

THE TECHNIQUE
OF
GREGORIAN CHIRONOMY

THE CHURCH MUSICIANS BOOKSHELF
Series II

No. 1

THE TECHNIQUE
OF
GREGORIAN CHIRONOMY

by

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Solesmes rhythmic signs used with the permission of the proprietors,
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To my friend and teacher

Auguste Le Guennant

*Director of the
Gregorian Institute of Paris*

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Were some future generation to be given the task of evaluating the progress of the liturgical movement from 1850 to 1950 without reference to documents written after the latter date and thus without the perspective of progressive reevaluation, the results would quite probably seem to indicate that the United States of America, although starting tardily, had risen to the greatest comparative heights in compliance with the Mind of Holy Mother the Church. Such an evaluation would be in perfect conformity with the tone and scope of most writings of American origin from that designated period. Unfortunately, according to present standards, such an evaluation would also be an error.

We dare say that the reader may open any current number of one of many periodicals devoted to Catholic music or liturgical arts and find statistics, reports of progress and articles of optimistic authority which, viewed apart from the actual quality of music commonly heard in our churches, would be very impressive to say the least. It is this one sobering qualification, the actual music, the proverbial proof of the pudding, which takes away most of the glow from such articles. The author must state without reservation that in this respect he has heard few American choirs or choral groups sing Gregorian chant *correctly and stylistically* according to the Solesmes method. This is not to imply that more do not exist elsewhere. It is merely a personal observation to show the rarity of such proficiency. Thus have we corrupted the old saying to read: *Verba, non res.*

This seemingly dark-colored point of view is not proffered without qualification, nor is it set forth *ex cathedra* for the digestion of all readers. Very encouraging signs of progress are beginning to show themselves here and there, notably the recognition of the very great difficulties involved in transplanting the technique and style of Solesmes to a country which has had little contact with that famous center. For the first time we recently heard a nationally known chant conductor say that the movement in the United States was seriously hampered by lack of direct contact with European centers of teaching and research. This is the real focal point of misunderstandings of the Solesmes theory. We have also recently heard another liturgist, not a musician, point out that the movement is greatly hobbled by the lack of real musicianship among even noted church musicians. This is another accurate observation, the true focal point of the lamentable lack of quality in music of any sort which is so obvious in most churches in this country. Thus we are beginning to see our failings more clearly, and when eyes are opened on a more universal scale, we may look for genuine progress.

One of the least understood techniques of practice of chant is that of the chironomy, literally, the direction of the hand. This is not surprising since clear, correct conducting of simple measured music is not what could be called commonplace. At a recent choir festival in the east the author watched a very well-known conductor lead a large and evidently uncritical group of teachers and organists in singing a composition in 6/8 measure — using a beat pattern for 3/4! This may seem incredible to some, but it is only a trifling error compared with some of the

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unbelievable blunders which occur in choir lofts throughout the country.

The development of any musical technique requires patience, clear analysis of its components, painstaking precision in practice and . . . *time*. This book is not designed for rapid reading, nor is it intended to provide a thumbnail course of study which will make the student proficient *ex opere operato*. Basic musicianship is presupposed, as is a fluency in reading Gregorian chant. It is not enough to be able to read it in modern notation, nor can anyone hope to acquire the technique of chironomy by preparing for ictus calculation in advance. The addition of pencilled ictus marks throughout the *Liber* is an appalling confession of inadequacy, and such scribblings soon become a crutch without which movement is impossible, even unthinkable.

The author is perfectly aware as he sends this volume to press that it will be the only source of instruction for many of those who will use it. Although he is also aware of the impossibility of personal study with Solesmes-trained teachers for most church organists and choir directors, he is impelled by conscience to emphasize the fact that no book can replace actual personal contact with the teacher. This is especially true in music, even more particularly true in Gregorian chant. Many concepts are subtle, beyond the scope of words alone; they depend on certain induced sensitivities which are imparted only by demonstration and experience. Thus not only should this volume be used, if at all possible, under the guidance of a first-rate teacher; it should, moreover, be digested with caution later on, when no teacher is present, as the gain made through correct, supervised practice is often undone by the immoderate floundering of trial and error which are almost inevitable when the teacher's control is removed.

Lest the student become unduly concerned about this matter of actual study under a Solesmes-trained teacher, let us point out that the knack of conducting chant is very quickly mastered in its fundamentals and that it is not necessary to conduct under the teacher's eye for very great periods of time. An attentive and normally observing musician who has the proper background for such study will find that basic competence is acquired in a matter of weeks and that the rest of the learning process is dependent on refinement of the technique and the penetration of the spirit of the repertoire.

* * *

It would be impossible for the author to express adequately his debt to Auguste Le Guennant, Director of the Gregorian Institute of Paris, for the systematic training he received under that master. Without incredibly painstaking personal attention which every advanced student receives from this scholar and musician while enrolled at that venerable institution, it is certain that the Solesmes movement and the specialized techniques on which it depends would not have more than a fraction of the dominance it enjoys through Institute alumni throughout the world. Despite a greatly overloaded schedule, M. Le Guennant spent a great deal of time with the author discussing this book while it was being sketched in 1951-52. He has personally reviewed the chants selected for the appendix which are taken from course assignments frequently given at Paris. It is only fitting that the publication of *The Technique of Gregorian Chironomy* be dedicated to him.

We wish to acknowledge the assistance of Harold Boutin who prepared the diagrams and the in-text examples of chironomy, that of Miss Pauline Robert who prepared the lay-out and format, and in particular, that of Senorita Heloisa Fortes de Oliveira of Rio de Janiero, Brazil, who prepared the engraving and art-work for the entire appendix. We also thank Clifford A. Bennett for reading the manuscript and offering many helpful suggestions regarding format and layout.

Toledo, Easter Week, 1955

J. R. C.

CHAPTER ONE

The Fundamental Concepts

Before one can begin the study of any conducting technique, at least with any hope of acquiring it, there are certain vital elements which must be taken into account in a preliminary study.

Let us state dogmatically that the direction of any activity presupposes a full understanding of it. It is not always necessary to be able to *do* the thing to be directed, and often notable success has been attained by persons in the direction of activities which they had grasped only on the intellectual level, for example, the orchestra conductor who plays only the violin but understands how to secure the right effects from all the instruments under his baton. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that ability to carry out the actions one is directing is of great value, and this point must never be passed over lightly.

In the direction of chant choirs, it is important for even a modicum of success that the conductor understand the technique of singing the chant and forming its rhythmic groups. We may go even further and state that unless the conductor can sight-read chant fluently and grasp the main points of a composition in a two-minute examination of the music, he will attain only partially satisfactory results in his work. Good conductors will also note in a brief reading of the music the placing of the arsis and thesis curves, the expressive intervals and the opportunities for bringing out features of the chant style.

How, then, can we expect that persons lacking complete training and mastery of mechanics and basic stylistics will acquire a solid chironomic technique? The answer, obviously, is that we cannot.

Although personal preference would have been for even more stringent restrictions, the author has tried in class work to enter upon the study of chironomy only with students who have had at least a full year of chant study. This, in the light of the unfortunate atmosphere of rapid education prevailing today, is perhaps the best that may be hoped for, and indeed it might be quite satisfactory were the general level of chant instruction in first-year courses what it should be. Unfortunately again, there is no assurance that a student bearing col-

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lege transcripts or other such evidence of elementary study, even when these are over the seal of a noted school, will have the faintest notion of basic rhythmic, modality, the nature of the ictus or the proper manner of counting at the bar-lines.

Be that as it may, we are faced today with facts, not hypotheses, and we must try to offer our students, at whatever level of preparation, as complete a reference to chironomic study as possible. We must take as our first duty to warn the student that his conducting will depend on his preparation, and from that point we must do what we can to help him with both his preparation and his actual study.

Let us, therefore, set a few simple examples as a standard by which the student may judge his own preparation.

In the following fragment of chant, the student who is adequately prepared for chironomic study should be able to sing the notes correctly at sight, placing the ictus where called for by the Solesmes method,

Grad.
L.

O

s ju- sti * me- di- tá- bi- tur
sa- pi- én- ti- am, et lin- gua e- jus
lo- qué- tur jú- di- ci- um.

without any great difficulty. Stumbling indicates that one is either out-of-practice or in need of a little more intensive drill, but this is not a deterrent to chironomic study providing that the stumbling is obvious to the student himself and the nature of his error immediately apparent. If the sight-reading of this piece or others like it breaks down to a point of vague grasping for notes, frantic casting about for an ictus or similar symptoms of general deterioration, the student should put this volume on his bookshelf for the period of time necessary for correction of his inadequacies.

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This point brings us to a discussion of the general musicianship necessary for chant conducting . . . or any other conducting, for that matter.

We should not suppose that music is a "natural" phenomenon in that it is the manifestation of purely instinctive impulses. Music, particularly music of civilized cultures, is a highly stylized and intellectual affair, a fact which is implied in our classification of it as an art. Therefore, to the extent that music has become refined and subtle, it requires a certain specialized approach, a certain study, if you will. It is not enough to be "musically inclined", as the phrase goes. Technical training and, very important, too, a knowledge of the repertoire of the branch of music being studied must be sought.

Chant students should be familiar with basic solfege beat patterns, should understand something of the distinction between essential and ornamental tones in melody and should be familiar with as wide a repertoire of chant pieces as possible.

In the light of the above remarks, we can set forth some fundamental notions about the subject of chironomy itself.

Chironomy, like all conducting, is nothing more or less than the visual, the manual reproduction of the essential skeleton of the music, with the purpose of inducing the singers to execute it according to the ideas the conductor wishes to express.

As Dom Mocquereau has pointed out in his many writings on the question of chironomy, the gesture used for Gregorian chironomy, because of the nature of Gregorian rhythm and esthetics, should not be based in any way upon the measured stroke of conducting patterns used for modern music. Chironomy does, of course, have certain elements in common with the later types of gesturing, but of necessity it must preserve the fluidity of line which is characteristic of chant and which it is its function to transmit to the singers as faithfully as possible.

Since there are two points of view in approaching music, one analytical, the necessary probing and examination in detail which discloses the structural secrets which provide its variety and its unity at the same time, the other synthetical, the welding together for performance and for "the olympian view" which is that necessary for good conducting, and since we must presuppose to some extent that the student has had some experience in both, let us establish the aims of both of these aspects of our study:

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The analytical approach will be used for the examination of the separate phases of each piece, its rhythmic ebb and flow, the determination of arsis and thesis, the choice of ictus points when such is left free, in short, the setting in order of every detail which will later take its place in the synthesis.

The synthetical approach is the goal of all study. When all details have been given roles in the broad plan and all questions of procedure have been given tentative solutions (for in chironomy no solution is so inflexible as to be beyond easy adaptation to circumstances of practical necessity), the musician can concentrate on the subordination of one element to another and the producing of the broad sweep of the music and the all-over general effect sought by the writers of the music.

We shall spend a great deal of this present study in discussing the various analytical aspects of chironomy; therefore, let us give a few moments' thought to the goal of all this effort, the synthetic result.

It is possible to produce through concentrated study the proper chironomic gestures, the proper tempos, the very style itself of chant according to the Solesmes method. This does not mean that the choir will automatically reproduce the desired effects. After all, chironomy is only a means of communication, and in that sense it can be successful only when the persons who are to receive its message, as well as the conductor himself, understand its various signs and subtleties. Let us hasten to add that many of the basic gestures of conducting, and this applies to both chant and modern music, are so intimately related to certain nearly universal gestures and reactions which we experience in every-day living that they will elicit the desired response from the singers without any involved explanations, although the singers must be made to watch for them. Among these nearly automatically obtained reactions will be that of loudness and softness, indicated by the variations in amplitude of the gesture and in the muscular tension and facial expression of the director. Other more subtle points, such as the effect of holding back in the course of a long descent or that of preparing and broadening the leap of a wide interval, belong to certain stylistic characteristics of chant which must be felt profoundly by the conductor and communicated to his singers, at first, by rote teaching, and then by subtle implications in the articulations of his wrist and arm, in the facial expression which he should cultivate as a powerful aid to conducting of any sort, and in the suggestion which can be brought to bear on the music by judicious use of the left hand, or, in

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

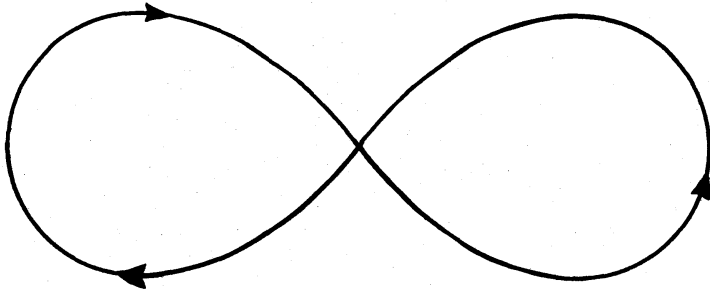
the right, when the student finds left-handed chironomy easier or more practical. Let us add parenthetically that the diagrams in this book, when not expressly designed for two-hand conducting, are given with the intention of showing the movements of the right hand as seen through the eyes of the conductor himself.

The synthetic effect, then, depends among other things on the use of a gesture which is peculiar to chironomy. This alone produces a certain psychological effect when viewed by the singers. It implies a certain style which is associated with chant and is thus reserved from the singer's point of view for just that purpose. We shall begin with a discussion of this gesture and proceed to elaboration of its application to chant.

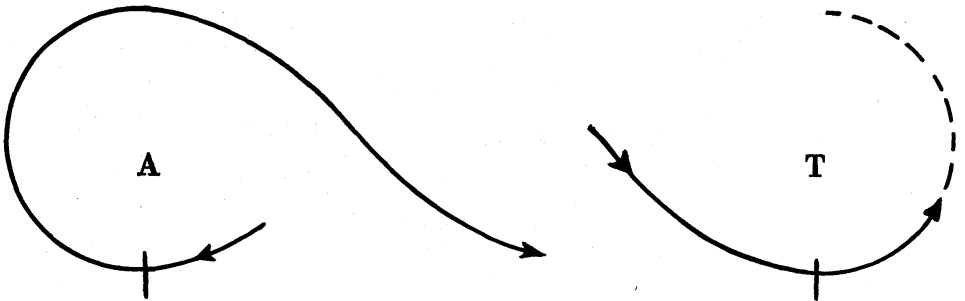
CHAPTER TWO

Elementary Gestures

The fundamental gestures used in chant conducting are the arsis and the thesis. They are complementary to each other and in practice they form a continuous flowing movement of the hand roughly resembling a reclining figure 8:



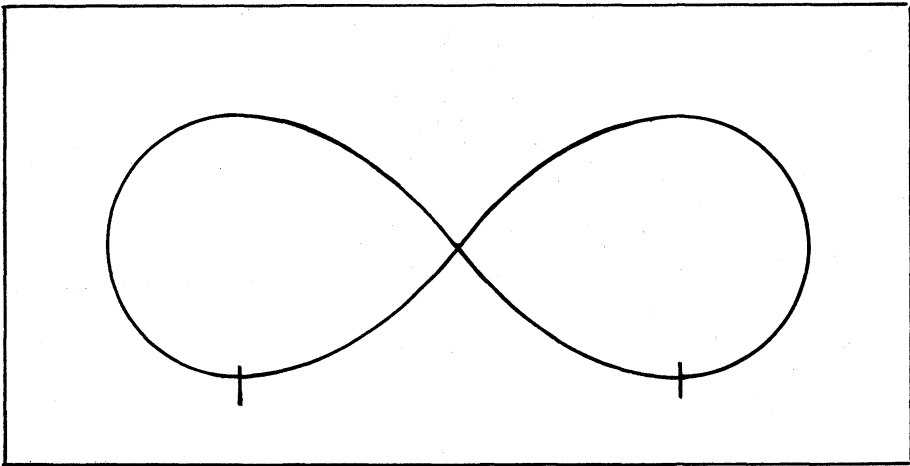
The arsic gesture is conveniently understood to be that which, in the right hand, is made toward the left of the conductor himself. The thetic gesture is, then, that to his right. Taken as separate elements they assume the following forms:



The arsis represents the active elements in Gregorian chant and the thesis the static, or rather, the retractive.

GESTURES

In learning to make the form of the arsis and thesis with the hand, we have found it efficacious to utilize a wall chart of fairly strong paper — ordinary wrapper will do — which can act as a guide for the entire period of formation. To facilitate the work of the reader, we include a specimen chart with this book. The chart, it will be noted, resembles the following diagram and is large enough so that when it is hung at about the level of the hand in conducting position, the gestures may be made by tracing the curves of the chart with the fingers:

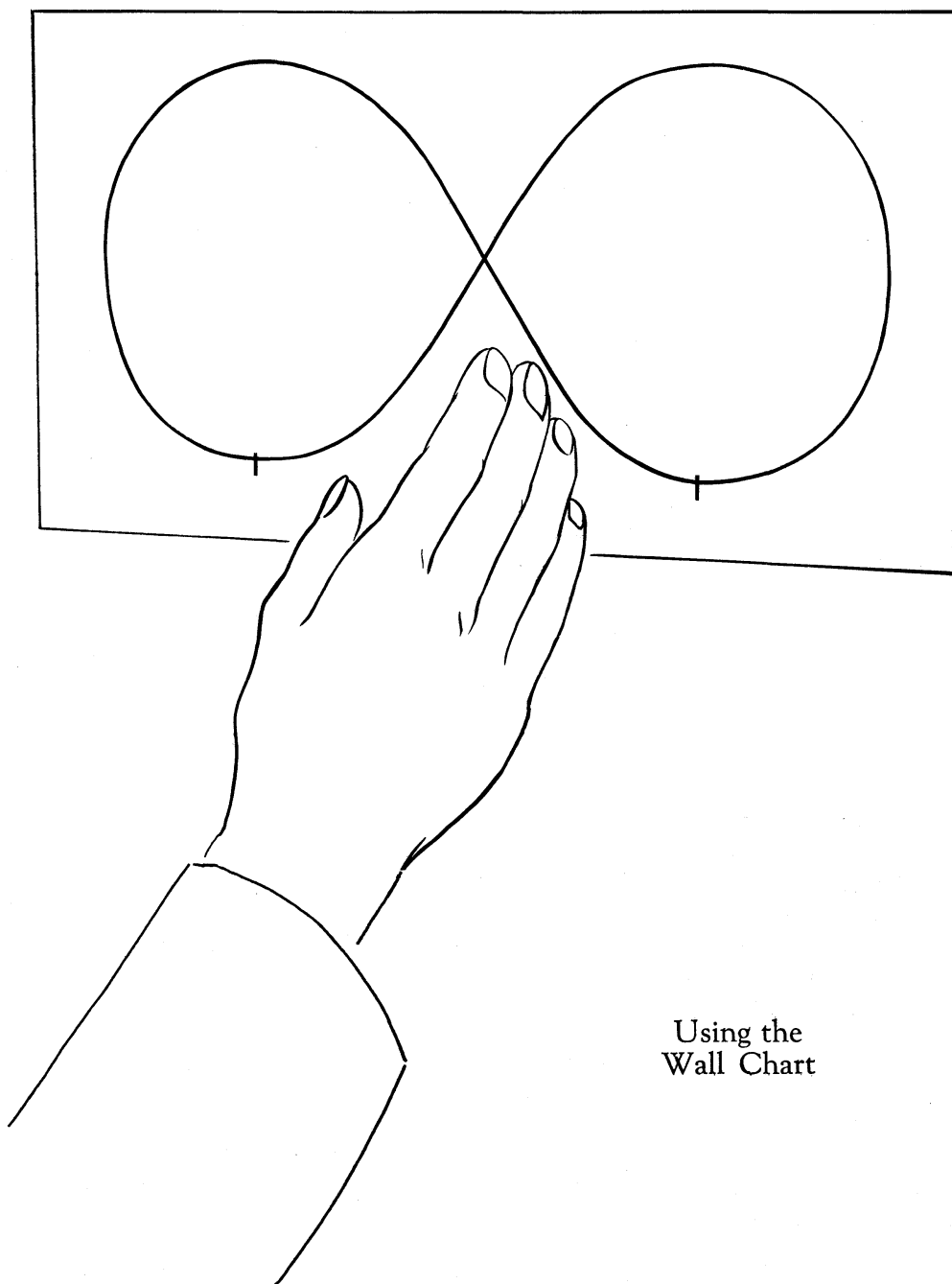


On this chart, the ictus is marked at the point at which it will normally occur, that is, at the exact bottom of the curve. The reason for this precision is clear. Each compound beat, thus each ictus, of the piece to be conducted will be assigned either an arsic or a thetic role in the over-all design. Thus each arsic or thetic curve will be planned as falling on one ictus, and for perfect precision, the lowest point of the curve is selected as the ictic touchpoint.

In testing the first attempts at gesturing, the hand is held at the upper right hand corner of the diagram as the student conductor faces it. He then makes the first arsic stroke in a single unbroken curve sloping downward to the left where he will try to plan to arrive at the moment of ictus, and then the hand will lift and arc back to the right and downward to form the thesis which follows.

If the hand seems to need more space for the gestures, the curve may be too small. The feeling of too rapid a movement, on the other

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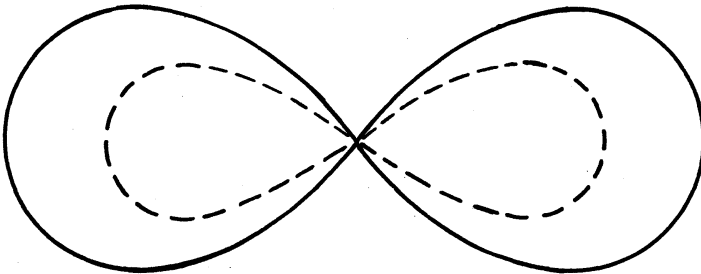


Using the
Wall Chart

hand, suggests that the diagram may be too large. The chart printed for use with this book and supplied with it is of medium dimensions, suited to a person of average physical proportions, but persons with shorter arms or, on the contrary, a longer reach, will find it easier to stand back a few feet from the chart and to follow its indications in adapting them to personal needs.

Before leaving the subject of the wall chart let us emphasize a point which will be repeated in the course of this book and in the course of any good teaching of chironomic technique. *The diagram must be drawn precisely and followed with equal exactness.* If there is the slightest angularity in the drawing, the slightest deviation from the application of the imitating gesture, the technique will be adversely affected.

Gestures are intended to represent, as we have said, the arsic or thetic quality of each compound beat. As the compound beats differ in length from two to three counts, the size of the gesture must also differ to allow for this variance. In no instance should the gesture be abruptly altered or stopped to permit the longer beat to take place before beginning the next gesture. The movement of the hand should be as much as possible an uninterrupted flow from the beginning to the end of a piece. The manner of adapting the gesture to binary and ternary compound beats is diagrammed below (see also wall chart):



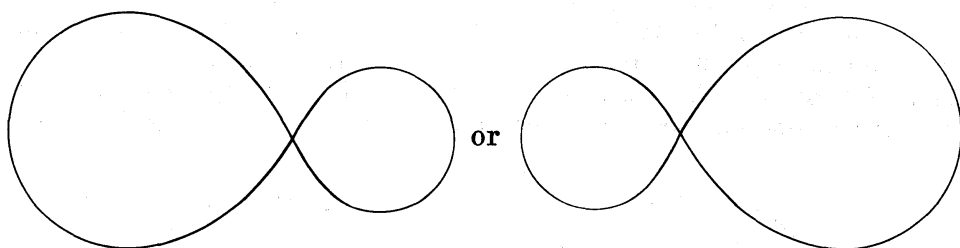
As is known, the alternation of binary and ternary compound beats follows no set patterns. One must, therefore, become accustomed to the irregularity of this sequence, and the adaptation of the size of the curve as diagrammed above must be made automatically and with perfect precision.

One of the most effective means of practice is the number sequence, a system of rhythm study which treats the problem of binary and

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ternary groupings in an abstract manner without the encumbrance of melody and text.

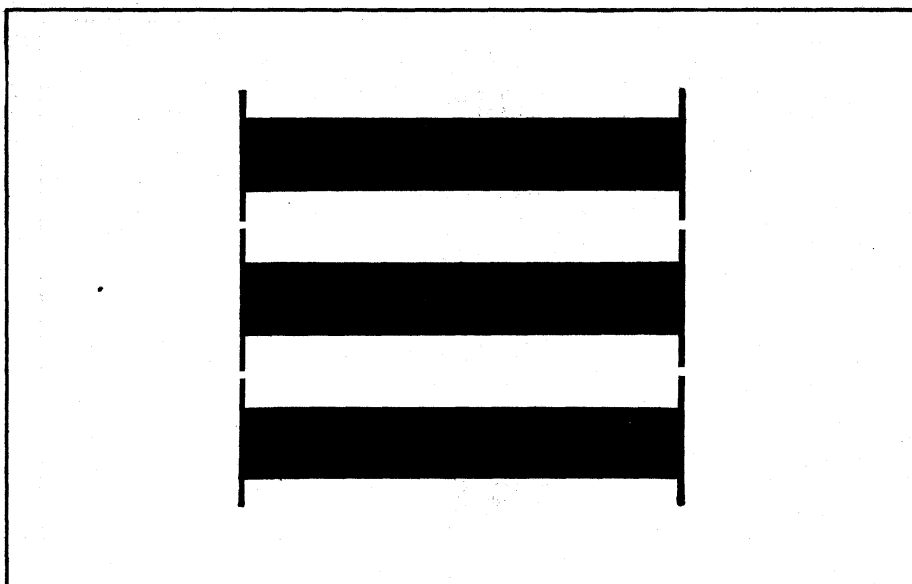
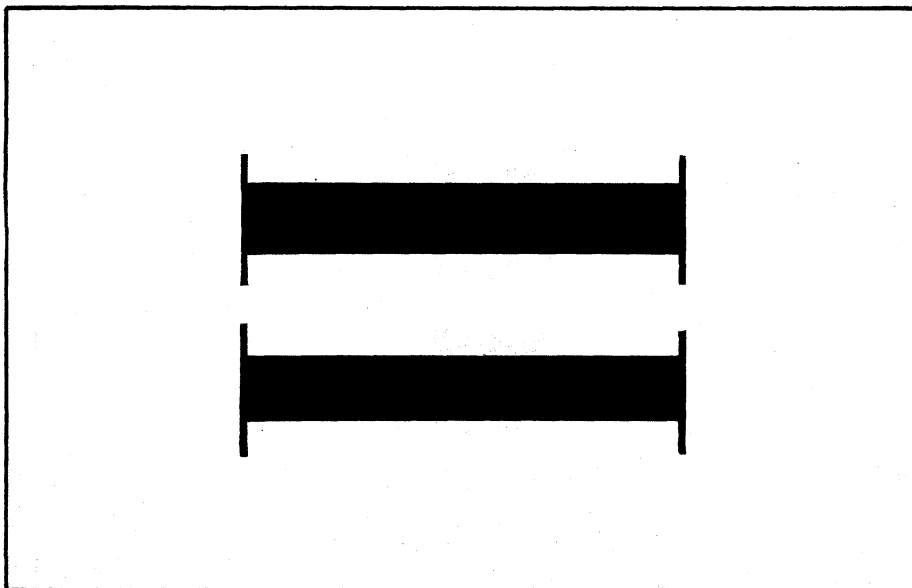
On a piece of paper or even better, on a blackboard, a series of numbers should be drawn at random, 2,3,3,2,2,2,3,2,3,2, etc. Then these should be used as practice material in making the chironomic gestures. They will, of course, become familiar after a few minutes of concentrated practice, but that is of no consequence, as a few changes in the sequence of numbers will suffice to create fresh problems. A metronome is of use in this practice, as it obliges the student to calculate rapidly and at a steady pace. The student should count with the metronome as he glances at each number: "one,two" for the 2's, "one, two,three" for the 3's. The gestures should be made alternately with the figure-eight design as basis, first arsis, then thesis. The student should take great care to broaden his ternary groups and limit his binary groups to a conservative arc.



The next step in facilitating reading of the groupings and their coordination with the chironomic gesture is rendered practical by the making of a set of cards designed like those illustrated here, with the two Roman numerals as marked.* About a dozen or so cards will suffice, six or so with the numeral II, six or so with the III. The use of these is perhaps obvious. They are placed together in a pack and well mixed. Then they are placed in a row on a table top before the student. Then, with the metronome operating at the proper speed for easy reading, say about 90 ticks per minute, the student conducts ternary and binary groupings according to the pattern which happens to be formed, applying arsis and thesis alternately to the compound beats.

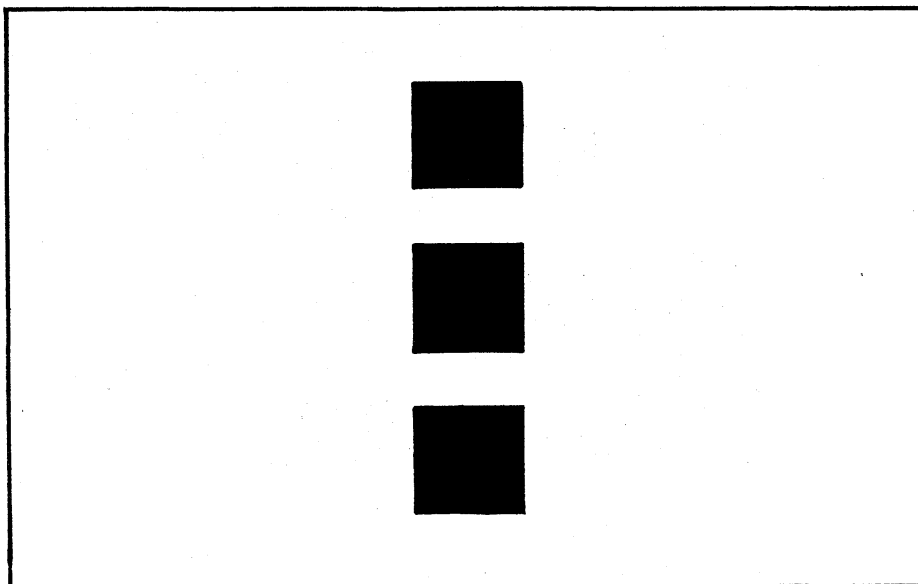
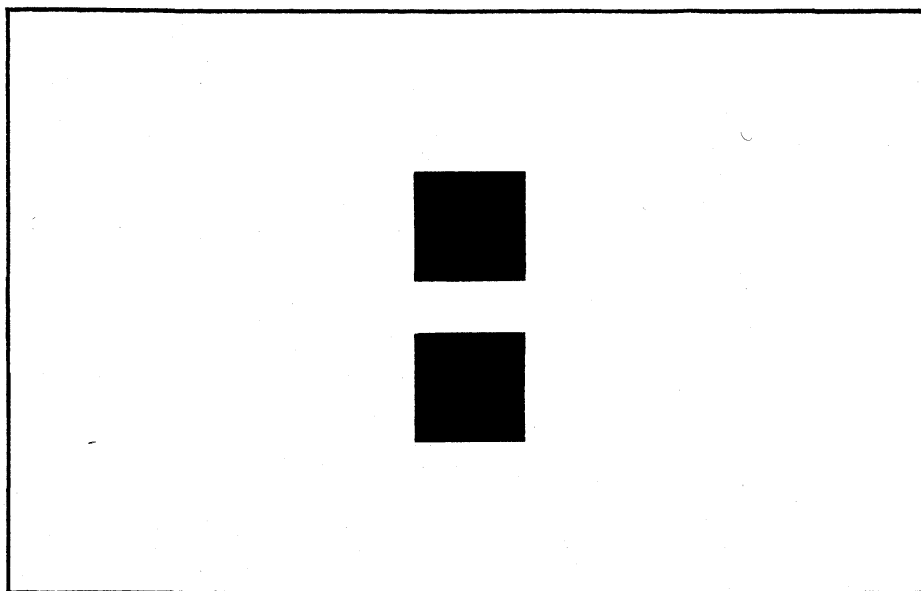
*All cards may be obtained from the publisher at nominal cost. Students wishing to procure these should specify *Elementary Chironomy Cards* (Roman numerals), *Intermediate Chironomy Cards* (distrophas and tristrophas) or the regular Gregorian Chant Flash Cards (neumes).

GESTURES



Elementary Chironomy Cards

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Intermediate Chironomy Cards

GESTURES

The final pre-conducting stage is reached with the use of cards bearing ternary and binary note groups, resembling distrophas and tristrophas.* These may be mixed and used for forming chains of compound beats as was formerly done with the numerals and diagrams.

Those who wish to carry this stage of practice to more advanced cards will find that regular Gregorian notation flash cards will do very nicely, and that when neumes larger than three notes are given, simple ictic subdivision will suffice to adapt them to this practice.*

The use of the metronome is a delicate point on which musicians and Gregorianists will come to blows. Naturally no device will ever be preferable to human effort, particularly when it is a question of artificially creating a regularity which is not to be strictly followed out in practice. Nevertheless, most musicians who have been trained exclusively in the classical system are prone to adapt the groupings of chant rhythms to a sort of universal common denominator, a compound beat somewhere between the proper length of a binary and a ternary beat. Ternary beats are contracted into triplets when they fall into otherwise binary passages, and binaries are broadened to duplets when they occur as isolated elements in preponderantly ternary passages. This will never do. A binary group is equal to two counts, a ternary group to three of the very same length counts. To those who have difficulties or who doubt their solidity in this matter the metronome offers a possible solution. For the student working alone, this is perhaps the *only* solution.

Until the gesture becomes perfectly habitual and adapts itself automatically to the size of ternary and binary compound beats, the student should not move beyond this stage of his study.

*All cards may be obtained from the publisher at nominal cost. Students wishing to procure these should specify *Elementary Chironomy Cards* (Roman numerals), *Intermediate Chironomy Cards* (distrophas and tristrophas) or the regular Gregorian Chant Flash Cards (neumes).

CHAPTER THREE

Elementary Written Chironomy

The best preparation for actual conducting is a period of written study based on the same principles which will later be used in conducting from the *Liber* or *Graduale*.

Written chironomy is of practical use only on chant pieces transcribed into modern notation. The reason for this is obvious. It is materially impossible to draw two chironomic curves, arsic, thetic or both, on neumes such as the doubly dotted podatus, clivis, etc., as each dotted note must have a full curve. The only possibility of providing the space for drawing out each curve is by transcribing the music under study into modern notation.

As we have mentioned in the previous paragraph, each compound beat must receive an arsis or a thesis; thus we must have a sufficiently "open" notation to permit drawing the chironomy directly on the music. We have seen examples of chironomy drawn over, under and to one side of the music. They all share a common fault: they do not correspond closely enough with the actual music in the student's visualization of the design. For this reason they tend to permit tiny inaccuracies to crop up in the student's actual conducting, and in the course of time, these small defects become so firmly rooted in habit that they go unnoticed by the student and settle into permanent disfigurements of his style.

At the risk of redundancy we repeat: the perfection of chironomic technique depends upon attention to seemingly exaggerated detail during the first stages of study, both written and practical. If there is the slightest angularity in the drawing of the chironomy, it will appear in the gesture of the hand, all objections to this statement notwithstanding. If the ictus is not drawn carefully at the bottom of the arsic and thetic curves and these graduated carefully to coincide with the placement of the notes on the paper, imprecise conducting will result, and this will produce in turn a certain indistinctness in the rhythmic ensemble of the singers.

In transcribing to modern notation, it seems advantageous to observe certain principles which are not always established in the in-

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struction given these days in our schools.

Good transcription should, insofar as possible, render the construction of the Gregorian neumes and the peculiarities of the line. The method commonly used in modern notation editions, even those of Solesmes, is not entirely dependable in this regard, and we wish to suggest certain modifications for our purposes.

The pressus is most often rendered by the use of a quarter-note over which the commonly used sign of reinforcement is placed:

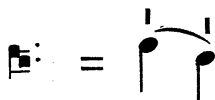


Obviously this does not show the structure of the neumes involved, and we prefer a combination of tied eighth-notes:

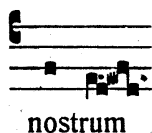


This system, besides permitting analysis of the neume components at a glance, has the added advantage of spreading out the transcription, a feature which makes the drawing of the chironomic curve much easier.

We also categorically treat all long notes in the above fashion: distropha, tristropha, oriscus, etc., and use the quarter-note only for the dotted notes of the chant notation:



Whenever the proper transcription of a neume requires a quarter-note as well as a series of eights, all of which belong to the same neume in the Gregorian notation version, we transcribe as usual, and to render the unity of the original neume, we tie the quarter-note to its proper group:



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We also wish to declare ourselves emphatically on the matter of the rest which is commonly placed at the full bar, that is, the phrase bar.

For some years now, the better schools and masters of Solesmes persuasion have utilized a certain system which, for some reason or other has not attained general use . . . or for that matter even general understanding in English-speaking countries. It has the great advantage of being wholly artistic, very logical, and very simple to apply. It is, moreover, far superior to the old idea of always inserting an eighth-rest, for this older system, although a simple one in theory, gave scope to much inaccurate singing, particularly among less experienced choirs.

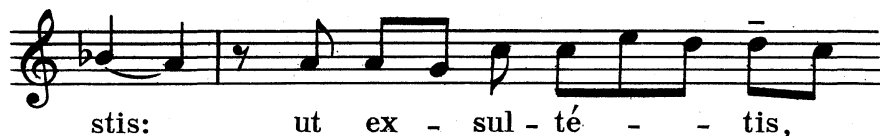
Unfortunately, until very recently, only the course books of the Gregorian Institute of Paris and certain technical studies of Solesmes have used this system in print, although its actual use is widespread. Even the standard accompaniment editions do not observe it, and the most quoted recent writers on chironomy, including Monsignor Eccher, do not utilize it for their studies and editions. We may note in passing that the chironomic editions of Father Thibault, the great pioneer of the chant movement in the United States and Canada, are generally not in conformity with the principles set forth here based on present Solesmes practice. This is largely due to the fact that Father Thibault drew only upon methods developed long before studies reached their present point of progress, and because that fine musician, to whom so many owe their orientation to chant, blended his own ideas and his personal style with the technique of chironomy. Taking this into account, we must, however, state that his sincere enthusiasm and contagious fervor have left a permanent and immensely beneficial appreciation of chant with all who knew him, and that without the great interest which his work engendered, the present trend to chant study would be far less vigorous and promising.

For those who would like a point of comparison, here is the older system: no real rests are observed in the chant except at the full bar or double bar. For such cases, a simple eighth-rest was inserted—before the bar when the next phrase began directly with an ictic note:



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or after the bar, when the second phrase began "off the beat", or on a non-ictic note:



The advantage of this system is obvious, but a subtle and dangerous weakness overbalances it. In the second of the above cases, that of the eighth falling after the bar-line, there is no practical difficulty in getting a choir to sing what is written. When the singers arrive at this point, the already established rhythm will force them to sense the fall of the silent ictus, and they can very easily be taught to refrain from singing through the rest. In the first instance, however, that in which the rest comes before the bar, the rest forms the brief third element of a ternary compound beat, the first two counts of which are to be sung. It is by no means easy to get the choir to "lift the voice off" for this eighth-rest, and when one does succeed in obtaining the rest, very often it is too large and steals some of the value from the notes before it.

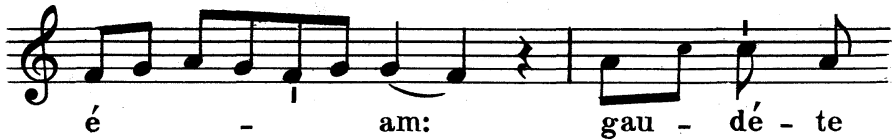
This explanation of the merits and defects of the older system is a bit over-simplified, but those who have experienced the use of it and have later changed to the present Solesmes practice will readily acknowledge the truth of our assertions.

The "new" practice, so beautifully described by Dom Gajard in the *Revue Gregorienne* (No. 5, 1948, p. 183 ss.), is based on the principle: always a silent ictus at the full bar. Since even very inexperienced choirs quickly "feel" the silent rest in the second example above, that in which the rest falls after the bar line, the present practice is to provide such a silent ictus in cases which call for a rest *before* the bar line, too.

Here is the procedure. When the second phrase is to begin with a non-ictic note as in our second example above, we follow the usual practice and place the eighth rest after the bar line. When, however, the second phrase is to begin squarely on an ictic note, the rest is placed before the bar line, *but in this instance it is a quarter-rest, not an eighth*. This makes it possible in singing to finish the first phrase on, normally, a binary compound beat and then add a silent ictus on

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the quarter-rest before attacking the next phrase :



We point out that this method, like any other, is of *practical* value and that its historical accuracy is certain only to the extent that we are reasonably sure that the pauses in chant were actually measured and in rhythm. Those who treat this point lightly and who assume that any pause will do, even an unmeasured one, are violating the principle of unity which is of paramount importance in all music and art. We propose that this method be adopted because of its practical value and because it has been found to be that which is best suited to chant by the foremost authorities of Solesmes and Solesmes-method schools. It is the method used throughout this book for all transcriptions, and it is used by the author in his classroom teaching.

* * *

We must now turn to the question of drawing the chironomic curve. Although we might be safe in presuming some familiarity with the appearance of written chironomy among those adequately prepared for its study, let us briefly sketch its use, application and conventions.

Since actual conducting is a spatial affair, that is, a gesturing within a certain limited area *directly* in front of the chironomist, and since the retracing of gestures which is natural and indeed unavoidable by crossing and re-crossing the same area with the hand cannot in any legible way be reproduced on paper in the precise form it takes in real conducting, we utilize a convenient approximation of the real gestures for our written work.

The student will already have noted in his preliminary practice with the wall chart that his gestures of arsis and thesis, when properly performed, show no angularity whatsoever. Unfortunately, when writing chironomy, in order to preserve the shape and design of the basic gestures, we are obliged to sacrifice to some extent the graphic appearance of the "follow-through", the extension of the curve which brings the hand into position for successive gestures. An illustration will make this clear.

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This is the chironomy for Kyrie XI. Note that in order to coordinate the chironomy with the written music, we must extend the curve to the right to follow the flow of the notation. For the word *Kyrie*, this is no real problem, as the written chironomy and the actual conducting of the music happen to be practically identical, but for *eleison* it is quite another matter. To begin with, the final thesis of *Kyrie* cannot be made to lead smoothly into the first arsis of *eleison* without some compromise in the written line. We use the little retraced hook as the clearest means of solving the difficulty. Another idea might serve nearly as well, but for uniformity Solesmes scholars have selected this means of showing the link between the thesis and a following arsis.



Note also that the two arses of *eleison* must be extended to the right in drawing the chironomy. In practice they are, of course, concentric or coincident loops, or in any case, two vertically related arcs more resembling this shape:



rather than a horizontal extension.

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Be this as it may, the present system of transcription and chironomic overlay is quite adequate both for pedagogical and mnemonic purposes, and it is not likely that its compromises with the problems of representing in two dimensions something that takes place in four will offer the reader any great difficulties.

The question of selecting the arsic or thetic qualities of the respective compound beats is one which requires some amplification and extensive treatment, and we shall reserve it for the following chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

Melodic Influences

Of prime importance in the development of the chironomy of any piece is the consideration of the melodic curve.

In any given Gregorian melody the melodic rise and fall has in its very nature the implications of arsis and thesis qualities. We must not confuse our notions of arsis and thesis with those which are currently applied to modern music. In the more sophisticated and involved music of the last two or three centuries the elements of impulse and relaxation do not stand in the same relationship to each other as in chant . . . or at least, not necessarily. Impulse and relaxation, other terms for our arsis and thesis, are aspects of rhythm, and as such, independent of certain vicissitudes of the melody. This independence is not always noticeable in chant but is very much more pronounced in more recent music. Thus we may safely say that in the simple, straightforward style of Gregorian chant, the melody, considered apart from the text, contains in its curve the definite indications of arsic and thesis functions.

These functions are overruled or modified by the text, to be sure, in certain cases, but we must consider the melodic indications by themselves for the moment.

In the light of the general aim of all conducting which we noted in our first chapter, we can set as a general principle that the chironomy must not violate the unity of the incise, that is, the synthesis of the fragments of chant which lie between the small quarter bars in the Solesmes editions. To whatever extent possible, it may support not only this unity but the unity of the member, the phrase and the period, too. We shall see how this is achieved later on.

Each incise exhibits a unity based on the functions of 1) impulse or elan which tends forward toward the melodic apex, and 2) relaxation which falls gradually away after this apex. We express this current of energy which flows through the incise with the ordinary crescendo and decrescendo marks:

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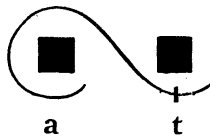
We call the pre-apex phase the protasis and the post-apex phase the apodosis.

Note that the intensive pole or apex of the incise is indicated by an accent stroke.

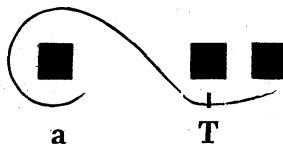
The above example is very clear cut and obvious, each function of the rhythmic flow being of precise and distinct form. Others exist which are more complex, and it will only require a few minutes' examination of the *Liber* or the *Graduale* to see that there are almost as many possible shapes and forms and there are incises. Nevertheless, in practice we make certain generalized classifications which simplify our study and render the evaluation of given cases more rapid and practical.

In his splendid treatise *Precis de rythmique gregorienne*, Dr. Auguste LeGuennant ranks the various possible rhythmic combinations according to certain formal classifications. Using Roman numerals and large and small letters as a convenient means of labelling the different categories, he assigns the following order to them:

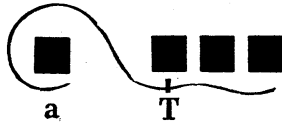
TYPE I — FUNDAMENTAL RHYTHMIC CELL



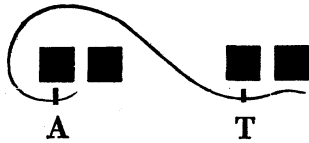
TYPE II — FUNDAMENTAL RHYTHMIC CELL



TYPE III — FUNDAMENTAL RHYTHMIC CELL

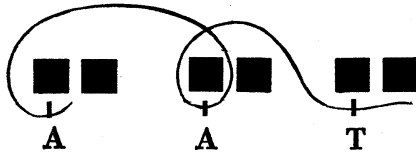


TYPE IV — DEVELOPED SIMPLE RHYTHM (as opposed to the *elementary* rhythms above).

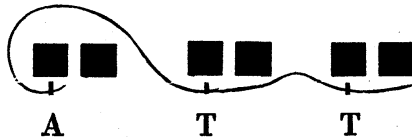


N.B. The distinction in terminology implied by *elementary* and *simple* as applied to the above combinations rests on the nature of the arsis phase of each. When the arsis is a simple note, that is, a non-ictic single count, the rhythm is called *elementary*; when the arsis is a compound unit, that is, an entire compound beat, the rhythm is no longer *elementary*, but we call it *developed simple* to avoid confusion with the more complex forms which follow.

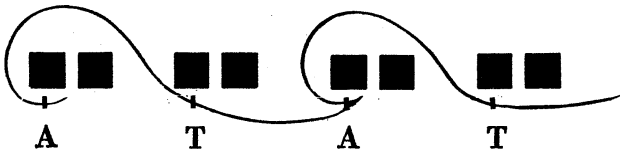
TYPE V — COMPOUND RHYTHM (more than one arsis leading to a single thesis)



TYPE VI — COMPOUND RHYTHM (a single arsis leading to a series of theses)

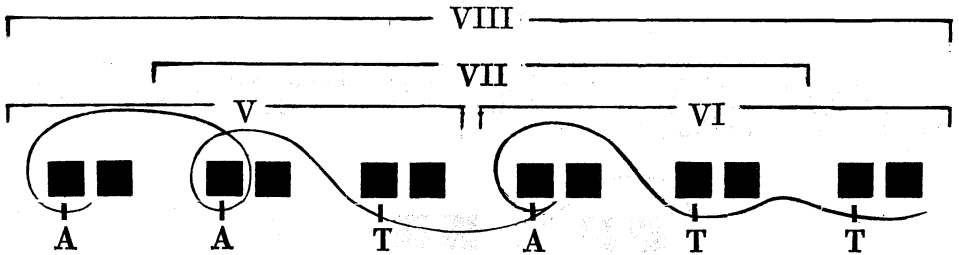


TYPE VII — COMPOUND RHYTHM (regular alternation of arsis and thesis)



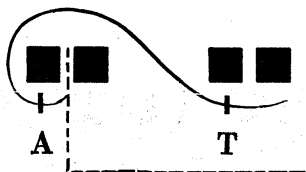
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TYPE VIII — COMPOUND RHYTHM (overlapping of various combinations to form units larger than those in Types I to VII.



Let us hasten to point out that the above categories are not given here with illustrations of all their possible combinations. In the categories from IV to VIII, each compound beat can be either binary or ternary without changing the nature of the category concerned. One very important distinction is that of the elementary rhythm as opposed to the developed simple rhythm (Types I, II and III in contrast with IV), which is based on the difference between the single-count arsis and the arsis with a full compound beat value. An easy way to remember this distinction is to keep in mind that the elementary rhythms are those whose arses are non-ictic, whereas the developed simple rhythm always has an ictus on its arsic phase.

The second important distinction, and the one which is of highest meaning to the chironomist, is that between the elementary rhythms I, II and III and the developed simple and compound rhythms from IV to VIII. Rhythms I, II and III are never found in isolated, actual form in chant. These categories represent *analytical* points of view, a sort of dissection of the living music to its bare fundamentals. We do not imply, however, that these rhythmic types are not real. On the contrary, they are quite as real as any of the others, and in fact, their presence as the sub-surface skeleton of the greater rhythm is the only factor which makes the larger rhythmic types at all possible. The elementary rhythms, however, are bound into the rhythmic texture in such a way as never to be present independently of a larger rhythmic organization. Thus, for example, in Type IV:



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the larger scheme includes one of the first three elementary forms within it, in this instance Type II. Any relationship between two compound beats can, of course, be shown to contain such an elementary rhythm.

Let us return now to an examination of the forms which concern us, types IV to VIII. Applying our categories to actual chants, we can find examples such as the following:

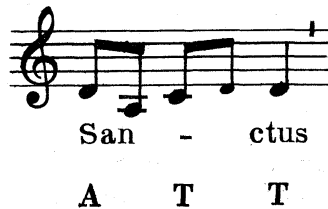
TYPE IV (Sanctus X)



TYPE V (Communion *Qui meditabitur*)



TYPE VI (Sanctus XI)



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TYPE VII

(second incise of Introit
Exsurge)

qua - re ob - dór - mis Dó - mi - ne?
A T A T A T

TYPE VIII

(Gradual *Omnes*)

O - mnes
A A A T T T T
V VI VIII

Naturally, these are only a few of the possibilities. Many others will be found in the liturgical books, and in the course of his study of chironomy, the student will be obliged to deal with rhythmic forms of every conceivable shape and cast.

Although it will have been impossible for the student who approaches this study with adequate preparation not to have had some contact with the principles of placing the arsis and the thesis and the selection of these qualities of impulse and relaxation, we must consider this problem "from the bottom up", as it were, for only by a careful assimilation of the basic concepts can higher ideas and techniques be absorbed properly.

Generally speaking, then, let us set down the following principles for the selection of the arsic or thetic quality of a compound beat:

1) The incise must not be characterized by a chironomy contrary to the musical form. Most of the ictuses leading up to the apex tend to be arsic and those which follow thetic.

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2) Generally an ictus which is higher than a preceding ictus has a tendency to be arsic; a lower one tends to be thetic.

3) When the melodic line is so quiet and flat as to make the use of the above two principles equivocal, the slope or direction of the notes of the whole compound beat may be considered, subject to certain modifications of common sense. Thus in a recitation on one note, a podatus sometimes inserts a slight "lift" or a clivis, conversely, a "drop", both of which return immediately to the simple recitation. For all practical purposes, although the line is not rising in itself, nor the ictus points higher or lower in their march across the music, these slight inflections of the very neume structure tend to give arsic or thetic character to the ictus to which each belongs. We shall see examples of this later.

Just as in elementary chant study when we must learn to place the ictus fluently according to a set of rules, so now we must learn to recognize the arsic or thetic character of an ictus by the application of the three basic principles above. We shall also, as in the study of the placement of the ictus, use these principles in order of importance.

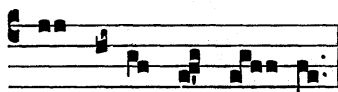
Just as in the study of ictus placement, however, the first rule, although the most important in a *general* sense, is less frequently applied than the second, since most cases which require our attention are subject to the principle of ictus pitch relationships rather than that of incise unity. The very nature of incise construction, moreover, is such that we seldom need concern ourselves about the possibility of a contradictory chironomy. We must *not* try to make *every* ictus which precedes the apex arsic and *all* those which follow thetic. This would be as nonsensical as to pass a law requiring all apples to be red because most of them happen to be! We shall merely use the first principle as a guide in the rare cases in which a preponderantly thetic quality might be given to the protasis or an arsic one to the apodosis by indiscriminate use of the second rule. By way of remark we might say that the first principle is more useful for the consideration of very short incisives than for the study of the more extended ones.

Before looking into actual examples of the application of the above rules, let us note that there are some cases which must be treated independently of the rules. Certain formulas, neumes and cadences are always handled in the same manner, regardless of their context.

Thus the salicus (NOT the scandicus) is always treated in arsis,

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as it represents a conventional form whose ictus always lies higher than the preceding note and whose tendency is strongly upward and energetic. This is the case even when the salicus is approached from above in an otherwise descending passage:

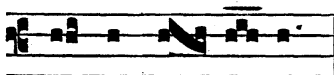


de gente non san-cta:



Similarly, the high distropha which falls on a single syllable as in the above example, but in the Vatican edition transcription of Graduals is, in most cases, a high bivirga in the manuscripts. Thus, from the very nature of its pitch level and the double virga (remember that the virga represents the high pitch, the punctum the low in primitive notation), we conventionally treat this isolated distropha in the upper register in arsis, *when found in Graduals*.

So, too, we usually treat the upper note of the three-note pressus group, formed by a punctum and a podatus at the unison, in *thesis* when it receives an ictus:



non e-ru- bé-scam:



This is done in the above case and in others like it because in the

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original versions which can be deciphered from the manuscripts this upper note is often an oriscus, a note of appendage and in this case, ornamentation. It does not, although higher than the preceding compound beat, justify the use of an arsis.

We also treat the doubly dotted clivis or podatus in thesis, as these forms are invariably found in cadence formulas.

The well-known cadence formula which is so frequently found in the third and fourth modes:

The image shows two musical notations for the cadence formula 'cae-li'. On the left is a simplified notation on a four-line staff with a C-clef, showing a sequence of notes: a half note on G4, a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4, a quarter note on C5, and a quarter note on B4. On the right is a standard musical notation on a five-line staff with a C-clef, showing a sequence of notes: a half note on G4, a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4, a quarter note on C5, and a quarter note on B4. The lyrics 'cae-li,' are written below the notes, with a comma under the final 'i'.

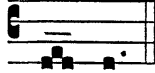
receives a uniform treatment dependent on the position of the word accent (for more detailed explanation, see the following chapter). When the word accent falls on the first element of the formula, that first ictus is as arsic and all those which follow thetic. When there is no accent on the first ictus of the formula, the entire formula is in thesis, regardless of the context:

The image shows two musical notations for the cadence formula 'me-o'. On the left is a simplified notation on a four-line staff with a C-clef, showing a sequence of notes: a half note on G4, a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4, a quarter note on C5, and a quarter note on B4. On the right is a standard musical notation on a five-line staff with a C-clef, showing a sequence of notes: a half note on G4, a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4, a quarter note on C5, and a quarter note on B4. The lyrics 'me-o:' are written below the notes, with a colon under the final 'o'.

The image shows two musical notations for the cadence formula 'Dó-mi-ne'. On the left is a simplified notation on a four-line staff with a C-clef, showing a sequence of notes: a half note on G4, a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4, a quarter note on C5, and a quarter note on B4. On the right is a standard musical notation on a five-line staff with a C-clef, showing a sequence of notes: a half note on G4, a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4, a quarter note on C5, and a quarter note on B4. The lyrics 'Dó-mi-ne,' are written below the notes, with an accent over the 'ó' in 'Dó' and a comma under the final 'e'.

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The very common formula which is found throughout the entire repertoire in various modes:



is too often treated by inexperienced chironomists in arsis. It is *sometimes* arsic, to be sure (see Communion *Ego clamavi* Appendix, p. 88), but more often than not it is better taken in thesis, as by its very nature it implies a retardando towards the final note of cadence. We shall see the ramifications of this principle in our study.

With these brief remarks, let us begin by examining the sequence of compound beats in the Introit *Venite benedicti*. Here is the first incise:



The first ictus is clearly rising, active and arsic. It is, moreover, the initial ictus and is treated conventionally in arsis. The second ictus, which comes on the pressus, is higher in pitch than the first (rule 2) and tends upward (rule 3). It is arsic, since it thus fits into the form of the incise (rule 1) quite perfectly. The final ictus of the incise is higher than the second (rule 2), but this point is overruled by the fact that it is the last element of the incise, a cadential element (rule 1) and could not be arsic without injuring the form of the incise. Note that Rule 1 applies in this instance, as we have pointed out above, in the short type of incise. This incise, formed of two arses and one thesis, is of Rhythmic Type V.

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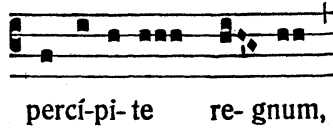
In the second incise we have more complex phenomena :



The first ictus on *be-* is arsic, as it fulfills the role of initial ictus and that of melodic apex, too. The second ictus, which through subdivision falls on the last note of the torculus, is thetic, since it is not higher in pitch than the previous note and the slope of its notes (Rule 3) tends to make it thetic. The first rule is not applicable at all. The third ictus, on *dí-*, is lower than the second (Rule 2) which overrules its upward tendency (Rule 3), and therefore it, too, is thetic. The fourth ictus, on the same syllable *dí* is higher than the third, and this (second rule) governs its arsic quality. The fifth ictus falls on the marked diamond-shaped note and is again lower than the preceding one (Rule 3) and therefore thetic. The dotted note, although not a true cadence, serves as a point of repose of the rhythm and is therefore treated in thesis, even though it is higher than the preceding ictus. In this case, the shape of the incise and the general tendency to thetic beats which follows the apex (Rule 1) are decisive. The ictus on the last syllable of *Patris* is decidedly lower than any of the preceding ones and is thus thetic. In the case of the dotted note on *me-* we prefer to choose a thesis from the melodic point of view for the same reasons we noted for the dotted note on *-cti*. Let us mention in passing, however, that consideration of the text (see the following chapter) may modify this kind of ictus in more advanced study. From all points of view, the last two ictuses of this incise are thetic.

The next incise, *percipite regnum*, is very simple:

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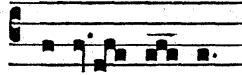
If the elementary student wishes to be rule-bound, he will place the first ictus on the punctum of the first syllable, *per-*. For our purposes we prefer to place the ictus on the accented syllable *ci-*, as this is characteristic in dactylic formations and is in this instance supported by the modal dominant on which that syllable comes. This ictus is markedly higher than the preceding one and represents a new impulse after the cadence which comes immediately before it; therefore it is arsic. The tristropha on *te* receives, of course, the second ictus, lower than the preceding one, no melodic slope at all and therefore thetic. The third ictus of the incise falls on the podatus of *regnum*; although the ictus is neither higher nor lower than the preceding one, the slope of the neume (Rule 3) is in at least a small way a factor indicating arsis. This is not always the case, as very often this pivoting about a single note of recitation is purely ornamental and thetic, but here we consider that the inactivity of the melody on *te* just before it justifies a slight arsic quality on this podatus as a means of carrying the movement forward somewhat. The reader will already have guessed that the slope of the neume formation also determines the character of the two diamond-shaped notes which make up the fourth ictus of the incise: thesis (Rule 3, of course). The final ictus is again thetic as representing no pitch change either in ictus or neume direction.

Note that the settling of the melody on a long note often gives a thetic character to the ictus because of the reposeful nature of the entire compound beat thus involved. There are, of course, long arsic notes, and the student should not try to make rules of simple observations.

The final incise of the first phrase, *alleluia*, is a matter upon which even experts may differ slightly. Were we to consider the relative pitch

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of the ictuses, we would call them all thesis, as even the third ictus



al-le- lú- ia:



al- le - lú - ia:

(on *lu*), although higher than the preceding one, is part of the cadence formula which we noted above as being frequently thetic. Due to the proximity of the phrase ending and the fact that this cadence is both the phrase and incise formula, we would hesitate to make this episematic torculus arsic. We are faced, however, with an incise in which no ictus would be arsic — this, too, would be absurd! To give form and character to the incise according to our first rule, we must seek a suitable place for an apex . . . at least one arsis. We must place it on the plain torculus in this instance, for consistency in our preliminary study is important, and the slope of this neume as well as its position after the dotted note give it a feeling of activity. The alternate solution would be that of placing the arsis on the episematic torculus. We have given our reasons for our preference, but we leave the door open for personal concepts.

Because the next phrase begins on the ictus, we add a quarter rest before the bar and call it thetic.

The student should work out the remainder of this piece with the instructor and should study certain short pieces of the repertoire to familiarize himself with these principles.

We repeat for clarity; the student should ask himself the following questions regarding each ictus:

- 1) Is it vital for incise form and unity that this ictus be arsic for the pre-apex phase or beginning or thetic for the cadence or end of incise?

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- 2) If the answers to both aspects of the first question are *no*, then does this ictus represent a higher point than that given by the ictus immediately before it . . . or a lower point?
- 3) If all the preceding questions are answered negatively, then does this ictus begin a compound beat whose slope or shape is clearly rising or dropping?

We add, in closing, that the beginner should beware of the tendency which is so often noticeable among neophytes, that of using the slightest pretext for placing an arsis on an ictus of doubtful or almost "neutral" character. We shall note in later chapters that this may result in an intense, energetic movement which is not entirely in keeping with the style of Gregorian chant in the Solesmes method.

CHAPTER FIVE

Textual Influences

As has been pointed out countless times in the major pedagogical and historical studies of the Solesmes school, the melody of Gregorian chant very frequently brings weight to the choice of arsis and thesis through its relationship with the text. Melody is independent of the text, to be sure, but in most instances there are not great discrepancies between the qualities of the text and those of the melodic line.

This assertion will not surprise those who are familiar with the basic techniques of the Solesmes method, for to acquire these one must gain an understanding of the textual-melodic rapport.

Each word in chant has a rhythmic quality. We group the words into two broad categories which are modifications of an ancient grammatical ranking. Words which carry their accents on the penultimate syllable are called spondaic (*tollis, Deus*) and those which carry them on the antepenultimate are called dactylic (*Dominum, filius*). All Latin words tend, according to the Solesmes findings, to bear an ictus on the final syllable when considered in their isolated rhythmic form. This is known by all Gregorianists and is the natural result of considering the word as a complete rhythm with an initial arsis on the accent and the concluding thesis on the final.

The consequences of the above approach are that 1) the Latin accent is indifferent to the ictus and often falls on a non-ictic part of the rhythm, 2) the spondaic words have clearly non-ictic accents, 3) the dactylic words have, by a process of placing secondary ictuses every other syllable counting backwards from the final (ictic) syllable, normally ictic accents, and 4) the chironomic qualities of arsis and thesis, in accord with our consistent concept of impulse and relaxation respectively, are applicable to the two principle parts of the word rhythm, the accent (arsic) and final syllable (thetic).

Thus in the word *Dominus*, the accented syllable *Do-* represents the arsic portion of the word-rhythm and the *-nus* the thetic quality.

Applying this principle, which may be fully studied in any of the fundamental treatises which are used in first-year courses, we can add to our melodic principles studied in the preceding chapter one of a verbal or textual nature: generally speaking, the coincidence of an

TECHNIQUE OF CHRONOMY

accented syllable with the ictus lends the latter a tendency to arsis; coincidence of the word-final with an ictus tends to lend to this ictus a thetic quality.

As a corollary to the above, let us note that the central syllable of a dactylic word has a neutral nature, and is pliable to melodic exigencies. It is, moreover, of a distinctly non-ictic character, and when the neume formation upsets this natural order and places an ictus on this syllable, it should be carefully studied to determine whether it is part of a generally arsic line or a thetic one, for the giving of an independent quality to the syllable without concern for its context will result in lending it an importance which is contrary to its nature.

Let us now see how these considerations are applied to a chant piece.

The Communion *Spiritus ubi vult* has this as its first incise:

Comm.
VIII.

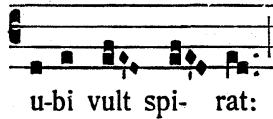
S PI-RI-TUS *

Spi - ri - tus

The first ictus is, of course arsic, as it coincides with the accent as well as being the initial compound beat of the piece. The second ictus, and also the third, are coincident with the word-final and are thus thetic.

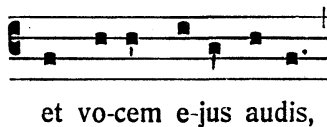
The second incise begins with a short word *ubi*, one of those which bears no accent but which are conventionally treated like other accented words unless the musical form indicates a contrary handling. Here it begins the second incise in an upward movement and is thus considered to be arsic:

TEXTUAL INFLUENCES



The second ictus on *vult* is a further rise on a monosyllable, and in keeping with the musical form, arsic. The third ictus falls on the diamond-shaped subpunctum and is subject to the third melodic rule of the slope of the neume: thesis. The fourth ictus coincides with the accent, and although its ictus is not elevated above the preceding ones, its slope combines with the arsic accent to give the whole compound beat an arsic quality. The fifth ictus is like the third and like it is thetic. The sixth and seventh ictuses belong to the doubly dotted cadence *clivis* and are thetic.

The third incise begins with a decided upward movement on *et* and this ictus is arsic, of course. The second ictus coincides with the

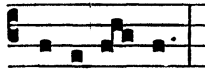


word-final and is thus thetic. We note that the melodic form indicates for this ictus an arsic treatment (Rule 2, higher ictus), but we shall consider such cases of conflict in a later chapter. Let us tentatively give a thesis to this ictus, then in accord with our present study of

TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

word influences. The third and fourth ictuses are both on word-finals and both in descending ictus order: two theses.

The fourth incise *alleluia* is very brief and comes at the end of the phrase itself. We may, therefore, to avoid too much active feeling near the cadence, call the first ictus on *al-*thetic and that on the word accent arsic. The final dotted note, coinciding with the word final is, of course, thetic.



alle- lú- ia:



al- le- lú - ia:

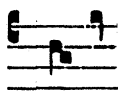
The student should finish this piece with the instructor as usual, and try others for practice. Melodic considerations should, in this work, be overlooked in favor of textual ones.

CHAPTER SIX

Interplay of Melodic and Textual Influences

In countless instances in Gregorian chant, the simultaneous consideration of textual and melodic tendencies will clarify beyond doubt the choice of arsis and thesis in cases where each aspect in itself would not be sufficient to clarify the whole chironomy. We must not attempt to make rules about the respective importance of textual and melodic influences, however, as circumstances alter cases. We can use as a general principle that the textual influence is not as important as the unity of the incise and that often it is not as important as the comparative pitch of the successive ictuses, but we must usually bend to its influence over neume slope, and when the text is of importance or the melody less imperious, it may happen that the word may take precedence over the pitch relationship of the ictuses.

Before examining actual cases, let us point out that sometimes there is found a phenomenon which is best described as a *melodic inversion*. Such formations are characterized by seemingly direct contradictions of the normal melody-text agreement on arsis and thesis. We may cite, among other examples, the case of the *Christe* of Mass XI:



Chri-ste



Chrí - ste

Here the accented syllable lies much lower than the word final, and its neume slope is, moreover, downward. In such instances, the intention of the composer cannot possibly have been a negation of the very word-structure. This melodic inversion is, in effect, a paradox. The arsic qualities of the accent and the thetic qualities of the word-final are underscored in a sense by setting them off against a diametrically opposed melodic scheme. Note, however, that the rhythm is arranged with the articulated group on the accent and the long note of "repose", if we may call it that, on the word-final. We treat such striking cases

TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

with full consideration for the text. The first ictus is arsic, the second thetic.

Let us hasten to point out, however, that all cases of disagreement between melody and text are by no means "melodic inversions". We must be able to discern two important factors in order to justify such a classification: 1) complete inversion and opposition (partial inversion will not do) and 2) preservation in its essentials of the word-rhythm. Thus long melismas on word finals are not melodic inversions, nor are descending melismas on the accent. Long experience, however, will help the chironomist in classifying cases of conflict.

Let us examine the Communion *Petite et accipietis*. The first incise is brief, simple and easily evaluated: Of the two ictuses, one is arsic, the second thetic according to melodic rule one.

Comm. I.

P E-TI-TE, *

Pé - ti - te,

The second incise contains five ictuses:

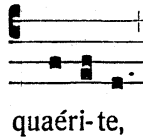
et ac-ci-pi-é-tis:

et ac - ci - pi - é - tis:

MELODY AND TEXT

The first ictus on the clivis of *ac-* is at the same pitch as the preceding one, but the slope of the neume is downward and the syllable neutral. The ictus is, therefore, thetic. The second ictus on the podatus of *ci-* is lower than the preceding ictus and falls on a neutral syllable, but in looking ahead we see that we must overlook these points in favor of the direction of the slope of the neume, since unless we put an arsis here, we shall be unable to have one at all. Therefore, to preserve the unity of the incise and give it an apex (Rule 1), we choose an arsis. All the following ictuses form part of the descending formation, and the ictus on the accent does not suffice to take from this formula its thetic quality.

The brief incise *quaerite* is bound to the preceding one by the overlapping compound beat. Of its two ictuses, the first on *-ri-* and the second on *-te* are arsic and thetic respectively to preserve the form of the incise.



The fourth incise is also bound to the third by a link of an overlapping compound beat. Its first ictus on *in-* is subject to the principle



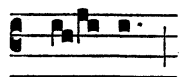
TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

of downward slope of the neume and falls on a neutral syllable: thesis. The torculus on *ve-* is also on a neutral syllable but with a rising slope: arsis. The logical ictus on the last note of this torculus lies higher than the preceding one, but looking ahead we note that it is really an ornamental anticipation of the real arsic apex on *e*, the word accent. Since we feel that in such a short incise the form would be unbalanced with a succession of three arses in succession, we call this third ictus thetic and reserve the principal arsis for the accented syllable on the episematic clivis. From this point the melody descends to a cadence formula on the final syllable, four thetic ictuses in succession.

It would be well to examine this notion of ornamental groups at this point. Often we find that certain neumes or groups act as embellishments to others, usually receiving a thetic treatment. Sometimes, as in the case above, the ictus of the embellishing group is one degree higher than the preceding ictus. In such instances we are not bound to observe the second rule, and the melodic importance of the group is diminished by its subservient role. Experience with the repertoire will show, however, that certain characteristics are often present in such ornamental groups, and a listing here of these traits will perhaps be of service to the student.

1) When a series of ictuses on the same degree support a neume structure which turns and bends about this degree, and when no syllabic exigencies (accented or final syllables) interrupt it, the first ictus of the series is treated in relationship to the context and the others as thetic ornaments. For example: the Antiphon *Hic vir*, final syllable of word *caelo* (see transcription in appendix).

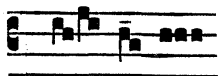
2) When a group of two clivis occurs, the second lying a degree higher than the first as in the Introit *Puer* of Christmas:



no- bis,



nó - bis,



hú- me-rum



hú - me - rum

MELODY AND TEXT

in such a way that the clivis form an ornament about the first ictic note, the first ictus is, when on the accented syllable, arsic and the other, although higher, thetic. See also the very clear case of the Introit *Eduxit*.

3) Certain groups which occur with frequency in chant are treated in thesis although the slope of their neumes and elements is decidedly upward. For example, the very common cadence *la-do-sol-fa* which is found in the tract *De profundis* four times and in many other pieces:



4) In certain instances, including the case above in the fourth incise of the Communion *Petite*, an ictus may come between two others of more important function, and even when the ornamental ictus is higher, it is considered as thetic. Note that the most frequent form of this ornament is found in such cases as the torculus above which bears a deductive ictus in its third note. By definition a torculus has its second note higher than the other two; therefore the characteristic elevation of this note anticipates the deductive ictus which is always at least a step lower. As examples of this we may cite the word *universi* of the Introit *Ad te levavi*:



TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

or the word *decoris* of the Gradual *Ex Sion*:



Careful study of the chants transcribed in the Appendix will reward the student in regard to these subtle and interesting cases.

The student should, after this brief digression, complete the study of the Communion *Petite* with the instructor and examine other brief pieces from the repertoire for practice.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conducting from Written Chironomy

As we have said, the first step toward good chant conducting is thorough practice in drawing the chironomic line on transcribed chants.

In order to conduct from written work and to draw up a "master score" of the piece under consideration, the student must make a continuous diagram on a single staff such as that which is included with this volume and which may be removed or unfolded for study. As a specimen of this type of written diagram we give the Introit *Invocabit me*.

Note that the crescendo and decrescendo marks which we have used for indicating the protasis and apodosis of incises are also utilized for larger divisions, with double, triple and quadruple accent strokes to denote the hierarchy of melodic units.

We also give a textual analysis and have added the rhythmic types in horizontal brackets above the music.

The advantage of this sort of diagram is very obvious. It more nearly represents the actual flow of the music than any other means we have at present. It makes it possible to draw the chironomic curve in a single line rather than imposing a break at the end of each line as in a page-format transcription.

To begin with, the student should try the shorter pieces of the Appendix, transcribing them to long strips of paper as in our specimen. He should limit himself to simple, short pieces until he has thoroughly acquired the knack of working from written chironomy.

We should at this point warn the student that he will undoubtedly make an error which has been the *bete noire* of all beginners since the method was devised. When the student has a series of arses to express, he will have a little or no trouble making them fall more or less within the area directly in front of him, either as concentric circles or as rising arcs. When, however, he has a chain of theses, he will at first make each of them too large and too extended on a horizontal plane, with the result that he will soon find that his hand is stretched as far

TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

as it will go away from his body with yet another thesis or two to conduct! This is an easily remediable fault, and it is overcome by simply limiting a group of theses to a spacing of three or four inches between ictuses and a rather small amplitude. The last thesis should, however, swoop down somewhat so as to prepare the return to the following arsis:



We must state clearly at this point as our strongest admonition to beginners to beware of syllabic pieces such as Glorias, Credos or Hymns and Sequences. These, while giving the appearance of simple structure, involve the neophyte in such subtle conflicts of word and melody as to confuse him at the very stage of his study which most urgently calls for consistent practice and assimilation.

Here for consideration are some of the pieces which are easy to work out and fruitful for practice:

- Gradual *Vovete*
- Gradual *Bonum est* (verse only)
- Communion *De fructu*
- Communion *Gustate*
- Communion *Qui meditabitur*

In the initial work with the choir, the conductor must take pains to assure a perfect rhythmic mechanism in the singing before trying to insert subtleties. He must take his group through the piece at hand until all doubtful counting, rests, attacks and other such purely technical matters have been cleared up. There is no way of setting down principles for this *a priori* as the peculiarities of each choir . . . and for that matter, of each director, . . . will alter procedures from one moment to the next.

We cannot state too strongly that the student must beware of following the singers rather than obliging them to follow him. Often, in order to maintain ensemble, a director will alter his tempo, the amplitude of the curve of the chironomy or other such points in order to compromise with a choir of inexperienced or inflexible singers. This

CONDUCTING FROM CHIRONOMY

certain that his singers have come as close to this ideal as their state of advancement will permit.

It is best to direct the chant without accompaniment, at least in the will never do. From the outset, the director must hear in his mind how he wants the music to sound, and he must not be satisfied until he is first repetitions. Often the organ will pull the singers into line and disguise flaws in the conducting. There is nothing quite so revealing as a first rehearsal of a new chant piece without the crutch of accompaniment.

Lastly we can only advise the student to take every opportunity which he can arrange for to conduct. Only by daily application do the principles set forth here become meaningful, and their stylistic implications felt by the choir and choirmaster.

CHAPTER EIGHT

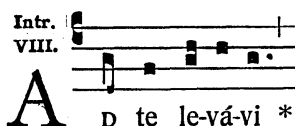
Writing Advanced Chironomy

In considering the entire repertoire as the field of the chironomist, we must take into consideration the many varied and subtle influences which may modify our principles previously set forth or require new applications of them. In nearly every extended composition, certain special cases which call for the exercise of good judgment and artistic sensitivity may be found, and these may or may not adapt themselves to the basic principles which we have henceforth used as guides.

There is no better way to outline these than by examining a few of the extended works of the chant repertoire and commenting on them ictus by ictus.

Let us begin with the first Introit of the liturgical year, *Ad te levavi*. The first incise consists of three compound beats:

Intr.
VIII.



A D te le-vá-vi *

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody consists of a series of notes: a quarter note 'A', a quarter note 'D', a quarter note 'te', a quarter note 'le', a quarter note 'vá', and a quarter note 'vi'. There are vertical lines above the notes indicating ictus. A large letter 'A' is placed to the left of the first note.



Ad te le - vá-vi *

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef. The melody is written with a series of notes: a quarter note 'A', a quarter note 'd', a quarter note 'te', a quarter note 'le', a quarter note 'vá', and a quarter note 'vi'. There are vertical lines above the notes indicating ictus. A large letter 'A' is placed to the left of the first note.

Up to this point we have accepted the principle that all pieces begin with an arsic ictus and that all phrases (thus all compound beats immediately following a full bar) also begin with an arsis. In broader esthetic concepts, however, it is possible to take account of the subtle form of certain opening groups by deferring the arsis to the preparatory beat which we mentioned in our earlier discussions. Thus the real rhythm of the incise or phrase may be said to begin with the silent preparation, an intellectual affair, to be sure, and the opening *sung* ictus may be thetic. Such is the case with the familiar *Asperges* intonation,

ADVANCED CHIRONOMY

Ant.
VII.

A



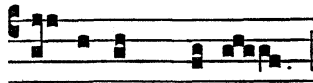
- SPÉR- GES me, *

and such is the case with the Introit *Ad te levavi*. Here is the chironomy of the first incise with the indicated preparatory arsis:



Ad te le - vá-vi *

The second incise consists of six ictuses:



á- nimam me- am:



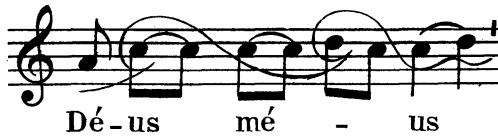
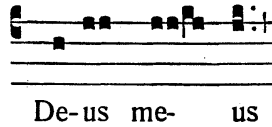
á - ni- mam mé - am:

The first of these on the accent of *animam* is subject also to the melodic principle of relative pitch of the ictus: arsis. The second, on the word final, although of rising slope (Rule 3), is clearly lower in ictus pitch (Rule 2) and thus thetic. In the word *meam* we have an ictic accent one step lower than the preceding ictus. The slope of the neume is upward, however, and this, added to the accent quality would justify the use of arsis. The three final ictuses on the last syllable would then be thetic. An alternate solution might be worked out by following the melodic indications more strictly with less regard for the text. In such a case the podatus on *me-* would be thetic because of rule 2, and the

TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

first ictus of the torculus on *am* arsic. The last two ictuses would be thetic as usual. We prefer, however, the former solution, while leaving the final decision up to the tastes of the individual.

The third incise contains five ictuses:

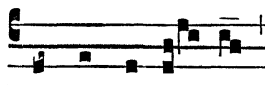


The first incise is on the high distropha of *us*, and here we may consider the word to be in inversion with the melody. Note that the rhythm of the word is preserved, however. Had this formation occurred in the center or closing portion of an incise, we could easily grant the treatment of melodic inversion and place a thesis on the high note. In this instance, however, the sudden melodic upsweep at the very beginning of the incise after the relaxation of the preceding cadence leads us to prefer to disregard the text and place an arsis on this first ictus. On the second ictus we have a word accent, but no change of pitch whatsoever, even in the neume slope. Looking ahead we see that the melodic line is almost perfectly flat. To place an arsis here because of the accent will require that we treat the ornamental clivis on the next ictus as a thetic embellishment in order to avoid an exaggerated sense of arsis in this simple line. If, however, we prefer to treat the clivis as arsic because of its being the highest melodic ictus (which is the preference of the author), we then can treat the distropha of *me-* in thesis, in deference to the melodic shape. The doubly dotted podatus is, of course, cadential, and it should unquestionably be thetic. Here then are the possible solutions in order of preference. The third choice is a very weak one.

	ICTUS	1	2	3	4	5
First choice		A	T	A	T	T
Second choice		A	A	T	T	T
Third choice		T	A	A	T	T

ADVANCED CHIRONOMY

The fourth incise is clear-cut:



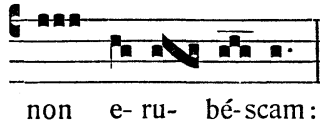
in te confi- do,



After the cadence of the third incise, although the first ictus of the fourth is decidedly lower, we prefer to treat it in arsis in order to impart to it a certain impulse and movement. The second ictus is only one step higher than the first and of downward slope. It seems to be, in fact, an embellishment of the note *fa* to which it returns. Moreover, the next two ictuses are to be arsic, and the treatment of the ictus of *te* in thesis is advisable to avoid a succession of four arsis in this short incise. Therefore, we repeat: the first ictus on *in* is arsic, the second on *te* thetic. The third, rising on the accent, is arsic; the fourth is the apex (Rules 1 and 2) and is also arsic. Now we come to a clivis in cadence position immediately before the incise bar which carries a horizontal episema on both notes. *In such two-note cadence groups which carry the double episema we treat each note as though it were doubled by the addition of a dot, but only when placed just before the bar line.* Each of these doubled notes carries, in theory, an ictus, and each is thetic. Note, however, that the execution of this group should be so smooth and the second of the two ictuses so soft as to make it seem as though only one long compound beat were represented. We should try, in conducting this piece and others like it, to avoid making a heavy stroke on the second ictus of such groups, as the proper rendition by the choir is to a great extent dependent on psychological suggestions of the gesture.

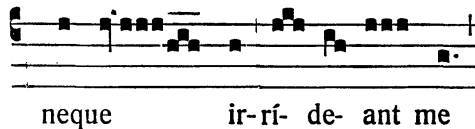
TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

The third incise carries its apex at the beginning:



Although a simple monosyllable, the *non* falls on a high tristropha and bears the principal arsic ictus. The second ictus on the clivis of *e-* is melodically and textually thetic. From the third to the sixth and final ictus, the line is melodically flat. If we treat the cadence group including the episematic torculus as thetic, we may then be justified in using an arsis for the third ictus (on *ru*). The fourth, fifth and sixth ictuses would then all be thetic. If, exceptionally, we treat the accent of the word *erubescam* in arsis in spite of its being part of our cadence formula, then we would be justified in treating the second, third and fourth ictuses in thesis. In extreme cases and when the choir tends to lag too much, arses on both the third and fifth ictuses are possible. The author prefers the first solution (first and third ictuses arsic, all others thetic).

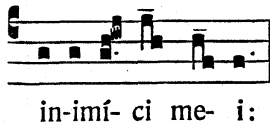
Since the second phrase begins with a non-ictic note, we put the silent ictus after the full bar and give it the value of an eighth note. It is, of course, arsic, as it is the beginning of a phrase and includes the high attack on *ne-*.



ADVANCED CHIRONOMY

The second ictus on the dotted virga comes with the final syllable of *neque* and is thus thetic. The tristropha acts as a continuance of the line, and since it is of no special melodic significance, it is thetic. We drop to the episematic torculus in thesis, of course, and place another thesis on the deductive ictus of its third element. If the choirmaster feels that there is too much thesis in this protasic phase, he may, in certain cases, place an arsis on the tristropha in order to give more movement to the line, but in very good choirs, this is not essential. On the torculus of *ri-* we place an arsis in deference to the word accent and the melodic apex. On the clivis of *de-* most certainly a thesis (melodic rules two and three). On the tristropha of the last syllable *ant*, textual considerations call for a thesis. The only support for an arsis here is the elevation if its ictus above the preceding one, but as this is only the difference of one degree, a semitone at that, we can overlook it. The last ictus of the incise on *me* is, of course, thetic.

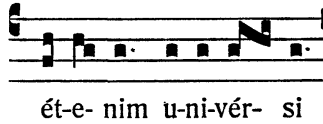
The second and final incise of the second phrase consists of six compound beats:



The initial ictus on *in-* is quite satisfactory as arsis after the long succession of theses which precede it. The dotted note preceding the quilisma is coincident with the accent of the word, and we shall call it arsic. The expressive quilisma is a rising ternary group on the apex and is thus arsic. These three arsic beats are then beautifully balanced on the apodosic side of the incise by the decidedly descending fourth, fifth and sixth beats. These, although the fifth contains an accent, are all thetic. The accent is in such a markedly thetic melodic movement and at the same time so close to the final cadence note of the entire phrase that it is undoubtedly best in thesis. The perfectly symmetrical shape of the incise is also best served by this choice. Note that an additional binary compound beat is added to this incise by the placing of a quarter-rest before the bar. It, too, is thetic.

TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

The first incise of the third phrase contains seven compound beats:



The first ictus, falling on the accent and the first impulse of the phrase, is arsic. The second ictus is higher than the first, but it falls on a central syllable of a dactylic word, and we should not exaggerate its importance with an arsic designation. Its slope is, moreover, downward, and its ictic note loses some of its melodic prominence because of its anticipation by the last note of the preceding compound beat: thesis. The dotted note, a point of repose, coincides with the word-final: thesis. Were we to place an arsis on the first syllable of *universi* we would draw a sharp distinction between the thetic dotted punctum before it and the whole continuity which follows. In order to preserve the unity of the incise and avoid giving the impression of two separate incisives, we use a thesis here and thus link the sections together with a rhythmic Type VI overlap:



not



ADVANCED CHIRONOMY

The torculus on *ver-* has been cited above in regard to ornamental passages; its first ictus (number five in the incise) is arsie in deference to the accent and the rising slope. The second is thetic as an ornamental embellishment. The dotted punctum on the word final *si* is thetic.

A slightly different rhythmic interpretation is applied to the next incise than that which is implied by strict rule-of-thumb transcription:



The normal placement of the ictuses would be this:



The preferred rhythm is, however, this:



The reason for this alteration of the printed indications is to be found in manuscript research. In the manuscripts, the punctum on *te* is actually related to the torculus of *ex-* as a praepunctis neume group. The two similar vowel sounds of *te ex-* are blended as one, very much as in certain hymn verses of the liturgy where such blendings may be found. The torculus praepunctis of *spe-* is treated normally with the ictus on the praepunctum, and this symmetrical alteration of these two praepunctum groups reinforces our treatment of the first of them.

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The chironomy of this special incise is as follows: since the *prae-punctum* is conventionally lengthened slightly in execution very much as the note before the serrated element of the *quilisma* and the notes affected by a horizontal *episema*, the effect of the *ictus* on *te* is not particularly *arsic*, but rather more as one of hesitation. Besides, were we to attribute an *arsic* quality to *te*, this would set a precedent for a chain of four consecutive *arses* leading to a simple binary cadence. We do not mean to imply that four *arses* would be an impossible combination. Indeed, we shall see later that even greater groupings are conceivable. Here, however, circumstances do not call for such excitement. We shall, therefore, ignore the slope of the group on the *ictus* of *te* and call it *thetic* according to melodic rule two. The central note of the *torculus* is then *arsic* by melodic calculation; the third *ictus*, falling on a lower *ictus* which coincides with the lengthened *prae-punctum*, although coincident with the accent, is treated in *thesis* and the *arsic* element given to the deductive *ictus* on the high central note of the *torculus*. This similarity of treatment of the two *prae-punctis* groups is justified by the fine musical and artistic result as well as by the support of certain of our basic principles. The two final *ictuses* on *tant* are *thetic*.

The last incise allows of two treatments:



non confun- dén-tur.



One may consider the *ictus* of *non* as a new impulse after the cadence of *expectant*, or, to bind the last impulse more closely to the entire context, as a *thetic* preparation to the second *ictus*, a sort of parenthetical link to the textual and melodic thought of the preceding incise. In the former case, the first *ictus* will be *arsic*, the second *thetic* (Rule 3), the third *arsic* in order to supply a very tiny *arsic* movement to carry the incise to the end, and the fourth and fifth *ictuses* of the cadence *thetic*. If the first *ictus* is treated in *thesis*,

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the second will be arsic and the rest thetic. Two other ideas are barely possible: either the first and second ictuses arsic and the rest thetic, or the first thetic and the second and fourth arsic. The latter is, however, very inartistic so close to the final cadence. The author prefers the use of a single arsis on the second ictus, the rest of the incise remaining thetic.

In connection with the exceptional technique of making the first audible ictus of the phrase or piece thetic (contrary to usual principles), let us point out that this is best applied when the preceding phrase ends on a high point or rising formula and the second begins on a lower note *on the ictus*:



In transcription, the quarter rest comes *in this exceptional case only*, AFTER the bar line, as this makes it possible to form an arsis on the silent ictus, thus providing the phrase which seems to begin on a thesis, with a silent, but nevertheless real, arsic beginning:

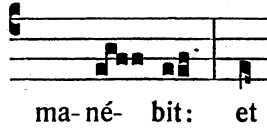


Other cases where this thetic treatment of the first audible ictus of the second phrase may be used are in instances where beginning with an arsis would produce an exaggeration of arsic quality because of the succession of arses which results:



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or when certain inverted formulas indicate that the next phrase will begin on a lower ictus:



A number of working principles can be drawn from the study of this Introit *Ad te*.

Note that the arsic quality of the word-accent is satisfied by the first arsic ictus (*universi*) and that subsequent ictuses on the same syllable are subject to the melodic rules, more or less independently of textual influences. Note also that this concept is applicable to word finals:

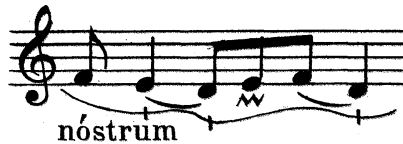
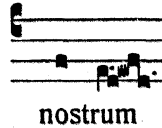


When the thetic quality of the word final is satisfied by the first ictus which falls within it, the rest of the group on that same final syllable is treated as pure melody.

One definite exception can be noted regarding the treatment of extended groups on word-finals. When the grouping is not greatly extended and occurs as a cadence or quasi-cadence group, the ictuses

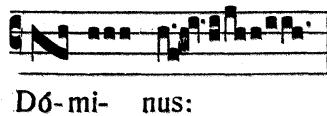
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all tend to be thetic, even when, after the first satisfies the demands of the thetic final syllable, some of the others have slight upward slopes. This is most often the case when a quilismatic group is inserted in a cadence passage:



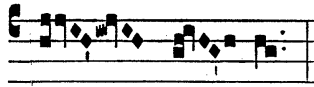
Quilismas, because of the lengthening of the first ictic note, have strong thetic tendencies when coincident with word-finals, even though in every instance the following elements are rising.

Generally speaking, we may say that, with the exception of ictuses on high tristrophas and distrophas, extended cadence groups tend to very strong thetic qualities on all long notes, even when at different pitch levels:



Note also that certain cadence formulae are subject to the placement of the word accent and the direction of approach for the determination of their ictic quality. In this very well-known formula:

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me- am.



the accent of the word requires an arsis, but the downward approach to the first cadential ictus calls for a thesis and defers the arsis to the second, higher ictus. Note, however, that the same formula in the following examples is doubly arsic because the approach has been made from the same pitch level or from below:



The student will have noted throughout our discussion that we have at times been concerned with the over-exaggeration of arsis or thesis in an incise and the resulting unbalance of the form. Let us, however, note that there are some cases in which long successions of arsis or thesis are not at all undesirable, and although rare, these cases do prove that no principle is absolutely inviolable in the interests of expression and form. The Offertory *Ascendit*, for example,

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could perfectly well begin with *five* arses:

A - scén - dit * Dé -
 - us

although it would be in keeping with the textual elements and the form of the first incise to place a thesis on the podatus of *it*.

The student should not think either that our treatment of isolated distrophas and tristrophas in a thetic phase is necessarily characteristic of all distrophas and tristrophas, particularly when one is faced with a long single-tone recitation of them:

lá - que - - - us

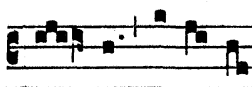
or

li - be - rá - - - ti
 sum - us.

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In the above cases, a wholly thetic treatment would reduce the rhythm to a wooden and unmusical affair. The succession must be interspersed with an arsic element without which it would be a silly and meaningless drone. The placement of this arsic element will depend on the presence or absence of accents or word-finals on, or connecting with, the first and final ictuses of this series of long notes. Thus the influence of the final syllable of the word *liberati* in the second of the above examples will influence the ictuses at the beginning of the flow, and the word accent of *sumus* which follows it will affect the ictuses which must lead to this new accent. We leave it to the experience of the student to work out these cases in conformity with the principles of chironomy set forth so far and the far greater principles of common sense.

As a final refinement, we call the student's attention to the gesture called by Dom Gajard the *rising thesis*. This is a useful and expressive movement of the hand which can be used to express the arsic quality of a word-accent which falls on a short non-ictic note which would normally be included in a thetic gesture. A good description of the proper technique is given in the *Gregorian Review* (1954, Vol. I, No. 5, p. 39) in an interesting chironomic study by Sister Leonie de Jesus. We print here an example adapted from this article as being a *locus classicus* of the use of this gesture:



ter- ra gló-ri- a



tér ra gló-ri - a

At the words *terra gloria*, in order to express the thetic quality of the final syllable of *terra* and the arsic quality of the accent of *gloria*, the hand descends on the ictus in a more vertical stroke than is usual and continues downward, then back upward in a rising arc which gives a clear rising movement for the elementary arsis on the third count of the compound beat. Here are the three possible versions given in this article, of which the first is the regular chironomic

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treatment, the second a modification in which the hand moves back in a quick little arc to pick up the elementary arsis, and the third the application of the subtle "rising thesis":

tér- ra gló-ri- a (1)

tér- ra gló-ri- a (2)

tér- ra gló-ri- a (3)

The choirmaster who has tried to work out satisfactory chironomies of syllabic chants such as the Glorias and Credos will realize that in this gesture of the rising thesis he has a powerful aid to the clear expression of many difficult points of a form similar to that of the quoted examples above. We suggest, however, that he use this gesture conservatively until he has had a chance to work it out thoroughly with an experienced teacher or through long practical experience.

CHAPTER NINE

Considering Some Complex Cases

We have noted, for the most part, during the discussions undertaken by the preceding chapters, interesting but somewhat common examples of the various aspects of chant structure and rhythmic formations. Now we must touch briefly upon some of the rarer and more perplexing stumbling blocks in the repertoire. A complete treatment would be beyond the scope of this work and perhaps beyond the scope of a good set of volumes, but the student may draw from our approach to these few set forth here an understanding of the attitude he must cultivate as a means of approaching a solution to others he may meet.

We have already seen how ictuses which are in most instances clearly determined by the structure, vertical episemas or long notes may be, in certain rare cases, altered by research or the exigencies of artistic execution. Let us note in passing some others of this sort.

Dom Gajard, O.S.B., Choirmaster of Solesmes, has found through long experience that the alteration of one of the ictuses in the Alleluia *Oportebat* produces a finer rhythmic result and an execution more in keeping with Solesmes style and esthetics:

IV.

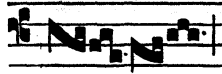
A











In the second and third incises above, as well as in the same melodic formula on *intrare* and the melisma following the last word *suam*, Dom Gajard has put an ictus on the second note of each porrectus thus:



This produces a fine quiet binary rhythm which develops a sort of oscillation leading very convincingly to the broader ternary groupings in the fifth and sixth incises of the piece and in their counterparts in the final melisma. The student has only to sing this melody through as written and then with the alteration suggested by Dom Gajard to feel that the Solesmes master has accurately found a touchstone of the beauty of the entire piece.

We do not suggest that the student seek other places which he might alter as Dom Gajard has done with this one, however, as many years of experience must be absorbed before even an expert chironomist may presume to tamper with the slightest detail of this chant which has been edited to conform to the highest artistic and historical consistency which is possible at the present time.

The student does have, however, many opportunities which offer him limited but satisfying range for the exercise of his individual tastes and ideas. It will be apparent to him that one of the most

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flexible of the decisions within his competence will be the choice of arsis and thesis. This he has already been obliged to work out in many instances of his study up to this point.

Such decisions are not the only ones open to his tastes however. In certain places in the Solesmes editions vertical episemas have been purposely avoided in order to leave the final choice of the ictus point to the tastes of the choirmaster. One such case may be seen in the word *pariter* of the great Alleluia *Dum complerentur*:

A musical staff in G-clef with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of several notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4-A4 (beamed eighth notes), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). Vertical lines (ictus) are placed above the notes: one on the first G, one on the first note of the beamed eighth notes (A), one on the first note of the next group (B), one on the first note of the final group (G), and one on the final C. The text below the staff is "pá-ri-ter*se-déntes." with the asterisk above the 'se'.

A musical staff in G-clef with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of several notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4-A4 (beamed eighth notes), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). Vertical lines (ictus) are placed above the notes: one on the first G, one on the first note of the beamed eighth notes (A), one on the first note of the next group (B), one on the first note of the final group (G), and one on the final C. The text below the staff is "pá-ri - ter se - - den - tes." with hyphens between the syllables.

Here the first ictus is obviously on the silent eighth count after the bar. It will be arsic. The next five notes, beginning with the ictic first note of the torculus resupinus, must be divided into two compound beats: either 2 plus 3, or 3 plus 2. The choirmaster may feel that the grouping of the five notes on the next syllable, *se-* could be made to give artistic support to a symmetry and thus model the first group of five after it, that is, the binary group first, the ternary second:

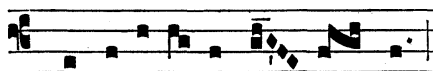
A musical staff in G-clef with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of several notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4-A4 (beamed eighth notes), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). Vertical lines (ictus) are placed above the notes: one on the first G, one on the first note of the beamed eighth notes (A), one on the first note of the next group (B), one on the first note of the final group (G), and one on the final C. The text below the staff is "pá-ri - ter se - - den - tes." with hyphens between the syllables.

On the other hand he may feel that the torculus resupinus is an orna-

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mental anticipation of the note *fa* which is finally asserted by the emission of the last syllable *ter*. In such a case the ictus may be placed on the fourth note of the torculus resupinus, thus giving a three plus two grouping. The way is open to either choice, providing it is based on reason and not caprice.

Sometimes the choice of ictus placement may be exercised at the beginning of a new phrase after a full bar. Note the structure of the opening of the third phrase of the Responsoy *Collegerunt*:



Si dimittimus e- um sic,



Sí di-mít-ti - mus é - um sic,

Here the rule-of-thumb would lead the amateur to put the ictus on the first punctum on the word *Si* without a moment's thought about another possibility. The experienced chironomist will perhaps choose this solution, too, with an eye for the balance of the rising ternary beat thus produced with the descending ternary beat which follows, and the result can be very beautiful in the hands of an intelligent musician who realizes its possibilities. On the other hand, the preponderance of binary beats in this and the preceding incise may lead him to place the ictus which is to begin this incise on a silent eighth count and place another ictus on the punctum of the syllable *di* which will also produce a very beautiful result when sung with full understanding of its reasons and potential. We do not oblige the student to accept one or the other of these solutions as absolute. We do remind him, however, that he must explain his choice to the choir! When called on to direct a choir other than his own regular group, the choirmaster must ascertain the experience of the new group in such subtleties before asking the singers to carry them out. Failure to work out all the details of a piece such as this may result in a conspicuous moment of confusion during the actual performance, if not a full debacle.

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As a conclusion to our discussion of variable ictuses let us note another change which lends great beauty and meaning to the music. In the Communion *Jerusalem* of the Fourth Sunday of Lent, we have a very unusual intonation:



Before discussing it, let us call to the students attention, if he does not remember it from his early study, that Hebrew words often are treated in Gregorian chant with their Hebrew characteristics rather than transmutation to Latin accentuation. Thus the common Hebrew accentuation on the final syllable of the word differs greatly from the usual Latin restriction of the accent to the penultimate or antepenultimate. In some instances the Hebrew word is adapted to Latin concepts by using the antepenultimate syllable, the secondary accent if we count back from the real accent in binary groupings, as a make-shift tonic accent, thus producing a sort of pseudo-dactylic word:

Cherubim
Jerusalem
Israel, etc

Here in our Communion *Jerusalem*, the first word is marked textually as one of these pseudo-dactyls, but musically it is treated as though the semitic accent were in its normal place on the last syllable. Thus is it perfectly justifiable to treat this word final in arsis, generally speaking, and to ignore the usual arsic claims of the pseudo-dactylic accent.

Let us note also, to return from our digression, that on the final syllable of *Jerusalem* most Solesmes chironomists alter the ictus, nor-



COMPLEX CASES

mally on the first note of the podatus, and place it on the *second* note of the podatus, the note *sol*. This altered ictus is arsic and the entire group is binary in articulation rather than a mixture of ternary and binary beats. Needless to say, the first ictus of the incise is arsic, but second, on the pseudo-accent, and the third are thetic.

A brief examination of the repertoire will be enough to show the student some of the various treatments of Hebrew words in ornate chants. If he studies them carefully, he cannot but be rewarded with a deeper insight into the esthetics of the composers of the middle ages who speak to us from this music.

Let us add in closing one further "problem case" for the student's consideration.

In most of the Libers now in use, the intonation of the Introit *Esto mihi* is given in this form:

Intr.
VI.
E -STO mi-hi * in De- um

Recently a dot has been added to the punctum of the final syllable of *mihi*, thus wiping out the problem entirely. It is valuable for the student, however, to consider it as it has usually stood.

Note that when the Introit is first sung through, the cantors give the intonation as far as the asterisk and double the ictic note of the last syllable of *mihi*. Thus the choir enters on the ictus of *in* with no difficulty whatsoever. On the repetition of the Introit after the *Gloria Patri*, the whole choir sings from the first word, with no doubling of the last note of *mihi*. Now this would mean ordinarily that the four notes falling between the ictus of the final syllable of *mihi* and the ictus on the first syllable of *Deum* must be divided into two binary beats to adapt to the given rhythm. This is not possible, however, since this means putting an ictus on the serrated note of the quilisma, absolutely forbidden in the Solesmes method!

The solution is not obvious, and neither is it simple. What we must do is this: the last note of *mihi* is assimilated with the first of

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in, and the whole of the first and second incisives treated as a blended whole:

Intr. VI.
E -STO mi-hin De- um

Such cases are, happily for the student, rare. They serve to point out, however, that in the study of chant there is always something new to learn, something of beauty to discover.

CHAPTER TEN

Chironomy at Sight from the Liber

Just as in the elementary study of chant where the student must work to obtain mastery of ictus placement in fluent reading, so, too, in chironomy he must work for a mastery of the fundamentals which will eventually permit him to devise his chironomy in a brief examination of the music . . . a chironomy at sight, as it were.

We do not believe that anyone will ever reach the point in chironomic study at which the arrangement of a chironomy for a new piece, particularly the extended type, will always prove to be satisfactory on the first attempt. Experienced conductors alter their chironomies with the perspective of constant use, and without doubt the neophyte will find himself obliged to make many changes in his first selections. This should not be a matter of discouragement, for the student should bear in mind constantly that the study of chironomy is one of the most flexible and complex in the field of chant.

When beginning a new phase in any study, it is best to step backward from the more complex pieces to simple ones. We cannot expect to feel at home in our first experiences with chironomy at sight unless the music under consideration is of such a nature as to be easily understood and *singable* at sight. A student of advanced chironomy, of course, should be able to sing any piece of chant at sight with the proper rhythm and ictuses; therefore we do not merely refer to this sort of ability. We mean, rather, that the music selected for the application of on-the-spot chironomy must be so very easy that no technical problems but those of the chironomy itself are in evidence.

Again we refer the student to simple Communion and some of the Antiphons of the Office. Let us give, as an example, a thought sequence based on the study of the Communion *In splendoribus*. Time limit: three minutes.

Comm.
VI.

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The staff contains a sequence of notes and rests, with some notes marked with a vertical line above them. Below the staff, the Latin text is written: "N splen-d6- ri-bus * sanct6- rum, ex ú- te-ro an-". The text is aligned with the notes on the staff.

I N splen-d6- ri-bus * sanct6- rum, ex ú- te-ro an-

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First glance: four incisives, all carrying definite thetic cadence formulas.

Second glance: all first ictuses of each incise seem to be of a sort which will permit arsic treatment.

Third glance: in the first incise the first ictus is arsic; the second on the accent, arsic; third on the word-final, thetic; fourth on episematic clivis must be arsis to prevent too great a succession of thesis, since the last two ictuses call for thetic treatment.

Fourth glance: first ictus may be arsic, in second incise. If so, the second (salicus) must be, too, but all the rest thetic. If the first is thetic, then the second must still be arsic and the third may be arsic, too. From the fourth on, all must be thetic in any case.

Fifth glance: First ictus of third incise clearly arsic. Second ictus on liquescent note may be thetic; third on *lu* arsic; fourth on dotted note thetic (accent will be satisfied on next ictus); the fifth ictus obligatorily arsic (salicus); the last two thetic.

Sixth glance: Last incise begins with what are obviously two arsic beats; distropha on *nu* is thetic; last two beats may also be thetic.

The chironomy is ready. Needless to say, a good memory is important in this work, as the student must recognize when conducting the piece the notes and neumes he had previously examined so quickly and briefly. This will also come with time, however.



CHIRONOMY AT SIGHT

te - ro an - te lu - ci -
fe - rum ge - nu - i te.

In the above piece the flatness of the lines might suggest a possible arsic treatment for the two normally thetic cadence formulas which include the episematic torculus. Were this a more extended composition such as a Gradual or Tract, we would accept this alternate solution, but our own preferences take into account the brevity and simplicity of the piece. We do not feel that a great deal of arsis is advisable. The text, moreover, calls for a happy, quiet, almost matter-of-fact approach. In fact, we may say that most brief pieces suffer from too much expressive variation. A very simple execution will suffice to bring out the qualities of the short Communions and Antiphons where more elaborate ideas and intense expression will only produce a sentimentalized exaggeration.

Generally speaking, we are opposed to the idea of marking the *Liber* to any great extent. Fully indicated chironomies, at least for the student who has not mastered the art, are dangerous crutches which will cause the knack of providing chironomy at sight to become atrophied and weak. This is almost as damaging a habit as that of the beginner in chant who insists on marking every ictus in the pieces he studies. If we reduce our approach to the chant to mere mechanism, we have no right to expect anything better than purely mechanical-sounding performances under our direction.

Marking the *Liber* has other disadvantages, too. When a complete chironomy is written out in the book before the student's eyes, he will be inclined to:

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- 1) conduct the piece without much forethought, resulting in a superficial and unsatisfying rendition.
- 2) use the written version to the end of his days, never understanding that constant reexamination is the only means of improving his style and accuracy.
- 3) insist on following the written chironomy without regard for extrinsic circumstances which may call for the improvisation of a different chironomy entirely.

The first two of the above points are self-explanatory, but we feel that it may be advantageous to elaborate somewhat on the third.

When actually in the course of conducting a choir, the choirmaster is often obliged to alter his previously thought out scheme in order to cope with difficulties which arise without warning during the performance. Anyone who has ever conducted a choir knows that no matter how experienced the singers may be or how extensive their background and training, moments do occur when things do not run as smoothly as expected, passages do not flow as they should, tempos get out of hand or voices stumble. Very few choirs can look forward to the great task of Holy Week with confidence in an unblemished series of performances. Defects may be few and quite minor, but defects they remain.

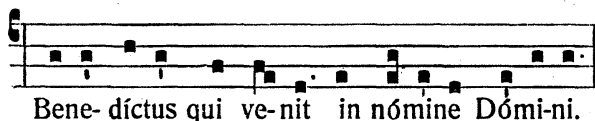
When the choir is having a good day and response is instantaneous and alert, there is no reason for altering the chironomy to any great extent. If, on the other hand, the singers are tired or over-enthusiastic, nervous and eager or sluggish and inattentive, certain modifications must be made in the chironomy to overcome their failings.

When a choir seems too boisterous and energetic, a not infrequent case in this country, the chironomy should be executed with a minimum of arsic gestures. Wherever there is a matter of choice, the choice should be exercised for thetic ictuses. The amplitude of the arsic gestures should be restricted, too, so as not to unduly excite the singers.

When, particularly with amateurs and inexperienced singers, the tempos drag and the whole line seems lifeless, when attacks are weak and ragged, the option for arsic beats should be taken advantage of

CHIRONOMY AT SIGHT

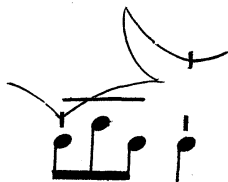
wherever possible. Sometimes in such cases it is vital to break down the very compound beats to the basic eighth-note units and to beat them without recourse to the chironomic gesture, using instead the ordinary patterns for two beat and three beat measure in modern music. At times it will be necessary to interpolate an *elementary arsis* after certain thetic beats in order to urge the singers forward:



In this regard we wish to point out that the interpretation of the cadence formula which utilizes the episematic torculus:



calls for a *rubato* which is not easy if the strict chironomic curve is held to. There are two thoughts about this torculus, of course, 1) that the first note is lengthened slightly and the others still less, gradually regaining the normal note length at the dotted note which follows, 2) that the whole formula calls for a gradual retard to the end, just as would be indicated by an *allargando* in modern music. We feel that the first approach is best for cadences at minor divisions (incises and members), but that the second is more expressive at full bars and terminal cadences. In either, however, the only sure way of ensuring unity and ensemble will be by utilizing a clear three-beat pattern for the torculus much as in modern music. The gesture should also be amplified slightly in order to fix the attention of the singers on the *rubato* and to guarantee attentiveness and response:



TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

In closing we make a strong plea to the beginner to keep in mind one cardinal rule:

THE REGULARITY OF THE RHYTHM IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN FUSSINESS OVER THE CHOICE OF ARSIS AND THESIS. AT ALL COSTS KEEP YOUR BEAT GOING, BE IT ARSIC, THETIC OR VAGUE AND INDIFFERENT. WHEN A MOMENT OF CONFUSION OVERCOMES YOU, AS IT MAY SOMETIMES DO, CONCENTRATE ON BEATING *SOMETHING*. WAVERING IN THE BEAT BECAUSE OF CONCERN OVER THE PRESERVATION OF THE PROPER ARSIS OR THESIS AT SUCH TIMES WILL BE THE SIGNAL FOR A GENERAL BREAKDOWN OF THE SINGING AND A RESULTING LOSS OF THE VERY SPIRITUAL QUALITIES WHICH YOU SEEK TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SERVICE.

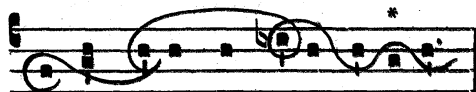
Let this not be an excuse for haphazard distribution of the arsic and thetic beats. Let it merely act as an emergency principle which will become less and less exercised as the chironomist gains in experience.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Chironomy for Psalmody and Syllabic Chants

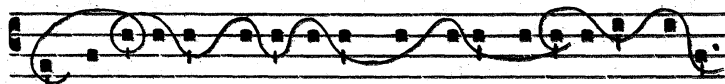
The use of chironomy for the regulation of psalmody requires special attention. In the use of chironomy for regular chant melodies the conductor will often indicate the size of a melodic group or the rise or drop of the group by raising or lowering his hand throughout a succession of arses or theses and by modifying the size of the arc of each gesture. This same sort of adaptation is utilized for psalm tone work or for any recitation which is to be made on a fixed pitch by a group of singers.

To adapt the gesture to psalmody, the characteristics of the musical line must be considered. Psalmody is usually based upon a repeated formula consisting of an intonation, a mediation (with an occasional flex) and a cadence, and these fixed parts are joined together by single tone repetition on the dominant, or recitation note. Naturally there will be no great melodic fluctuations which will require amplitude in the gesture. In fact, the very flatness of the line and the tranquil cast of the music tends to reduce the gesture to a minimum. Often, too, very few arses are utilized in the course of an entire psalm, as the slight arsic "lift," the so-called undulation, in the final count of each compound beat will usually pick up the accent and suffice to express its arsic quality:



Di-xit Dóminus Dómino meo:

In the same way, the hand itself will make a very tiny up and down movement to show the placement of the ictuses. Here is a suggestion in written chironomy which will indicate the relative importance of the arcs:



CUM invocá-rem, exaudí-vit me De-us justí-ti-ae me-ae:

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It is not within the scope of this volume to consider the proper placement of the ictuses in psalm texts. It is not an easy matter to settle, and it had best be reserved for separate study, completed before beginning psalm-tone chironomy, of course. The general rule that the ictus should fall on the word-final is not the law of the Medes and the Persians. It is modified by the succession of dactylic and spondaic words, the possibility of placing an ictus on the dactylic accent, the general avoidance of an ictus on the central syllable of such dactylic words, and the avoidance of the effect of syncopation which would result from the placing of a word-accent* on the second count of a ternary beat:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} & & * & & * & & \\ \text{Díx} & \text{Dó} & \text{mínus} & \text{Dó} & \text{míno} & \text{meo} & : \\ | & | & | & | & | & | & | \\ \underline{1} & \underline{2} & 3 & \underline{1} & \underline{2} & 3 & \underline{1} & \underline{2} & \underline{1} \end{array}$$

not this:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \text{Díx} & \text{Dó} & \text{mínus} & \text{Dó} & \text{míno} & \text{meo} & : \\ | & & | & & | & & | & & | \end{array}$$

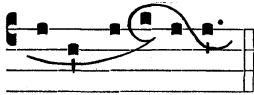
but preferably this:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \text{Díx} & \text{Dó} & \text{mínus} & \text{Dó} & \text{míno} & \text{meo} & : \\ | & | & | & | & | & | & | \end{array}$$

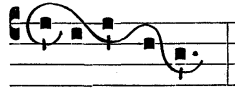
Let us reflect upon the nature of psalm-tones. Since they are formulas, repeated throughout the course of the psalm, we can think about them in one of two ways: either they may be chironomized as purely subservient to the text, or they may be treated as a transcendent melodic element which receives uniform chironomy, regardless of the text. The same would apply to hymn melodies, too, of course. The big question is, then: is the melody or formula, since it is always the same, to be considered superior to the textual demands which fall in all sorts of odd ways from one verse to the next, OR, is the melody an insignificant vehicle which is repeated ad infinitum as a support to the text, which would then take precedence over it?

The artist and experienced Gregorianist will make no *a priori* decision about this matter. Often he will find it advantageous to follow one point of view, and equally as often he may choose to follow the other. Experience has shown the author that in very simple psalm-tones such as the fifth or eighth, textual considerations may be given consideration more often than not, with generally excellent results.

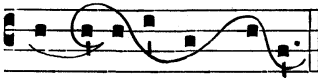
SYLLABIC CHIRONOMY



et li-be-rá-vit me.



vé-ri-tas e-jus.

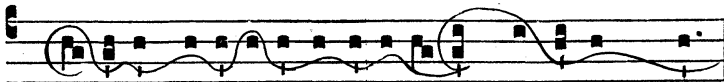


qui há-bi-tas in coe-lis.



in-imi-có-rum tu-ó-rum.

In more ornate recitation, however, such as Introit psalmody, the placing of the chironomy according to the melodic shape of the formula is often the better solution.



Ps. Quóni-am a-li-é-ni insurrexé-runt advérsum me: *



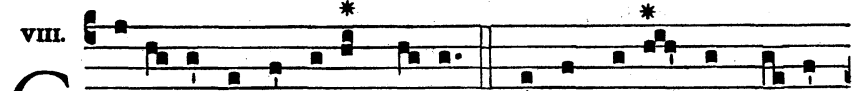
et fortes quaesi-é-runt á-ni-mam me-am.

When considering the monotone recitation which comes between the little intonation, mediation and cadence formulas, textual considerations will, of course hold sway, since no melodic influences can be said to really exist.

We are faced with the problem of choosing between textual and melodic considerations only for that part of the psalm-verse which falls on the little characteristic formula.

This brings us to the consideration of the most difficult sort of chironomic problem, that of the syllabic chant of regular melodic characteristics. One has only to examine the Credos and Glorias of the Kyriale to find examples of the most perplexing and urgent type.

TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

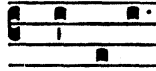
VIII. 

G LO-RI- A in excélsis De- o. Et in terra pax ho-mí-
 ni-bus bonae vo-luntá-tis. Laudámus te. Be-ne-dí-cimus te.
 Ado-rámus te. Glo-ri- fi-cámus te. Grá- ti- as á-gimus ti-bi
 propter magnam gló-ri- am tu- am. Dómi- ne De- us, Rex coe-
 léstis, De- us Pa- ter omní- po- tens. Dómi- ne Fi- lí u- ni- gé- ni- te
 Je- su Chris- te. Dómi- ne De- us, Agnus De- i, Fí- li- us Pa- tris.
 Qui tol- lis peccá- ta mundi, mi- se- ré- re no- bis. Qui tol- lis pec-
 cá- ta mun- di, sú- s- ci- pe depre- ca- ti- ónem no- stram. *etc.*

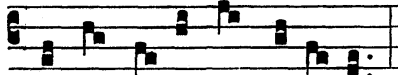
* *Difficult ictuses*

SYLLABIC CHIRONOMY

Naturally, in melodies where there is only a single note to each syllable, there are bound to be cases where descending melodic passages contain strongly arsic accents on important ictuses. Others which rise on word-finals are very frequent . . . seeming almost like opposition to the chironomists "law of gravity."



Qui sedes



De- us Pa- ter omni-po- tens.

There can never be pat solutions to some of these difficult cases of conflict. Indeed, many of them offer only opportunities for compromise . . . no really satisfactory solution at all, at least in the same way as may be devised for ornate melodies. Good chironomists often alter their chironomies many times in rehearsal in trying to find a solution for these cases which will obtain the most desirable execution from the singers. In such cases we cannot overlook that the ability and experience of the choir is often a major factor in the final choice of an arsis or a thesis for a given ictus.

Here, then, does the printed word fail. We can only warn the student against a brash and hasty approach to such subtle problems. Here, too, it may at last be obvious to the less experienced among our readers as to why earnest promoters of the chant so often fail to obtain sympathy from congregations and choirs who are too frequently asked by these well-meaning persons to begin their practical experience with chant by singing certain popular syllabic chants from the Kyriale. The recommendation of the Credo as a good beginning for congregational singing may be excellent pastoral theology, but it is poor advice from the practical musical standpoint. It is the reason we hear so many horrible performances of that old war-horse, Credo III. Its companion piece, Gloria VIII, is almost as often mercilessly misconstrued and misinterpreted.

TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

The answer for the serious student of chironomy is study with an experienced teacher, if at all possible. When this is not possible, he must seek out all the literature and second-hand instruction on the matter which he can find. Lastly, and to the intelligent musician this is by no means the least important point, he must take every opportunity to conduct and to measure the results of his conducting against his technique. Self-criticism, when developed systematically, is a powerful aid to the musician working alone.

Mature Conducting

CHAPTER TWELVE

We have discussed many of the technical aspects of the problems which face the would-be chironomist. We cannot leave the question at this point, however, for there is another very substantial element in conducting which is easily the greatest factor of all. We refer to the communicative nature of the personality.

It is quite possible for a church musician to acquire great proficiency in all technical aspects of his work and yet fail to reach even a moderate level of success with his singers. In such a case, where there is no question of material impossibility, the failure can usually be ascribed to an inability of the choirmaster to project his personality when dealing with the choir.

Many subtleties of the Solesmes style depend on a mutual understanding between the director and the singers of not only the style itself, but the very means of expressing it visually in the gesture. It is possible, of course, to teach certain stylistics by rote, but this will not do for the yearly rotation of the huge Gregorian repertoire. Valuable time will be wasted in demonstration and wordy description unless the choirmaster is able to indicate through facial expression, amplitude of the arc and other spontaneous means the ideas which he wishes to reproduce in the singing of the choir.

No rules exist for the human personality; so, too, no rules can be made for adapting its manifestations to musical expression. For some, such a simple but expressive movement as the raising of the eye-brows will mean a softening of expression on a high note to avoid the roughness which melodic pinacles sometimes elicit from singers. For others it will mean an exhortation to crescendo and fuller tone. Neither expression is "wrong" or "right" in the usual sense, but each may be perfectly right for a certain choir and wrong for another, depending on whether or not it is successful in obtaining the desired effect. So, too, hunching the shoulders often is spontaneously successful in producing a slight retard in a long descending passage which calls for an avoidance of precipitation, but it is just as often successful in getting an intense tone from a group which has not quite made as great a crescendo as the conductor desires.

TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

In the light of the inadequacy of words to classify these intangible notions of personality, what, then, can we say that could be of use to the student?

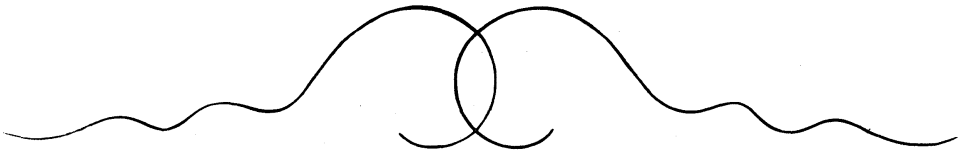
We may urge him to take special note of the facial expression and the posturing of the body which are utilized to good effect by successful conductors . . . and we do not confine this recommendation to chant conductors only; good choral and orchestral conductors can teach chironomists a good deal about effective expression. We urge him especially to note the great *economy of gesture* used by a good conductor. No successful conductor uses his most intense and sweeping representations as a basis for building expressive response among his singers. When singers get used to a very conspicuous gesture, it becomes nearly impossible for the director to devise a more powerful stroke for use in the really intense passages. Only by conditioning the singers to watch for a conservative gesture and insisting upon their following it can a conductor be certain that his more ample and expressive gestures will elicit the desired response from the group. If the singers do not respond to a small gesture, the choirmaster should not compromise by using a larger one. He must shout, threaten, cajole and hammer away until he secures the attention necessary for the successful use of economic gestures.

One of the great problems in good chant singing is the proper regulation of the breathing. Often an otherwise good performance is spoiled by a fish-like gasp for air by the whole choir at the end of an incise or member. Alternate breathing should be explained, of course, but no amount of explanation will entirely eradicate bad breathing habits unless some means be used pointedly in the course of actual performance to call the points of respiration to the attention of the singers. The choirmaster must exert his talents as a mimic for this, and at the proper breathing points, or ever so slightly before them, give a good exaggerated imitation of deep breathing while facing the portion of the choir which is to take breath. Holding the free hand up in a "stop" gesture or in a beckoning attitude for the part of the choir which must continue without breathing at such a point will help to avoid confusion as to the order of rotation.

Oftentimes the choirmaster is called upon to direct a large group such as a school chorus or even the congregation. In such instances he may find that single-handed conducting is not as effective as double. He should then utilize both hands in mirror-like duplication

MATURE CONDUCTING

of the regular single curve chironomy. Here is the way an arsis and two theses will look from the eyes of the conductor:



Note that in order to conserve space the initial arsic gestures cross in front of the conductor, one hand passing slightly behind the other. In double-handed conducting even greater care than usual must be taken to avoid making large or extended theses, as the two hands may otherwise get so far apart in a long series as to give the ludicrous impression of an overgrown bird trying vainly to get off the ground. In normal conducting a series of theses need not be spaced more than three or four inches from each other horizontally. This can best be discovered by experience.

We cannot do much more for the student in these pages. Whatever else he may learn will come mostly from experience. He should, as we have mentioned in an earlier chapter, take every opportunity to conduct, and in his musical life he should neglect no possibilities of broadening his culture to include as much great music, sacred and secular, in his activities as it may be his good fortune to enjoy. Only by making daily efforts to improve himself in his art and by bearing constantly in mind the need to grow musically throughout his life will he attain some measure of that artistic perfection which should be his constant goal.

- APPENDIX -

(Chants transcribed in modern notation)

ANTIPHON AT MAGNIFICAT
(Confessor not Bishop)

8. 
Hic vir des-pí- ci- ens mún- dum, et ter- ré- na,



tri- úm- phans, di- ví- ti- as cae- lo cón- di- dit ó- re , má- nu.

Communion of Martyr-
Bishop. (Mass II)

4. 
Sé-melju-rá-vi*in sán- cto mé- o :



sé-men é- jus in ae- tér- num ma- né- bit: et sé-




-des é- jus si- cut sol in conspéctu mé- o , et si- cut lú- na

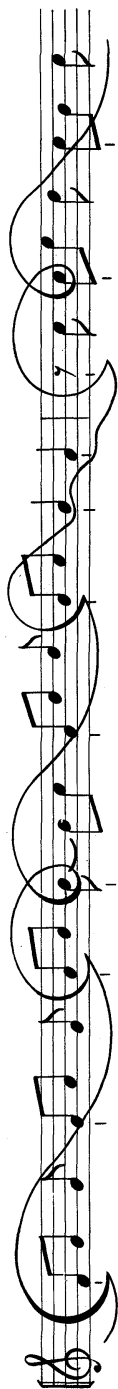


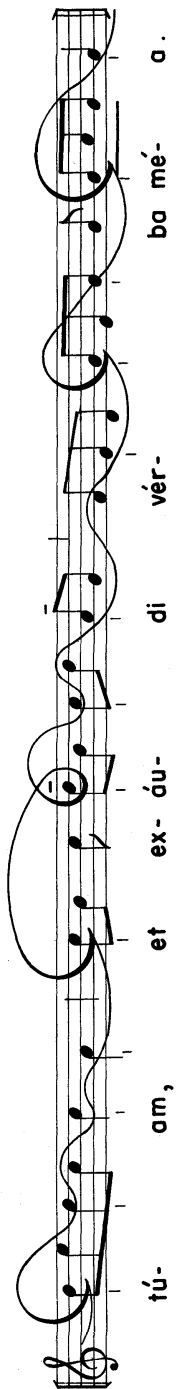
per- féc- ta in ae- tér- num : et tés- tis in cée-lo fi-dé- lis .

TECHNIQUE OF CHIRONOMY

Communion 22nd. Sunday
after Pentecost.

8.  E- go cla- má- vi, *

 quó- ni- am ex- au- dí- sti me, De- us : in- cí- na áu- rem

 tú- am, et ex- áu- di vér- ba mé- a.

Communion of Septuagesima
Sunday.

1. 
Il- lú- mi- na * fá- ci- em tú- am su- per



sér- vum tú- um, et sál- vum me fac in tú- a mi- se-



ri- cór- di- a : Dó- mi- ne, non confún- dar,



quó- ni- am in- vo- cá- vi te.

Communion of Confessor
Bishop (Mass I)

7. 
Fi dé- lis sér- vus*et prú- dens, quem cons



-ti- tu- it Dó- mi- nus su- per fa- mí- li- am sú- am :




ut det il- lis in tém- po- re trí-



- ti- ci men- sú- ram.

Communion of Holy Women
Martyr.

1. 
Prin- ci- pes * per- se- cú- ti sunt me



grá- tis, et a vér- bis tú- is for- mi- dá-

— 91 —



-vit cor mé- um : lae- tá- bor é- go su- per e-

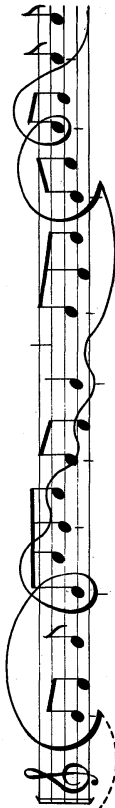



-lío- qui- a tú- a, quá- si qui in- vé- nit





spó- li- a múl- ta .

Introit Ist. Sunday of Lent

8.  In- vo- cá- bit me * et é- go ex

 -áu- di- am é- um : e- rí- pi- am é-

 -um, et glo- ri- fi- cá- bo é- um : lon- gi-

 -tú- di- ne di- é- rum ad- im- plé- bo é- um.