

A M

E S S A Y

— K

O N T H E

CHURCH PLAIN CHANT:

P A R T F I R S T,

C O N T A I N I N G

I N S T R U C T I O N S

F O R L E A R N I N G T H E

CHURCH PLAIN SONG.

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W I T H A P P R O B A T I O N.

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L O N D O N:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. P. COCHLAN,  
IN DUKE-STREET, GROSVENOR-SQUARE,  
MDCC LXXII.

T H E

A P P R O B A T I O N.

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**W**HEREAS JAMES PETER COGHLAN,  
Printer in London, hath humbly re-  
quested our Approbation to a Work he is now  
printing at his own Expence, called AN ESSAY  
ON THE CHURCH PLAIN CHANT, &c. We  
having perused it, and finding nothing contrary  
to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church,  
do approve of the same being printed.

Given under our Hands this 20th Day of  
July, 1781.

✠ JAMES BIRTHAN, V. A. E.

Signed also the 14th Day of August, 1781,  
by

✠ THOMAS ACONEN, V. A. E.

Signed also the 24th Day of July 1781, by

✠ GEORGE DAULIEN, V. A. S.

✠ JOHN MAROCHIEU,  
Dauliensis Coadjutor.

# ADVERTISEMENT.

**J**. P. COGHLAN requests the PUBLIC will observe, that it is near Four Years since he was first advised the Re-establishment of Printing the GREGORIAN or CHURCH PLAIN SONG in this Kingdom:---That it was with Difficulty, and at a Great Expence, that he obtained, about Two Years ago, the Type; but having no Compositor versed in setting that Sort of Musick, naturally delayed the Work; which, if through the infant State of the Attempt, should be found any where erroneous, he hopes what has been said will be a sufficient Apology; and that the nice Observer will honour him with their Remarks against another Edition.---Also Gentlemen, who are possessed of, or can obtain any choice Pieces, which may contribute to the Piety and Harmony of Religious Music, and will favour J. P. COGHLAN with a Copy, may depend on all due Attention. Lastly, His Intention being to be guided in his further Publication of the Church Service by a Majority of the Public,---he requests they will honour him with their Names, who are for having the whole of the Morning and Evening Service,-- or the Office of the Holy Week,---or the Office for the Dead,---done separately or together;

together; and a Hint for such Mode or Plan, as they think most judicious to follow in the Publication,---which, unless properly and sufficiently supported, must be laid aside.

It is necessary to observe, that the Third Part, or Supplement to this Work, was not compiled by the Gentleman who did the other Two Parts, but was added, at the particular Desire of some distinguished Friends, for whom J. P. COCHLAN had too much Regard and Esteem to refuse.

T H E

C O N T E N T S.

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# INTRODUCTION.

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**T**HE pious practice of singing the praises of God in temples dedicated to his worship, is of such antient date, so universal, and of such excellent use in raising devotion; that little need be said here by way of recommendation.

But while we admire the sanctity of the institution, can we forbear regretting the great neglect in the cultivation of it? We observe, that those whom nature has blest with a moderate share of vocal powers, can contribute in general to raise social mirth by a song, yet when every heart and every voice should join in hymning the Deity, alas they are dumb!

If we consider the great effect that is produced in divine service by a few untutored voices; how much greater must the effect be, if every individual in a congregation, capable of singing, should join in a well regulated

A

choir,

choir, and all united by the powerful harmony of a well-touched organ? \*

The knowledge of Church Plain Chant, if properly taught, is very easy to be acquired; nothing can be more simple than it is in itself. It seems as if our ancestors, who first adopted it to the liturgy, intended that every one, possessing voice and ear, should be able to sing without much study: not but that the same piece, sung by different persons, may greatly change the effect, owing to the manner of singing.

Many affect to despise the Church Plain Song, loading it with such epithets, as too often belong to the singers.---It is barbarous! rustic! grotesque! --- but perhaps that which appears to be so, may have been mutilated, spoiled, falsely copied and never corrected when printing was first used. Who can say what may not have been lost? Who can say what may have been substituted? and by whom? but admitting this, are there no beauties left? Many. For instance, the chants or eight tones of the psalms, some of which may be conjectured to be older than even Christianity itself; Are not their melodies devout? Do they not admit of the most elegant harmonies?

\* This seems to correspond to the idea of the Church, *Cum quibus et nostras voces, &c. Pref. ad Miss.*

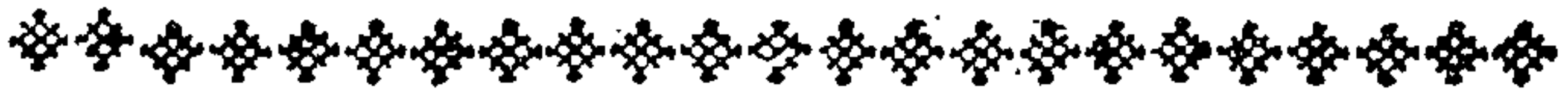
Many beauties may be found too in others of a later date, as, *Veni Creator Spiritus*,---*Jesu corona Virginum*,---*Lucis Creator*,---*Exultet Orbis*, and many others. But the manner of singing should be particularly attended to; otherwise, What man possessed of feeling but must be disgusted, to hear a hoarse voice bark the pious hymn, *Stabat Mater*, *Lamentationes Jeremiæ*, &c. ?

In regard to those parts which are bad, and which we must suppose to have been greatly changed from what they originally were, by false copying, mistakes in printing, or caprice of the ignorant; it certainly is in the power of superiors to procure amendment or alteration, wherever necessary: and it is to be hoped, for the glory of the Church, as far as regards her decent discipline, that such necessary amendments and alterations will before long take place; and this with good reason, if we consider that many Introits and Alleluias sung at Mass, as also Antiphons and Hymns sung at Vespers, where the words convey the highest idea of joy and exultation, the Plain Chant, as it now stands, is most sorrowful wailing and dismal lamentation. The pious mind would by no means introduce light fantastic airs to divine service, but why not such as may accompany the spirit and meaning of the words?---*Alleluia*,---*Benedicamus Domino*,---*O Roma felix!*---

Are these expressions for tones of sorrow? No, but of sacred joy.

But in the state it is even at present, it would appear to much greater advantage, if well understood and well sung. This little Essay is therefore offered for the assistance of those who wish to be instructed in the Church Plain Chant, not that it is possible to acquire the niceties of singing without an able master.

May peace and harmony unite us in brotherly love, and perfect charity, and may all who join in singing to the praise and glory of God here, be admitted to join the Celestial Choirs, who are praising him in everlasting bliss.



A N

E S S A Y

O N T H E

C H U R C H P L A I N C H A N T.

**T**HE Gregorian Plain Chant is governed by two Cliffs, namely Ut Cliff, and Fa Cliff, which correspond to the two lower cliffs in music, viz. the Tenor, and Bass.



Ut Cliff

Fa Cliff

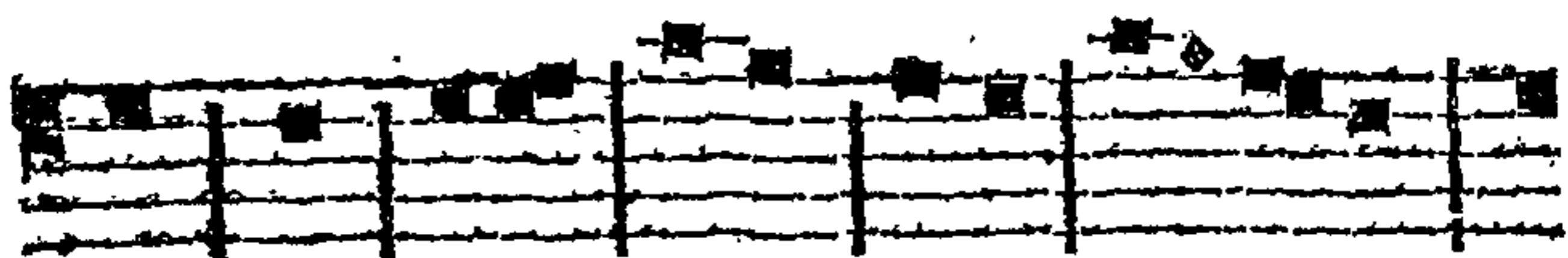
The use of these is to point out the progression of tones and semitones, and thereby to determine the key, or tone of the chant, which is commonly contained in four lines, otherways called a stave in music; but as it very often exceeds that compass, the cliffs must necessarily change their place to give a greater scope to the chant, and this is a very great embarassment to young pupils, and might be at once removed by using a stave of five lines instead of four: for although a piece often exceeds the compass



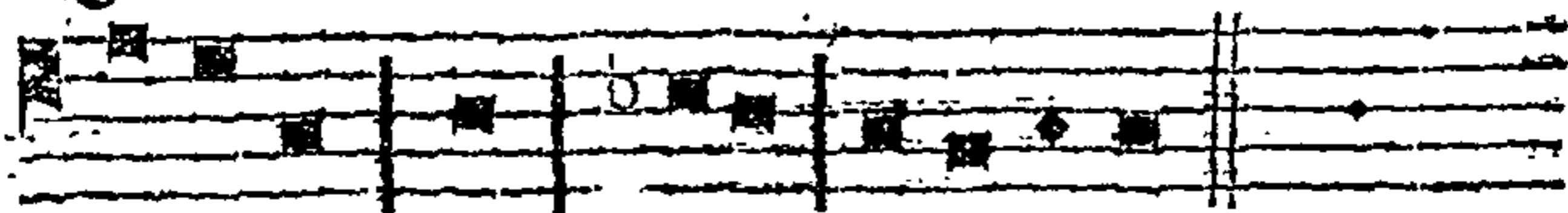
compass of four lines it seldom exceeds the compass of five.

On the Feast of Corpus Christi, in the Sequence, *Lauda Sion Salvatorem*, the cleff changes its place twelve or thirteen times, owing to the compass of this hymn so much exceeding the extent of four lines: but if five lines were here used, with the addition of a ledger line in three or four places, the whole confusion would be avoided.

For example, in the ninth Verse,



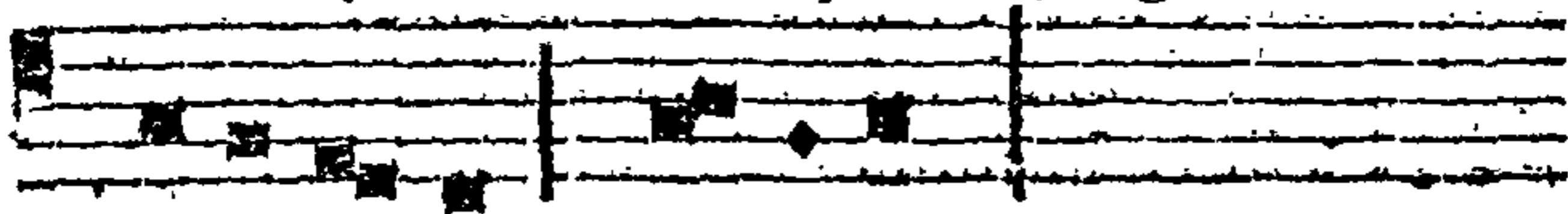
Quod in cœna Christus gessit, faciendum hoc



expressit in sui memoriam.

nor would it in any part exceed the compass of the lines below,

For example, the verse preceding the former.



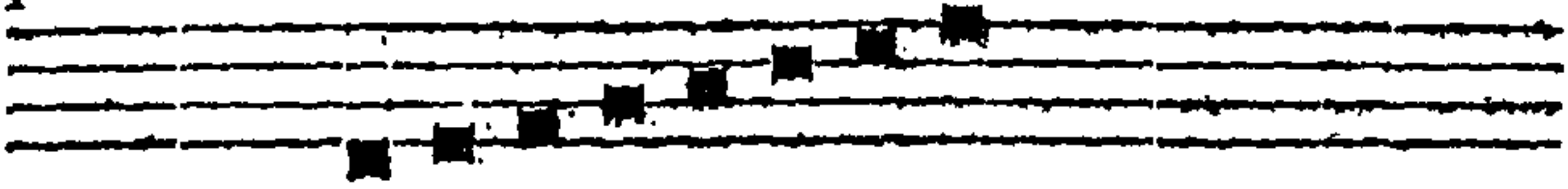
Vetustatem novitas

There are but seven notes, *ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si*; but the octaves to these may be carried on, above and below, to the full extent of any voice

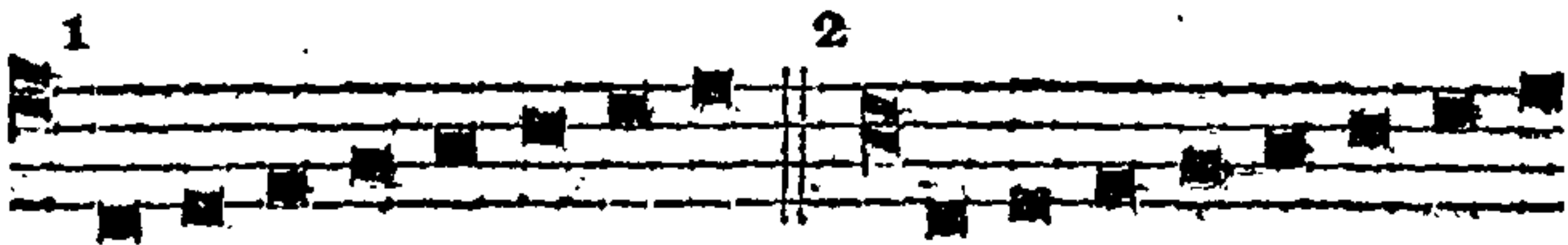
voice



voice or instrument. They always stand in this order ascending, but must be determined by the cliff placed at the beginning of the stave. For example, if notes should be thus presented,



No one could determine what they are, nor their names for want of a cliff; but the ut cliff being placed upon the fourth line, determines that line to be ut, by which they are all immediately known. Example 1,



ut re mi fa sol la si ut      mi fa sol la si ut re mi

But it is to be observed, that if the ut cliff should be placed on the third line, that line would then be ut, and the rest ranged accordingly, Example 2.

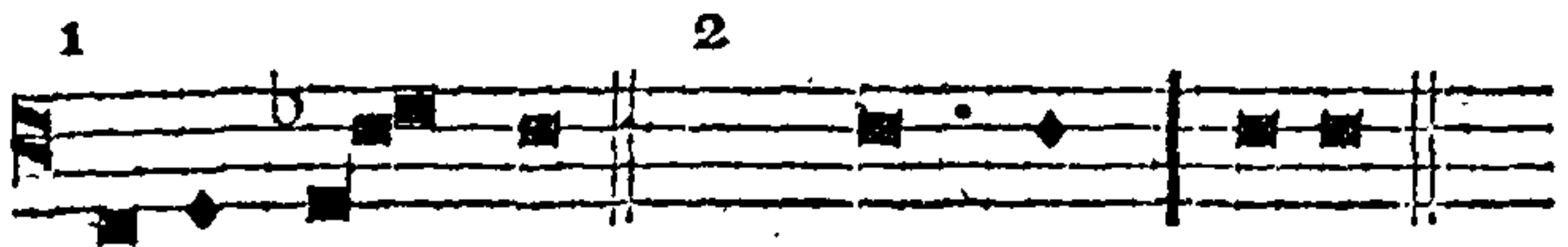
Thus upon whatever line the ut cliff is placed, that line is ut, and the same must be observed with regard to the fa cliff; the names of the notes changing immediately with the cliff, as often as it may happen. See the Exercise on the change of cliffs, page 13.

The bars, which nearly cross the stave, are used to separate the notes sung to each word; the

the bars, entirely crossing the staff, are used over some period in the reading; the double bars, which cross the staff entirely, are only placed at the end of certain portions or verses.

The diamond note is half the length of the square note, and is generally used to short syllables, and in divisions descending.

The notes, which are longer than the square notes, have one or two tails, but are seldom used; and, here it is necessary to caution the learner, not to mistake for these, such notes, which having tails, are only meant to be tied to another note at some distance. Ex. at 1.



Gaudea---mus

A dot after a note makes that note half as long again, for example, a square note with a dot, and a diamond note following it, are equal to two square notes, as Ex. 2. But this is only to be found in modern books.


This mark  $\flat$  makes a natural note flat.

This mark  $\natural$  makes a flat note natural\*.

This mark  $\sharp$  which makes a natural note sharp, is not used in the Gregorian Chant, though often wanted, as shall be shewn hereafter, page 17.

\* In printed books, by mistake, the one is often put for the other.

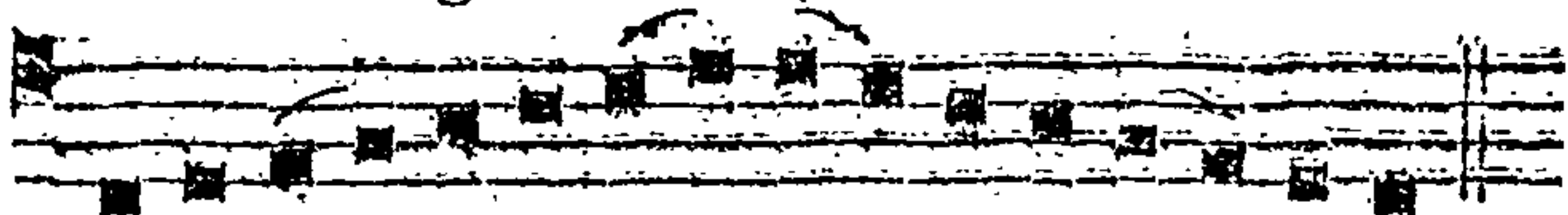
This

This mark , called a guide or direct, is used at the end of the lines, to signify the note which begins the next stave: but it matters not how little they are attended to, as they are often false, and lead the singer into an error.

The learner should make himself perfectly acquainted with the names of the notes in all the lines and spaces wherever the cliff should happen to be placed, and then proceed to

Solfaing.

c d e f g a b c



ut re mi fa sol la si ut ut si la sol fa mi re ut

This gamut cannot be sung too often, nor can the notes be sung too slow, as thereby the voice is to be formed, and rendered capable of sustaining the notes.

The marks from mi to fa, and from si to ut shew the semitones ascending, -- from ut to si, and from fa to mi, descending; but here the master should be consulted.

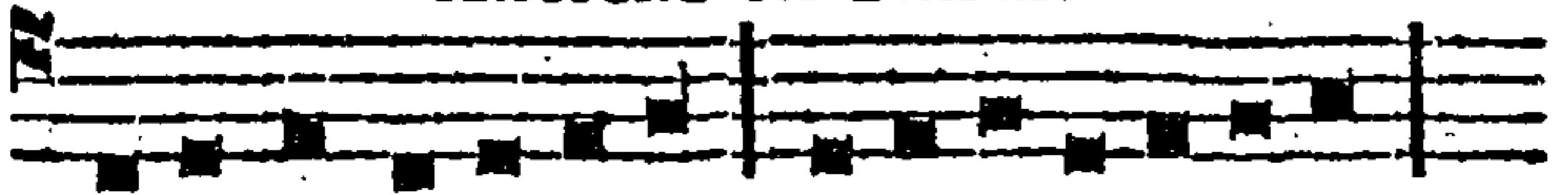
It generally happens in Plain Song, that when a passage rises but one note above la, that note is sung flat, being thus marked (b), and then it is not named si, as if ascending to ut, but za, and generally descends again immediately. Be careful to observe, that in

B

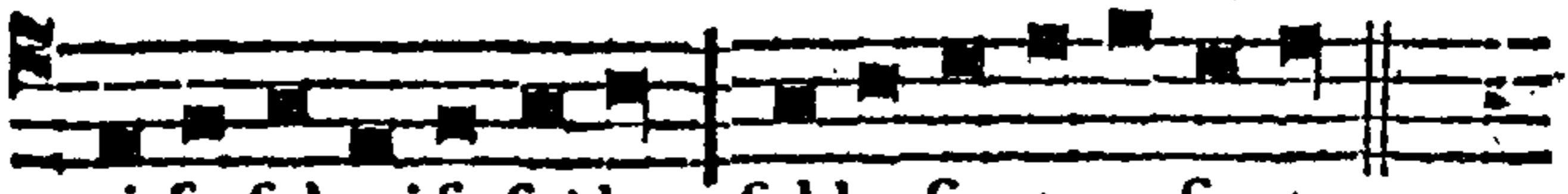
this

this case the semitones are from mi to fa, and from la to za; but if doubts should arise, consult the master.

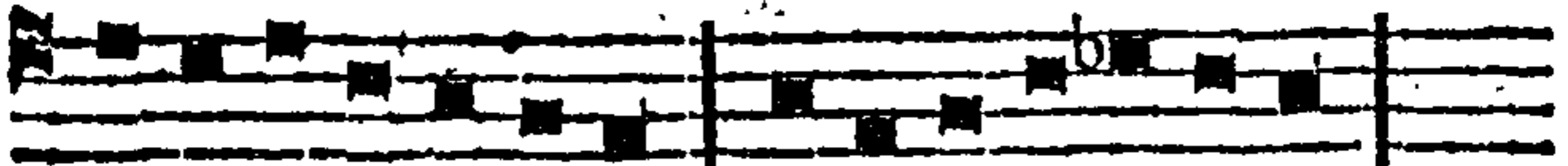
### Exercise on Thirds.



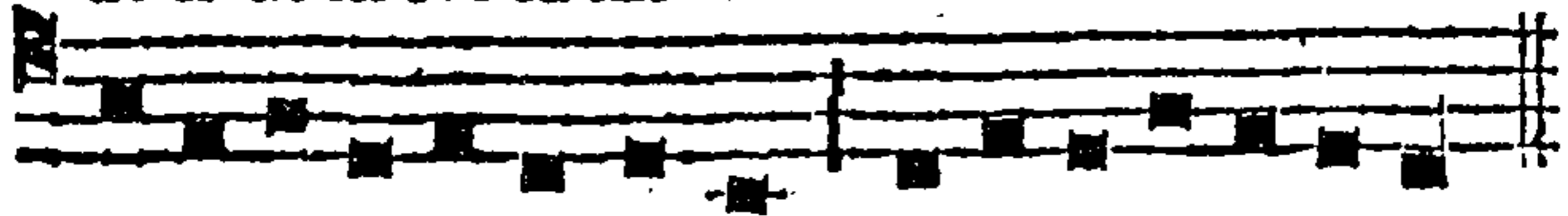
ut re mi ut re mi fa re mi fa re mi fa fol



mi fa fol mi fa fol la fol la si ut re si ut



ut si ut la fol fa mi fol mi fa la za la fol



fol mi fa remi ut re si ut mi re fa mi re ut

It is intended, that a short pause should be made upon the long notes preceding the bars, and breath to be taken there, but no where else throughout this example.

It is necessary here to make an observation on the management of the breath; for upon this very much depends.

The finger should always keep some breath in reserve; that is, he should never so exhaust himself, as that it may be perceived he wants breath. The lungs should be well filled, and the wind gently let forth again, as expression may require. He should never take breath

in



in the midst of a word, unless there should be many notes to that word, and then he is to find a long note, where he may replenish imperceptibly, and never with violence to burst upon the notes, like a pavior upon his rammer, but to sing smoothly, with ease to himself, and to express the words clearly and distinctly. It is a common fault for those, who know but little of the matter, to sing very loud, as if they would supply the defect of feeling, by forcing us to hear the more; but the difference is very great between singing and noise. The pupil should also accustom himself to keep his mouth moderately open, so as to produce a full, round tone; but let him also avoid imitating those who open their mouth as if they would swallow the book.

Exercise on Fourths.

The exercise consists of three staves of musical notation. Each staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are square-shaped. Small 'v' marks are placed above the notes to indicate where to take breath. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Staff 1: *ut remi fa re ut fa mi sol la si ut sol mi la sol*

Staff 2: *ut sol la mi fa ut re sol fa mi re ut fa mi*

Staff 3: *re sol ut.*

The little v marks shew where it is most proper to take breath. If the learner finds any difficulty

difficulty in hitting the distances, let him sing the interval privately to himself till he can do it without; and this he will be able to do, if the foregoing exercises are well practised, which they should be, before he proceeds farther. It is well known, that a sameness of succession retards improvement, therefore it is avoided in these short exercises, where also some intervals and distances are purposely omitted, being unnatural and never sung.

Exercise on Fifths.

ut re mi fa sol ut    ut si la sol fa ut

re ut si la sol re    re mi fa sol la re

sol fa mi re ut    sol    fa mi re ut si fa

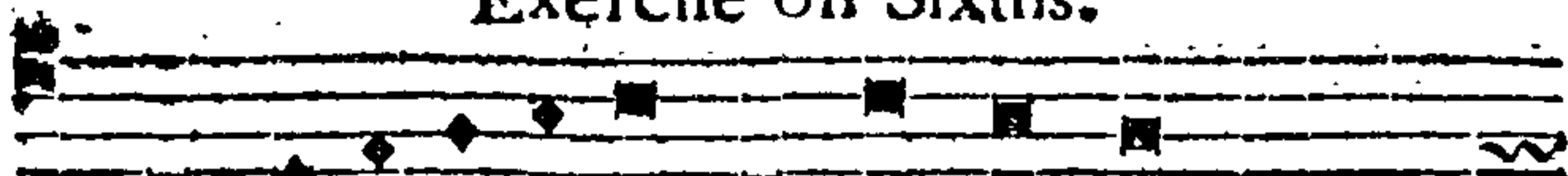
mi sol ut fa    sol sol ut

It is sufficient to take breath at the bars in this example; and the learner will now be able to judge for himself where to take breath, from what has been said.

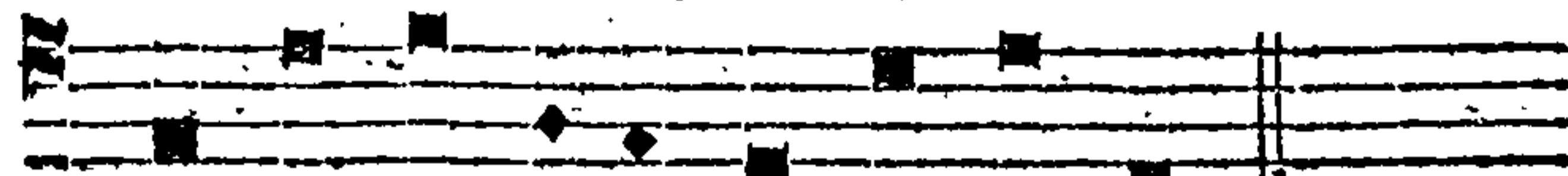
Exercise



Exercise on Sixths.



ut re mi fa sol la ut la sol fa

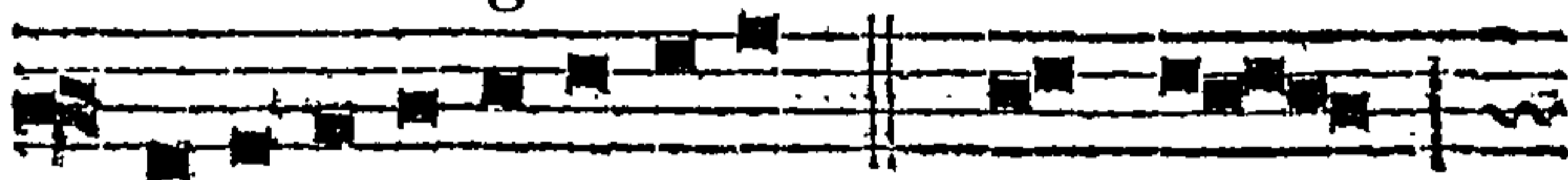


mi ut re fa mi re si ut ut

If the fa cliff is placed on the second line, the notes bear the same names, as when the ut cliff is on the fourth line. Example.

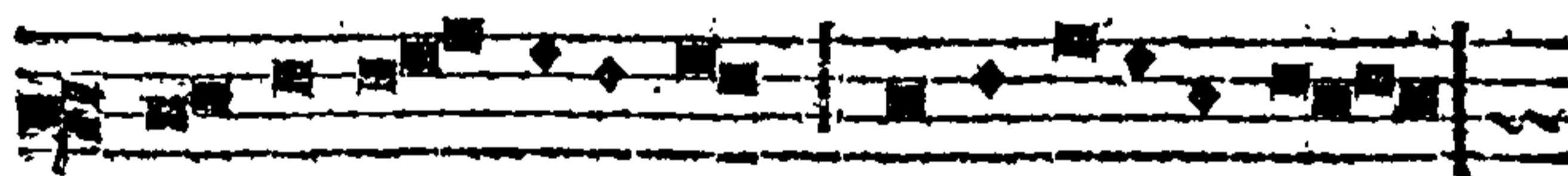
Fa cliff.

c d e f g a b c



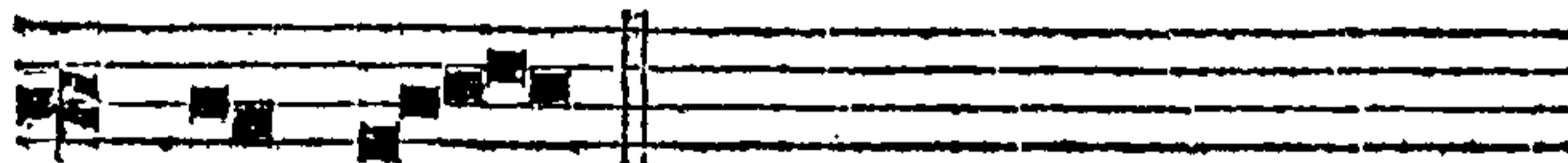
ut re mi fa sol la si ut

Sanctus - -



immor-ta - - lis

mifere - - - re

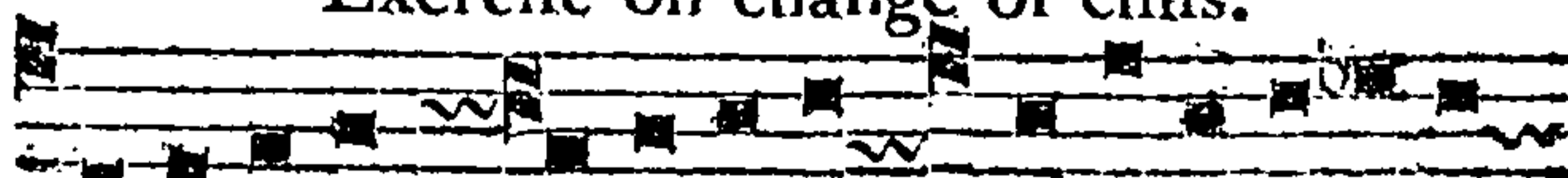


no - bis.

Feria sexta in Parasceve.

The learner should solfa these notes, before he joins the words to them.

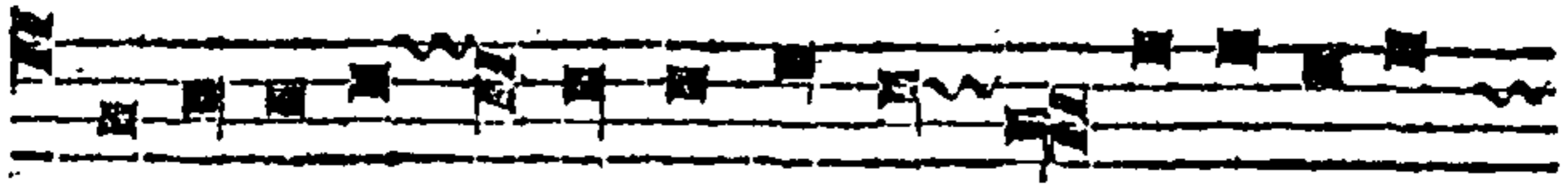
Exercise on change of cliffs.



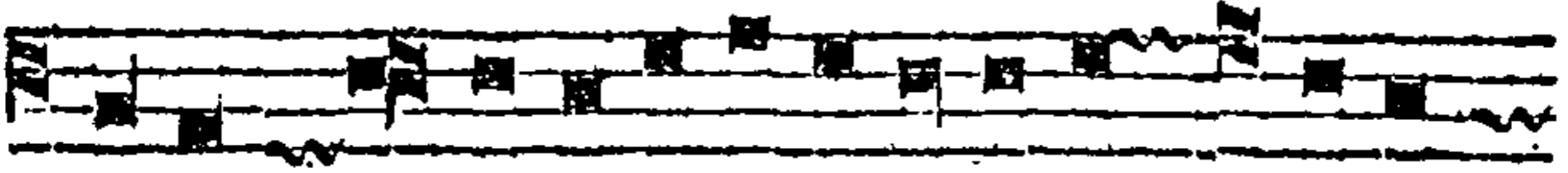
ut re mi fa

sol la si ut

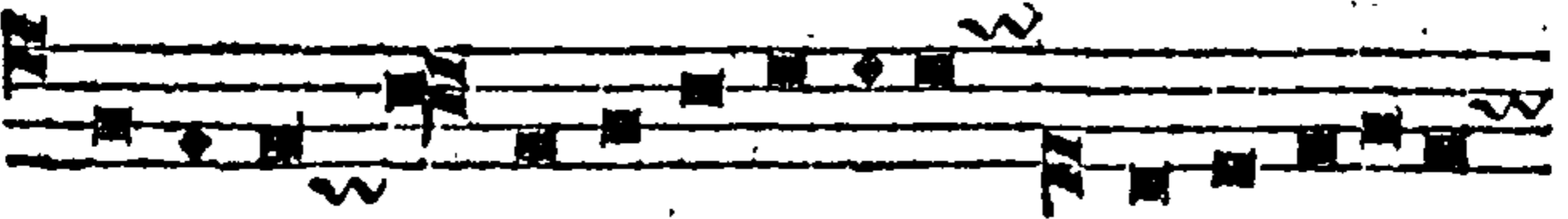
sol ut sol la za la



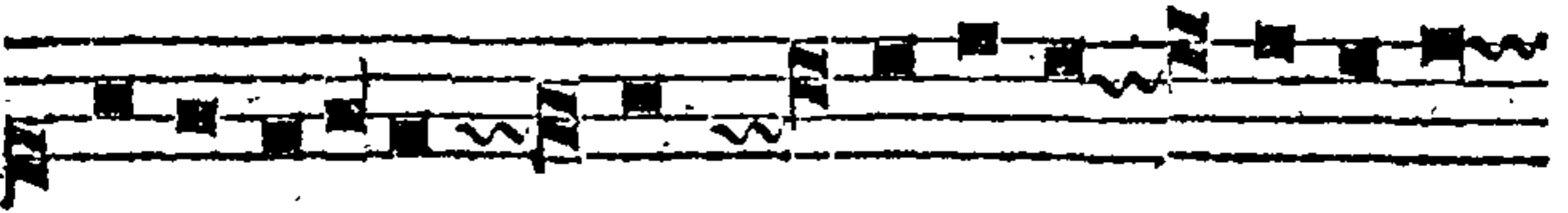
fa fol fol la ut ut re ut ut ut fi ut



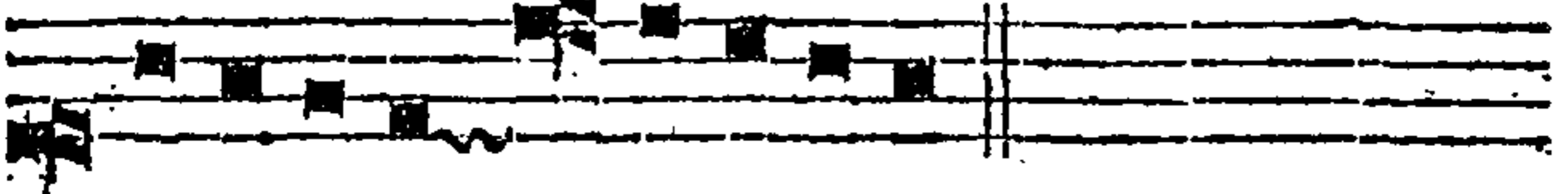
la fol fa mi fol la fol fa fa fol la fol



fa mi mi ut re fa fol fol fol fi ut re mi re



fa mi re mi re re re mi re ut fi ut

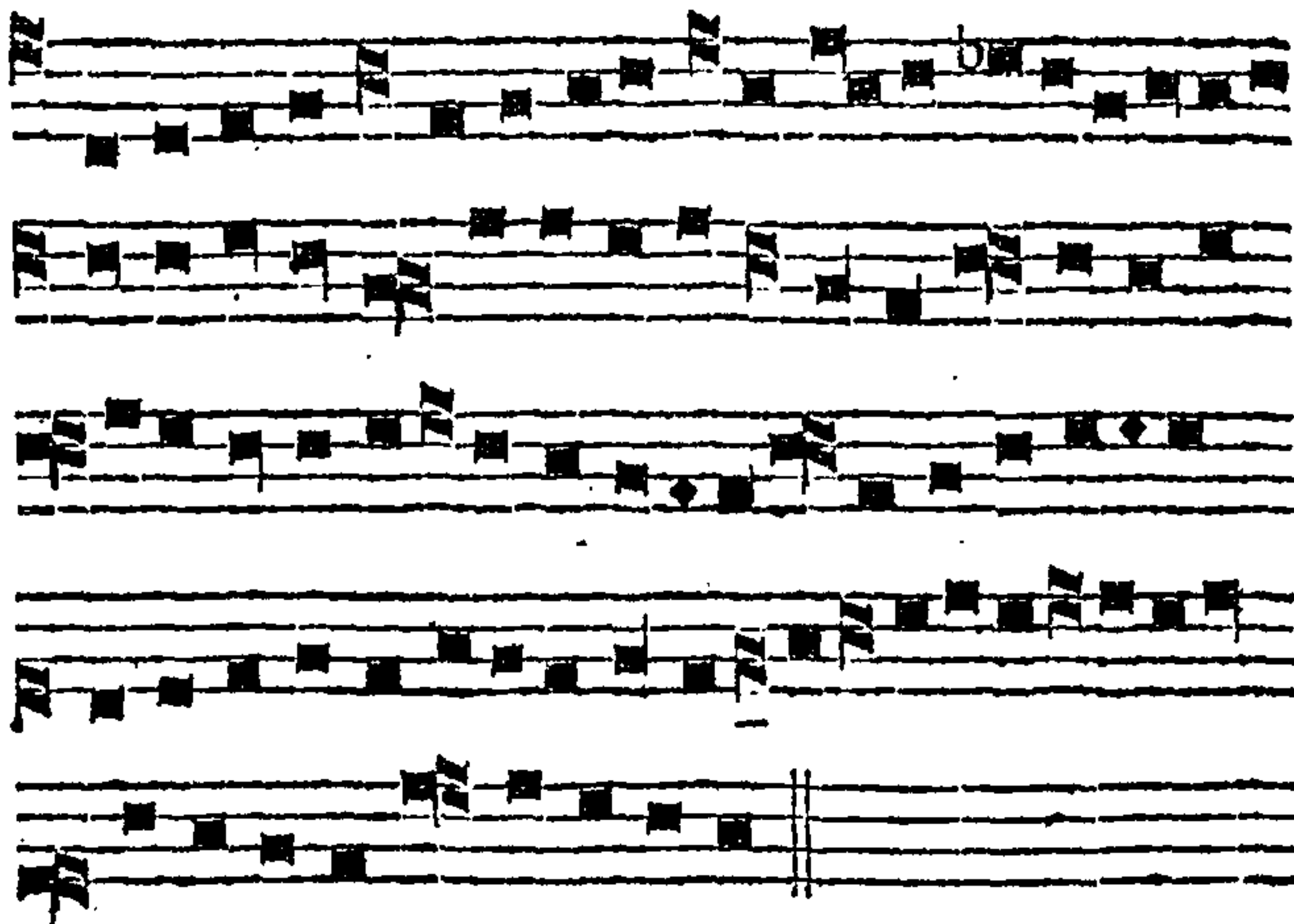


ut fi la fol fa mi re ut

This shews that it is possible for high notes to appear low, and for low notes to appear high, as they depend entirely on the situation of the cliff, as has been before observed.

When the learner understands this Exercise perfectly, and can sing it well, let him practise it from the following Example, where the names of the notes and the directs are purposely omitted.

The



The learner should practise solfaing until he can keep in his mind all relative sounds; for example, relative to ut, re is a second, mi is a third, fa is a fourth, sol a fifth, la a sixth, si a seventh, ut an octave. Relative to re, mi is a second, fa a third, &c. Relative to mi, fa is a second, sol a third, and so on; also to observe which are whole tones, and which are semi-tones. Here the master is necessary.

The Church Plain Chant has eight tones, which are known by their respective dominant and final notes, according to the following table.

Tone

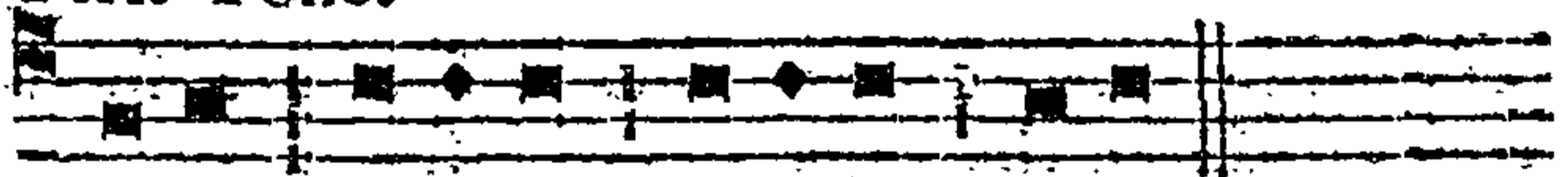
## Tone. Dominant. Final,

<i>Gravis</i>	1st.	la—	} re
<i>Tristes</i>	2d.	fa—	
<i>Misticus</i>	3d.	ut—	} mi
<i>Harmonicus</i>	4th	la—	
<i>Lætus</i>	5th	ut—	} fa
<i>Devotus</i>	6th	la—	
<i>Agelicus</i>	7th	re—	} sol
<i>Perfectus</i>	8th	ut—	

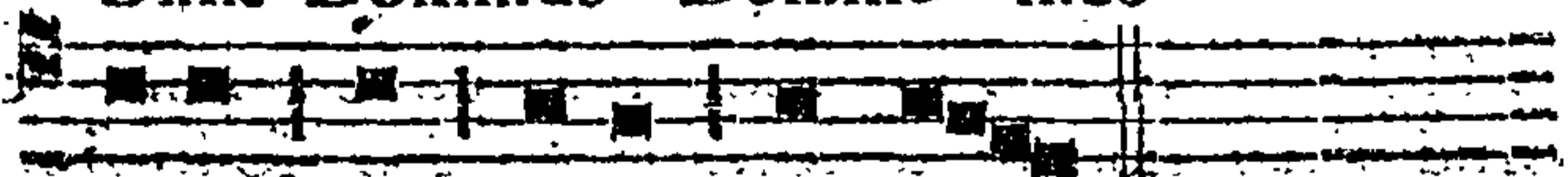
Some pieces may be found which deviate from this rule; but Antiphons in general have their regular Final, or ending note, and the Psalms their regular Dominant, or reigning note.

## Tones of the Psalms, with their most usual Endings.

## First Tone.

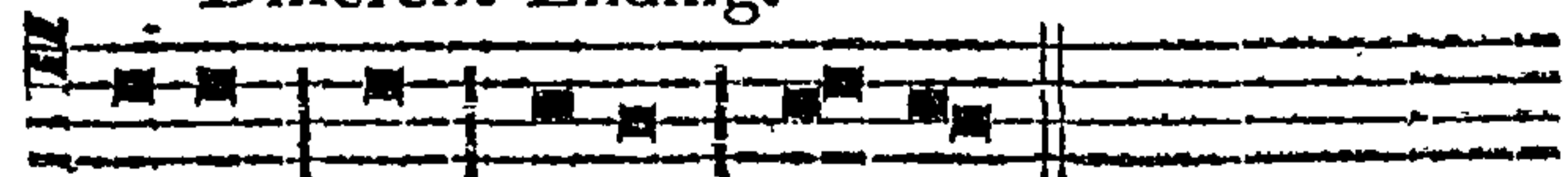


Dixit Dominus Domino meo



fede a dextris me - is.

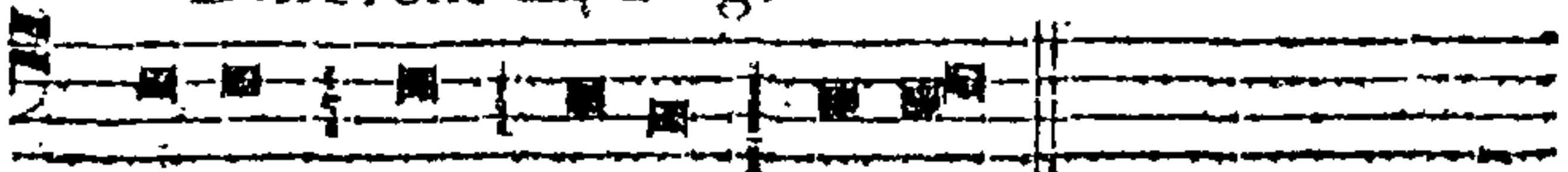
## Different Ending.



fede a dextris meis

Different

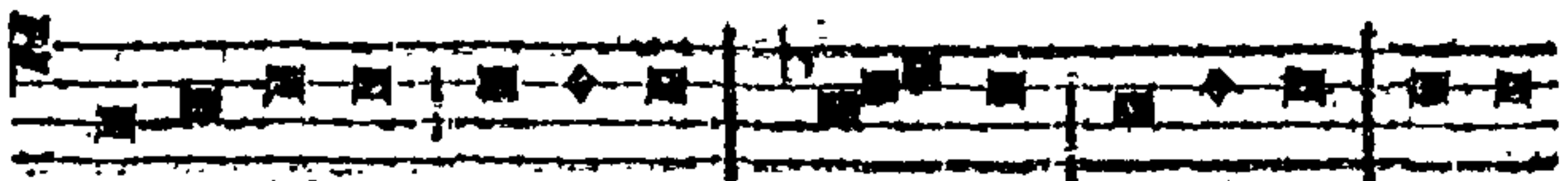
Different Ending.



fede a dextris meis

N. B. After the intonation of the first verse, the following verses begin upon the Dominant, except the Canticles, Magnificat, and Benedictus, which always keep their proper intonation each verse, and are sung slower than the Psalms. There is moreover some little difference in the music which shall be noticed.

In the first tone the difference is at the Mediation. Example.



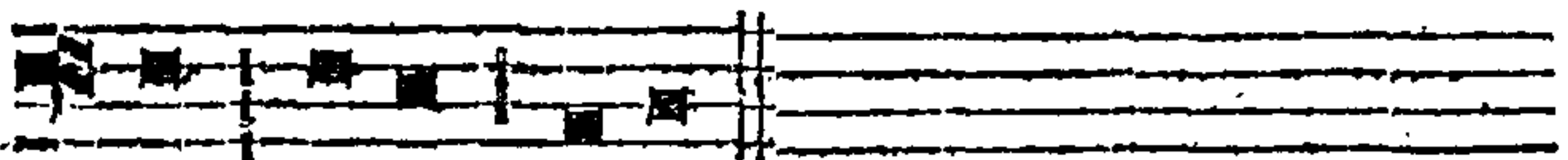
Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel, quia  
&c. as the Psalms.

Second Tone.



Dixit Dominus Domino meo fede

x



a dextris meis

The last note but one, with this mark x over it, custom has made sharp; although in Plain Chant there is no sign to express it. The sharp

C

sharp



sharp is generally wanted in the first and second tones, upon ut, when re is before and after it: in the third and fourth tones upon sol, when la is before and after it: and in the seventh and eighth tones upon fa, when sol is before and after it. Observe the mark x as it occurs.

The Canticles, in the second tone, are sung thus.



Et exultavit Spiritus meus, in Deo  
&c.

Third Tone.



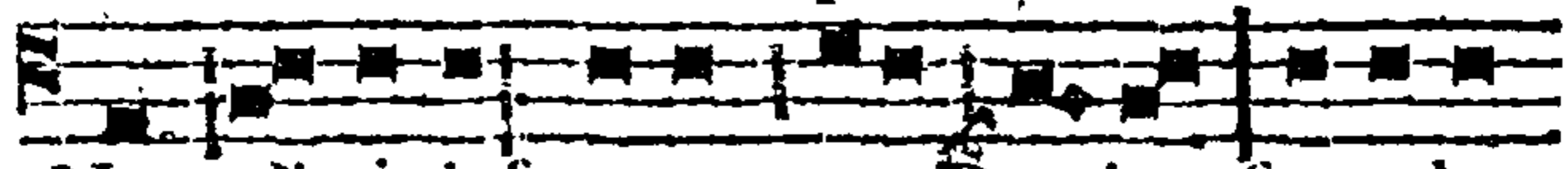
Dixit Dominus Domino meo, sede  
a dextris meis.

Different Ending. x



sede a dextris meis.

The Canticles are sung nearly the same.  
Example.

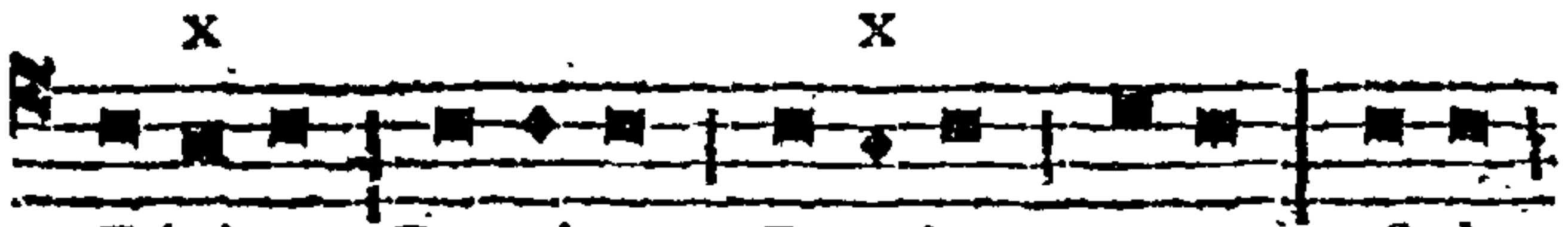


Nunc dimittis servum tuum Domine, secundum  
&c.

Fourth



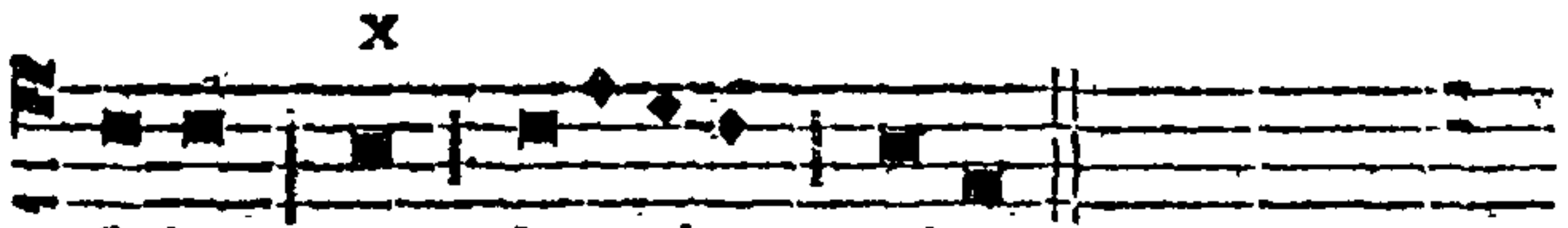
Fourth Tone.



Dixit Dominus Domino meo, sede



a dextris meis.  
Different Ending.

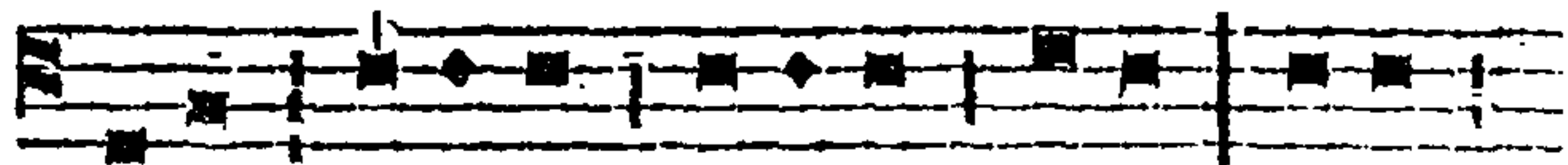


sede a dextris meis

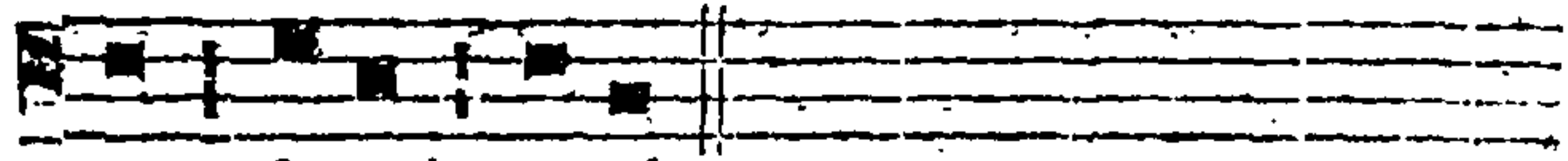
Canticles the same.

Fifth Tone.

Antiphons, &c. of the fifth and sixth tones have commonly a Flat placed immediately after the cleff, which makes za throughout the piece instead of si.

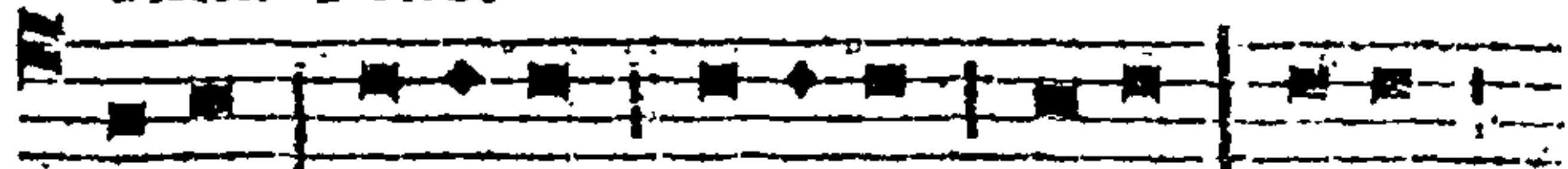


Dixit Dominus Domino meo, sede



a dextris meis  
Canticles, the same.

Sixth Tone.

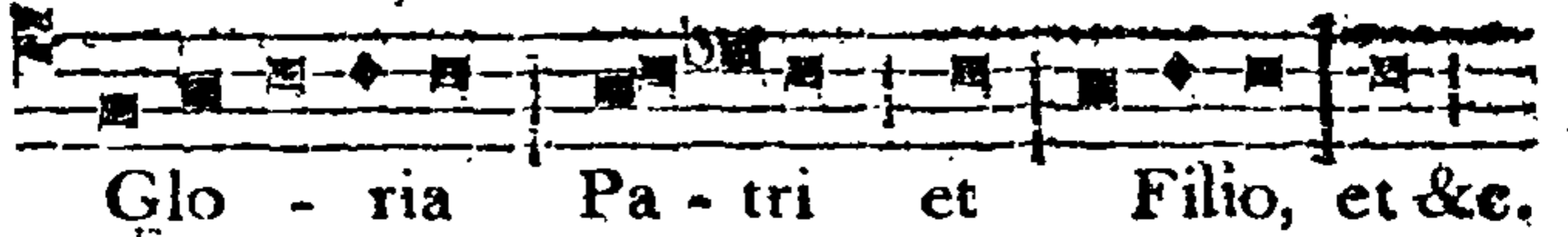


Dixit Dominus Domino meo, sede

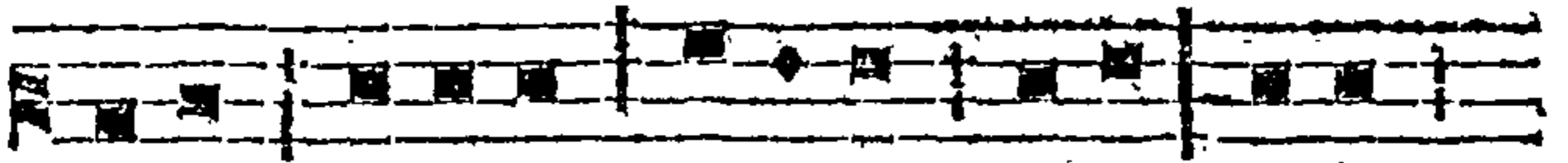
led



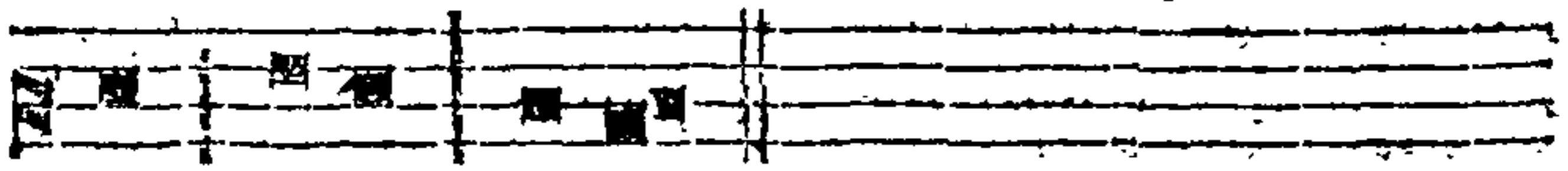
Canticles, thus.



Seventh Tone.

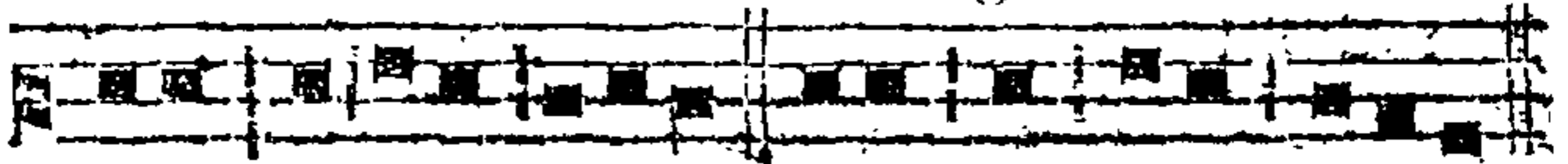


Dixit Dominus Domino meo, sede



a dextris meis

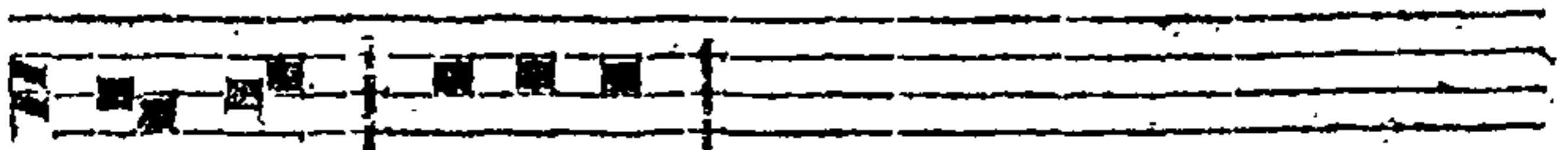
Different Endings.



sede a dextris meis. sede a dextris meis.

The Canticles differ in the Intonation:

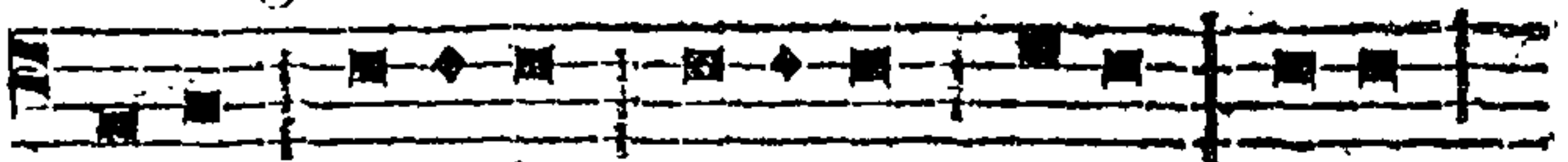
Example.



Quia respexit, &c. as the Psalms.

Eighth

Eighth Tone.

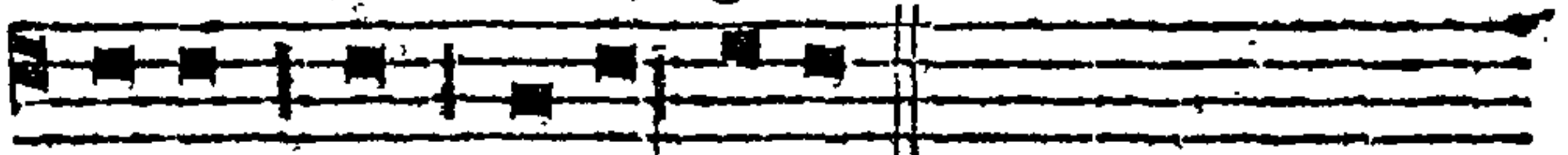


Dixit Dominus Domino meo, sede



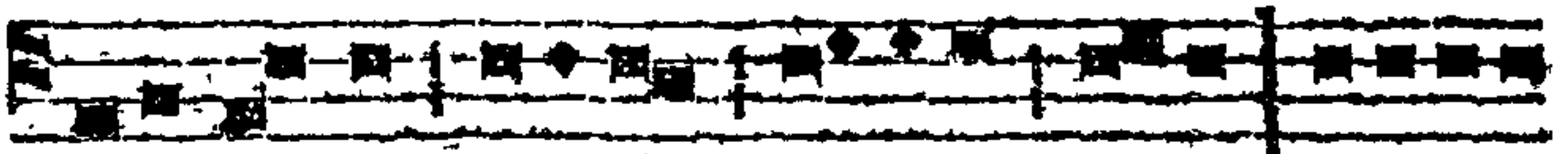
a dextris meis.

Different Ending.



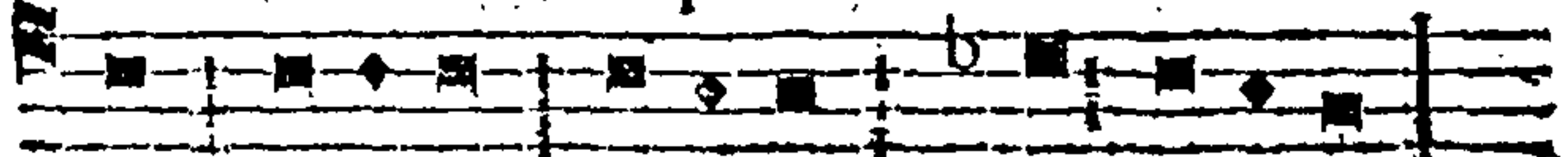
sede a dextris meis.

The Canticles thus.

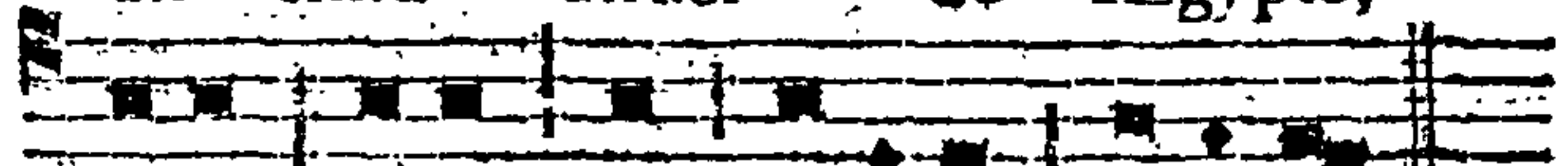


Suscepit Israel Puerum suum, recordatus

That which is called the eighth tone irregular seems to partake more of the first tone, having in the first part the dominant la, and the final re. Example.



In exitu Israel de Ægypto,



Domus Jacob de Populo barbaro.

Observation.

In chanting the Psalms, in the second, fourth, fifth and eighth tones, monosyllables, and words which

which are not declined, make their mediation upon a rising note. Example.

### Second Tone.



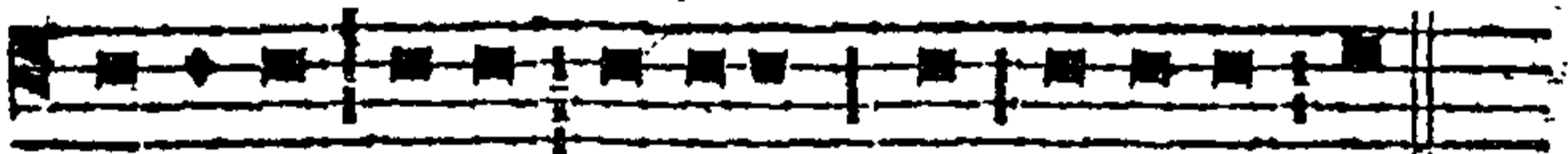
Si ascendero in Cœlum tu illic es.

### Fourth Tone.



Quoniam elegit Dominus Sion.

### Fifth Tone.



Etenim illuc manus tua deducit me.

### Eighth Tone.



Illuc producam cornu David.

### Eighth Tone irregular.

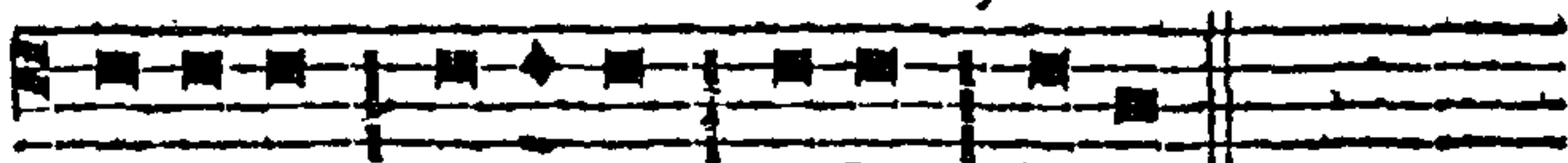


Benedixit Domui Israel.

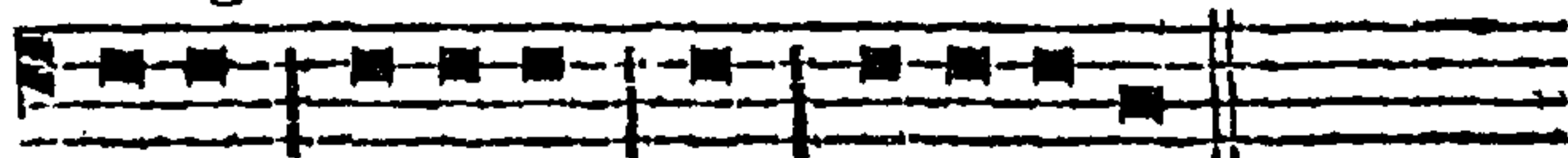
The same is observed in Versicles and Responses.

Common

## Common Way.

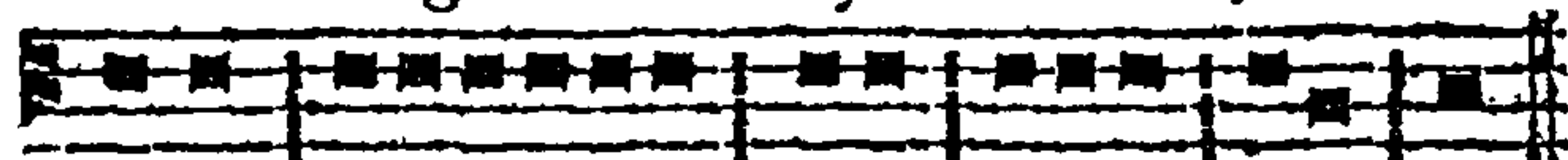


V. Dignare Domine nocte ista.

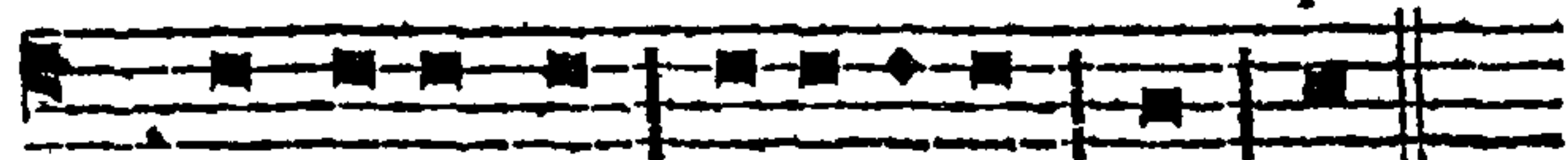


R. Sine Peccato nos custodire.

But ending with monosyllables thus,



V. Fiat Misericordia tua Domine super nos.



R. Quemadmodum speravimus in te.