

MUSICA DISCIPLINA

A YEARBOOK OF THE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Edited by
STANLEY BOORMAN

VOLUME LVII, 2012



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Alan Gampel, <i>Papyrological Evidence of Musical Notation from the 6th to the 8th Centuries</i>	5
Luisa Nardini, "God is Witness": <i>Dictation and the Copying of Chants in Medieval Monasteries</i>	51
Karen Desmond, <i>Texts in Play: The Ars Nova and Its Hypertexts</i>	81
João Pedro d'Alvarenga, <i>A Neglected Anonymous Requiem Mass of the Early Sixteenth Century and Its Possible Context</i>	155
* * *	
<i>Directions to Contributors</i>	191

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PAPYROLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF MUSICAL NOTATION FROM THE 6TH TO THE 8TH CENTURIES*

ALAN GAMPEL

In the 6th century, Isidore, Archbishop of Seville, wrote: “*Nisi enim ab homine memoria teneantur, soni pereunt, quia scribi non possunt.*”¹ A perfunctory reading of this comment, written in the context of the relationship between music and speech, could lead to the conclusion that no musical notation existed between the disappearance of an ancient Greek system in the early 4th century and the appearance of Paleo-Byzantine and Latin neumes in the 9th century.² Indeed, it has generally been assumed that music was transmitted orally during this period. For example, Susan Rankin, in a reference to 9th-century Latin monks, commented that “for the writing down of music, they had no models and had to invent *ab initio* ways to do this.”³ However, evidence will be presented demonstrating the development of a system of musical notation during the 6th–8th centuries in the Hellenized mediterranean region. Additionally, an appendix will provide evidence for the use of modal indications as purely musical guidelines, during this same period.

The primary object of this article is to present a preliminary representative sample of published and unpublished primary sources, to substantiate a theory of an experimental, embryonic musical notation between the 6th and the 8th centuries. At present, these sources are all Greek Christian hymns.⁴ Most have appeared in catalogues and editions of Greek literary papyri,⁵ while some were discovered recently through online digital catalogues. Fourteen of these will be examined below, because they include unidentified indications that arguably have musical functions.

* All dates are A.D. unless otherwise noted.

1. Gerbert, *Scriptores Ecclesiastici*, 20; “Unless the sounds are memorized they will perish because they are not able to be written down.”

2. Boukas and Papataniasiou, “Early Diastematic Notation,” 4, comment on musicological studies that describe a ‘notational vacuum’ between the 4th and 9th centuries.

3. Rankin, “Carolingian Music,” 293.

4. A recent project to compile a comprehensive collection of these hymns unearthed 210 examples on papyri. Cf. Grassien, “Préliminaires.”

5. See Schubart, “*Griechische literarische*”; Pack, *The Greek and Latin*; and van Haelst, *Catalogue*.

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“GOD IS WITNESS”: DICTATION AND THE COPYING OF CHANTS IN MEDIEVAL MONASTERIES*

LUISA NARDINI

Recent manuscript studies have increasingly underlined “the performative and visual dimensions of medieval textuality,” implying that the copying of books, rather than being an eminently literate and visual exercise, entailed the continuous interchange between written and oral processes and the constant alternation between visual and auditory perceptions.¹

Similarly, literary critics and art historians have been gradually interpreting medieval books as performative documents, in that acts of performance could have either preceded or followed the immediate act of copying. Kathryn Starkey, in her study of a thirteenth-century manuscript of Wolfram von Eschnbach’s *Willehalm*, shows that the page layout constitutes the visual transposition of a performance. In fact, the visual program of the manuscript “depicts the narrator as an oral performer:” his “enlarged hands and elongated fingers gesture in speech, and these gestures constitute the focal point of the images.”² This and other similar secular manuscripts of the period—highly experimental in format because of the novelty of their content—were crafted having a performance in mind and as a way to bridge the gap between oral and written modes of literary transmission and their intended audiences.³

* Earlier versions of this essay were presented at the Conference of the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies “The Five Senses in the Middle Ages and Renaissance,” Tempe, AZ, February 2009; the Conference “Thinking Hearing,” The University of Texas, Austin in October 2009; and the Musicology Colloquium at the University of Colorado, Boulder, April 2010. I thank Veit Erlmann, James Grier, and Rebecca Maloy for encouraging me to work on this topic and for their precious suggestions. Stanley Boorman, Guido Olivieri, Marcel Zijlstra, Bibiana Gattozzi, Richard Gyug, and my anonymous readers significantly helped me shaping my ideas and improving my writing. Although working independently and on a different set of sources (the manuscripts of Hildegard of Bingen), Honey Meconi reached conclusions that are very similar to mine in her paper “‘Caveat cantor’: Manuscript differences in Hildegard’s songs” presented at the 19th International Musicological Society Congress, Rome, 2012.

1. See William Robins, “The Study,” 22. Similar positions are also reported in Stephen G. Nichols, ed., *The New Philology*, special issue of *Speculum* 65 (1990). For a critical view on the ‘new philology’ see Alberto Varvaro, “The ‘New Philology’.”

2. Kathryn Starkey, *Reading the Medieval Book*, 2.

3. *Ibid.*, 10–12.

TEXTS IN PLAY: THE ARS NOVA AND ITS HYPERTEXTS

KAREN DESMOND

In 1956, in this journal, Gilbert Reaney, André Gilles and Jean Maillard published three articles on Philippe de Vitry's *Ars nova*. In these articles they published editions of each of the versions of the *Ars nova* found in three manuscripts: Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barberini lat. 307 (*I-Rvat* 307), Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, fonds latin 14741 (*F-Pn* 14741) and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, fonds latin 7378A (*F-Pn* 7378A).¹ In subsequent volumes of *Musica Disciplina*, the same authors published three further articles: a French translation of the *Ars nova*, an edition from what they termed a "newly-discovered source" of the *Ars nova* in the manuscript London, British Library, Additional 21455 (*GB-Lbl* 21455), and an edition of another closely related text, from the manuscript Siena, Biblioteca Comunale L.V.30 (*I-Su* L.V.30).² This set of articles formed the basis of the edition they presented as Volume 8 of the *Corpus scriptorum de musica* (CSM) series, which they titled *Philippi de Vitriaco Ars nova*.³ In all these publications, the name Philippe de Vitry was invariably paired with the *Ars nova* treatise. In so doing, the editors were following a tradition of attribution that began in the fourteenth century

1. Reaney, Gilles and Maillard, "The 'Ars nova'"; Reaney, Gilles, and Maillard, "Ars nova magistri"; and Gilles, "Un témoignage" In what follows, I will refer to the conceptual 'Vitrian' treatise as the *Ars nova*, and the early fourteenth-century musical style or movement as the *Ars Nova* (no italics). I would like to express my appreciation to Margaret Bent, Michael Scott Cuthbert, Sarah Fuller, Barbara Hagg-Huglo, Edward Roesner, Jason Stoessel, Anna Zayaruznaya and the anonymous reviewers for reading my paper and providing many thought-provoking comments and suggestions. The final draft of this paper has also benefited from the discussion following my presentations at the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society in New Orleans in November 2012, and at the Medieval and Renaissance Music Seminar, organized by Margaret Bent, at All Souls College, The University of Oxford, in November 2012. I am also very grateful to the following libraries who very kindly granted permissions for the use of images in this article: Newberry Library, Chicago; Biblioteca Capitulare y Colombina, Seville; and the Biblioteca comunale, Siena. Finally, the present study was completed before the publication of Renata Pieragostini's wonderful article on the Chicago theory manuscript, the implications of which will be considered in my further explorations of the *Ars nova* theory complex (Pieragostini, "Augustinian Networks").

2. Gilles, Maillard and Reaney, "Philippe de Vitry"; Gilles and Reaney, "A New Source"; and Reaney, "A Postscript."

3. *Philippi de Vitriaco Ars nova*.

A NEGLECTED ANONYMOUS REQUIEM MASS OF THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY AND ITS POSSIBLE CONTEXT*

JOÃO PEDRO D'ALVARENGA

Taken together, Grayson Wagstaff's research into the polyphonic Requiem mass and the Office for the Dead in Spain and Latin-America and Rui Cabral Lopes's thesis on the Requiem mass in Portugal offer quite a comprehensive account of the subject,¹ further enriched by Tess Knighton's contribution to the book presented to Bruno Turner in 2011 during the Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference in Barcelona.² There are, however, at least two sixteenth-century Requiem masses in well-known Portuguese manuscripts that have gone unnoticed.³

One of these masses is preserved in Coimbra, Biblioteca Geral da Universidade (P-Cug), MM 34. The source is a choirbook entitled "Livro dos defuntos" ("Book of the dead"), is possibly from Coimbra Cathedral and is dated to the 1570s or 1580s.⁴ The mass setting, on ff. 21v–33r and 35v–37r, is

* Parts of this article were delivered at the International Colloquium "Musical Exchanges, 1100–1650: The Circulation of Early Music in Europe and Overseas in Iberian and Iberian-Related Sources," Universidade Nova, Lisbon, 21–23 June 2012. I acknowledge the assistance of the CESEM (Centre for the Study of Sociology and Aesthetics of Music) at the Universidade Nova, Lisbon, and the FCT (Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology). I thank the staff of the Music Section at the National Library of Portugal, Owen Rees and Ana Sá Carvalho for providing information on some bibliography and sources that otherwise would not have been accessible to me in good time; Tess Knighton for having read an early draft of this article; Juan Ruiz Jiménez and the readers for this journal for their comments and suggestions; and my wife, Isabel, for her support.

1. Wagstaff, "Music for the Dead," and ensuing articles: "Music for the Dead and the Control of Ritual Behavior," "The Two Requiems by Cristóbal de Morales," "Morales's Officium," "Cristóbal de Morales' *Circumdedereunt me*," and "The Big Sombrero;" Lopes, "A Missa *pro Defunctis*" and "Os *cantus firmi*."

2. Knighton, "Music for the Dead."

3. A third, late-sixteenth-century unnoticed anonymous Requiem mass is in the less-known manuscript Braga 965; see the Appendix, no. 6.

4. On Coimbra MM 34, see Rees, *Polyphony in Portugal*, 237–45.