

St Gall Level 1 Group 3-2

Two-note Neums – Examples

Transcript

Before we look at examples of these neums in a manuscript, I am going to ask you to identify some examples of these neums yourself in a chant in modern notation.

NEUM IDENTIFICATION EXERCISE. Go to the link, print the page, and circle every podatus and every clivis in the score. When you are finished, click the Yes button to indicate that you have finished.

On the left side of the screen we have the chant in modern notation that you just printed and marked. It is the communion chant *Meménto verbi tui* as found in the Graduale Romanum, but with all the rhythmic markings removed. On the right side of the screen we have the chant as found in the manuscript Einsiedeln 121.

(singing) *Meménto verbi tui servo tuo, Dómine in quo mihi spem dedísti: haec me consoláta est in humilitáte mea.*

In the score on the left side of the screen, here are the podati, here on the first line, and here on the second line. Take a moment, pause the video, and check your own markings. Continue when you are ready.

Now, there is another note grouping that looks like it contains a podatus, here at the end of the first line. However, this is not an isolated podatus. It is part of a larger grouping of notes. A podatus, remember, is two-notes on a single syllable of text. If what looks like a podatus is part of a larger grouping of notes on that single syllable, it is something else, something that we will examine in a later video.

Let's see how these compare to the manuscript. Here on the first line, over the word *Meménto*, the correlation is exact. However, on the second line, over the word *spem*, it is an altered podatus. The lines still show the downward stroke indicating a lower note, and the upward stroke indicating the higher note, but they are much more angular lines than in the normal podatus. This is an altered podatus, which we will study a little later.

You might also notice that there is a podatus on the first line, above the first syllable of the word *tui*, here. However, this two-note figure does not appear in the modern notation. The modern notation has a single punctum for this syllable, here.

Ostensibly, the Einsiedeln manuscript indicates a slightly different melodic tradition than is represented in the Graduale Romanum. You will notice, too, that this podatus in Einsiedeln 121 has the letter “e” before it, for *equáliter*, indicating that the first pitch of this podatus is the same pitch, that is, an equal pitch, as the last note of the previous neum, in this case a clivis, with some letters above and after it. This is one of a few indications of, at least, relative pitch in this notation. It is quite possible that in the reverberant space of the monastic church, the first note of this podatus was not heard distinctly, and at some point, at least in the ears of a scribe in later years, it was lost, and that the manuscript on which the Graduale Romanum is based, was one that did not record that “lost” note. Maybe.

Now let’s see how you did marking the clivis. There are nine. Take a moment, pause the video, and check your own markings. Continue when you are ready.

Again, there is another note grouping that looks like it contains a clivis, here in the middle of the second line. However, this is not an isolated clivis. It is part of a larger grouping of notes. A clivis, remember, is two-notes on a single syllable of text. If what looks like a clivis is part of a larger grouping of notes on that single syllable, it is something else, something that we will examine in a later video.

Let’s see how these compare to the manuscript. Well, aside from various letters than accompany them, there are five clivis that correspond exactly, here, here, here, here, and here. The other four are all altered versions. Each one has an episema, a horizontal line, across its apex, indicating a lengthening of, or emphasis on, both notes of the clivis.

By the way, the version of this chant in modern notation, as it appears in the Graduale Romanum does have various rhythmic markings – dots and episemas. Some of them correspond to these altered neums in the ancient manuscript, and some do not. I omitted them for sake of clarity with regard to the specific topic of this video, which is just the unaltered forms of the podatus and the clivis.

One last comment. In the Einsiedeln manuscript, this particular chant shows a number of ways in which these neums are nuanced, not only by the episemas, but also by the letters next to the neums and by slight variations in the actual shape of the neums. We'll come back to this a little later.