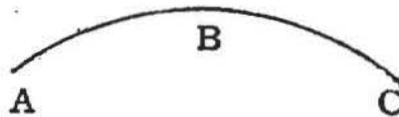
In these latter examples the *clivis* (*la-fa*) and the *torculus* (*sol-la-sol*) lose their *thesis* which is carried on to the next syllable.

Length then specially belongs to the *thesis* both in words and neums. Is it the same in the case of stress?

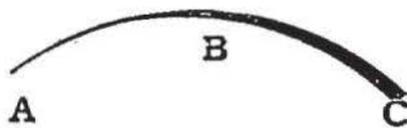
Place assigned to *stress* and the part it plays in Rhythm. —

Rhythm cannot do without stress and softness of sounds : but nothing in the essential constitution of rhythm obliges stress to be confined to one special place. In other words stress may be found indifferently either in the *arsis* or the *thesis*.

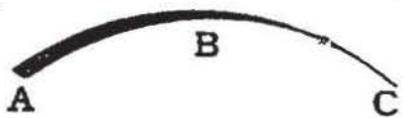
A painter may make a given curve A B C.



thicker at A (the *beginning*) B (the *middle*) or C (the *end*)



= X = *strong ending*



= Y = *weak ending*



= Z = *weak beginning and ending.*

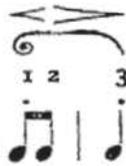
So a musician is free to place the stress wherever he pleases in his rhythmical line.



He may put the stress at the end  and then he has a *strong thesis* = X.



He may place it at the beginning  and then he has a *weak thesis*. = Y.



Or he may put it in the middle  and then he will again have a *weak thesis*, but the centre will be *crescendo*. = Z.

These three rhythms are of the same value. Stress alone differentiates them and entirely changes their character.

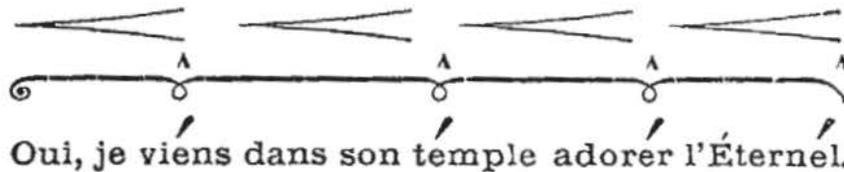
There are then two kinds of rhythms so far as stress is concerned.

a) the rhythm with the *strong thesis* (X), where the fall or rest is stronger than the rise or flight.

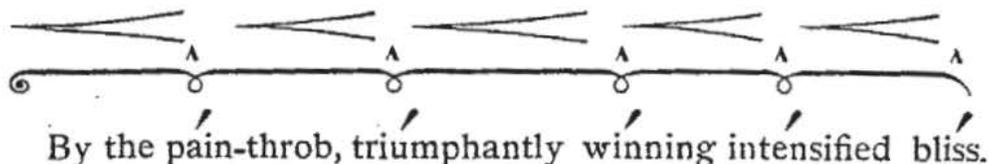
b) the rhythm with the *weak thesis* (Y and Z), where the fall or rest is weaker than the rise or flight. Z is only another form of Y.

The place of the stress is determined by extrinsic or accidental circumstances, the wish of the artist, composer or poet, the genius of the language, the accent or the word, the air, etc. The composer may use one of these rhythms exclusively or blend them together. This is what we find in every page of our classical music, ancient polyphony and plain-song.

a) Example of feet with a strong thesis (X), *in French* :



in English :



b) Examples of rhythms with a weak thesis, *in Latin*.

Spondaic or dactylic words
accented at the beginning (Y).



In these last examples the accent is at the beginning of the word and rhythmical movement, and the stress is at its highest intensity from the initial utterance of the first syllable: it afterwards grows weaker until the *thesis* touches ground.

Words unaccented
at the beginning (Z.)



In this case the impulse of the *arsis* and of the rhythm commences at the beginning of the word and reaches its climax on the accented syllable, then it dies away on the last syllable. Thus the accent is incorporated with the *arsis*, but — and this shows its importance — it gives the latter all its strength and character, and is at the same time its climax in music, rhythm and intensity. It is, as has been often said, the soul of the word.

Various circumstances — either in the music or the rhythm or simply in the text — modify the making of rhythm. e. g.



But we cannot here enter into these details: practically the singer and accompanist have only to look at the pointing.

With this last example we come to dactylic endings and long words, that is to say, to compound rhythm.

B. COMPOUND RHYTHM.

Rhythm is compound when it consists of more than one arsis and thesis, in other words of more than *two* simple or compound beats.

It is made up of several linked simple rhythms, and may be divided into *incisa*, phrases, and periods. e. g.

Rhythmical Period

Rhythmical Phrase

Rhythmical Phrase

Rhythmical *Incisum*

Rhythmical *Incisum*

Rhythmical *Incisum*

Rhythmical *Incisum*

A

B

B

C

A

B

C

A

B

B

B

B

B

C

Can-tá-te Dó-mi-no cán-ti-cum nó-vum, laus é-jus ab ex-tré-mis tér-ræ.

The image shows a musical score for a Latin hymn. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a rhythmic diagram with square notes and rests, illustrating the structure of the compound rhythm. It is divided into four 'Rhythmical Incisum' units, which are grouped into two 'Rhythmical Phrase' units, and finally into a single 'Rhythmical Period'. The units are labeled with letters A, B, B, C. The bottom staff is a musical score in treble clef with a 7/8 time signature, showing the melody for the text 'Can-tá-te Dó-mi-no cán-ti-cum nó-vum, laus é-jus ab ex-tré-mis tér-ræ.' The notes are placed on a four-line staff, and the lyrics are written below the staff.

The *linking* occurs in two ways :

1. — By the simple *junction* of two or more simple rhythms ; each keeping its own *arsis* and *thesis*.

This junction takes place without breaking up the unity of the simple rhythms as is shown by the above bracket.

2. — By *contraction*. Contracted rhythm is compound rhythm, in which the *central point where the movement touches ground*, is at the same time the *thesis* of the first rhythm and the *arsis* of the following one. e. g.

The *arsis* here consists of four syllables, or two compound binary beats, and is called compound. The first part *multi*, being weaker, is a secondary *arsis*; and leads on to the stronger *arsis túdi*, which has the accent.

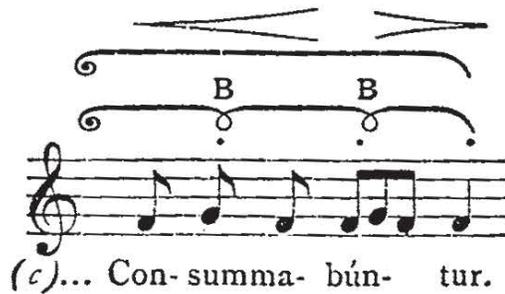
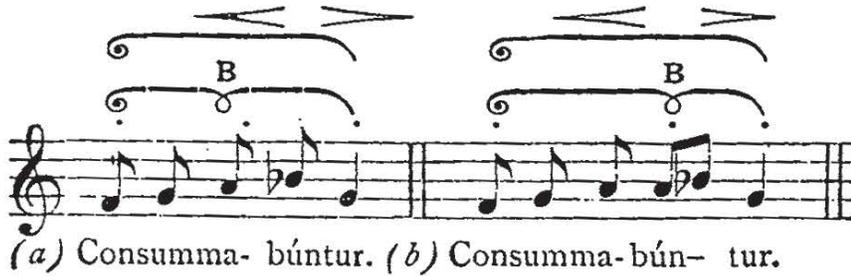
This is where we find the contraction. The central point B so far as the rise *multi* is concerned takes the place of the fall of the *thesis*; but with reference to what follows, it is the starting-point of a new flight ending in the final *thesis*.

The same occurs in the above antiphon *Cantate* wherever the movement touches ground in the middle of its *incisa*. They are indicated by a B.

Successive binary rhythms

should be linked together by contraction, and should in fact be sung thus :

Here are other examples of contracted rhythms :



The pointing may vary in all these different ways : selection must depend on the context of the melody or rhythm : for though Latin words have their own melody and rhythm; frequently retained in the middle of passages, yet they have often to give way to the more powerful movement of the passage itself.

The *thesis* may comprise several compound beats : it is then called the lengthened *thesis*.



We shall not carry the explanation of Gregorian rhythm and pointing further. What we have said is enough to lead on to the teaching which follows and show its importance.

“ When in reading and also in syllabic chant all the syllables of the same word are swept in by the movement, then the latter must be so controlled as to end by falling softly on the last syllable.” (*Dom. J. Pothier.*) In the course of such a movement stress is laid irregularly on the various syllables and rhythmical supports : some are, strong others weak, others very weak : all depends on the syllable which corresponds to them and on the place they fill in the groups of notes. **It would be a serious mistake to give them the strength of the first beat in a bar of modern music.**

The preceding explanations are designed to prevent an error of this kind.

