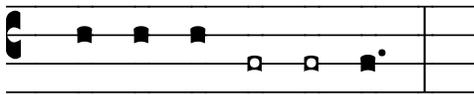


The Punctum (or Full Stop)

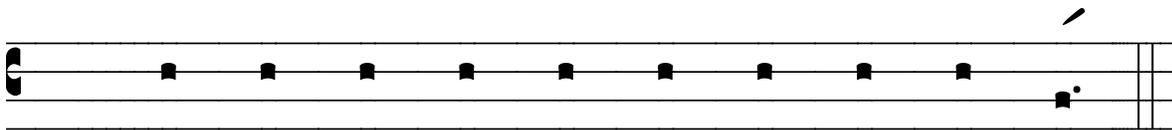
The Punctum (also called the “Full Stop”) ends every sentence that is not a question or the conclusion of a passage.

The “Musical Appendix” of *The Altar Book* gives the Punctum for Tone I as:



If the last syllable is stressed, only that syllable is sung at the lower tone.

Examples of Stress on the Final Syllable of a Sentence



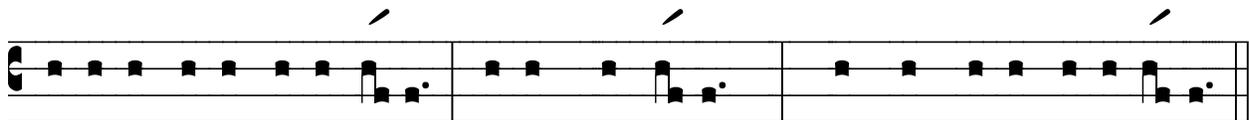
the stone had been removed from the tomb.
There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
and I am coming to you.
just as I do not belong to the world.
For nothing will be impossible with God.

If the last accented syllable is before then, then that last accented syllable is the last syllable sung on the reciting tone.



and the light was the life of all	peo-	ple.
and the word	was	God.
and the darkness did not over-	come	it.
for theirs is the kingdom of	hea-	ven.
and you will call him	Je-	sus.
and they were	ter- ri-	fied.
for they will be	com- fort-	ed.
and I have been	glo- ri- fied in	them.
but he came to	tes- ti- fy to the	light.

Note that in the *Liber Usualis* Gospel Tone #2 (p. 107 in my edition) the drop from the reciting tone to the lower final note (or notes) takes place on one note:



et érat Má-ter Jé-su i - bi. Vínum non há-bent. Nondum vénit hóra mé-a.

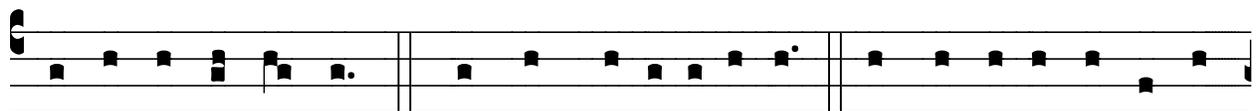
Otherwise Gospel Tone I in the Musical Appendix to *The Altar Book* is identical to the *Liber Usualis* Gospel Tone #2.

The still more ancient *Liber Usualis* Gospel Tone #3 is the same as Gospel Tone #2, except that it is subtonal rather than subsemitonal in the interval between the reciting tone

and the lower final note or notes. The shorter, half-tone interval seems to be the older of the two but has tended to be replaced by the subsemitonal.¹

An Example of the Subtonal Punctum

Franz Tack in his *Gregorian Chant* (1960) gives the same Gospel (Matthew 28:18-20) sung with the subtonal and the subsemitonal melodies. Here I am giving just the subtonal.



Do-mi-nus vo-bis-cum. R̄. Et cum spi-ri-tu tu-o. Se-quen-ti- a san-cti E-

¹“The *Liber usualis* prescribes tones for the prayers (collects) and the readings from Prophecy, Epistles, or Gospels that form a part of the Mass, as well as the short Chapters of the Day Hours and the more extended Lessons at Matins. All these tones are essentially monotone recitations sung at a certain pitch called *tenor* (in medieval books also *tuba*, in characterizing reference to its loudness, like that of a trumpet), and with downward inflections at the various points of punctuation, as indicated in the text by a comma, colon, semicolon, interrogation mark, or period. In the earliest manuscripts the recitation is made preferably on a, with inflections down to g and f. In twelfth-century sources we find the first examples of a tenor on c', with inflections down to b and a, or on f with inflections down to e or d. This change is an indication of a tendency, often noticeable in Gregorian chant, to replace a subtonal tenor by a subsemitonal tenor; that is, a tenor having a whole-tone below it (g, a, b) by one forming a semitone with its lower neighbor (f, c'). We shall see later that the tendency toward subsemitonal tenors also plays an important role in the formation of the psalm tones. As for the tones of the prayers, etc., the liturgical books of the present day prefer the subsemitonal tenors, listing the others as “Ancient Tones.” Nearly all the tones given in *L* [Liber Usualis] have a tenor on c', the only exceptions being the ancient tones for the Prayer given on pp. 100f, for the Gospel on p. 108, and for the Lessons of Matins on p. 121.” (Willi Apel, *Gregorian Chant*. [Indiana University Press, 1958] 204.)

