



# Rhythm in Life and in Popular Art in Sicily

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I have long been aware of the existence of a law of applied mechanics that determines the organic structure of each animal species on the basis of the movements they need to live and survive. I also know that every organ has its own steady rhythm and normal movement, regulated by an oscillation that depends on its shape and weight. Furthermore, I also know that our actions and movements are always governed by rhythm, such as when our muscles alternately contract and relax, or in the automatic formation of the rhythmic period, in the small movements that initiate and follow a major effort. Our organs are endowed with the faculty to adapt, meaning that all movements are refined by all those secondary unnecessary actions and optimized by all those useful ones, until they become perfect and automatic. This is all done in an involuntary manner, since rhythm cannot be regulated by our will as it lacks the notion of duration. And finally, I was also aware that movement has a psychological determinism, related to the search for plastic beauty.

However, all this theoretical knowledge actually falls quite short of the mark, and obviously I have never been able to put it personally to the test, since nobody can exclude the disrupting presence of human volition from the whole experience.


I therefore decided to study the rhythmic phenomenon in the outside world, to observe my objective surroundings and take notes. This was how I managed to discover a whole series of elementary manifestations of rhythm in the vast lands of Sicily. The first example was in the *anninnata di li jenchi*, literally the “lullabying of the bullocks”.

As autumn is drawing to a close, the wild bullocks are yoked to the plough. After a moment of rebellion through the bare earth, the animal is lassoed and then harnessed to the yoke – the *percia* – the handle, and the ploughshare by the cowherd and his helpers. This is all done in a series of traditional gestures, in rites that have been handed down unchanged from ancient Sicilian ancestors. The animal turns side-on, lowers its head and backs away, emitting long drawn-out bellows as if he were mourning for his lost freedom. Then the lullabying begins, a majestic and solemn psalmody which turns this primitive struggle into a religious ritual. The song scolds, threatens, cajoles: "Working is the law, o poor animal! If you don't pull straight, death will come, o poor animal! " And the chanting goes on all day long for a whole week and the bullock *listens*. It forms an iambic pattern of forward impulses: "*addizza e sfaccia*" [on and on we go], and the melody acts as a sort of lubricant for these living creatures, mitigating the physical effort. This harmonious charm gradually calms the animal down and he starts to move in an orderly fashion, more suitable for the purpose: *a picca a picca l'armalu si addizza* [slowly but surely, the animal goes straight]. At last, the black and fertile furrow, the origin of every human culture, is opened up in Mother Earth, from whose bowels the frisson of the melody rises.


LULLABYING THE BULLOCKS

1. 

*Addiz-zà e sfac-cia figghiu di ma-'a - - - ra*



*Addiz-zà e sfac-cia figghiu di ma-'a - - - ra O po-ri-m armalu Oh oh!*

2. 

*E si lu addiz-zà ti met-tu lu no- - - mu: Ga-lan-to- - - ma*



*E s'im-a-diz-zà Ga-lan-to l'aspet-ta O po-ri-m armalu Oh oh!*


3.    
 La lica bed-dun lu la-mu-ra-ku - - - ri  
 du pascia-led-du a lu mu-ia - - - mu O po-vi-mu armela Oh,oh!

4.    
 O ra jemma a piggghieri 'a lignu d'a santhi cu - - ci  
 E chiddu chi t'ab-brazza e lu cunnu - ci . O po-vi-mu armela Oh,oh!

5.    
 Cia' i'ò lu ma-stu di la sev - - la  
 E chi ti 'nsigna li strati e li vi-o - - la O po-vi-mu armela Oh,oh!

The cowherd said, "The bullocks are like children, you must calm them down by singing". Then I was able to see that the *anninniata di li jenchi* was similar to the lullaby that the women of Salemi sing to their children, a melody which I had already found and transcribed in my collection.

THE LULLABY OF SALEMI

1.    
 O figlia mi-a, dorme ad ab-ben-ta sutta lu pèri di la mente a-hò!

2.  *Ed a la-li ed a la nin - na sta figghia bedda di sonnu spinnu d'ha!*

3.  *O figghia mia, dormi ch'è n - ra li pa - ri . to - i dormunno a st' n - ra d'ha!*

4.  *O figghia mia, dormi e arripo - - sa tutta lu pe - - ri di la rosa d'ha!*

The bewhiskered old cowherd's limpid eyes could see right to the heart of things, his wisdom derived from his direct contact with nature. Herder's and Schopenhauer's metaphysical intuition was an experimental fact for him, since he was able to see the initial identity of all forms of music everywhere he looked.

More than the production of a strictly isochronous rhythm, music brings about a preliminary elimination of the disordered and violent movements of the living being. Both the *anninnata di li jenchi* and the lullaby from Salemi have the *hesychastic ethos* of Greek theory, where the modality and rhythm of a melody have a marvellous soothing effect, which was so often described by writers of ancient times. I have also noticed this same ethos in the instrumental melody that the herdsmen from Partanna on the Frattàsa platea play on their *zufoli* [pipes] at sunset, to call their herds to gather to rest under the oak trees.



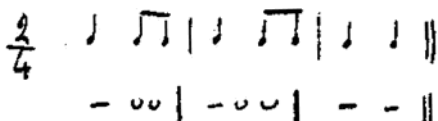
The image shows three staves of musical notation. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff includes a *lunga* marking above a long note. The third staff includes a *pp* marking below a note.



The men and animals slumber in the shade in the heat of the day until a new melody with a *stirring ethos* wakes them up and leads them back to the pastures.



In both humans and animals, the isochronous rhythm is further developed because of organic needs and through training. Who has never seen the way horses dance in circuses and arenas? The ancient Greeks singled out the rhythm of these equestrian dances in the *enoplios*, a dactylic tripod made up of two pure dactyls and a spondee:

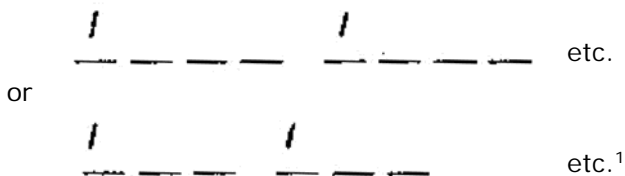


Pindar undoubtedly attests this when he writes of Bellerophon who "leapt forward and slipped the charmed bridle around its jaws (that is to say, gently pulling back on it) and caught the winged horse. Once he had mounted on its back, all armoured in bronze, they started to dance the *enoplios*". One can almost see this young god and his horse, elegantly trotting in a rhythmic manner.

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I have never had the chance to directly observe such genres in our folk customs, but cannot exclude the existence of many elements of great interest that deserve further investigation. On the other hand, however, I have been able to collect a large number of examples of natural and instinctive rhythm from the daily life of our people, from the blacksmiths' anvils and the percussion instruments: the men's *tammurina* [big two-headed cylindrical drums] and the women's *tammureddi* [small two-headed cylindrical drums].

A smith strikes the iron with a series of blows from his hammer; the normal speed of these blows is due to the weight of the smith's arm and the hammer, which the laws of muscle movement make equidistant. Finally, energy is regained at equal time intervals which causes an accent and, hence, the strokes are divided into successive periods:

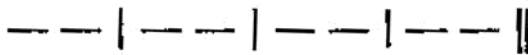


<sup>1</sup> For this and the following examples that regard the blacksmiths' work, see Favara, Alberto. 1957. *Corpus di musiche popolari siciliane*, Accademia di Scienza, Lettere e Arti, nn. 1073ff., 577ff. [note by Ottavio Tiby].

A rich variety of rhythms take form when smiths work together, spontaneously giving rise to the *musica di la 'ncunia* [anvil music]. The blacksmiths stand around the anvil and each uses his hammer to strike the exact same point of the red-hot iron, almost like converging spokes around a central hub. We can consider this combination of men and objects as a machine, where it is essential that the hammer blows come one after another and never collide in any way. Work is made possible by the way these blows are performed in a series, in a rhythm, in a musical phrase that has different accents and extensions depending on the number of workers and the weight of the hammers. Different weighted hammers allowed Pythagoras to discover the harmonious relationship between a particular hammer and *its own sound*, but a rhythmic relationship also exists between the weight of each hammer and its oscillation. Nature always has something new to teach us.

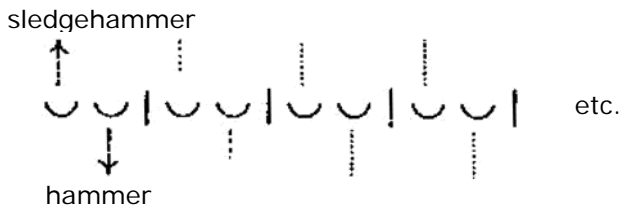
Here is the *sonata a 2 martelli* [2 hammer sonata] I found in Salemi and Palermo. There are two workers: *lu mastro di forgia*, the master, and *lu battimazza*, his apprentice. The smith has a small hammer in his right hand and uses his left to hold the red-hot iron on the anvil; the apprentice holds a sledgehammer in both hands.

*Attacco* – The master taps the anvil a few times, three or four spondees:

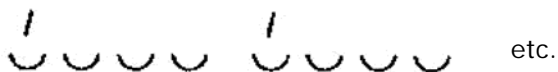


which indicates the movement to the apprentice. These are the *preparatory* movements of the sonata.

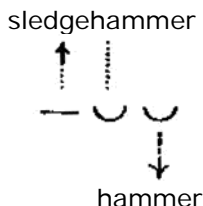
*First motif* – The sledgehammer and the hammer strike the red-hot iron in a rapid alternation which together form a series of simple proceleusmatics (Aristides Quintilianus: 34). The hammer continues to move as it did in the *attacco*, intercalated with the blows from the sledgehammer.



The uninterrupted series of breves acquires a rhythm on account of the accents that are produced naturally at equal time intervals by muscle action laws.



*Second motif* – When the master-smith feels that the iron has been worked enough on one side and that it needs to be turned over, he directs his blows at the anvil, immediately followed by the apprentice. The two workers instinctively keep on hammering, since it would be difficult to suddenly interrupt their movements; indeed stopping and starting, instead of keeping on going would actually call for a greater effort. However, once the man with the sledgehammer is no longer directly involved in the working process, he rests by halving the number of blows he makes on the anvil: “*pi pigghiari ciatu, pigghia 'no botta 'nta l'aria*” [to get his breath back, he makes a stroke in the air]. Then the sledgehammer comes to rest *supra la 'ncunia* [on the anvil], while the hammer keeps on striking the same series of blows. This spontaneously gives rise to the following dactylic rhythmic form:



Thus, the two motifs are united in an almost leisurely fashion and with a touch of aesthetic pleasure. A tripod with two dactyls and a proceleusmatic springs forth from the anvil:



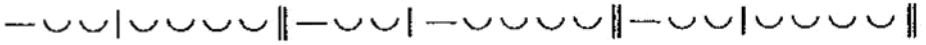
This motif is called *appellu*, *appellatina* or *staccamentu* since it indicates the blows on the anvil, while the first motif is on the iron that is being worked. Once the iron is in its new position, hammering starts again in the first motif.

Although the tripod is the typical form of the *appellatina*, I also found a tetrapody in the 2-hammer sonata:

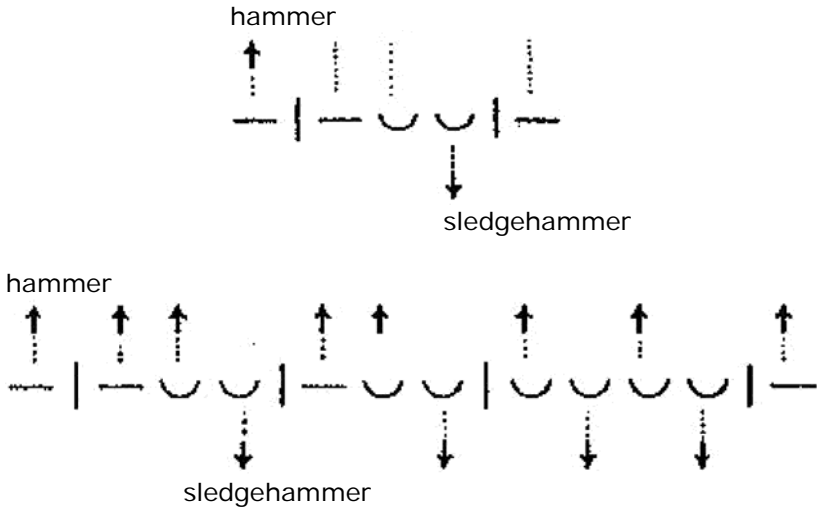




and a hexapody:



as well as the anacrusic forms:



As the diagrams show, this variation comes from the different ways in which the sledgehammer strikes the anvil, while the hammer performs its regular spondees.

A smith from Salemi saw the *appellatina* as having more than a practical working use. In his opinion, it differentiated between smiths and the boilermakers who always beat out proceleusmatics. He saw this distinction as being most important, as he considered his art of crafting ploughs, hoes, and weapons as a far nobler profession. Perhaps, he was voicing the primordial pride of the ancient Sicilian bronze-workers, who prepared the weapons for a population of horsemen who thirsted for war (Pindar, *Nemean*, 1). Furthermore, since metal-working in Sicily dates back to the oldest ages, as proved by Prof. Orsi's archaeological excavations, we can be sure that the rhythms produced within this work have just as ancient origins.

Moreover, the practical use of measure and proportion is enhanced by the sense of beauty that they spontaneously emanate. Our smiths feel the beauty of the *anvil music*, as they call it, and they understand its fundamental artistic importance: "*Di ddocu, di la 'neunia, spuntau la musica; tutti li musicchi spuntaru di ddocu*" [It is from there, from this selfsame anvil that music springs forth: it is where every kind of music is born]. These almost seem to be the words

of some Greek scholar who is explaining the predominance of rhythm over the other elements in the musical arts, and things that are light years apart and yet identical are immediately brought together.

The most ancient rhythm in Greek musical art is the dactylic tripod: in a flash, this coincidence takes us from the blacksmith's sooty hovel to the Idaean caves. Here, the Dactyls mysteriously extracted metals from the bowels of the mountains and used fire to forge them to the rhythm which now takes their name. This mythical fact is now furnished with experimental proof, since it still exists today, as an unchangeable law that is there for all to see. It was to this rhythm, as strong and steady as the iron from whence it came, that the Apollonian culture developed triumphantly throughout the Mediterranean, from the priestly oracle to religious eulogies, from social and moral order to the Greek epic. This culture was hammered out in hexameters, in the midst of the smoke and flames of the mythical forge, pairing in a single line the tripodies beaten out on the anvil.

First line of *The Iliad*:



Just as with the blacksmiths' work, this meter is the source that gave harmony to the highest expressions of the Hellenic spirit. Nowadays, in Italy, apart from the occasional classical poet, the hexameter is rarely used. The heroic meter has returned to its humble place of origin amidst the smoke and sparks where it continues to exist unnoticed. One might even go as far as to make some well-founded remark about the lack of Apollonian elements in our lives today, and perhaps it would not be such a bad idea to return to the ideal model of the dactylic rhythm in the midst of all these panting dochmiacs.

But our scholars and musicians never set foot outside the library, and we need to look amongst the common people to find someone who knows where this old rhythm is hiding, someone who can draw it forth from the smithy into the open air: our *tammarinu* players. These are the pupils who have learnt from the smiths: "*Comu nuatriri sintiamu li mastri firrara, la sturiavamu supra la tammurinu*" [We adapted what we heard from the master smiths and played it on our drums]. The passage is found at the core of Palermo's *Solemn Procession* motif:

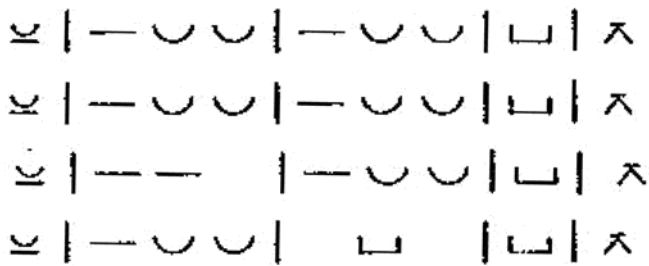


(the series is continually repeated).

I was given this motif by Giuseppe Cacia, who is more than eighty years old and comes from a family of *tammurinàra* [drum players],

where traditional rhythms have been handed down from father to son for generations. The *need* for rhythm passes from work on the anvil to *work on the drum*, where the same law is applied to different materials. The *tammurinàra* has rhythm in his blood and sinews, while for the rest of us, it has become something abstract. It only takes shape in the malleable substance of musical sounds, which are not bound by any laws of tempo.

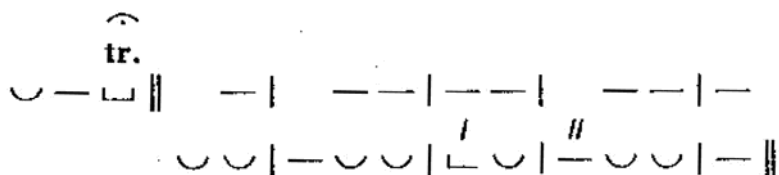
Palermo's *Solemn Procession* actually offers us a Greek *prosodion*, which is exactly the same as the primitive example that has survived in the Spartan folk song in honour of Lysander:



Even today, the slow pace of the youths and maidens as they walk to the temple in an orderly procession is still regulated by the same rhythm as two thousand years ago. To underline the noble tone of the event, old Cacia said: "*Si nni vannu a passu, bellu, 'na 'alantaria*" [they march in step, wonderful, such graciousness], and he was struck by its hidden beauty, almost as if he were an ancient Greek. Today modern and noisy brass bands have rather controversially replaced the old *tamarinu*, and certainly do little to enhance the fascination of these religious representations. One might even say that they disrupt their very nature.

This relationship and identity between the form and use of Sicily's popular rhythms and those of classical antiquity continue to persist in all genres and species. With the *abbanniatina di la tunnina* [sing-song calls of the tuna streetvenders], Cacia gave me another example of a quick march, similar to the *embaterion* and Tyrtaeus' anapestic tetrameter. This *abbanniatina* accompanied the tuna as they were transported from the beach to the town. The arrival of this cheap and sweet-flavoured fish was a moment of great joy for the local people; the tuna was adorned with garlands of carnations and hoisted onto the shoulders of two men. However, the key figure in this ceremony was the *tammurinàru* because he provided the rhythm behind the march, transforming it into a ritual. At the right moment, the men carrying the tuna used to call out to Cacia: "*Vossa sona, zu' Peppi!*" [Please play for us, Uncle Giuseppe]. While they lift the tuna, the *tamarinu* starts with an

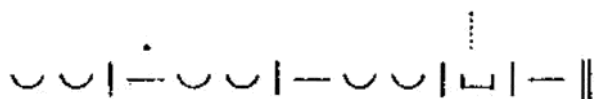
iamb, which acts like a shock and accompanies the initial effort needed to pass from stillness to movement; this is followed by a series of lively spondees, with the preparatory movements that set the tempo of the march, and finally, we have the lively anapestic march, performed in short steps due to the heavy weight that is being carried:



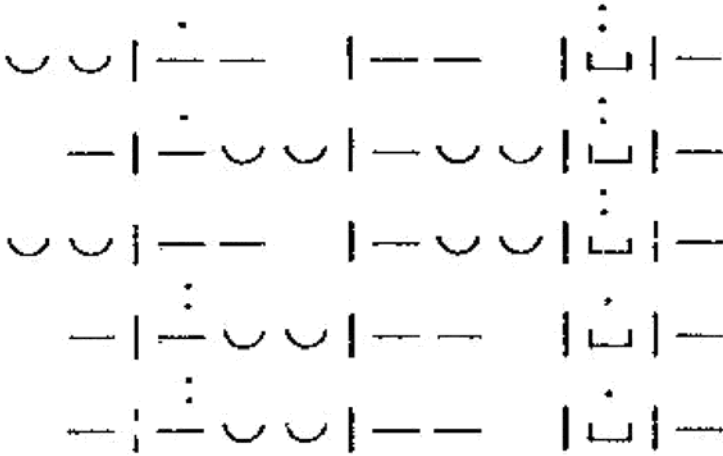
The little parade moves merrily forward driven on by the rhythm. "Cu' a sunata," Cacia told me, "ci sèntinu piaciri, a caminari, e 'u pisu manca 'u sentinu" [Thanks to the sonata, they actually enjoy the walk and hardly feel the weight]. As a true cynic, he was unknowingly in agreement with Friedrich Nietzsche. In *The Gay Science*, the gifted aesthete asks himself, "What does my body actually want of music? I believe it wants to have *relief*, so that all animal functions should be accelerated by light, bold, unfettered, self-assured rhythms; so that brazen, leaden life should be relieved of its burdens...". If rhythm loses this ability to relieve, then the march becomes harder. "Chiddi che portanu 'u tunnu senza tammurinu, 'un ponnu caminari. Senza tammurinu ci aggranca 'a spada" [Without the drum, the ones carrying the tuna cannot walk. Without the drum, their shoulders go numb]. This is so true that if the owner of the tuna does not want to pay for a *tammurinàra*, the tuna-bearers often pay for it themselves.

This essential measure is an acatalectic anapestic dimeter; the natural unity of the double step marching (left foot/ right foot) is expressed in the accent on the second unit; the main accent comes in the following unit, marked by a powerful drum roll. The shortness of the meter corresponds to the quick but difficult march, and therefore to the need to invigorate the bearers.

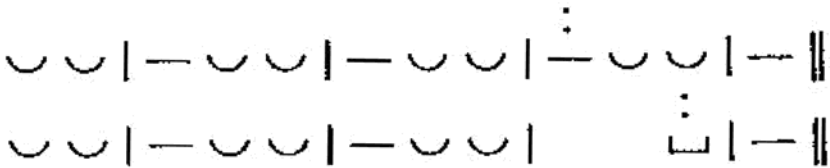
In fact, the same conditions produced the same tempo typical of the armed marches of the ancient Spartans. As they marched to defend themselves, the tribes soon realized that they needed to find a collective rhythm, which transformed a wild horde into a living organism, under a single direction. This spontaneously gave rise to the *paremiac*, the rhythm of the road, which is an acatalectic anapestic dimeter (*metrum laconium messeniacum*):



As they marched, the warriors sang the *mèlos embaterion*, the marching song, in the same time. An example still survives in Tyrtæus, Fragment 13:



Monuments show us the choir of warriors as they launched their attack, using the same movements and spurred on by this rhythm. We can see the heritage of their race, the affirmation of a mindful and irrevocable will: the homeland above all. The other way of marching in the Laconian region was the *melos castoreon*, which is an anapestic tetrameter, formed from an acatalectic dimeter and a paremiac:

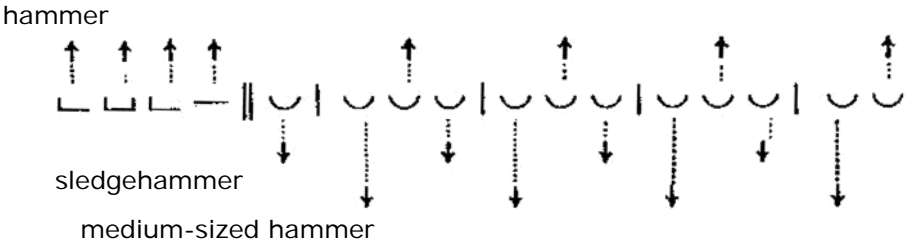


This is the same as the former, but with longer breaths and it therefore indicates a slower march. This was how the Laconians commemorated the deeds of their autochthonous hero Castor, and the *melos castoreon* probably even rang out in the propylaea of the temple at Agrigento, erected in honour of the divine horseman.

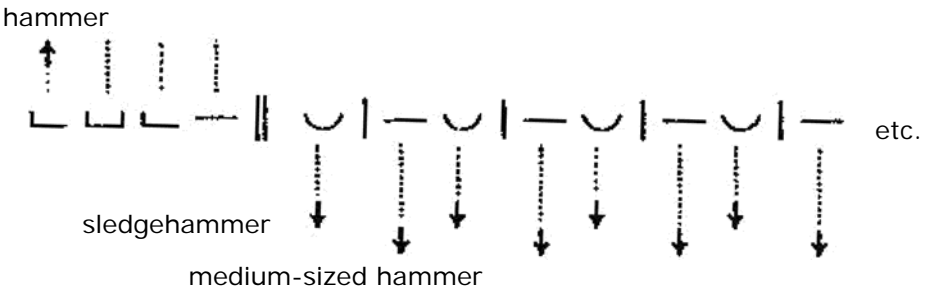
Tyrtæus found these features in the traditions of the people, as a result of their instincts and feelings. He respected them and transfused them into his ardent poetry, with the delicate aesthetic sense of an ancient Greek, for whom art is always deeply rooted in the people's soul and customs.

The anvil continues to offer us doubletime rhythms when the smith and two apprentices work together: hammer, sledgehammer, and medium-sized hammer.

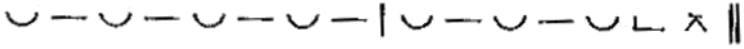
This results in odd rhythms with the most common being the iamb. After the usual preparatory movements to establish the unity and speed of the working rhythm, the three workers take it in turns to strike the anvil:



The iamb is formed by the medium-sized hammer in the arsis and the sledgehammer in the thesis. The hammer blow breaks up the length of the iamb and transforms it into a tribacchus. However, since it is very light, it is absorbed by the strong blow of the sledgehammer, so that the actual rhythmic pattern is as follows:



The *tammurinàra* use the same kind of rhythm on their instruments as the one that rings out on the anvil. This is a brachi-catalectic tetrameter that is played in the early morning on feast days in Salemi to wake up the faithful and prepare them for the solemnity of the day.

FIRRIATA DI PRIMA MATTINA [EARLY MORNING PHRASE]<sup>2</sup>


The above is a brachi-catalectic iambic dimeter used by town criers in Palermo:



Its lively and simple rhythm gently accompanies the small parade of *tammurinàru* and the town crier around the town and summons groups of silly women to the crossroads, all eager to hear the announcement. But it is also made fun of when the local rascals use the same rhythm, but the following words:

<i>Nun ci cririti nenti,</i>	Don't believe anything
<i>Nun ci cririti nenti,</i>	Don't believe anything
<i>E nenti, nenti, nenti,</i>	And nothing, nothing
<i>Nun ci cririti nenti.</i>	Don't believe anything.

Here the iamb appears in its original function of attacking someone or something. We find it again in Alcamo, in an acatalectic dimeter, which announces a feast that has been put off several times, and where the local people tease the organizers by crying out to the beat of the *tammurinu*:

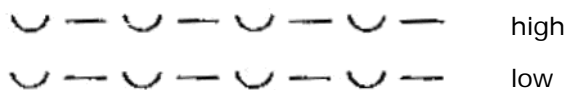
  
***Si fa, si fa! Nun si fa cchiù!***  
 [It's on, it's on! It's not on!]<sup>4</sup>

"*Lu tammurinu, quannu suona, è come fussi che parla*" [The drum as it plays is like these people talking]. In fact, it has a certain number of high and low inflections ("*lu tammurinu fa l'avutu e lu vasciu*" [the drum plays the high and the low]) depending on where the skin is hit; the player alternates these inflections according to a certain criterion for variety and they go to make up a *conversation*.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, page 97, note 60.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, page 97, note 61.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix, page 97, note 62.



This rhythmic pattern passes spontaneously from the *tammurinu* and is exteriorized in the dialect. It starts with onomatopoeia:

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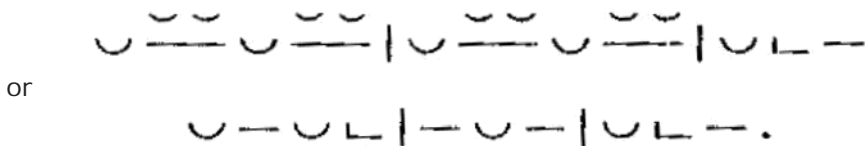
**ghichiti, pùrra,** etc., [run on then]

where the syllables correspond to the consonants at the level of the sound and its rhythm. It then moves to the word and finally to poetic discourse, in an intimate relation with the rhythm itself and with the action it needs to regulate. The rhythm therefore gives rise to words that are filled with its *ethos* and the malleable images that accompany it. Thus we have a poetry that has its very origins in things, as can be seen, for example in Fragment 54 from *Sappho*:



In the past, Cretan girls used to dance to this rhythm.

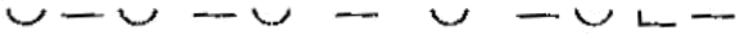
Therefore, the metric patterns of our popular poetry are found in percussion instruments. This is *quantitative* versification and is not based on stress or syllables, and should therefore be called a brachi-catalectic iambic trimeter and not a hendecasyllable, a word that has absolutely no rhythmic meaning. The number of syllables can increase or decrease in the presence of a tribacchus or a three-beat longa, where the rhythm pattern remains intact:



When the actual word stress does not agree with the rhythm, then it is relinquished in the recitation in any case.


In this line the stress of the words coincides with the rhythm:



  
**Amùri, amùri, chi m'ha fàttu fàri!**

[My love, my love, what on earth possessed me to do it!]

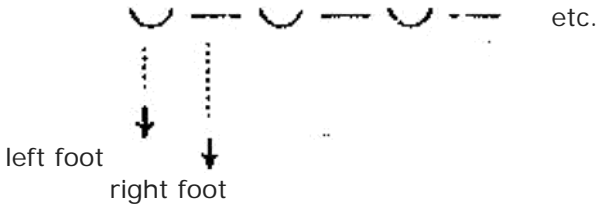
In this other line, the stress does not always coincide:

  
**Jùnciu a la fònti e mi vàgnu lu vi-su...**

[I get to the fountain and wet my face]

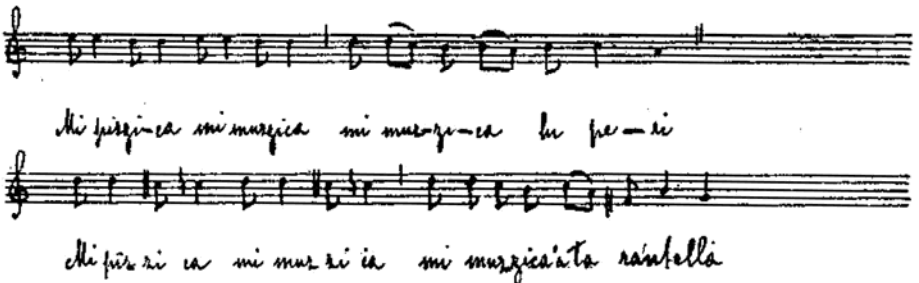
The way the spoken language adapts itself to rhythm has no limits; in fact, all of the modern literary languages are engaged in reproducing the Greek metric forms.

But far more interesting is the application of the iamb to our body movements. I found that my 5-year-old daughter Teresa unconsciously produced an iamb as she hops-skips-jumps forwards:

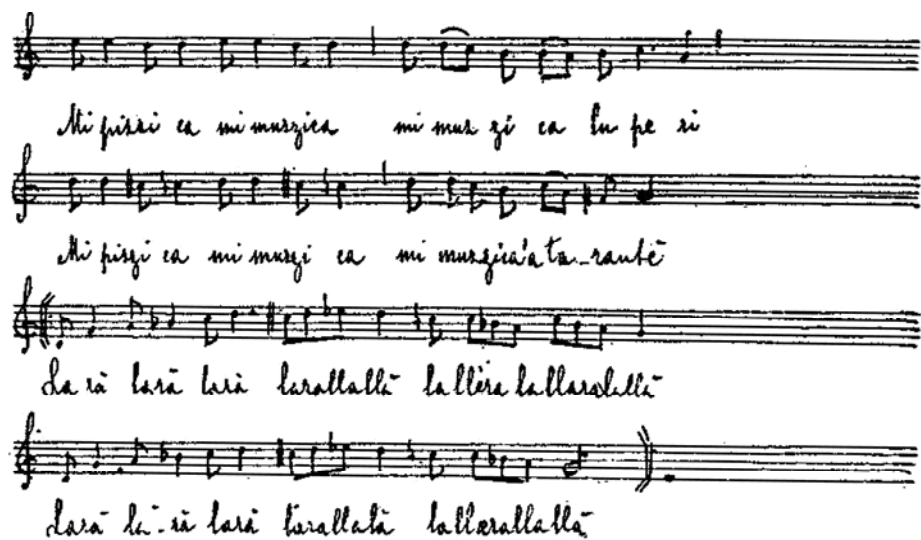


She starts off on her left foot and then lands on her right.

Another malleable form of iamb is found in the traditional dance for women called the "*Mi pizzica, mi muzzica*" [he pinches me, he bites me], in which the dancer hops up and down on the toes of her left foot. The arsis indicates the hop into the air, while the thesis is the landing.



Mi pizzica mi muzzica mi muzzica lu pe-ri  
 Mi pizzica mi muzzica mi muzzica ta rinfella



Mi fissai ca mi muzgia mi muzzi ca lu pe ri  
 Mi fissi ca mi muzzi ca mi muzgia'ata rante  
 La rì larì larì larallallì lallèrè lallarallè  
 Lara lè rì larì larallatà lallèrallatà

The brachi-catalectic form of this tetrameter marks the moment at the end of the line, when the dancer lands on her right foot and the pause at the end of the line, which is exactly the same as what I had observed in my daughter's dance. As the *tarantella* dancer herself says, she moves back and forward to avoid being bitten by the tarantula. This is an aftermath of the choreomania that spread throughout southern Italy in the XIII century, and which still exists in the people's memory. The victims, dressed in white and wearing crowns of roses, danced until they were fit to drop, and their sweat expelled the poison from their body. Father Kircher gives ample space to this in *De Arte magnetica* and even provides a drawing of the innocent insect that was blamed for the epidemic. He quotes the lines:

<i>Dove ti muzzicào la tarantella?</i>	Where did the tarantula bite you?
<i>Dillo, amata, dove fu?</i>	Tell me, my love, where was it?
<i>Sotto la pudia della fanella!</i>	Under the hem of my skirt!

But some other lines read:

<i>Non fu taranta nè tarantella</i>	It was neither the tarantula nor the
<i>Ma fu lo vino della garratella.</i>	tarantella, / But the wine from the flask.

So Bacchus's brew had something to do with it! Basically, there was an explosion of all the pent-up energy that people had accumulated during the repressive Mediaeval period. A state of exuberance in life exists where the health of each individual is confused with disease. But this state is actually beneficial for the species: it is like a river that

overflows its banks and destroys everything, but which, as soon as it returns to normal, leaves behind lands that are fertile for centuries to come. In fact, these are the periods when humanity revitalizes itself. The Homeric culture in Greece was preceded by such an obsession, and the Renaissance in Italy comes from tarantism, more than from humanism. Every population has suffered from these diseases where normal life is transformed into a cruel and relentless orgy: the Greek bacchanalia is a stylized example. And the iamb is precisely the rhythm of this state, which not only influences the motifs of the body, but also those of the spirit and its common and risqué songs.

Here is an iambic song from Palermo:

1. 

Più di canna e un-ri di can-na;



la vi-ta de la don-na è sempri bel-la



E ca si mesu-ra. vi la mezza can-na.

*Coro:*



ÿpã ÿpã ÿpã, maccar-un-ni è quocenti fa!



O J-nella di l'arma mi-a sempre hã m'ham a piggìu...

2. *Solo:*



Amezzu lu ma-ri c'ò un-na en-low-na,



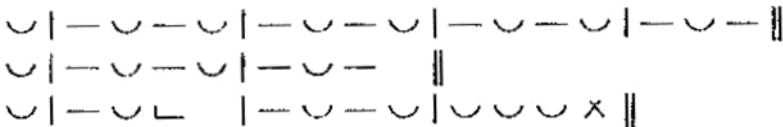
Quattro di-ci na-ta-ra m'na puv-na,

E la hinna la ti-m-a me so-m Alon-ma.  
 Eya eya eya, maccar-en-nia gocciali fa!  
 O I-nella di l'arme mie sempria tin m'hainia pizzica ..

The iamb rules supreme, attacking, lambasting, and insulting in this satirical and irresistible outburst; the Dionysian spirit prevails in the uneven form of its pentapodies; 2:3 alternated with simple dipodies. The iamb is thus part of our nature: the living elements that we find in the people of today lead us directly back to the ancient Sicilian comedy of Epicharmus and Phormos, and to the iambic poetry of Aristoxenus from Selinunte. As Cicero says in his *In Verrem*, "Sicilians are never so miserable that they cannot make a joke".

This is an iambic way of seeing life, in a land that is filled with contrasts: pain is overcome with irony and scorn; the absurdity of everything, found in the imperturbability of universal life and the accidentality of individual life, is grasped and then laughed about, and the plebeian laughter burns and cures. This was how the goddess Demeter forgot her sorrows, when Iambe, her servant, sang and danced before her – probably in the iambic meter that takes her name – and made the goddess roar with laughter. The secret of the iamb lies right here in Demeter's laughter which, as if by magic, manages to lift the goddess's spirit and erase the memory of the Titans' atrocious violence.

Even Aristophanes laughed in iambs to get over the Hellenic decadence; in *Frogs*, he maintains the boisterous song from the goddess's popular cult: "O Demeter, protect my aged knees with laughter, jokes, and serious proposals".




In the second motif of the sung dance "*Mi pizzica, mi muzzica*", the second dimeter of the two lines is trochaic, and the dance, in perfect

correlation with the rhythm, is now performed in a circle, no longer in the angular way of the iambs. Teresa spins around a table skipping to this rhythm; she steps to the side with her right foot, then jumps up and lands on her left foot in exactly the same place as where her right had been. This is how our children's *Ring a Ring-o-Roses* spontaneously comes to life.

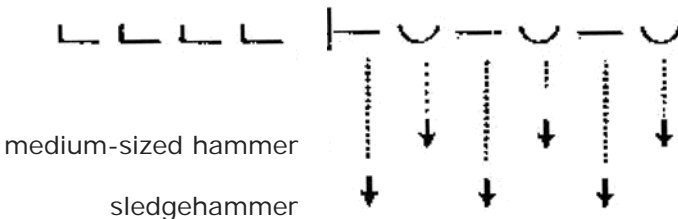
Another purely trochaic sung dance is the following from Palermo:

CHIOVU "ABBALLATTI!"



Abballati abballa-ti fimmuni schet-ti ma-ci-la-ti  
 I s'un abballa-ti bna nun vi ca' bna e' nun vi s'ann  
 Se'n se'n se'n quattu fimmuni chi ci su' e' n'e' quattu scarfaga-ti  
 'i facemmu cu' i probati e' n'e' quattu annu' c'addi 'i facemmu i piseddi...

Instead, we find continuous tetrapodies of trochees with tribacchuses and three-beat longae in the lively and light-hearted common dances from the south. This form of double-time is then found on the anvil and in the percussion instruments used for dancing and quick marches. I found this form hammered out on the anvil and obtained from the simple inversion of the two hammers that are in the iamb, in other words, the rhythm was started off by the sledgehammer instead of by the medium-sized one:



I found the same form with the *tammurinu* in fast-moving processions, when the candles dedicated to male and female saints are carried to the church:

— ◡ — ◡ — ◡ L

But this is no longer the trochee of the circle dance: it has a different form and is the *choreus*, that is to say, a very quick march. In fact, the *tammurinàra* have this to say about this composition: "*E'linusa, ci voli lena assai, si curri*" [It's quick, you need to make good time, you run].

Even the *choreus* is interspersed with light tribacchuses, as in the trochee:

— ◡ — ◡ — ◡ L  
 ◡ ◡ ◡ — ◡ — ◡ L  
 ◡ ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ ◡ L  
 ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ L

There are also complete dimeters of short notes:

◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡

The prosodion in Aristophanes' *Birds* contains the archaic popular rhythmic forms of his country. If we go even further back, they are found again in myths. Euripides' *Bacchae* recall: "Rea gave the satyrs, all drunk with wine, the sacred kettle drum that had been forged by the Curetes in the deep caverns of Crete. And for the first time, the impetuous and forceful cretic rang out on the earth, and its echo ran through mankind's grand and orderly processions, illuminated by torchlight during the nocturnal feasts".

The primitive form of the cretic is a dipody, made up of a choreus and a three-beat longa:

— ◡ ◡ ◡

The final chorus of Aristophanes' *Assemblywomen* cries out: "Kick your feet like the men from Crete and let's go!", as, torch in hand, they go to the nocturnal feast. "Hoorah! Hoorah!" and the crowd moves on.

So what exactly is the cretic mode? The longa indicates the falling movement of the body, an energetic cadence after the light impetus of

the *choreus*. Now, I have gleaned this orchestric form from my knowledge on the spontaneous production of rhythm. My seven-year-old daughter Anna often expresses her childhood feelings by jumping and dancing; her well-proportioned body unconsciously follows the laws of rhythm, in such a way that her emotions are transformed into different patterns of regular undulations. She often repeats this pattern as she *runs forward*:

— U L — U L — U L — U L

In the *choreus* of each dipody, my little girl hops two steps forward on her left foot and then lands heavily on her right in the three-beat longa (*bases*), performing the following passage:

— U L  
l . l . r .

This is certainly an example of a cretic form, but can we say that it is the cretic of our ancestors? Of course, nobody can say this for certain, although it is definitely a tempting hypothesis, which has much in agreement with that nocturnal image, left to us by the poets, of a chorus of satyrs celebrating and skipping forward as they perform their danced prosodion.

This interpretation of the cretic, mainly based on the living experimental fact of a dancing child, is therefore unquestionable, but actually in contrast with the ancient doctrine of the Alexandrine meter, where every longa is reduced to two first beats. Something similar has come about in the interpretation of elegiac verse, where we modern folk have reduced the pentameter to its correct length with the four-beat longa; we have done the same with the cretic and the paeon, lengthening the two-beat longa to a three-beat one. Callisius conserves the *melos creticon* model in Fragment 222, the ancient dance melody from Jupiter's holy island.

— U L — U L — U L — U L  
— U L — U L — U L — U L

Here the first paeon mixes with the pure cretic. It has the same tempo, but is a lighter and more impulsive orchestric form.

With Talete, the paeon-cretic moved on from Sparta and became part of the gymnopaedia and art. Here the basic form was amalgamated with other double rhythmic forms. Attic comedy conserves the

first examples of this process of differentiation, adding the fourth paeon (U U U L) and the choreus to the cretic.

L U U U - U L | - U - U - U L Aristophanes  
(*Knights*, IV)

- U - U | - U - U | L U U U - U L (*Lysistrata*,  
1014)

- U - U | - U L | - U L - U L  
- U L - U L L U U U - U L (*Birds*)

- U L L U U U - U L - U L  
- U L L U U U L U U U - U L (*Fr. 334*)

- U U U - U L L U U U - U L (*Birds*)

U U U L L U U U L U U U - U L (*Birds*)

These three first paeons and a cretic are the typical form used by Aristophanes: here we have a tetrameter that flows and takes off, and the poet composes lively palinodes with trochaic epodes:

L U U U . L U U U L U U U - U L 9 times

- U - > | - U - > | - U - > | - U - x ||

ep. (*Archarnians*, XI)

L U U U L U U U L U U U - U L 8 times

- U - > | - U - > | - U - > | - U - x || ep.

The choreuses indicate a slight slowing down in the cretic impulse, in homage to the artistic principle of variation. But a greater modification occurs when this principle is applied not only to the musical rhythm,



but also to the extension of the phrase members. This happens in the most advanced Doric chorus and in Aeschylus.

I.            ∪ ∷ — ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪ ∪ — ∷  
                  ∪ ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∷  
                  ∪ ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪ ∷

II.            ∪ ∷ — ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∷  
                  ∪ ∪ ∪ ∷ — ∪ ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪ ∷ ∷  
                  — ∪ ∷ — ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∷ ∷

Pindar, *Olympian II.*

Here, amongst all these trimeters and meters, the sense of eurhythmmy passes from the line to the period. The original surge of cretic paeons is transformed into a calm procession, which comes to pass in the evolution of the strophe, the antistrophe, and the epode.

Once the Hellenic culture came to an end, the cretic paeon returned to the grey area of popular life, where it lived on forever, unheeded in the irresistible instinct of the body's muscles. In fact, I came across it in the San Ciro district near Salemi, produced in exactly the same manner as in ancient times. Far off in the distance in the autumn evening, I heard the uproar of the fiery cretic played by the *tammarinu*, as their incessant and irresistible drums urged on the torchlit procession in honour of the local saint along the lower slopes of the hills and down into the valley. The rhythm throbbed with all the ancient mystical exaltation of the flames that shine out in the darkness. Every now and then, the crowd shrilly invoked the name of the saint, just like the Sicilian's primitive god, Dionysus-Zagreus, who loved racing and collective dancing (*filacorèuta*).

CIACCOLATA<sup>5</sup>

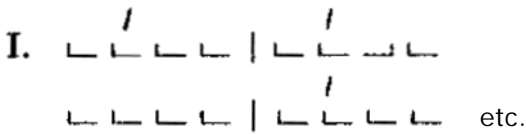
1. ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∷ | ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∷ ∷  
 2. — ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ — | ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∷ ∷  
 3. ∪ ∪ ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — | ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∷ ∷  
 4. ∪ ∪ ∪ ∷ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∷ | ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∷ ∷

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix, page 98, note 67.

- 5.  $\overset{/}{\cup} - \overset{/}{\cup} - - | \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \overset{\#}{\cup} \cup \cup \parallel$
- 6.  $\cup \cup - | \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \overset{\#}{\cup} \cup \cup \parallel$
- 7.  $\cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \overset{\#}{\cup} \cup \cup \parallel$
- 8.  $\cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \overset{/}{\cup} - | \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \overset{\#}{\cup} \cup \cup \parallel$
- 9.  $\cup \cup - | \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \cup \overset{\#}{\cup} \cup \cup \parallel$
- 10.  $- \cup \cup \cup \cup \overset{/}{\cup} - \cup - | \cup - \cup \cup \cup \cup \overset{\#}{\cup} - \cup \cup \parallel$
- 11.  $\overset{/}{\cup} - \overset{/}{\cup} - \overset{/}{\cup} - \overset{/}{\cup} - \overset{/}{\cup} - \overset{/}{\cup} - \overset{/}{\cup} - \overset{/}{\cup} - \overset{\#}{\cup} - \parallel$
- 12.  $\cup \cup \cup \cup \overset{\#}{\cup} \cup \cup \parallel$
- 13.  $\parallel : - \cup \cup - \cup \cup - \cup : \parallel \text{ ep.}$


I observed that this *Ciacculata* had a primitive cretic paeon: it had the same virile and passionate nature, the same vigorous and lively orchestric form, and the same wealth of rhythm. It offered a search for contrasts obtained by opposing the various types of rhythm.


Almost all the lines have caesura; in the first dimeter, the line gains momentum, and in the second it precipitates from lively tribacchuses in the brachi-catalectic dipody, with a greater rest in the cretic cadence, in relation to the preceding stress. Line 7 with its three-beat longa is set between lively tribacchuses. The greatest contrast occurs between lines 11 and 12: the former has eight reversed iambs and is a period of pertinacious fury and violent jumps, with no caesuras or cadences, while the next line rests in long six-beat notes. These longae can be found in Fragment 23 of Bacchylides, in a cretic hyporchema. Reversed iambs are found in Pindar's and Aristophanes' paeonic compositions, but never in a continuous series, as shown here in line 11. The series of three-beat longae are found again in Aristophanes' *Birds*, 1058ff.:



After having wound its way around the countryside, the procession returns and stops in front of the sanctuary. This is where the *tammurinaru* usually starts off his majestic and solemn trochaic epode,

in a catalectic form. Each *tammurinu* beat usually has its epode, which is always opposite to the previous one, and it conventionally marks the end for the people, just as the ancient epode did in Greek lyric poetry. Our people have these rhythms in their muscles and in their souls and they can feel its suggestive power. They express this *ethos* in an original way, applying words to the rhythms. Salemi's *Ciacculata* says:

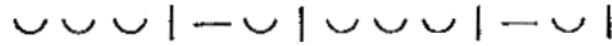
  
**Ghichiti ghichiti gghi, ch'è bella,**


  
**ch'è bella, ch'è bella, ch'è bella!**

[Run, run, how beautiful,  
how beautiful, how beautiful, how beautiful!]

The repetition of these words shows all the excitement that this race offers.

In Montalbano Helicon, I found a cretic tetrameter whose words contain all the malleable expression of the movement:

  
**Curriti tutti, curriti tutti,**

  
**curriti tutti a la santa Nuvena!**

[Everybody run, everybody run,  
everybody run to the holy Novena]<sup>6</sup>

The rhythm of the *tammurinu* tells the people to hurry to the church to participate in the mysteries of the nativity of Jesus of Nazareth: "*Unca lu tammurinu nun parla?*" [Why doesn't the drum speak?]. The acatalectic form with no cadence gives the precise image of the continuous flow of people rushing to the temple.

The cretic mode is very common in Sicily and offers a great variety in its musical realization and the extension of the phrase members. Every village, every town has its own form, whose delicate undertones

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix, page 99, note 68.

reveal the character of each district and mankind's exquisite sensibility to rhythm.

This impetuous motif for processions from Monreale, high up on the Conca d'oro, urges the faithful to dance along:

o o o o o o o / o o o | o o o o o o o // o o o | 7

Cinisi, on the plain, has quieter motifs. The cretic is preceded by two perfect choreuses, without any whirling tribacchuses, and the cadence falls on each dimeter, while the tetrameter has a shorter momentum:

- o - o - o - o L 8

Girgenti has this hexameter which is amazing in its variety and growing momentum:

L L o o o L | o o o - o o o L | o o o o o o L 9

This palinode is played in Villalba (Caltanissetta) as the people leave the church at the end of the Mass<sup>10</sup>:

o o o / o - o - || o o o o / o - o L ||  
 o o o / o - o - || o o o o / o o o L ||  
 o o o - o o o o - | o o o o o o o o o L ||  
 o o o - o - o - | o o o o o o o o o L ||  
 o ; o o o o o o o o o | o o o o o o o o o L ||

Everyone returns home in a state of mystic joy, charmed by the rhythm, and the poet sings to his beloved in admiration "*Quannu camini pari chi abballi*" [When you walk by, it seems you dance]. This is movement in a superior form; the echo of a far-off world, of a full and harmonious life, and our civilization with all its excesses and faults pales in comparison.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix, page 99, note 69.

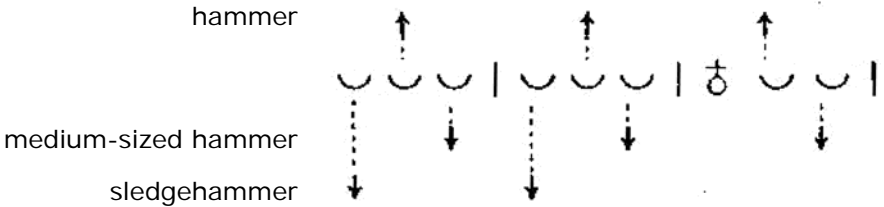
<sup>8</sup> See Appendix, page 99, note 70.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix, page 99, note 71.

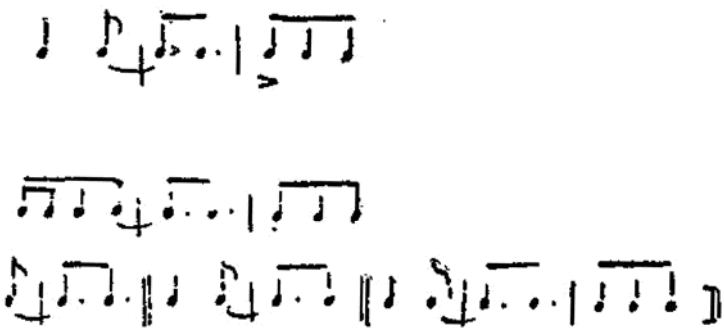
<sup>10</sup> See Appendix, page 100, note 72.

\* \* \*

Let us now continue to weave the magic thread of our rhythmic identity with our ancient Mediterranean forefathers, between the two indefinite terms of myth and future. The blacksmith's anvil under the work of three hammers gives us all the double-genre forms, such as the paeon-cretic and the dochmiac. If the blacksmith rests by *swinging his sledgehammer in the air*, that is to say, without striking the anvil, the result is automatically a syncope.



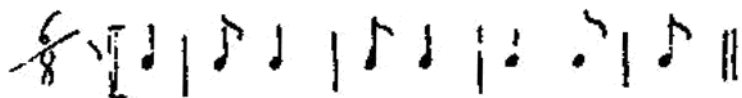
The symbol ⊕ marks where the sledgehammer did not strike the anvil. The dochmiac produced by a simple working mechanism takes on an ethical and aesthetic value in the *tammurinu* and in the funeral rite that it accompanies, which is not found in the anvil music. Each time the last rites are carried in a procession to the dying, this sorrowful rhythm resonates in every one of Sicily's little villages. In Salemi, the humble processions of shepherds and farmers proceed in faltering steps to this motif:



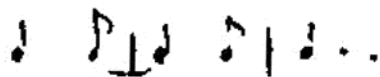
Here we have the rumble of ensuing death, the decomposition of life and organic eurhythmic movements into nothing. Faced with the dying person, pain suddenly reappears as the fundamental law of this world; the choir's emotions are so intense that the swaying bodies form an

irregular tripod, which is the dochmaic, an oblique dance; the rhythm arises between one tripod and another.

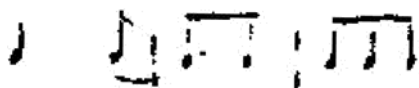
The plasticity of the rhythm is found in its very name: proof is offered by yet another *tammurinu* beat which accompanies the *sciancata* [lopsided] mimicry of the *mastru di campu* [a Carnival mask] in Palermo's traditional masquerade:



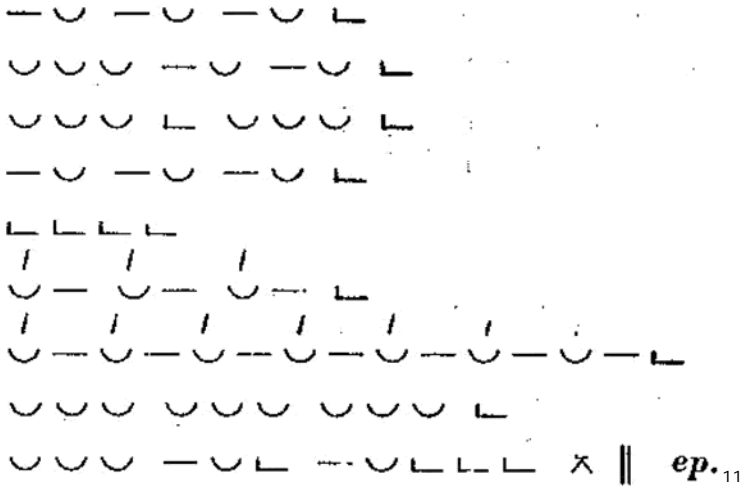
The motif that accompanies Salemi's last rites is a thetic form of dochmaic, which is rather more pessimistic and sorrowful than the anacrusic form, typical of the Greeks. The thetic form is found every now and then in tragedies, mixed with the other forms (Euripides, *Orestes*, I):



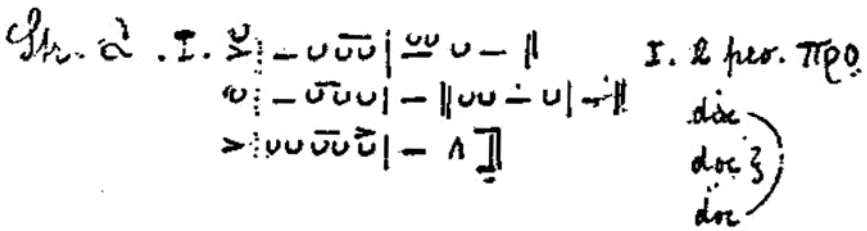
Another common feature in the dochmiacs of Greek tragedy is the irrational breve after the syncope and the tribacchus at the end of the tripod (Euripides):



Once the sad rite has been accomplished, the cortege makes its way back to the village. As soon as the church comes into view, the funeral dochmaic is replaced by a festive march, "because seeing the house of God *metti alligria*" [brings joy to your heart]: only in God do we find joy and happiness:



In Aeschylus' tragedies, the dochmaic is the only rhythm used in every situation where death and destruction appear to be the only possible and fatal solution of some kind of conflict. The choir of Theban maidens sing in dochmiacs in Aeschylus' *Seven*, when from the tower on high they catch sight of the innumerable army that floods the plain in clouds of dust, and the galloping horses who rush forward like a flowing stream, and the charioteers who circle the walls, yelling and shouting while the seven dukes march haughtily on the seven gates. The terrified choir of virgins, beside themselves with fear, beg and scream and plead with the gods of the city to save them from the horrors of war, in a magnificent dochmaic *maiden's song*, which could also be said to represent the death song of the glorious city of Cadmus:



<sup>11</sup> See Appendix, page 101, note 75.

II.  $\bar{v} : \bar{v}\bar{v} - v | - v || \bar{v}\bar{v} - v | - v || - \bar{v}\bar{v}\bar{v} | - \Lambda ||$  II.  $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{doe} \\ \text{doe} \\ \text{doe} \\ \text{doe} \end{array} \right\}$   
 $v | \bar{v}\bar{v} - v | - v || \bar{v}\bar{v} - v | - \Lambda ||$

III.  $v : \bar{v}\bar{v} - v | - v || \bar{v}\bar{v} - v | - \bar{v} || - - v - \Lambda ||$  III.  $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{doe} \\ \text{doe} \\ \text{doe} \\ \text{doe} \\ \text{doe} \end{array} \right\}$   
 $v : - - v | - v || \bar{v}\bar{v} - v | - v || \bar{v}\bar{v}\bar{v}\bar{v} | - \Lambda ||$

Str. β'  $- : - v - v | \bar{v}\bar{v} v - v | - v - ||$  giam. 6  
 $v : - - v | - \bar{v} || - \bar{v} | - \bar{v} || \bar{v}\bar{v} - v - \Lambda ||$   $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{doe.} \\ \text{doe.} \\ \text{doe.} \end{array} \right\}$  12

Still reeling from their horrible flight from marriage and choosing death over dishonor, the daughters of Danaus sing in dochmiacs as they wander around the rocky shores of Argos and beg protection from the king of the Pelasgians:

I.  $v : - v -$  I. περ. πρρ  
 $v : - - v | - v || \bar{v}\bar{v} - v | - ||$   $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{do} \\ \text{do} \\ \text{do} \end{array} \right\}$   
 $v : - - v | - \Lambda ||$

II.  $\bar{v}\bar{v}\bar{v} - v \bar{v} - || \bar{v}\bar{v}\bar{v} \bar{v}\bar{v} v - \Lambda ||$  II. τρ.  
 $\bar{v}\bar{v}\bar{v} - v - || \bar{v}\bar{v}\bar{v} - v - \Lambda ||$   $\left. \begin{array}{l} \{3\} \\ \{3\} \\ \{3\} \\ \{3\} \end{array} \right\}$

<sup>12</sup> Aeschylus. *The Seven against Thebes*, 78ff. Cf. Schmidt, [Johann Hermann Heinrich]. 1868. *Die Eurhythmie* [...]: 314-319.



III. VC: UU - CY | - VE || UU UU U | - CY || L - UU - U - U ]

II. dochm.  
 doe.)  
 doe.)  
 log. 4. EΠ.

CV CY V: UU - U | - > || UU - U | = Λ #  
 CV CY V: UU - U | - U || - U | = Λ #  
 CV CY V: UU - U | - U || UU - U | = Λ #  
 U: U - U | - U || UU - U | L #  
 UU - U L - Λ || EΠ: logaediō 13

and also when they beg their father not to forsake them, terrified lest the fast sailing ships of their pursuers should catch up with them:

U: UU - U | - > || UU - > | - Λ #  
 U: UU - U | - U || UU - U | - Λ #  
 U | L - U | - U || - U | - Λ # 14

A dochmiac example in Sophocles is the *Kommos* in *Antigone* (VIII, 1261–1347). However, the pattern of the old dochmaic dithyrambic

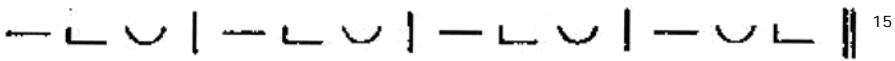
<sup>13</sup> Aeschylus. *Supplici*: 346–353, 402–406 (*idem*).

<sup>14</sup> Aeschylus. *Supplici*: 734–738 (*idem*).

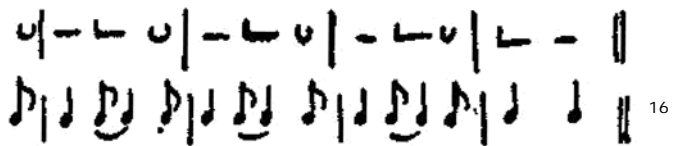
style is found in Euripides' *Bacchantes*, when the chorus of Maenads celebrate the death of Pentheus:

<p>I. <math>\dot{u} : \dot{u}\dot{u} - &gt;   - - \dot{u}   \llcorner \wedge \parallel</math>  <math>\dot{u} : \dot{u}\dot{u} - &gt;   - - \dot{u}   \llcorner \wedge \parallel</math>  <i>1 trim giamb</i> ]</p>	<p>I <i>bacch</i> 3  <i>bacch.</i> 3</p>
<p>II <math>- &gt; - \dot{u}\dot{u} - \dot{u} - \parallel</math>  <math>&gt;   - \dot{u}\dot{u} - \dot{u} \llcorner - \parallel</math>  <math>\dot{u} : \dot{u}\dot{u} - &gt;   - \wedge \parallel</math>  <i>.trim</i></p>	<p>II. <i>log.</i> 4  <i>doc.</i> <math>\varepsilon \pi</math>.</p>
<p>III. <math>&gt; : - - &gt; - \parallel</math>  <i>trim.</i>  <math>&gt; : \dot{u}\dot{u} - \dot{u}   \dot{u}\dot{u} \parallel</math></p>	<p>III <i>doc.</i>  <i>doc.</i></p>
<p>IV <math>\dot{u} : \dot{u}\dot{u} - \dot{u}   - \dot{u} \parallel - - &gt;   - \wedge \parallel</math>  <math>\dot{u}\dot{u}\dot{u} \dot{u}\dot{u}   - \dot{u} \llcorner \parallel</math></p>	<p>IV. <i>doc</i>  <i>doc</i>  <i>peo. 2. = επ</i></p>

The tragedy takes its double genre rhythms from the primitive dithyramb: other rhythmic forms are the syncopated form of the bacchiac dipody which I found in a *tammurinu* motif in Naso (Messina):



This is the thetic form of the bacchiac tetrameter found in Greek tragedy:

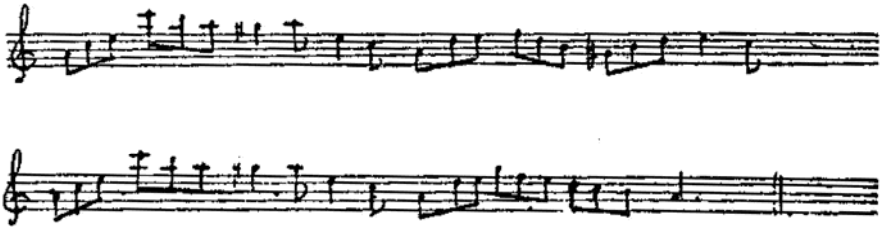


<sup>15</sup> Aeschylus. *Supplici*: 734-738 (*idem*).  
<sup>16</sup> Aeschylus. *Eumenides*, V., str. A B, 1 (*idem*).

I have also found the bacchius in dances from Partanna (Trapani); it is a type of bacchanal dance, whose essential feature is the syncope, like a heavy fall to the ground out of time.



These strange elements still persist in Partanna and their nature becomes all too clear if we compare them with Marsala's light stepping circle dance, which is all choreuses and tribacchuses.



These differences go to show our people's heightened sensitivity towards rhythm, be they from the mountains or the sea. In Salemi, where the main tradition is the logaoedic jumping dance, they say that the folk from Partanna play and sing *'mparpugghiati* [with difficulty].

From the dithyramb, we finally arrive at the myth where the origins of rhythm are to be found. When Dionysus-Zagreus was torn to shreds by the Titans, the primordial unity of mankind was destroyed, and humankind was created from the death throes of the God.

The ancients replaced a phenomenon with a god, and the cult of this god was the representation of the phenomenon itself, whose motifs were reflected therein. Thus, in the cult of the god Dionysus, double genre rhythms were a direct representation of telluric phenomena and

linked to the formation and catastrophic destruction of worlds. Aeschylus says this in a passage on the primitive dithyramb: "The drum rolls, like thunder rumbling underground, spreading great terror". Telluric events periodically reoccur on this earth of ours as the centuries go by, and this renews the *dochmaic sense* of life in every one of us. The dithyramb is still alive and kicking and, together with its rhythms, has emerged from the very bowels of the earth that was shaken and overwhelmed.

Therefore, nothing has changed. From underground, the Eumenides cursed the Gods of Olympus in dochmiacs. And even today, we shed heartfelt tears and continue to curse the ironic fate of this land, where beautiful things are created and destroyed at the whim of some God or other!

Therefore, the opposition between equal and double-genre rhythm is not merely a question of metrics, but it exists in life itself, in the dynamics of things; it is the opposition between the spiritual and material world, between heaven and earth, between Apollo and Dionysus. Dactyls have an innate tendency to be symmetric, because this is how one limits the effort involved in achieving one's aim as quickly as possible; this symmetry is sought after and obtained right from the basic unit of measure: the foot. On the contrary, in double-genre feet, there is no equivalence between successive movements, and symmetry is only achieved between groups of two or more basic units. The iambs and trochees are grouped in dipodies with stress on the first or second foot:



The cretic is already a dipody and eurhythmy can only occur in a dimeter:



This happens more often in the dochmiac which is a tripod:

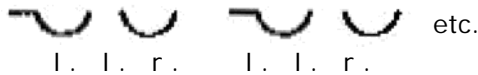


Metricists count the only cyclical form of all the 3/8 ones in monopodies:



The plasticity of the cyclical form consists of a series of small turning jumps. Metricists have observed that cyclical forms and trochees are less aggressive than iambic and cretic forms; the latter are jumps forward, while the former are a kind of circular jumping. These scholars also add that the arsis in the cyclical form is more intense than in the trochee.

The metricists' interpretation corresponds to the plastic, spontaneous, and unconscious nature of the cyclical form. Anna jumps in a cyclical rhythm, hopping on her left foot during the thesis and landing on her right during the arsis.



In the trochee, the arsis is the upward movement, while in the cyclical form, it is the fall and has a secondary stress.

In Sicily, all the logaoedic forms are found in the *tammurini*, the *tammureddi* (tambourines), the *friscaletti* (beaked flutes) and the *ciaramedde* (bagpipes). The following *Jolla* from Salemi is played on a three-hole pipe:

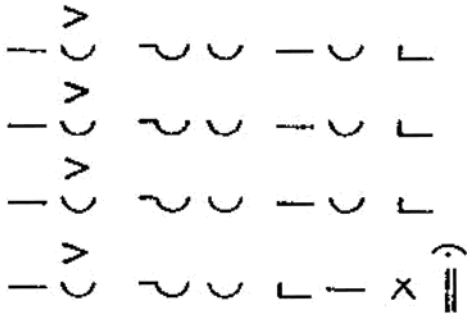


This other piece from Montalbano Helicon is played on the bagpipes:



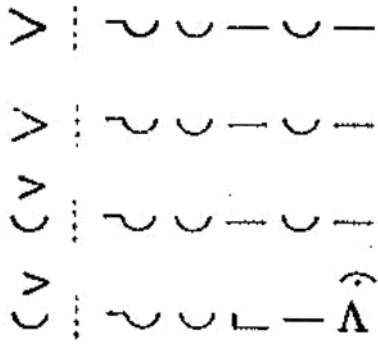
There are female dance motifs that are linked to traditional poses and movements which are both graceful and harmonious. This was how Cora and her companions had to dance through the flower-filled valleys to the sound of the warbling flute. "*Lu picuraru fa l'armonia di l'acciddi*" [The shepherd produces the same harmonies as the birds], Pietro La Grassa, a farmer from Salemi told me. "He is always studying new motifs for his flute to make the girls dance". This is just how Alcman used the calls of nightingales and partridges to derive the logaoedic songs he taught to the young girls of Sparta (Fr. 26).

But Aristophanes is the poet who preserved the archaic Greek logaoedic form, "the aria from the ancient golden age, to be performed in a rustic manner". (Thes.) He mainly uses the squared glyconic quatrain, which is so easy and full of momentum, with the typical Greek brachi-catalectic:



(*Knights*, VII, 973ff.)

Another meter of this kind of lighthearted song is the first pherecratic with anacrusis, which is as lively as the ancient village *sikinnis* [satirical dance]:



(*Knights*, VIII, III and ff.)

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Although this essay has served my intended purpose of providing information about the topic, it has merely scratched the surface. Of course, we have an extremely limited knowledge of this primordial musical world. In the best of cases, Italian culture has looked no further back than our Renaissance classics, whenever it has actually stopped its wild-goose chase through the music of every country. Our culture has overlooked what is most vital and essential in all of us and has ended up as sterile rhetoric. However, if we leave aside all these kinds of developed music and put our ear to the ground, then we will be able to hear the perennial sources of Italian melody, the immortal song of our land, which has long been waiting to make its entrance into art and to enrich it. The simple feeling of something that is new and refreshing is exactly where the nobleness of our work lies: the gathering and bringing this material to light with the supreme goal of creating our national art, and of thereby providing a harmonious and glorious image of our way of life.

The creation of this direct relationship between culture and popular life is a decisive step towards solving our artistic problems. However, it cannot be limited to providing superficial notions of an isolated fact or offering mere *historical* notions of this and that. It has to go above and beyond history, looking deeper into the distant past and far-off future of the full and integrated life of the Italic peoples that emerges from the dark ages and from *folklore*.

From such a distant perspective, many things that are given far too much importance today will remain obscure, while simple and essential truths will be brought into the open. All of a sudden, we can rid our-

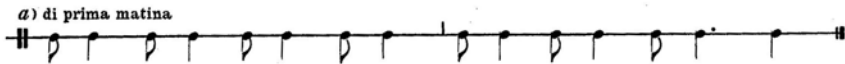
selves of the prejudices of the mannerism that we have been used to seeing as the final form of music; any developments in our art are no longer seen as essential, but are instead a way of being and a style that can also change. And it is this sense of life, beyond the fortuity of a determined time that contains the energy that springs forth from the depths of our soul and drives us onwards in the infinite spiral of our development. This is the world of instincts, the world of positive forces that go to create a nation, and it is the only place where art and our lives can find the bases and the core-matter of a true culture.



**Appendix** (from: *Corpus di musiche popolari siciliane*, edited by Ottavio Tiby, Palermo 1957)

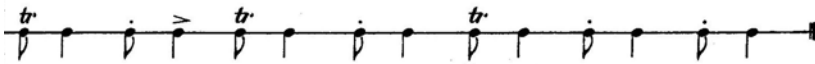
### 1026. Firriate

PIETRO MALTESE



Note 60.

### NASO 993. Vigilia

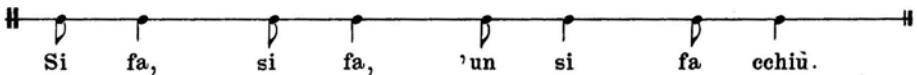


in

Note 61.

ALCAMO

### 999. Festa della Madonna dei Miracoli <sup>\*)</sup>



Note 62.

552

# 1022. La ciacculiata

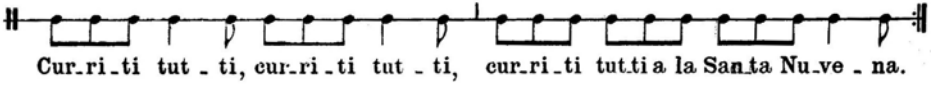
PIETRO MALTESE

The musical score for 'La ciacculiata' consists of ten staves of music. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The music is written in a rhythmic style with many beamed eighth notes and some accents. The final staff includes three trills marked 'tr.'.

Quando si arriva alla Chiesa e il corteo si ferma:

A single staff of music showing a rhythmic pattern of beamed eighth notes, ending with a double bar line.

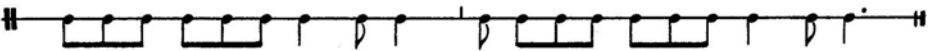
## 992. Notte di Natale



Note 68.

### MONREALE

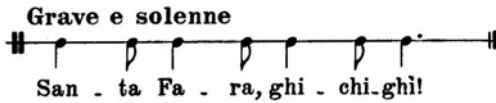
## 958. Processione



Note 69.

### CINISI

## 950. Processione di Santa Fara<sup>3)</sup>



Note 70.

### AGRIGENTO

## 974. Sunata



Note 71.

### 988. Fine della Messa - Uscita dalla Chiesa



Note 72.

d) Ritorno alla Chiesa

PIETRO MALTESE

Il ritorno si effettua con la prima formula indicata a lett. a). Quando il corteo giunge in vista della Chiesa, si suona:

*Allegro*

A musical staff with a treble clef. It begins with a trill (tr) over a note. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The melody consists of several notes with accents (>) and some beamed eighth notes. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Altra formula più ricca:

A musical staff with a treble clef. It begins with a trill (tr) over a note. The melody is more complex than the first formula, featuring beamed eighth notes and various rhythmic patterns. It ends with a double bar line.

A musical staff with a treble clef. The melody consists of notes with accents (>) and some beamed eighth notes. It ends with a double bar line.

A musical staff with a treble clef. The melody consists of notes with accents (>) and some beamed eighth notes. It ends with a double bar line.

Per concludere:

A musical staff with a treble clef. The melody consists of notes with accents (>) and some beamed eighth notes. It ends with a double bar line.

Note 75.