“Other than the obvious obligation of paying attention to the meaning of the words, the singer need only follow the neumes step by step. They will guide [the singer] along as if ‘by the hand’ [the voice following the gesture of the choirmaster’s hand, or the copyist’s tracing of the neumes onto the parchment.] The early notations have been called ‘chironomic,’ [Greek for ‘hand sign’] and the term is fully justified. … The margin left to the singers for interpreting the chant is really quite large. However, there can be no authentic expression of the chant if the objective indications provided in the manuscripts are contradicted.

…The meaning of the words and the character of the musical composition, its length and range, with the vocal demands it makes on the singers, as well as many other factors, must all be taken into consideration when choosing the most suitable pitch, tempo and expression for any given piece.” [Eugène Cardine, An Overview of Gregorian Chant, Tr. by Gregory Casprini (Orleans, MA: Paraclete Press, 1992), p. 46-47].
The principles of this performance practice flow out of the polished matching of a sacred text with a gregorian melody. For that reason whoever gives attentive effort to Latin (or English!) diction in singing, by that very fact already possesses very many of the requisites for executing Gregorian chant properly (cf. the introduction to the Liber Hymnarius, 1983).

Emphasis is regarded by many readers as the all important thing: but it is really the least important. Any untrained voice can emphasize. The difficult thing to do well is the opposite of emphasis – the slighting of certain subordinate parts of discourse. … The task of the oral interpreter is:
– to find the words that carry the central thought of a passage or sentence,
– to emphasize these key words
– and to learn to subordinate the others.

Grouping (i.e.: phrasing) is simply speech punctuation. … in oral reading punctuation marks are helpful, but they are inadequate. The reader must supply additional speech punctuation. Words should be grouped together that make up a unit of thought (a sense unit). A sentence is a complete unit of thought, but within the sentence there may be smaller units – a clause, a phrase, or even a word. A pause between these ideas or thought units serves to show relationships and to clarify meaning. What do we do in good conversational speech? We communicate ideas by blending words together into idea groups. We do not say: She – is – coming – today, but rather: She’s coming today. In saying an idea group, we tend to blend the sound from one word into the next word in a continuance of sound, and we pause at the end of each blended word group: She’s coming today / at noon. We use a falling or rising inflection at the end of these blended word groups to suggest a closed or continuing thought: She’s coming (rising) / if at all possible (rising) / today (falling). We emphasize the words that carry the intended meaning, and we subordinate the others: She’s coming today (today, not tomorrow); She’s coming today (she, not he).
… Timing (the use of pause and duration) plays an important part in conversational rhythm. (Cf. Oral Interpretation by Louise M. Scrivner).

Saint Isidore of Seville describes the Reader at Mass as one who “will have been imbued with doctrine and reading experience and will be skilled in the knowledge of words [that is to say, their pronunciation] and [their] meaning, so that, with regard to the sense units, he will know where each sense grouping ends, where the discourse should still hang [in the air], where the final sense group closes. Thus prepared, he will maintain the [relative] strength of pronunciation so that the minds of all [his listeners] will be able to comprehend the sense [of what they hear]. [He will do this] by expressing the proper feeling [affectus] of the sentences, now [in the form of] an indicative sentence, now sorrowing, now rebuking, now exhorting, or in other similar ways, according to the proper category [genera] of what is being proclaimed. Furthermore, [a lector] should know the relative strength of every accent so that he will know toward which principle syllable his oral proclamation is tending.”
Isidore goes on to describe the role of the Psalmist at Mass: [he, or she] should be noted for a good voice and good training, so that by the attraction of such sweetness, they may be able to stir the souls of their hearers. Their voices, however, should not be raucous or harsh, but lyric, sweet, smooth and clear. They should have the voice quality and the kind of tunes that are congruent with holy religion, not those of the tragic theater but those which show Christian simplicity in their melodic shapes. Neither should they exhibit the [qualities] of musical gesturing and the entertainment arts [the theater], but rather be such that promote compunction for those who hear [their] singing.

Isidore's concept of *vis pronuntiationis* (the power of pronunciation) suggests more than a sense of perfect rendition: To sing *pleno ore* (with a full mouth) is also the expression of a spiritual attitude. One might ask whether Isidore's indications as to the affective rendering of the readings hold equally true for later times, and whether these indications apply to the cantor as well. Since they do not appear in the later customaries, they might not apply to psalmody—but one of the most important musical treatises of the 9th century seems to make a strong case for the affective rendering of melodies:

*Neque solum diiudicare melos possimus ex propria naturalitate sonorum, sed etiam rerum. Nam affectus rerum, quae canuntur, oportet, ut imitetur canticus effectus: ut in tranquillis rebus tranquillae sint neumae, laetitionae in iocundis, merentes in tristibus; quae dura sint dicta vel facta, duris neumis exprimi; subditis, clamosis, incitatis et ad ceteras qualitates affectuum et eventuum deformati; item ut in unum terminentur particulae neumarum atque verborum.* *(Cf. Musica enchiriadis, ed. Schmid (1981), 58.)*

We can judge melodies not only from the specific nature of sounds, but also of things. For the affect of the things that are sung about needs to be imitated in the rendering of the melody, so that phrases are calm for calm things, cheerful for joyous things, mournful for sad ones. Harsh words or actions need to be expressed by harsh phrases (*neumes*), with subdued, loud, or agitated ones, and shaped according to other qualities of affects and events; also the subdivisions of musical and textual phrases should close together.

Now the expression *voces moderari* in itself is very confusing, since out of context it seems synonymous with *temperari*--to "regulate" in a vague sense. It doesn't seem to be specific enough to serve as a technical instruction. The words *submisse* and *temperate* seem to stem from the classical rhetorical teaching of the three levels of enunciation (*submisse, temperate, granditer*) --a tradition based on Cicero which entered the medieval curriculum through Augustine and Isidor of Seville. It becomes clear when we relate temperate to *protendere*, and *submisse* to *moderari*: "slowly (temperate)--lengthen (*protendere*)" and "softly (*submisse*)--soften (*moderari*)." The interpretation of *submisse* as "softly," not "low in pitch," is confirmed by the indications of a much later source of monastic origin, the customs of Cluny, composed under abbot Udalricus (ca. 1080-3), where we read: *(Quemlibet cantum, quantumlibet submissa voce cantetur, nemo tamen alius audet ad altiorem vocem levare. No one shall dare to raise any chant, however softly it is sung, to a stronger voice. And Wilhelm of Hirsau (d. 1091), whose own customary depends largely on Udalricus, adds after this sentence a remark that seems almost to echo the Aachen text: Ipse autem nunquam debet negligere, quando nimirum submissa cantatur, quando vel festinantius vel protractius quocunque loco, vel tempore quin statim fratribus innuant manu quidquid emendandum est in cantu. When one*
sings very softly or when, at any given place or time, one sings either more swiftly or
more slowly, he [the cantor] must never fail to tell the brethren immediately with a sign
of his hand whatever needs to be improved in the singing. In this context, the antinomy
\textit{submisse--altior} in Udalricus’ customs for Cluny, which we would have the tendency
(without further specification) to relate to \textit{pitch}, can actually not refer to lower pitch, but
only to lower \textit{intensity}.

According to Dom Daniel Saulnier, the analysis of Gregorian chant is based on three
stages:

1. It is based on the spoken word, for in the spoken word there is already much of
what constitutes a melody.
   — The \textbf{rhythm} and \textbf{tempo} of a phrase in chant corresponds to the rhythmic flow
   of speech used by a good public reader.
   — \textbf{Pretonic} syllables tend to flow more or less rapidly toward the tonic accent of
   a word or a phrase (e.g.: \textit{a-nun-ti-á-vit}).
   — The \textbf{Tonic} accent of a word or a phrase contains all the energy and momentum
   for all the syllables that follow it (e.g.: \textit{Dó-mi-nus}).
   — \textbf{Post-Tonic} syllables are carried by the energy of the preceding Tonic accent
   syllable (e.g.: \textit{Dó-mi-nus}).
   — \textbf{Final} syllables dissipate the remaining energy from the Tonic accent and bring
   the forward momentum to a stop (e.g.: \textit{Dó-mi-nus}). A common example of this
   phenomenon is that of letting a car coast to a stop at a stop sign.

2. The melody, the modal construction and the Gregorian modes.
   — \textbf{The recitation pitch} (or “dominant”) corresponds to the optimum pitch level
   used by good speakers for the normal proclamation of a sense unit in a text.

   — \textbf{Intonation patterns} in chant correspond to the rising patterns used by
   speakers at the beginning of a sentence.

   — \textbf{Cadence patterns} in chant correspond to the dropping pitches used by
   speakers at the end of sentences and especially at the end of a major section of a
   text.

3. The neumes in their earliest forms. These are modeled after the hand signs of a director
   (i.e: chironomic notation) that indicate the flow and tempo of a piece.

On the basis of these three pillars one can then begin to analyze a great number of pieces.
All three criteria need to be considered together in each stage. There are three levels in
studying the spoken word: the phrase, the word, and the syllable.
The Latin accent in a Gregorian composition appears with three characteristics: a melodic
elevation, a bit of lengthening, and a certain amount of intensity. These will vary
according to the epochs and according to the style of the composition [cf. Charles
Atkinson’s article on “Neumes and Accents”].

A CHECKLIST
of things to do when starting to sing a piece of chant

- Take a deep, full breath and launch the sound \textit{immediately} from that breath
- Start the sound softly (e.g.: an “AH”) and quickly increase the volume
- Maintain the appropriate volume (louder for accents, softer for all others)
- Increase speed and volume on notes and syllables leading to an accent
- Decrease the speed and the volume on those following an accent
- Do the above for a complete word, like \textit{compassionate}, or:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chant_ex1.png}
\end{center}

Do the above for a complete phrase: \textit{“et unam sanctum cathó-li-cam”}:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chant_ex2.png}
\end{center}

- Move quickly to the last note over a syllable that has more than one note
- Give full syllabic value to that last note of the syllable (Cf. “laudá-te” above)
- The note at the break between these neume elements is \textit{always} a \textbf{stressed} note:

1) \textbf{In} the midst of a melodic ascent:
\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chant_ex3.png}
\end{center}

2) \textbf{At} the peak of the melodic curve:
\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chant_ex4.png}
\end{center}

3) \textbf{In} the midst of a melodic descent:
\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chant_ex5.png}
\end{center}

web address: http://www.saintmeinrad.org/the-monastery/liturgical-music/downloads/
DIRECTING CHANT
From micro to macro gestures

MICRO gestures from semiology for use during rehearsals:

The Laon 239 Uncinus:

\[+\sim = \sim\]. The Uncinus comes in three basic sizes: \[\sim \sim \sim\].

As you sing a vowel (e.g.: AH) draw lightly and quickly the upward stroke and sing it lightly and quickly. Then draw the hook with firm pressure and sing it with a certain amount of stress and full sound. Then draw the upward ending of the design with a lifting motion of your hand and sing the ending lightly. In bel canto terms, the vowel will begin with a kind of portamento and end with a fading of the volume: AH = \(p \rightarrow f \rightarrow p\).

Draw the Uncinus as you sing the vowel.

The Saint Gall Virga: / should be sung just like the Laon 239 Uncinus. Drawing the diagonal line as you sing a vowel gives you a feel of leaning forward as you sing. This produces a sense of a line that moves forward in the singing, rather than a static, vertical feeling one. Again move the volume of the vowel from \(p \rightarrow f \rightarrow p\). The amount of volume will depend upon the function of that syllable in the verbal context.

The three different sizes of the Laon 239 Uncinus indicate the different volume level and function of each of the syllables of this opening phrase of the antiphon:

MACRO gestures for the musical line in actual performance:
The basic gesture for directing chant in actual performance, is that of the “lazy eight”: \(\infty\). Start the gesture by moving your right hand counter clockwise, from 6 O’clock to 3 O’clock for the “breath beat” and then immediately down through 6 O’clock to 9 O’clock for the word accent Dó- of Dominus. Lift your hand to 12 O’clock for the syllable mi- and then back down counter clockwise, through 9 O’clock to 6 O’clock for the final syllable -nus. Then lift your hand lightly and quickly back to 3 O’clock, ending with a “fishhook” gesture for the cut-off of the sound. You will have done a “lazy eight” as your basic macro gesture. In an extended phrase, move forward from one stress syllable (or graphically separated note) to the next one as if riding a series of gentle ocean swells. Then your gesture will be a series of tiny loops before the final stressed syllable, which will use the counter clockwise motion from 9 O’clock back through 6 O’clock to end at the 3 O’clock position. All the non-stressed syllables and notes in chant are sung more softly and quickly than the stressed ones. This will require a great deal of vocal and breath control to master it.