

## CAPITULUM SECUNDUM

### MONOCHORDI ELEMENTARIS DIVISIO SEU COMPOSITIO

Regulare monochordum  
numeris et mensura  
subtiliter a Boetio  
dividitur. Sed illud,  
sicut theoreticis utile  
iocundumque est, ita  
cantoribus laboriosum  
intellectuque difficile.  
Verum quia utrisque  
satisfacere polliciti  
sumus, facillimam  
regularis monochordi  
divisionem reddemus, quam  
non modico labore nemo nos  
arbitretur invenisse,  
quippe qui illam multis  
vigiliis antiquorum  
praecepta lectitantes et  
neotericorum vitantes  
errorem cum sudore  
repperimus. Et eam  
quilibet vix dum etiam  
mediocriter eruditus  
facile intelligere  
poterit.

Sumatur itaque cuiusvis  
longitudinis nervus sive  
chorda, quae super lignum  
aliquid habens  
concavitate extendatur;  
locus autem extremus, cui  
nervus alligatur, puncto *a*  
signetur. Alius locus e  
regione procul positus,  
quo nervus trahitur et  
torquetur, puncto *q*  
signetur. Quantitas autem  
*q a*, idest totius chordae  
longitudo, in duas partes

## SECOND CHAPTER

### THE DIVISION OR ARRANGEMENT OF THE ELEMENTARY MONOCHORD

The regular<sup>1</sup> monochord  
is accurately divided by  
Boethius with numbers and  
measurement. Although it  
is agreeable and useful  
for theorists, it is  
laborious and difficult  
for singers to understand.

Truly, since we have  
promised to satisfy both  
[the theorists and the  
singers], we will render  
an extremely easy division  
of the regular monochord.

Let no one think that we  
came upon it with ordinary  
labor, inasmuch as we  
devised it with hard work  
during many sleepless  
nights, reading and re-  
reading the precepts of  
the ancients and avoiding  
the error of the modern  
theorists. Anyone even  
moderately educated will  
be able to easily  
understand it.

Therefore, let a string  
or, if you prefer, a cord,  
of any length be taken--  
which is stretched over  
wood having some degree of  
concavity--and let the  
furthest place to which  
the string is bound be  
marked by the point *a*.  
Let another place,  
positioned in a straight  
line at a distance from  
which the string is drawn  
and stretched, be marked

dividatur aequales et  
aequae distantiae punctus  
*h* littera notetur.  
Dividemus iterum per  
medium quantitatem chordae  
*h a* et in medio divisionis  
*d* constituemus. Quantitas  
*h d* iterato secabitur et  
in sectionis medio *f*  
collocabitur.

Idem quoque de alia  
chordae medietate  
faciendum intellige  
scilicet *h q*, quoniam in  
prima divisione loco medio  
*p* figurabitur; et in  
divisione *h p* aequaliter  
ab utraque distans ponatur  
littera *l* et inter *l* et *p*  
servata eadem  
intervallorum regula *n*  
immittatur. Quod si *f n*  
per medium divisimus,  
litteram *i* signabimus.

Per hanc autem mediam  
divisionem ulterius ad  
partes minutiores,  
quousque alias divisiones  
fecerimus, non deveniemus.  
Sed totum *a q* per tria  
dividemus et a littera *q*  
mensurantes in fine  
trientis ponetur *m* et in  
besse *e*. Deinde *e q* per  
tria iterum dividatur et a  
littera *q* versus *e*  
venientes in besse signum

by the point *q*. Now let  
the quantity *q-a*--that is,  
the length of the entire  
string--be divided into  
two equal parts, and let  
the point of equal  
distance be marked by the  
letter *h*. Then we will  
divide the quantity of the  
string *h-a* in half, and in  
the middle of the division  
we will place [the letter]  
*d*. Again, the quantity  
*h-d* will be divided and *f*  
will be placed in the  
middle of the section.

Understand that the same  
also should be done in  
respect to the other half  
of the string--that is,  
*h-q*--since [the letter] *p*  
will be formed midpoint in  
the first division. And  
in the division *h-p*, let  
the letter *l* be placed at  
an equal distance from  
both, and with the same  
rule of the intervals  
having been maintained  
between *l* and *p*, let *n* be  
inserted. But if we will  
divide *f-n* in half, we  
will inscribe the  
letter *i*.

However, we will not  
proceed any further to the  
smaller parts of this  
half-division until we  
have made other divisions.  
Thus, we will divide the  
whole *a-q* by three parts:  
measuring from the letter  
*q*, we will place [the  
letter] *m* at the end of a  
third part and [the  
letter] *e* at the end of  
the two-thirds part.

□ quadrum configetur et  
quantitate □ quadri et  $q$   
duplicata signetur  $b$ .

Sed iterum  $m-h$  per  
medium secabimus et medium  
sectionis punctum  $k$   
littera colorabimus. Quod  
si quantitatem  $k-g$   
duplicemus, in fine  
duplicationis  $c$  ponemus;  
sed inter  $e$  et □ quadrum  
aequalibus utrimque  
spatiis  $g$  situetur. Si  
autem  $g-g$  in duo aequalia  
partiamur,  $o$  littera  
signabitur sicque totum  
monochordum legitima  
partitione divisum est, ut  
in subiecta figura  
cognoscis [figura 1].

[5] Then, let  $e-g$  be divided  
again by three, and coming  
from the letter  $g$  toward  
 $e$ , the square □ sign will  
be transfixed at the two-  
thirds point, and round  $b$   
will be inscribed with the  
quantity of square □ and  $q$   
doubled.<sup>2</sup>

Now again we will divide  
 $m-h$  in half and we will  
mark the middle point of  
the section with the  
letter  $k$ . But if we  
double the quantity  $k-g$ ,  
we will place  $c$  at the end  
of the duplication;  
however, let  $g$  be placed  
between  $e$  and square □  
with equal lengths on both  
sides. And if we divide  
 $g-g$  into two equal parts,  
it will be marked with the  
letter  $o$ . Thus, the whole  
monochord has been divided  
by a legitimate partition  
as you [may] examine [for  
yourself] in the figure  
below [see Figura 1].

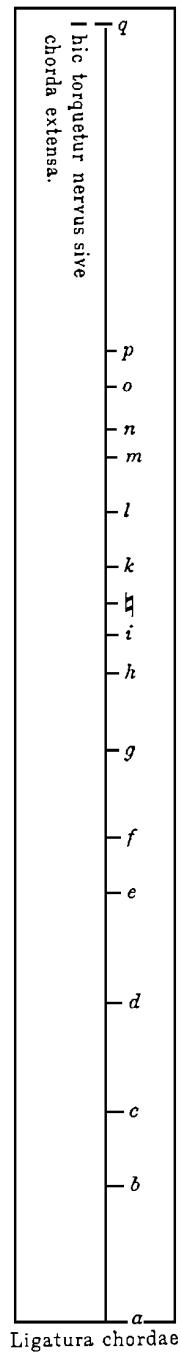


Figure 21. Figura 1 of the *Musica practica*, 5.  
Source: Johannes Wolf, ed., *Musica practica*, 5.  
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## ENDNOTES

1. The third declension adjective *regularis* can be defined as "regular," "well-ordered," or "that which contains rules." I have elected to translate this adjective as "regular" to remind the reader of its derivation from the noun meaning "a rule" or "ruler" (*regula* in Latin;  $\chi\alpha\upsilon_\nu$  in Greek). Musicians used the "monochord rule" to audibly demonstrate the principles of their musical propositions. For further discussion of the monochord, see Cecil Adkins, "The Theory and Practice of the Monochord" (Ph.D. diss., State University of Iowa, 1963).

2. The natural sign ( $\_$ ) is used in this translation to represent *square b*. Ramos is inconsistent in the usage of *square b*, preceding *square b* with the modifier *quadrum* or *quadratum*, notating *square b* sign without the modifier, and even writing *b mi* with a round-shaped *b*.