

Laon Level 1 Group 1-2

Single-note Neums – Examples

Transcript

Let's take a look at a couple more examples of these neums in a manuscript.

This is the first part of Gradual for the First Mass of Christmas, or Midnight Mass, *Tecum princípium*.

On the left side of the screen we have the chant in modern notation as found in the Graduale Romanum. On the right side of the screen we have the chant as found in the manuscript Laon 239.

Let's look at the opening words, *Tecum princípium*. Here on the left, in the modern notation, we see the first three syllables notated as puncti, single-note neums. On the right side, in Laon 239, we see these first three notes also notated as puncti. These notes are puncti, because, as a group, they serve as light precedents to the principle syllable of the word *príncipeium*. We also see the overall direction of the melody indicated here. The second note is lower than the first note, and the third note is higher than the second.

On the left, the tonic, or accented syllable of the word *príncipeium*, that is, the syllable -cí-, is notated as a punctum, another single-note neum. On the right, however, in Laon 239, it is an uncinus. It is a normal note, given the length and weight that would be normal for this principle, accented syllable of the word.

On the left, two syllables later, the final syllable of the word *príncipeium* is notated as a punctum, again a single-note neum. On the right, in Laon 239, however, it is an uncinus. It is a normal note, to be given the normal weight and length of this final syllable of the word.

One more time on the left side of the screen, moving a little farther down, at the end of the second line and the beginning of the third line, we see the words *in splendóribus*. The word *in* and the first syllable of the word *spendóribus* are notated with puncti, single-note neums.

On the right side of the screen, the word *in* is notated with an uncinus, here, and the first syllable of the word *splendóribus* is notated with a punctum, here, because the syllable *splen-* is a pretonic syllable to the main syllable of the word. We can also see the direction of the melody indicated here. The uncinus for *in* is higher than the punctum for the syllable *splen-*, and the following notes for the syllable *-dór-* are also higher than the punctum setting the syllable *splen-*.

So, we begin to see, that even with regard to single syllables, the Laon notation is much more sensitive to the nature of the text than is our modern square-note notation. The modern notation tends to treat all single-syllable neums similarly, while Laon differentiates, setting some with puncti and some with uncini, depending on the relative weight of the syllables within the context of the word or phrase.