

# A PHANTOM TREATISE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY? THE *ARS NOVA*

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**D**id Philippe de Vitry write a treatise *Ars nova*? The question may surprise, so prominent a landmark is the *Ars nova* in the established landscape of Western music history. Yet it merits attention, not only because the physical being of this landmark seems less rock solid than some other celebrated monuments of music theory, but also, and particularly, because “Philippe de Vitry’s *Ars nova*” is the rallying point for ideas about a critical period of musical development in fourteenth-century France, about the dissemination of new practices from Paris south, beyond the Alps to Italy, and about Philippe de Vitry’s stature and influence as a theorist. A close survey of this landmark bears upon present-day teaching on the historical phenomenon *ars nova* and invites fresh inquiry into how and where the new practice was taught in its own time.

Traditional scholarship equivocates on the genesis of what we conceive to be the treatise *Ars nova*. Confronted with the circumstance that “the preserved versions of his [Philippe de Vitry’s] treatise *Ars nova* are all different,” Gilbert Reaney remarks, “the theoretical work of Vitry must have been imparted mainly by word of mouth, for it is exceptional to find a treatise in such widely differing forms.”<sup>1</sup> Writing of Vitry’s theoretical contributions, Ernest Sanders states, “Evidently the versions [of the *Ars nova*] that survive represent the author’s work only as formulated by several of his disciples.”<sup>2</sup> Yet neither scholar doubts the reality of a treatise written by de Vitry. Sanders writes, “In his capacity as musician Vitry wrote a famous and authoritative treatise on the practice of music, *Ars nova* (c. 1322-3),” and he proceeds to relate the theoretical contributions of de Vitry in minute detail.<sup>3</sup> Commenting on Coussemaker’s liberal attributions, Reaney states, “However, we ought not to go as far as Riemann in considering the *Ars nova* itself as of doubtful authenticity, since we have the clear statements of Coussemaker’s Anon. III and VII, the explicit of Paris 7378A and that of the Vatican codex.”<sup>4</sup> Both men regard the proposition that Philippe de Vitry wrote a treatise *Ars nova* as a certainty rather than an

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<sup>1</sup>*Philippi de Vitriaco Ars nova*, ed. G. Reaney, A. Gilles, J. Maillard, *Corpus Scriptorum de Musica* 8, (1964), p. 79. (All volumes of the *Corpus Scriptorum de Musica* will hereafter be cited as CSM plus the volume number.)

<sup>2</sup>“Vitry, Philippe de.” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 20, (1980), p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>*The New Grove Dictionary*, vol. 20, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup>CSM 8, p. 5. Riemann’s position seems not so much directed at the *Ars nova per se* but is rather a response to contradictions among the many works assigned by Coussemaker to Philippe de Vitry (*Geschichte der Musiktheorie im IX-XIX Jahrhundert*), 1st ed., (1898), p. 224–26, 235).

hypothesis. Their position is shared by the musicological community at large, and has been reinforced by a precise dating of the work to 1321.<sup>5</sup>

I judge it essential to separate the notions of a definitive written treatise on the one hand, and a fluid teaching tradition known through formulations "by disciples" on the other hand. The two are functionally and operatively distinct and engender dissimilar interpretations and conclusions. The choice between the two positions rests upon the validity of what I shall call the *Ars nova* hypothesis, that is, the hypothesis that Philippe de Vitry actually did write a treatise on the new art. My examination of this hypothesis concentrates on four critical sectors:

1. the survival of an integral and intact version of the *Ars nova*;
2. the image of one central document behind those texts currently taken to represent the *Ars nova*;
3. the attributions of the presumed *Ars nova* representatives;
4. fourteenth-century comments on Philippe de Vitry's theoretical ideas and contributions.

### *The Intact Version*

The most recent editors of the *Ars nova* were manifestly guided by the premise that there was such a treatise written by Philippe de Vitry whose substance can be recovered through extant documents, and they framed their judgments on relationships among the manuscript sources accordingly.<sup>6</sup> Yet they do not claim to know an intact copy of the work. The texts they publish in fact comprise two incomplete fragments, one highly abridged digest, and three items that must be completely dissociated from the *Ars nova*. These are listed in Table I and will be briefly characterized in turn.

1. V 307-I. There is no reason to attribute this potpourri of conventional topics (3 genera of music, interval types, proportions, monochord division, hexachords, *falsa musica*) to de Vitry. It circulated independently from what is, in this manuscript, a second part (see end Table I), and the editors of CSM 8 dismiss it from the de Vitry sphere, while citing "practical reasons" and historical circumstance as justification for printing it as "Chapters I-XIV" of their *Ars nova*.<sup>7</sup> In tone and in material concerns, this section ("Part I") differs radically from V 307-II ("Part II"). "Part I" deals largely with matters proper to *musica plana*, while "Part II" takes up topics of *musica mensurabilis*: notation (*figura*) and mensuration. The fusion of these independent parts in V 307 indicates that the exemplar from which this scribe worked was defective.

<sup>5</sup>U. Michels, *Die Musiktraktate des Johannes de Muris*, Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft VIII (1970), p. 55.

<sup>6</sup>CSM 8, esp. pp. 3-4, 52-54, 71-73, 79-80.

<sup>7</sup>CSM 8, p. 3. The information in Table I on the two Vatican manuscripts that also contain this treatise is drawn from *The Theory of Music*, RISM B III:2, p. 100-01 and 112-16 respectively.

TABLE I

Recognized Sources: the *Ars nova*

Siglum	Manuscript	Incipit/Explicit	Published
V 307-I	Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barberini lat. 307 F. 17 - 18'. [Part I]	I: <i>Musica tria sunt genera: mundanum, humanum et instrumentale.</i> E: <i>Quia id quod falsum est, sequitur quod non sit verum, sed hoc non est falsum ergo.</i> (No formal explicit. Continues directly into "Part II")	CSM 8, pp. 13-23; CS III, pp. 13a-18b. (as <i>Ars Nova</i> "Ch. I-XIV")
V 307-II	Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barberini lat. 307. f. 19-20'. [Part II]	I: <i>Sex minimaе possunt poni pro tempore imperfecto</i> (continues from "Part I") E: <i>Explicit ars nova magistri Philippi de Vetri deo gratias amen amen amen.</i>	CSM 8, pp. 23-31; CS III, pp. 18b-22b. (as <i>Ars Nova</i> "Ch. XV-XXIV")
P 7378A	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds latin 7378A, f. 61'-62.	I: <i>Six sunt species principales sive concordantiae discantus</i> E: <i>Explicit ars quevis mensurandi motetos compilata a magistro Philippo de Vitry magistro in musica.</i>	CSM 8, pp. 55-69.
P 14741	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds latin 14741 (olim St. Victor 680), f. 4-5	I: <i>Cum de signis temporis variationem demonstrantibus</i> (No formal incipit. Contiguous with <i>Compendium [Musicae Practicae]</i> of Johannes de Muris) E: <i>Semicirculus autem pro modo perfecto et imperfecto indifferentur ponitur ut in praedictis 2 motetis reperitur.</i> (No formal explicit. Continues into <i>Conclusiones</i> of "Anonymous OP")	CSM 8, pp. 25-29 (top), 32.
Lo 21455	London, British Library, Additional 21455, f. 1-6.	I: <i>Cum de mensurabili musica sit nostra presens intentio</i> E: <i>quia de tono propter b debet fieri semitonus et sic erit falsa musica etc.</i>	CSM 8, pp. 73-78.
Si L.V. 30	Siena, Biblioteca Comunale L.V. 30, f. 129-129'	I: <i>Sub brevissimo compendio Philippo de Vitriaco in musica incipit. Omni desideranti notitiam artis musicae mensurabilis</i> E: <i>Inter perfectas, si brevis bina locetur temporis unius sit prima, secunda dupletur. Explicit Philippus de Vitriaco.</i>	CSM 8, pp. 80-81.
Sources Related to V 307 "Part I" <i>Musica tria sunt genera</i> *			
V 5325	Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, vaticano latino 5325, f. 2'-7'.	I: <i>Musica enim sunt tria genera scilicet mundanum</i> E: <i>Hic incipit specialiter diffinire Unisonus est. . .</i>	
V R.L. 1146	Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Regin. lat. 1146, f. 57-65'	I: <i>Hic incipit ars plane musicae. . . . Consequenter sciendum est quod ipsius musicae tria sunt genera</i> (f. 58) E: <i>Et haec dicta de mutationibus ad presens sufficiunt. Amen.</i>	
P 18514	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds latin 18514, f. 87-94.	I: TRACTATUS DE MUSICA COLLECTUM EX HIS QUAE DICTA SUNT A BOETIO SUPRA ATQUE DECLARATIO MUSICAE PRACTICAE. <i>Scientia est cognitio rei sicut est</i> E: <i>Et dicitur a semi quod est imperfectum et tonus quasi imperfectus tonus ut hic:</i>	

\* None incorporated into CSM 8 edition.

2. V 307-II. This item is a fragment. It begins *in medias res* with a passage on division of imperfect *tempus* by six minims. Elsewhere this subject is paired with and preceded by a passage on perfect *tempus* divided into nine minims, and the present text subsequently signals the omission in

stating that this very matter has been discussed "above."<sup>8</sup> The incomplete nature of this version is betrayed in other such unfulfilled claims as, for example, that the breve and its values, imperfection of the duplex long, and semibreve alteration "according to the old way" have been taken up previously by the author.<sup>9</sup> Just how much initial material has been lost is indeterminate.

3. *P* 14741. This text possesses neither formal incipit nor explicit. It emerges without even a paragraph break from the *Compendium* [*Musicae practicae*] of Johannes de Muris and flows directly on into an academic set of five *conclusiones* on notational problems by an anonymous author.<sup>10</sup> It is even more of a fragment than *V* 307-II, with which it concurs closely on just two sections, the chapter on various combinations of mode and tempus ("XVII") and the chapter on red notation ("XIX"). The other two sections—one on signs for mode and tempus, the other on types of perfect and imperfect tempus—differ substantially from their counterparts in *V* 307-II ("Chs. XVIII" and "XX-XXIV" respectively). The scribe precedes them with the remark that the decrepit state of his source has caused some lacunae: *et cum causa vetustatis aliqua sint dimissa super*.<sup>11</sup> This redaction of *ars nova* teaching is partial and incomplete, and even the scribe recognizes the inadequacy of his exemplar.

4. *P* 7378A is considered by the editors of CSM 8 to represent the *Ars nova* most comprehensively, for it comprehends both an *ars vetus* and an *ars nova*. A. Gilles links it with "un archétype que le 7378A nous permet de nous représenter de façon précise."<sup>12</sup> Yet the text is clearly an abridged digest derived from some more ample and discursive exposition of the material. The writing style is stenographic. Hardly any explanatory comment leavens the blunt succession of factual statements. Musical examples, regularly signaled by *ut hic*, are entirely wanting. Although the author claims to have treated of tempus division by six or nine minims, the present text contains no such passage.<sup>13</sup> The *P* 7378A *Ars nova* is aptly characterized by Gilles as an *aide-mémoire* and stands at least one step away from a more complete forebear that could as well have been oral as written.<sup>14</sup> This text also manifests signs of compilation. A conventional discant manual precedes the notation treatise, and the word *explicit* between the sections

<sup>8</sup>CSM 8, "Ch. XX," p. 29, line 2. For the normal sequence, see the Anonymi III and IV from Coussemaker, *Scriptorium de musica medii aevi* III (hereafter CS III), as reedited respectively in CSM 8, pp. 89–91 and CSM 30, pp. 39–40.

<sup>9</sup>CSM 8, "Ch. XVI," p. 24, l. 2; "Ch. XVII," p. 25, l. 10; "Ch. XX," p. 29, l. 7.

<sup>10</sup>See the manuscript inventory by U. Michels, *Johannis de Muris Notitia artis musicae* et. al., CSM 17 (1972), pp. 23–24.

<sup>11</sup>"And since, due to age, some things are missing above," CSM 8, p. 32, l. 2, corrected according to the manuscript, f. 4'.

<sup>12</sup>"An archetype [of de Vitry's treatise] which the version of 7378A permits us to grasp quite precisely," CSM 8, p. 54.

<sup>13</sup>CSM 8, p. 69, l. 33–35.

<sup>14</sup>CSM 8, p. 52.

on *ars vetus* and *ars nova* suggests that here, also, a grafting has taken place.<sup>15</sup>

5. *Lo* 21455. This treatise resembles *P* 7378A in compact format and in inclusion of *ars vetus* teaching, but it is a distinctly different work, intermingling old and new *artes* in the body of the exposition. None of the hallmarks of the other presumed *Ars nova* representatives is here: not red notes nor classification of perfect and imperfect mode and tempus types, not mensuration signs nor motet citations. Conversely, other topics of general character are included.<sup>16</sup> The affiliations of this succinct pedagogical manual are with Franco of Cologne (in general plan) and Johannes de Muris (in methodology). Definitions of *longa erecta* and *brevis erecta* associate it also with the *Regulae* of Robert de Handlo and the treatise known as Anonymous "Theodoricus de Campo [Theodonus de Capua]." <sup>17</sup> It cannot even be considered a witness to the de Vitrian teaching tradition, much less a possible version of the *Ars nova*.

6. *Si*. L.V. 30. Although title and explicit affirm a direct line to Philippe de Vitry, the exaggerated brevity of this compendium marks it as a peripheral source for de Vitry's thought. Far from adhering to *V* 307-II, *P* 14741, and *P* 7378A, this is the most curtailed and summary version of a tract beginning *Omni desideranti notitiam* which exists in two more ample versions, one of which was published by Coussemaker as the *Ars perfecta* of Philippe de Vitry.<sup>18</sup> Both other versions mention de Vitry in the third person, making it clear that they stand at least one remove from him (despite the direct attribution in the Chicago copy).<sup>19</sup> Correspondences between the more expansive versions of *Omni desideranti* and the *Libellus cantus mensurabilis* commonly attributed to Johannes de Muris place the former (and with them the Siena digest) at a fairly late stage in the development of fourteenth-century French notation.

From the foregoing, it appears plainly that none of the texts traditionally regarded as representative of the *Ars nova* can be considered a complete and intact version of that treatise. It follows, then, that no exemplar of the *Ars nova* is known at present.

<sup>15</sup>CSM 8, p. 63, l. 17. The initial segment on discant concords is closely related to an independent counterpoint handbook copied on folios 24-24' of *V* 307 (now MS 135/5 in the Archiv des Benediktinerstiftes, Sankt Paul [Kärnten]) and ascribed (improbably) to Johannes de Muris. On the relationship between the two, see K.-J. Sachs, *Der Contrapunctus im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft XIII (1974), pp. 69-70.

<sup>16</sup>The treatise begins with a *Regula de monochordo* drawn (without ascription) from Guido of Arezzo's *Micrologus*, and concludes with brief paragraphs on the eight concords and on *falsa musica*, items which the scribe clearly considered to be integral parts of the whole.

<sup>17</sup>For the Handlo, which is dated 1326 in the sole source, see CS I, p. 383-84. For Anon. "ThC", see the recent edition of C. Sweeney, CSM 13 (1971), pp. 32-33. I shall cite this anonymous as Anon. CSM 13.

<sup>18</sup>See Seville, Biblioteca Capitulare y Colombina 5-2-25, f. 63-64', edited by H. Anglès, "Dos Tractats Medievals de Música Figurada," *Festschrift für Johannes Wolf* (1929), pp. 6-10; and Chicago, Newberry Library, Ms. 54.1, f. 52'-56', edited CS III, pp. 28-35.

<sup>19</sup>CS III, p. 28; "Dos Tractats," p. 6. Quoted below, note 34.

### The Central Document

If no integral representative of the work survives, the hypothesis that Philippe de Vitry did write an *Ars nova* must rely on circumstantial evidence. The conventional assumption holds that the substance of his treatise is preserved in the surviving fragments and derivatives. If these indeed spring from a written core document, then they should cast a coherent image of the lost original. Specifically, they should concur on essential points of doctrine, in choice and order of subjects, and in technical terminology. Since the two fragments *V* 307-II and *P* 14741 are the most fully realized in an expository sense, they can be expected to exhibit maximum consanguinity, to project congruent images of a common source. Yet significant differences emerge from even a cursory comparison of the two (See Table II).<sup>20</sup>

Leaving aside fortuitous lacunae, the order of topics is not the same in both texts. Using the longer fragment, *V* 307-II, as the standard for comparison, and labelling successive topics alphabetically, *P* 14741 exhibits a divergent ordering: (D)(F) (G-H) (E). The explanation of red notation directly follows the passage on combinations of perfect and imperfect mode and tempus. Mensuration signs close the work, and only two of those mentioned in *V* 307-II are proposed. Whereas in *V* 307-II perfect and imperfect tempus types are treated quite separately, in *P* 14741 they are introduced jointly under a single topic sentence, and what the editors parse as five separate "chapters" in the former coheres in two connected paragraphs in the latter.<sup>21</sup>

Only in two sections, those on varieties of mode and tempus and on red notes (D and F in Table II) are the two texts close enough to support a claim that they might ultimately derive from a common source (and even in these sections divergencies in detail indicate different branches of any hypothetical stemma). Telling differences in language and expression bespeak separate origins for the other related sections (E G H in Table II). In G and H the Vatican writer speaks directly of *tempus perfectum* and *tempus imperfectum* types, while the *P* 14741 theorist speaks of the *figuratio*, *prolatio* or *significatio* of the basic *tempus* types. This locution puts the stress on the manner of performance or notation rather than on the *tempus* category in the abstract.<sup>22</sup> The two texts observe opposite internal orderings, *V* 307-II proceeding from the least to the most subdivided (*minimum*, *medium*, *maximum*), *P* 14741 from the most to the least (*major*, *minor*, *minima*). They deviate also on the nomenclature of the various

<sup>20</sup>In CSM 8, the sections of *P* 14741 are printed out-of-order so as to align them with the course of *V* 307-II, but an attentive reading of the critical notes will clarify the sequence proper to the Paris manuscript.

<sup>21</sup>CSM 8, p. 32, l. 2.

<sup>22</sup>Compare CSM 8, pp. 29–31 with p. 32, l. 2–4, 7. As a result of this locution, *P* 14741 always uses the feminine form of the adjective *major* (*prolatio*), *V* 307-II the neuter *maius* (*tempus*). This difference has also been noticed by R. Bockholdt, "Semibrevis minima und Prolatio temporis Zur Entstehung der Mensuraltheorie der Ars Nova," *Die Musikforschung* XVI (1963), 20.

TABLE II  
Order of Topics in *Ars nova* Sources

V 307-II	P 14741	P 7378A
Ⓐ Imperfect Tempus subdivided by 6 minims	-----	-----
Ⓑ Types of Semibreve ----- -----	----- -----	Ⓑ ⓧ  Imperfection [ <i>a parte remotiori</i> ]: L or DL by SB or m, B by m. Ⓨ Syncopation
Ⓒ Signs for Perfect and Imperfect Tempus ○ or 3 short lines C or 2 short lines	-----	Ⓒ
Ⓓ Varieties of Mode and Tempus: Perfect and Imperfect	-----	Ⓓ
Ⓔ Signs for Perfect and Imperfect Mode, Perfect Mode and Perfect Tempus, Imperfect Mode and Imperfect Tempus. ☐ = [Ⓜ] €	----- (see below)	-----
Ⓕ Red Notes	Ⓕ	Ⓕ
Ⓖ 3 Types of Perfect Tempus: minimum, medium, maius	Ⓖ "G-H" Types of Perfect and Imperfect Tempus: P: Maior, minor, minima prolatio  I: maior, minor prolatio	Ⓖ 3 Types of Perfect Tempus: minimum, medium, maius
Ⓖ 2 Types of Imperfect Tempus: minimum, maius	Ⓖ "E" Signs for Perfect Mode and Tempus, Imperfect Mode and Tempus Ⓜ €	Ⓖ 2 Types of Imperfect Tempus: minimum, maius

subspecies. *V* 307-II uses the terms *medium tempus perfectum* and *minimum tempus imperfectum*, while *P* 14741 labels both categories *minor*. The Vatican text cites no specific examples in this section, whereas the Paris one names individual motets to illustrate each type of *prolatio*.

Although these two fragments certainly stem from the same teaching sphere, they cannot be said as a whole to reflect a common written source. Just after the passage on red notation the scribe of *P* 14741 does deplore the state of his source, charging lacunae to its venerable age (*vetustas*), as

has already been mentioned. That he could supply some gaps in a way that accords generally with the *V 307-II* text argues for a common body of knowledge behind the two writings. In its original state, the defective source behind *P 14741* might possibly have resembled the Vatican fragment more closely than does the actual *P 14741*, but there is no way to test that insubstantial possibility.

Although the abridged digest *P 7378A* differs in nature from the discursive texts *V 307-II* and *P 14741*, it might, as the most comprehensive of the presumed versions, be expected to provide insight on the central document. Could *P 7378A* be derived from a source treatise of which *V 307-II* is the largest surviving segment? Close comparison between the two does not show *P 7378A* to be an orderly condensation of *V 307-II*. As can be seen from Table II (cols. 1 and 3), *P 7378A* follows the general order of *V 307-II*, but lacks topics ④ and ⑤ while including two subjects not in *V 307-II*, imperfection by non-adjacent note values (*a parte remotiori*), and syncopation (ⓧ and Ⓨ in Table II). This material occurs between the passages on semibreve types and on signs for perfect and imperfect tempus and cannot be explained as amplification of either.<sup>23</sup> (Remote imperfection, incidentally, is one of the cardinal points of Johannes de Muris' *Notitia artis musicae*.) In the section on red notes, *P 7378A* includes some of the examples mentioned in *V 307-II* (4 out of 10), but cites them in different order (2, 9, 7, 5 in relation to the Vatican text).<sup>24</sup> *P 7378A* also deviates from the Vatican fragment in juxtaposing topics ① and ②, a feature it shares with *P 14741*.

The impression that *P 7378A* has no direct filiation with *V 307-II* is confirmed by examination of the corresponding sections on semibreves (Table III). For the sake of comparison, and to provide more specific evidence on its separateness, the relevant portion of *Lo 21455* is also summarized in Table III.

Definition and nomenclature of temporal values smaller than the breve was central to the new practice. On so consequential a matter, treatises emanating from a codified written source or established tradition ought to concur. Yet *V 307-II* and *P 7378A* diverge so patently on terminology and typology of semibreves as to warrant Jacques of Liège's censuring remarks on modern dissent about such matters.<sup>25</sup> The two texts do not even agree on the name for the basic semibreve, that which is one-third of a breve in the old practice. *V 307-II* calls this semibreve *recta et vera*; *P 7378A* calls it *perfecta* and subsequently relates it to *prolatio perfecta*. The London handbook, *Lo 21455* calls it *minor* and assigns it the value of one tempus,

<sup>23</sup>Neither *V 307-II* nor *P 14741* uses the term syncopation, but both allude to the phenomenon under the topic of red notation (CSM 8, p. 28, l. 6 and p. 65, l. 59–63). Section ① in both fragments alludes to imperfection of the *duplex longa* by 1 or 2 breves or minims (CSM 8, p. 25, l. 8–11), but this passage does not match the remarks on imperfection by "non-adjacent" figures in *P 7378A* and occurs at a later point in the exposition.

<sup>24</sup>Compare CSM 8, pp. 28–29, "Ch. XIX", l. 2–12 with p. 69, l. 22–33.

<sup>25</sup>*Speculum musicae*, Book VII, ed. R. Bragard, CSM III:7, (1973), "Ch. XXIII," pp. 51–52, and "Ch. XXXIII," p. 64, l. 1.



TABLE III

Semibreve Classification in *Ars nova* Treatises

V 307-II (CSM 8, pp. 23-24)	P 7378A (CSM 8, pp. 63, 65)	Lo 21455 (CSM 8, pp. 75-76)
SB signata -- general term for any with added stem		
major SB } SB altera } = 6m	perfecta'', i.e. when B = 3 SB	major SB } SB altera } = 2 minor SB or 2 Tempora
semimajor SB = 5m or 4m		
recta et vera SB = 3m	SB perfecta = 3m	minor SB = 1 Tempus or 1:3 B or 3m
minor SB = 2m	SB imperfecta [= 2m]	minor perfecta [= 3m]
altera minima = 2m ''in gradu ternario''	altera minima = 2m ''in majori'' [i.e. when SB = 3m]	minor imperfecta [= 2m]
minima [SB] = 1m	minima [SB] = 2 sm ''si dici possent semiminime'' [◆]	altera minima = [= 2m] ''in majori prolatione''
	semiminima = sm [1/2 m] [◆]	minima [SB = 1m] ◆
semiminima = 1/2 m		semiminima = 1/2 m ◆ or ◆
alternate names for m and sm:		
semiminor [SB] = 1m	semiminor [SB] = 1m	
minima [SB] = 1/2 m	minima [SB] = sm	
	SBs ''a parte superiori et inferiori simul caudantur'' = 2m [◆]	SB ''tractum a sinistra parte ab angulo obtuso praecedentem'' ◆ (◆ or ◆ ?)*
SB = semibreve		
m = minim		
sm = semiminim		

\* The figure in the edition, ◆, which presumably reflects the source, does not conform to the textual description *per tractum a sinistra parte ab angulo obtuso*: ◆, ◆. In this regard, note Jacques of Liège's complaints about stems added to the sides and the middles of semibreves (*Speculum musicae* Book VII, ed. R. Bragard, CSM 3:7 (1973), p. 52 line 8).

an extraordinary usurpation of the traditional status of the breve. In V 307-II a semibreve worth two minims is labelled *minor*, in P 7378A a *semibrevis imperfecta*. The Vatican text defines the minim as itself, an indivisible unit, while P 7378A defines it in terms of the semiminim, with the qualification ''if one can speak of semiminims.'' <sup>26</sup> Altered minims are mentioned in both texts but the situation in which they occur is called *in gradu ternario* in V 307-II, *in majori [prolatione]* in P 7378A. The Vatican fragment alone uses the umbrella term *semibrevis signata* and includes in its hierarchy a semibreve worth four or five minims called *semimajor*. The Paris digest, for its part, posits a semibreve with both ascending and descending stems, a figure named elsewhere the *dragma* or *fusiel*. <sup>27</sup> The semibreve array and nomenclature proffered in the London compendium relates no more closely to V 307-II or to P 7378A than they to each other.

<sup>26</sup>CSM 8, p. 63, l. 23-24. This qualification reflects the contemporary semantic argument over whether there can be a note value smaller than the ''minimum,'' i.e. less than what is least. This controversy evidently underlies the alternate names for minim and semiminim mentioned in V 307-II and P 7378A. For a sanc viewpoint on the matter, see Anonymous *De musica mensurabili* (Anon. CSM 13), CSM 13, pp. 51-54.

<sup>27</sup>See CS III Anon III, CSM 8, p. 88 and Anon. CSM 13, p. 43.

The composite of the two texts *V 307-II* and *P 7378A* forms an image so refracted and elusive that it is impossible to discern a single source document behind them. Standard editorial practice would invoke scribal intervention, modernizing emendation, or source corruption to explain such divergencies, but such explanations presuppose an authoritative reference—a principal source or group of sources—against which deviations can be assessed. In the present case, no such referential nucleus exists, for, as noted above, none of the presumed *Ars nova* versions can be considered an integral copy of the postulated original. The discrepancies in “versions” therefore must be understood as intrinsic to the situation, not incidental or accidental to it. There is no objective means of ascertaining, for example, which manner of designating semibreve types—that in *V 307-II* or that in *P 7378A*—represents the true tradition and which the scribal intervention. Nor is it possible to determine whether the passages on non-adjacent imperfection and syncopation are to be regarded as interpolations in *P 7378A* or omissions from *V 307-II*. Simply on classic textual grounds, the *Ars nova* hypothesis founders for want of evidence. Where is the text?

Parenthetically, it may be remarked that the untoward transmission situation for the *Ars nova* stands in sharp contrast to that for the early works of Johannes de Muris on modern music theory. Both the *Notitia artis musicae* (1321) and the *Compendium* (c. 1322?) based on its second book, *Practica musica*, survive complete in at least five sources.<sup>28</sup> Even the fragments correspond with distinct segments of the whole and cohere to a stable written tradition. Despite variants in detail, it is possible to construct a conventional source stemma for each work and to edit a standardized text that conforms with normal canons of reliability. These two treatises conform to the model of an integral written source from which copies were generated, whereas the supposed *Ars nova* representatives do not coalesce about any evident written nucleus.

### *The Attributions*

To question de Vitry's authorship of a treatise on such textual grounds is to challenge the attributions that have long been accepted. It is therefore necessary to consider the status of the two attributions that enter into consideration, those of *V 307-II* and *P 7378A*, both contained in the explicits to the texts (See Table I).<sup>29</sup> By way of setting a context, it should be remarked that questionable attributions are legion among fourteenth-century writings on music, and that Johannes de Muris and Philippe de Vitry to-

<sup>28</sup>For a complete conspectus of the source situation, see U. Michels, *Johannis de Muris Notitia artis musicae et Compendium musicae practicae*, CSM 17 (1972), pp. 37–42b, 115–17. See also U. Michels, *Die Musiktraktate des Johannes de Muris*, Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft VIII (1970).

<sup>29</sup>On the Siena attribution, see above p. 27.

gether are the prime beneficiaries of the scribal legacies.<sup>30</sup> Besides this, the two ascriptions at hand are contradictory, not so much because they confer different titles upon the treatise (that may simply indicate a relaxed fourteenth-century attitude toward titles), but because the texts diverge enough in substance that if one is the de Vitry work, the other cannot be (as argued above).<sup>31</sup>

The explicit of V 307-II, the one perpetuated by Coussemaker, occurs in a source considerably removed in time and place from Philippe de Vitry's known sphere of activity. It was set down by an Italian scribe *circa* 1400.<sup>32</sup> That he misspells de Vitry's name (as Vetri) indicates that this scribe had no direct knowledge of such a person and either misread his source or was unable to correct it. The attribution as it stands is faulty insofar as it applies to all the material from *Musica tria sunt genera* through the chapters on *ars nova* practices, whereas only the last portion of the text plausibly transmits the teaching of de Vitry. This also suggests that the scribe merely reproduced his exemplar and was not writing from personal knowledge. The very nature of the title—which elsewhere serves as the common term for the new practice<sup>33</sup>—cannot but kindle the suspicion that some enterprising scribe converted a third-person reference to de Vitry in the missing first section into a positive ascription, as happened with the *Omni desideranti* manual.<sup>34</sup> In any event, the Italian scribe seems to have copied mechanically, and it is unclear whether whoever first wrote the explicit based it on secure grounds of authorship or not.

The ascription in P 7378A seems more worthy of credibility on the basis of geographical and chronological proximity to de Vitry's home ground. The manuscript is apparently Parisian in origin and solidly anchored within

<sup>30</sup>The de Muris attributions have been scrutinized by U. Michels, who ends up crediting him with five texts (*Die Musiktraktate*, cited note 28). L. Gushee characterizes evidence for two of these as "relatively weak" ("Jehan des Murs," *The New Grove Dictionary*, vol. 9, (1980), p. 588b). Attributions to Philippe de Vitry have not been studied in detail, but in mentioning only *The Ars Nova*, H. Besseler ("Vitry, Philippe de," *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 13, [1966], col. 1844) and E. Sanders (*The New Grove*, vol. 20, p. 23) tacitly reject the other treatises assigned to him in various manuscripts. K.-J. Sachs has commented on the attributions of *contrapunctus* treatises to Philippe de Vitry (*Der Contrapunctus*, pp. 170–79).

<sup>31</sup>The title is *Ars nova* in V 307-II, *Ars quevis mensurandi motetos* in P 7378A. Max Haas has stressed the difference in title as an element in his reevaluation of the *ars vetus/ars nova* relationship ("Studien zur mittelalterlichen Musiklehre I", *Forum Musicologicum* III, pp. 386–88).

<sup>32</sup>The body of the manuscript is dated late fourteenth century in *The Theory of Music*, RISM B III:2, ed. P. Fischer, p. 102; c. 1400–1432 in CSM 8, p. 10; and c. 1400 in C. Sweeney's introduction to *De musica mensurabili*, CSM 13, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup>See, for example, the introductory sentences of CS III Anon III (CSM 8, p. 84) and CS III Anon IV (CSM 30, p. 33), quoted below, p. 34.

<sup>34</sup>In both the Seville and the Chicago manuscripts (citations in note 18), the manual begins with a reference to *novitatemque [notitiam artis musicae mensurabilis] per Philippum in majori parte subtiliter invenisse*. In the Chicago manuscript this becomes amplified into an attribution: *Explicit ars perfecta in Musica Magistri Philippoti [sic] de Vitriaco*. The opening third-person reference is lacking in the Siena compendium, but an attribution to de Vitry persists in both title and explicit (See Table I). M. Haas characterizes the title *Ars nova* as a *musikwissenschaftliche Zutat* ("Die Musiklehre im 13. Jahrhundert von Johannes de Garlandia bis Franco," *Geschichte der Musiktheorie*, vol. 5, p. 91, note 1.

the fourteenth-century.<sup>35</sup> Yet there are problems in taking the explicit as evidence for de Vitry's authorship of a treatise. Besides the stylistic considerations that led earlier to rejection of this text as a possible direct version of the *Ars nova*—the clipped, spare writing, the tone of a student's economical notes—there is the composite nature of the text, which combines in unbroken continuity a conventional discant tract and a treatise on old and new mensural practices (or treatises, if we believe the explicit between the sections on the *ars vetus* and the *nova*).<sup>36</sup> Lack of any connective tissue between the discant material and the notation manual indicates some second-hand conjoining of separate units. The final explicit offers a solution in identifying this *ars quevis mensurandi motetos* as *compilata a magistro Philippo de Vitry*. If this is read as "compiled from" rather than "compiled by" and interpreted as a reference to the source of the teaching rather than a statement on authorship, it becomes possible to respect the accuracy of the explicit and at the same time to acknowledge characteristics of the text that make it more plausibly a report of de Vitry's teaching than a work of his hand. Neither of the attributions, then, provides convincing support for the *Ars nova* hypothesis, while both are compatible with the notion of a teaching tradition centered about de Vitry.

### *The Fourteenth-Century Reports*

Philippe de Vitry's reputation as author of an *Ars nova* does not rest solely on writings thought to be his but is founded also on references from fourteenth-century authors who cite him as an authority or credit him with seminal doctrines. These reports certainly testify to de Vitry's prestige as a fount of *ars nova* invention, but do they prove his authorship of a treatise as Reaney claims?<sup>37</sup> An attentive reading of the references casts doubt upon that claim. Anonymous III's statement *de nova arte quam Philippus de Vitriaco nuper invenit dicam hoc modo* can be understood roughly as "this is my account of the new art (practice) Philippe de Vitry recently discovered."<sup>38</sup> The author credits de Vitry with inventing, investigating, instigating new practices, but does not say that he codified them in writing. The *ars vetus* component of this handbook is cut short by an exhortation to consult magister Franco, but no similar short-cut is apparently available for the new teaching.<sup>39</sup> Reference to a treatise by de Vitry would be particularly welcome for the remark on red notation, which is disappointingly

<sup>35</sup>L. Gushee describes it as "almost certainly the oldest collection—in date of copying—of so-called 'Ars Nova' music theory." ("New Sources for the Biography of Johannes de Muris," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXII (1969), 6.

<sup>36</sup>See note 15 above.

<sup>37</sup>CSM 8, p. 5, quoted above, p. 23.

<sup>38</sup>CSM 8, p. 85, l. 2. As anyone familiar with early fourteenth-century writings on music rudiments will be aware, the phrase *ars nova* is not a specific title (unless otherwise qualified) but is a general term for contemporary new practices. This is plain, for example, in the continuation of Anon III, in Book VII of the *Speculum musicae* (CSM 3:7) and elsewhere. Music treatises are sometimes cited as *ars* (this writer so identifies Franco's work), but the context precludes such a reading here.

<sup>39</sup>*Vide residuum in arte Magistri Franconis* (CSM 8, p. 84).

cursory in nature, especially in comparison with the extended explication in V 307-II.<sup>40</sup>

Reaney's appeal to CS III Anonymous VII is complicated by the fact that this Anonymous is undoubtedly a composite of two different treatises, both incomplete.<sup>41</sup> Anonymous VIIa is an Italian who attributes doctrine on the three semibreve types found in *senaria* and *nonaria* mensurations to Master Philip of Paris. *Tres sunt semibreves, secundum magistrum Philip-pum Parisiensem, per quas mensura de senaria et nonaria discernitur, scilicet major. . . minor. . . minima.*<sup>42</sup> The major semibreve is worth three minims, the minor two. Whatever the source of this semibreve classification, it does not come from any of the presumed *Ars nova* representatives, for the major semibreve of V 307-II (the only one to use the term) is an altered semibreve worth six minims or two minor semibreves (See Table III). Moreover, the linkage with specifically Italian mensurations precludes any direct derivation from a treatise by de Vitry.<sup>43</sup> Anon VIIa probably took refuge in French authority because his explanation of semibreve types differs from that of the leading Italian theorist of the early Trecento, Marchettus of Padua. The association of a Parisian Philippe with distinctions between mensurations and with designations for short temporal values is compatible with a teaching tradition, but in no way authenticates any of the *Ars nova* representatives.

Owing to the radically truncated state of the treatise, the context of Anonymous VIIb's report on de Vitry cannot be fully reconstructed. Nevertheless, enough remains to assess the relationship of his statement to the presumed *Ars nova* representatives. After what was probably an exposition of established Franconian doctrine, the author plunges into an account of the new art as defined (he claims) by Philippe de Vitry:

Item dominus et magister Philippus de Vitriaco ad confirmandum et declarandum artem predictam, in arte nova ordinavit quod est modus et tempus et que sunt

<sup>40</sup>See CSM 8, p. 93. Note that the editor has moved this passage from its internal position to the end of the treatise.

<sup>41</sup>See G. Reaney, "Introduction" to *De diversis maneriebus in musica mensurabili*, CSM 30 (1982), p. 45. I will cite the two works as Anonymous VIIa (CSM 30, pp. 51–62; CS III, pp. 404a–408a through the third musical example) and Anonymous VIIb (CS III, pp. 408a after the musical examples-408b). K. von Fischer places Anonymous VII c. 1400 ("Zur Entwicklung der italienischen Trecento-Notation," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* XVI (1959), p. 98. F.A. Gallo puts Anon VIIa c. 1330–40 on account of the reference to de Vitry and the orientation toward ideas contrary to those of Marchettus (*La Teoria della notazione in Italia dalla fine del XIII all'inizio del XV secolo*, *Antiquae Musicae Italicae Subsidia Teorica*, [1966], p. 56).

<sup>42</sup>"According to Master Philip of Paris, there are three semibreves by which *senaria* and *nonaria* mensurations are discerned, i.e. major . . . minor . . . and minima." CSM 30, p. 55.

<sup>43</sup>This reference very likely stems from teaching on perfect tempus divided into nine minims and imperfect tempus divided by six minims associated with de Vitry, but it has passed through an Italian filter.

prolationes. Dicit predictus quod due sunt prolationes, scilicet major et minor. Iste due prolationes possunt dividi in quatuor.<sup>44</sup>

The four divisions, summarized twice, in consecutive lists, are as follows:<sup>45</sup>

First	L = 3B, B = 3SB, SB = 3m (3m divisible into 4 unequal parts)	1° major modus, perfect tempus 2° perfect mode, perfect tempus, major prolation
Second	[L = 2B], B = 3SB, SB = 2m (6m divisible into 12 unequal parts)	1° _____ 2° imperfect mode, perfect tempus, minor prolation
Third	[L = 3B], B = 2SB, SB = 3m (minims divisible into 4 unequal parts)	1° perfect mode, imperfect tempus 2° perfect mode, imperfect tempus, major prolation
Fourth	[L = 2B], B = 2SB, SB = 2m	1° imperfect mode, imperfect tempus, minor prolation 2° _____

Neither the language nor the four-fold mensural classification outlined here conforms with the supposed *Ars nova* representatives, for they define five types of tempus, three of tempus perfectum and two of tempus imperfectum (See Table II) and do not posit prolation as a separate relational level. The combinations of mode and tempus they enumerate also add up to five categories, the last of which has a tempus partly perfect and partly imperfect.<sup>46</sup> Whatever the merits of Anon VIIb's claim, the four-fold mensuration system he expounds cannot have been drawn from any of the *Ars nova* representatives known at present, and thus he in no way substantiates de Vitry's authorship of those texts. Despite the explicit invocation of de Vitry's name, this mensuration scheme more likely derives from Johannes de Muris who, in the *Compendium [Practicae musicae]*, already teaches a

<sup>44</sup>Likewise, the eminent master Philippe de Vitry, to confirm and clarify the art just explained [i.e. Franconian doctrine, the *ars vetus*], arranged in a new art the nature of mode and tempus and the prolationes. This man says there are two prolationes, major and minor. These two prolationes can be divided into four." CS III, p. 408 a-b.

<sup>45</sup>The author reviews "the four prolationes" twice in slightly different language, in each case omitting one of the four. The entries on the right are numbered according to whether they occur in the first or second list.

<sup>46</sup>On types of tempus, see CSM 8, pp. 29-31, 32, 69; on combinations of perfect and imperfect mode and tempus, CSM 8, pp. 25-27, 67/69. Petrus dictus palma ociosa (1336) is credited with the first technical use of *prolatio* to designate the semibreve-minim relationship, see W. Frobenius, "Prolatio II" in *Handwörterbuch der Musikalischen Terminologie* (1972), p. 4.

four-fold classification of notational figures that is a precursor to the mature, “classic” fourteenth-century mensuration system outlined in the *Libellus cantus mensurabilis*.

A third supposed witness to the *Ars nova* is Jacques of Liège. “Writing no later than about 1330, he knows all about the semiminim and the various names for notes smaller than the semibreve mentioned by Vitry. He also knows all the mensuration signs mentioned by Vitry in Chapter XVIII of the *Ars nova*.”<sup>48</sup> Both the Paris connections of Jacques of Liège and his familiarity with the music and ideas of the moderns—evident in the detail and the passion of his writing in the *Speculum musicae* Book VII—target him as a formidable source of information.<sup>49</sup> An unbiased reading of his principal discussions of “short notes” and of the new mensuration signs does not, however, point specifically to any one document or individual. Indeed, a central complaint is the plurality of opinion on such matters among the moderns, the lack of standardized conventions, authoritative systems.

Fuit enim inter Modernos de semibrevis formatione vel figuracione magna dis-sentio.

Multum laborant [moderni] in ipsarum [semibreuium] distinctione, significatione, valore, nominatione.<sup>50</sup>

Although teaching about semibreves and signs for mode and tempus compatible with the *Ars nova* representatives is found in *Speculum musicae* Book VII, it occurs intermixed with many ideas originating elsewhere and

<sup>47</sup>In the *Compendium, notulae* are classified as perfectly perfect, perfectly imperfect, imperfectly perfect, and imperfectly imperfect (CSM 17, pp. 94–95). Jacques of Liège transforms this classification for notation into a classification of *discantus*, i.e. compositions (*Speculum Musicae*, Book VII, CSM 3:7, p. 25). For the system as expounded in the *Libellus* (commonly attached to Johannes de Muris, but perhaps anonymous), see CS III, p. 47a. Anonymous VIIb may well have been inspired by the *Libellus* or some similar text. The author of *Les regles de la Second Retorique* (between 1411-1432) who credits de Vitry with finding *les iij prolacions* doubtless drew from the same tradition as Anonymous VIIb (ed. E. Langlois, *Recueil d'Arts de Seconde Rhétorique* (1902), p. 12). The “Catalan Anonymous” (reference in Table IV) associates the four prolations with “modern masters” collectively.

<sup>48</sup>G. Reaney, CSM 8, p. 5. Book VII of the *Speculum musicae* has been placed by U. Michels between summer 1323 and 1324/1325 (*Die Musiktraktate*, pp. 50–55).

<sup>49</sup>On the Paris association, see R. Bragard, “Le Speculum Musicae du Compilateur Jacques de Liège II,” *Musica Disciplina* VIII (1954), [1]–3. On Jacques of Liège’s first-hand acquaintance with the moderns, note especially his appreciation of the musicianship of certain contemporary cantors and discantors who employ a new mode of singing (CSM 3:7, “Ch. VIII”, 1. 13, pp. 23–24), and his report of a special musical gathering (CSM 3:7, “Ch. XLVIII”, 1. 9–10, p. 95).

<sup>50</sup>“Indeed, among the moderns there was great dissension on the form or notation of the semibreve. (CSM 3:7, “Ch. XXIII”, p. 51)

“They [the moderns] labor much over distinctions among semibreves and their differences, notation, value and nomenclature.” (CSM 3:7, “Ch. XXXIII”, p. 64).

is reported impersonally.<sup>51</sup> In the sections about semibreves and mensuration signs so many differing opinions are proffered, jumbled as though pieced together from personal recollections and experiences, that no plausible conclusions about written sources can be reached. Jacques of Liège certainly knew of no magisterial figure who had codified such matters for the moderns.

A definite chronological relationship between *Speculum musicae* Book VII and the *Ars nova* has been argued by Ulrich Michels on the basis of two brief "quotes" in the *Speculum*.<sup>52</sup> Exact quotations would help to prove the existence of a written document, but in fact both passages in question are paraphrases relative to the extant *Ars nova* representatives. The compact statement on discant typology has the tone of a succinct and memorable oral formulation, and Jacques of Liège attributes it to "the moderns" at large.<sup>53</sup> The comment on Franco, being more complex, more plausibly stems from a written source and is attached to an individual ("a certain modern doctor").<sup>54</sup> Still, the degree of paraphrase is such that Jacques of Liège could well be recalling a spoken assertion. Though testifying close familiarity with de Vitrian formulations, these sentences could as well spring from an oral as a written expression of ideas. Suggestive as they are, they do not weigh heavily enough to secure the *Ars nova* hypothesis.

The relationship between the presumed *Ars nova* representatives and *Speculum musicae* Book VII seems the more tangential when compared with that between Book VII and the *Notitia artis musicae* and the *Compendium* of Johannes de Muris. Jacques of Liège quotes extensively and exactly from both these works, some of his chapters full-blown commen-

<sup>51</sup>The three different series of semibreve names, for example, relate variously to *P* 7378A, Anon VIIa and the *Notitia artis musicae* (CSM 3:7, "Ch. XXIII," pp. 51–52). Jacques of Liège designates none of "the moderns" by name. The most recent personality he identifies is Petrus de Cruce, *ille valens cantor. . . qui tot pulchros et bonos cantus composuit mensurabilis* (CSM 3:7, p. 36, l. 7). Philippe de Vitry is never named in the *Speculum musicae*. A "Philippe" in Book VI noticed by U. Michels on the basis of the Coussemaker edition (*Die Musiktraktate*, p. 51, note 133) has been corrected to *Philosophum* in the Bragard edition (CSM 3:6, p. 89).

<sup>52</sup>*Die Musiktraktate*, p. 51 and note 133.

<sup>53</sup>*Speculum*: Item, secundum Modernos, sunt quidam discantus perfecti modo et tempore, alii imperfecti modo et tempore, alii imperfecti modo et non tempore, alii e converso, alii partim perfecti et partim imperfecti, quam modo tam tempore. (CSM 3:7, p. 25)

*V* 307-II: Sunt alii cantus perfecti de modo et tempore, alii imperfecti, alii perfecti de modo et non de tempore, alii e contra, alii partim perfecti et alii partim imperfecti tam de modo quam de tempore. (CSM 8, p. 25)

*P* 7378A: Sciendum igitur quod sunt aliqui cantus perfecti modo et tempore, alii imperfecti, alii modo et non tempore, alii tempore et non modo, alii partim perfecti et partim imperfecti tam modo quam tempore. (CSM 8, p. 67, l. 2–5).

<sup>54</sup>*Speculum*: Antiqui tempus perfectum non esse divisibile in plures semibreves quam tres, intelligunt de cita mensuratione, et hoc approbat quidem modernus doctor de Francone. Dicit enim quod tempus minimum posuit Franco cum brevis in tres semibreves dividitur adeo strictas ut ulterius sint indivisibiles. (CSM 3:7, p. 35)

*V* 307-II: Minimum tempus posuit Franco. Unde notandum est secundum Magistrum Franconem, et sicut visum est superius, [quod] minimum tempus non est nisi tres continens semibreves, quae quidem adeo sunt strictae quod amplius dividi non possunt, nisi per semiminimas dividantur. (CSM 8, p. 29)

The discordant tag in *V* 307-II, "unless it [the 3-semibreve tempus] is divided by semiminims," is evidently an inappropriate elaboration, but by whom?



aries on long sections of de Muris.<sup>55</sup> The correspondences are numerous and exact enough to demonstrate, if proof were needed, the existence of both de Muris texts at the time this book of the *Speculum* was written. By contrast, Jacques of Liège reports current teachings transmitted in the *Ars nova*-related texts in his own words, intermixed with reports of other practices, and does not comment seriously on any quoted proposition traceable to de Vitry.

Of those fourteenth-century theorists who invoke Philippe de Vitry's name, the anonymous author of *Omnis ars sive doctrina honorabiliorem habet rationem* (Anon. CSM 13) comes closest to implying that he was author of a treatise.<sup>56</sup> In a lengthy commentary on tempus division, he names three masters in sequence: Franco, who first fixed polyphonic measure in notational figures and set a tempus so constricted it could be subdivided into no more than three semibreves, Philippe who divides tempus otherwise than Franco and instituted one tripartite tempus, and Marchettus of Padua who transmits Italian practice and divides perfect tempus into twelve equal parts, so giving it a binary component.<sup>57</sup> Franco and Marchettus are known authors whose treatises survive to the present. By association, Philippe would appear to be also—but the case is not so straightforward. The doctrines Anonymous CSM 13 attributes to Franco and Marchettus are plainly corroborated in their works and can be traced to specific passages in the edited texts. The ideas bestowed on Philippe de Vitry are more difficult to trace and to interpret.

Magister vero Philippus, flos et gemma cantorum, aliter distinguit dictum tempus, quia de talibus tribus temporibus quantum ad eorundem prolationem secundum dictum Franconis, unum tempus instituit quod recte suae divisionis partes eius et tot per trinarium numerum distinguitur; quae quia trinitas perfectionem denotare videtur, tempus perfectum appellat.<sup>58</sup>

Just how this passage should be understood—in particular how Philippe's trinitarian division of tempus differs from Franco's—is unclear without external reference, yet the accepted *Ars nova* representatives contribute little toward its elucidation. Philippe is said to have instituted one tempus, the *tempus perfectum*, but the received accounts endorse either a two-fold tempus classification (perfect/imperfect), or a five-fold one (*minimum, medium, majus tempus perfectum, minimum* and *maius tempus imperfectum*

<sup>55</sup>For example, "Chapters XXIII and XXVIII" (CSM 3:7, pp. 49–53), and "Chapter XLI" (CSM 3:7, pp. 80–81).

<sup>56</sup>On this Anonymous, see note 17 above.

<sup>57</sup>CSM 13, p. 52. Does the distinction between past tense used for Franco and present tense used for Philippus (d. 1361) and Marchettus (d. ?) imply that the latter two were still living when this author wrote, or is it merely that their precepts were still current?

<sup>58</sup>"Truly Master Philip, flower and jewel of singers, divides the said tempus otherwise [than Franco] for with respect to the performance of three such *tempora* according to Franco, he ordained one tempus that was duly divided in the proper parts of its division and through the three-fold number. And because the three-fold quality (trinity) seems to indicate perfection, he calls it perfect tempus." (CSM 13, p. 52).

according to V 307-II). The reported homage to three-fold number also grates against the *Ars nova* representatives. The passages on mode and tempus types in V 307-II, P 14741, and P 7378A give no preference to ternary over binary temporal organization, and justify neither through numerological association. If this writer had a specific text in mind, it must have differed considerably from those now associated with de Vitry. As is the case with Anonymous VIIb, a more appropriate background to this report of post-Franconian teaching is to be found in the writings of Johannes de Muris. In establishing a unified continuum of durations, de Muris might justly be said to have instituted a single tempus, a reference unit for all greater and lesser values, for imperfect as well as perfect elements. Not only does de Muris assert that greater and lesser tempus do not vary in species, but he also renders effusive homage to ternary number.<sup>59</sup> It might just be that this anonymous musician, mindful of Philippe de Vitry's stature as singer and composer, attributed to him ideas which another *ars nova* theorist had committed to writing.<sup>60</sup>

One more pertinent contemporary witness is an anonymous English monk, probably from Bury St. Edmunds, who wrote before 1351.<sup>61</sup> This monk mentions Philippe de Vitry by name on five separate occasions, and demonstrates familiarity with his music in assigning to him two motets, *Hugo [Hugo princeps invidie]* and *Gratissima [virginis species]*. On the question of a treatise, two passages are of special interest, one on small note values, the other on red notes. The two passages, which are not consecutive, read as follows:

De minima vero magister Franco mentionem in sua arte non facit, sed tantum de longis et brevis ac semibrevis. Minima autem in Navarina inventa erat, et a Philippo de Vitriaco, qui fuit flos totius mundi musicorum, approbata et usitata; qui autem dicunt predictum Philippum crochetam sive semiminimam aut dragmam fecisse aut eis concessisse, errant, ut in motetis suis manifeste apparet.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup>See *Notitia artis musicae*, Book II, "Chapters I-III," CSM 17, pp. 65-73.

<sup>60</sup>Note that Anonymous CSM 13 misses a prime opportunity to mention a treatise by de Vitry (if he personally knew of one) when he reviews his main sources in the introductory remarks. He has relied on *tractatibus Magistri Johannis de Ypra, Magistri Petri de Cruce, Magistri Franconis* (CSM 13, p. 32).

<sup>61</sup>Anonymous I of CS III, p. 334-364. This treatise occurs also in variant form as the fourth of the *Quatuor principalia*, which, in its explicit, is dated 1351 and attributed to a certain minor friar of Bristol (CS IV, pp. 200-98). Pending careful source studies, the Bury Saint Edmunds version may be supposed to predate that of the *Quatuor principalia*. This treatise will be cited here as Anonymous I/QP and quoted in the CS III version.

<sup>62-3</sup>Master Franco in fact does not mention the minim in his *ars*, but only longs, breves, and semibreves. But the minim was invented in Navarre [sic] and was approved and used by Philippe de Vitry, who was the flower of the whole musical world. Those, however, who say this Philippe founded or approved of the crochet or semiminim or of the dragma are wrong, as appears plainly in his motets." CS III, pp. 336b-337a.

Rubeae autem notulae tribus de causis in motetis ponuntur, scilicet quando cantantur alio modo vel alio tempore vel alterius prolationis quam nigre, ut patet in pluribus motetis quos composuit Philippus.<sup>63</sup>

The salient feature in both is that the author corroborates his stand by appealing to de Vitry's motets, but not to a treatise or *ars*. Philippe is said to have endorsed and used the minim because that value exists in his motets. He is explicitly dissociated from semiminim and dragma—despite the claims of some—because the motets do not include these notational figures. It is not irrelevant to note that all of the accepted *Ars nova* representatives in which small note values are enumerated do include the semiminim, and that *P* 7378A also describes a *dragma* without, however, naming it (See Table III). Similarly, Anonymous I/QP invokes Philippe's motets, not a treatise, to confirm the reasons for red notation, but his report again departs from the *Ars nova* writings. The more discursive texts, *V* 307-II and *P* 14741, state two principal causes for red notation: change of measure for individual notational symbols, and transferral to another octave.<sup>64</sup> Anonymous I/QP announces three causes: a different mode, different tempus, different prolation, which, in the *Ars nova*-related scheme would all accrue to a single cause, change of measure.<sup>65</sup> This English monk is not only unaware of a treatise by de Vitry, but also confidently allies him with positions consistent with his motets, but contradictory with the supposed remnants of the *Ars nova*. For this observer, the motets are the fundamental repository of Philippe's thoughts on music.

There remains one document that does specifically credit de Vitry with a treatise, the *Argumenta musicae magistri Joh[ann]is de Muris*, an *unicum* in a manuscript copied in Ghent in 1503-04.<sup>66</sup> As printed by Coussemaker in a conglomerate entitled *Ars discantus secundum Johannem de Muris* the pertinent passage states:

Queritur utrum aliqua figura potest ultra imperfici quam in tertia ejus parte? Et videtur primo quod non per locum a simili et per locum ab auctoritate; quia invenimus in arte Franconis, et in tractatu magistri Philippi de Vitriaco et in arte Joh[ann]is de Belle, et aliorum magistrorum. longam imperfici per brevem, et brevem per semibreve, et semibreve per minimam, etc.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup>“However, red notes are placed in motets for three reasons, i.e. when they are to be sung in some other mode, or other tempus, or other prolation than the black notes, as appears in many motets composed by Philippe.” CS III, p. 347a.

<sup>64</sup>*Dicendum est igitur quod principaliter [rubeae notulae] duabus de causis ponuntur.* CSM 8, p. 28. *P* 7378A states the same two major reasons. The other two texts actually include a third reason in their discussion: use of red notes to signify foreign notes introduced into a *cantus planus*.

<sup>65</sup>This three-fold scheme does agree with that in the *Omni desideranti* handbooks which sometimes circulated under de Vitry's name (see note 34 above). Anonymous I/QP's account of red notation thus accords with a branch of supposed de Vitrian teaching different from that connected with the *Ars nova*.

<sup>66</sup>Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek 70(71), f. 46'a-48a.

<sup>67</sup>“It is asked whether any note can be imperfected by more than a third of its full value. It seems at first that it cannot be, arguing both from similarity relations and from authority. For we find in Franco's *ars* and in the treatise of Master Philippe de Vitry, and in the *ars* of Johannes de Belle and [in the works] of other masters that the long is imperfected by the breve, the breve by the semibreve, and the semibreve by the minim, etc.” (CS III, pp. 107a–107b). The statement does not accurately reflect Franco's position, of course.

I exclude this as reliable testimony on several grounds:

a) Since there are no pre-sixteenth-century sources for the *Argumenta* the report of a treatise could well be a second- or third-generation opinion based on a source with an explicit such as those in *P 7378A* or *Si. L.V. 30*. A few sentences in the *Argumenta* do concord with a section of *Ars quevis mensurandi motetos* in *P 7378A*.

b) On notational matters, Philippe is only cited as confirming Franco, that is, as supporting the *ars vetus*. He is not credited with any positions proper to the *ars nova*.

c) On the question of whether music is a *scientia* or a *modus sciendi*, the *Argumenta* quotes de Vitry's *Second Metaphysics* (CS III, p. 108b–109). He is nowhere else connected with metaphysical writings, and the question on which he is summoned here is remote from his musical concerns as reported in the presumed *Ars nova* texts.

d) The *Argumenta* is a haphazard miscellany of observations and questions patched together at some indeterminate time. The attribution to Johannes de Muris is plainly erroneous.<sup>68</sup> The work has no demonstrable authoritative status.

None of the various fourteenth-century writers who have in the past been called to verify the reality of the *Ars nova* or who have otherwise reported Philippe de Vitry's ideas confirms the hypothesis that de Vitry actually codified his new practices in a written treatise. Their witness is not so much negative as neutral; that is to say, while their various remarks provide no positive support for the *Ars nova* hypothesis, they do not expressly negate it. Given the lack of an authenticated text, however, positive support is crucial to the survival of the hypothesis. Philippe de Vitry was obviously held in high repute among musicians of his era who reported on the new art, but the source of this reputation seems to lie elsewhere than in an authoritative treatise which was well-known to his contemporaries. That such a referential document did not exist seems the more plausible given the uncertainties, and even misconceptions, in the reports on his views. Anonymous *I/QP* feels compelled to correct mistaken notions about de Vitry's endorsement of semiminim and dragma. The *Anonymi VIIa*, *VIIb* and *CSM 13* assign to him views alien to the accepted *Ars nova* representatives. Not only has an integral text not survived to the present, but one has left no indelible traces in the past.

### Reflections

To return to the alternatives posed at the beginning of this study: was Philippe de Vitry author of a definitive treatise on the *ars nova*, or was it his companions and "disciples" who promulgated a teaching tradition founded on the master's words? Positive indications for the first position are slight.

<sup>68</sup>U. Michels, *Die Musiktraktate*, p. 49, and *CSM 17*, p. 16.

They consist of a very late fourteenth– or early fifteenth-century attribution copied mechanically by an Italian scribe, and two brief paraphrased remarks in the *Speculum musicae* Book VII. Weakly ancillary is the indeterminate possibility that in its complete state the defective source for *P* 14741 closely paralleled *V* 307-II. Tenuous though the case is, it at least forwards *V* 307-II as the single candidate to be envisaged as a possible genuine remnant of a hypothetical de Vitry treatise.

The positive indications for the second position are more abundant and compelling in terms of providing a better explanation for the situation as it appears six centuries later, and eradicating the main problems attendant on the *Ars nova* hypothesis. With no fixed text as a control, representatives of a teaching tradition may be expected to manifest differences in language, content, and ordering such as are actually observed among the treatises connected with de Vitry. No one of the surviving versions need bear the burden of being the authoritative “state of the text.” Each can be understood as a particular manifestation of the teaching as comprehended by some individual and reported in the context of his own time and circumstances. The teaching tradition model accommodates the evident general areas of agreement among the various redactions as well as the observed specific differences among them. It is also consistent with the nature of the surviving documents, some of them relatively detailed fragments, another an extremely abbreviated handbook.

The discrepancies between extant texts and third-person reports of de Vitry’s contribution also better fit the hypothesis of an oral teaching tradition. Lacking a central document, those outside the immediate circle may well dispute whether the master did or did not accept the semiminim (Anonymous I/QP), or credit him with establishing the four prolations (Anonymous VIIb, *Les regles de la Seconde Retorique*), or with glorifying ternary number (Anonymous CSM 13), or with standardization of the semibreves used in Italian mensurations (Anonymous VIIa). Not only do many of the reports jar with the presumed *Ars nova* representatives, but their very variety betrays a lack of consensus on de Vitry’s principal contribution. Ascription to de Vitry of ideas more likely fathered by Johannes de Muris only reinforces the impression that no formal treatise by de Vitry was in circulation.

The teaching tradition hypothesis is broad enough even to assimilate the attributions—those of *V* 307-II and *P* 7378A—which become reinterpreted as testimonies to the source of the teaching rather than indications of direct authorship. It acknowledges de Vitry’s prestige as a central mover in the *ars nova*, but locates that prestige in teaching rather than writing or, in modern parlance, “publication.”

The dispersion of a towering *Ars nova* and its transformation into an unsatisfactorily amorphous teaching tradition alters the standard landscape of the French *ars nova*. The terrain must to some extent be recharted, its configurations resurveyed. Rather than simplifying the historical perspective, the interpretation advocated here raises new issues about the phenomenon *ars nova* and reactivates old ones long comfortably sheltered behind

the *Ars nova* hypothesis.<sup>69</sup> Only a few of them can be broached here by way of illustrating some changes in orientation encouraged by discarding or at least questioning the old hypothesis.

The teaching tradition perspective invites fresh inquiry into Philippe de Vitry's contribution as a theorist, as well as reconsideration of how and to what degree its substance may be recovered. If the writings previously privileged as the *Ars nova* are not versions of that legendary work, then they can no longer be automatically considered the sole direct sources of pertinent information on de Vitry's theoretical contribution. Both treatises that overtly profess a connection with the master—CS III Anonymous III and the *Omni desideranti* compendia—as well as others that transmit early *ars nova* lore without naming an authority might also stand close to the center of the teaching tradition and should be scanned for revelations about it. Third-person references too must be weighed, even though their value may pertain more to the reception history, to subsequent impressions about de Vitry's role in the *ars nova*, than to an elucidation of his demonstrable contribution. Concurrently, current ideas about the substance of the *ars nova* movement at large, hitherto largely molded by the presumed de Vitry treatise, must be reshaped. Affiliations among the many anonymous *ars nova* handbooks need to be traced, their chronology roughed out. The fullest possible range of information from the pedagogical manuals, from the carefully reasoned disquisitions of Johannes de Muris, from the first-hand observations of Marchettus de Padua and Jacques of Liège should be brought to bear on the study of developments in musical practice, notation, and systematic theory over the course of the fourteenth century in France. An informal checklist of some texts whose interrelationships (hitherto vague at best) need to be scrutinized, along with those in Table I, is provided in Table IV.<sup>70</sup>

The teaching tradition interpretation also calls for rethinking about the dissemination of *ars nova* ideas south to the Italian peninsula. Instead of being transmitted in a coherent text invested with magisterial authority as hitherto assumed, French ideas may rather have filtered across the Alps somewhat haphazardly through personal associations and secondary teaching manuals. Both the works of Italian theorists and the collections of writings on music compiled in Italy should be reexamined for the information they can bring to bear on the transmission process.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup>I am aware that this new interpretation will be difficult to accept. As L. Gushee has remarked on the subject of anonymous theoretical writings, "Not only are readers and writers of history generally happier with assertions of a positive character, but the conceptual manipulation of entities (in this case, individual writings on music) that do not have a memorable label or title is in practice extremely difficult." ("Anonymous theoretical writings," *The New Grove Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 442, col. 1.). Historians of music theory must somehow find memorable labels for the de Vitrian treatises (and others) that do not perpetuate historical inaccuracies.

<sup>70</sup>In order not to prejudice their relative significance, the order adopted is alphabetical, by first-line incipit. For the sake of easy cross-reference within the literature, common appellations and titles (of varying authority) from manuscripts are provided with the incipits.

<sup>71</sup>F.A. Gallo's excellent study, *La Teoria della notazione in Italia dalla fine del XIII all' inizio del XV secolo*, naturally assumes the *Ars nova* hypothesis.

TABLE IV

Informal Checklist of *ars nova*-related Treatises

(Supplement to Table I)

Incipit, Identification	Edition
Catalan Anonymous <i>Ad evidentiam cantus organici est sciendum.</i>	ed. H. Anglès. "De cantu organico Tratado de un autor catalán del siglo XIV". <i>Anuario Musical</i> XIII (1958), pp. 18-24.
CS III Anonymous II <i>Ad evidentiam valoris notularum sciendum quod</i>	CSM 30, pp. 13-28; CS III, pp. 364-70.
CS I Anonymous VI <i>Cum in isto tractatu de figuris sive de notis, quae sunt. . .</i>	CSM XII, pp. 40-51; CS I, pp. 369-77.
CS III Anonymous I <i>Dictis aliquibus circa planum cantum, restat aliud dicendum de cantu sive musica mensurabili.</i>	CS III, pp. 334-64.
QUATUOR PRINCIPALIA (Fourth Section) <i>In quo consistit musica discreta. . . Cum omnis quantitas aut est continua aut discreta. . .</i>	CS IV, pp. 254a-98.
Variant of CS III Anonymous I. Explicit dated 1351.	
TRACTATUS ISTI SUPER MUSICAM COMPOSUIT VENERABILIS MAGISTER PHILIPPUS DE VITRIACO. <i>Omni desideranti notitiam artis mensurabilis musicae tam nove quam veteris. . . Explicit Ars Perfecta in Musica Magistri Philippi de Vitriaco.</i>	CS III, pp. 29-35.
Breve Compendium: Seville A variant of <i>Omni desideranti notitiam</i> , above. See note 23.	ed. H. Anglès. "Dos Tractats Medievals de Música Figurada." <i>Festschrift für Johannes Wolf</i> . (Berlin, 1929), pp. 6-10.
Anonymous <i>De musica mensurabili</i> (= Anonymous <i>dictus Theodoricus de Campo</i> [Theodonus de Capual]) <i>Omnis ars sive doctrina honorabiliorem habet rationem</i>	CSM 13, pp. 29-56 CS III, pp. 177-93
COMPENDIUM TOTIUS ARTIS MOTETTORUM <i>Primo punctus quadratus vel nota quadrata est duplex</i>	ed. J. Wolf. "Ein anonymer Musiktraktat aus der ersten Zeit der 'Ars Nova'." <i>Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch</i> 21 (1908), pp. 34-38.
QUEDAM NOTABILIA UTILIA <i>Quocumque sola brevis ponitur inter duas longas. . . Explicunt argumenta musicae magistri Joannis de Muris</i> . One segment is concordant with part of P 7378A.	CS III, pp. 106a-09a
CS III Anonymous III [DE ARTE MUSICAE BREVE COMPENDIOLUM] <i>Quoniam per ignorantiam artis musicae multi, et maxime temporibus modernis, cantando delirant. . .</i>	CSM 8, pp. 84-93; CS III, pp. 370-75.
CS III Anonymous IV <i>Si quis artem musicae mensurabilis tam veterem quam novam. . .</i>	CSM 30, pp. 33-41; CS III, pp. 376-79.

Hitherto, the hypothesis of a written treatise has explained Philippe de Vitry's status as a prime mover in the *ars nova*, although little thought has apparently been given to the audience toward which the treatise might have been directed. The notion of a teaching tradition prompts serious questions about the sphere and scope of his teaching activity and the circumstances within which his reputation as a central figure became established. To date, the most concrete proposition is that de Vitry was master of philosophy and cantor at the newly instituted College of Navarre in Paris sometime between 1316 and 1322 (when his name is documented at the royal court).<sup>72</sup> This

<sup>72</sup>A. Gilles, "Contribution à un inventaire analytique des manuscrits intéressant l'Arts nova de Philippe de Vitry," *Revue belge de musicologie* X (1956), 151.

proposition has not been taken up by later scholars and indeed founders for want of a particle of corroborative evidence. The records of the College dedication on 3 April 1315 do not include de Vitry among the names of the masters, canons, clerks, students, and court dignitaries present at the ceremony. The statutes read on that occasion show that the few teaching positions were filled, and that there was within the College no such position as that postulated by Gilles.<sup>73</sup> In fact, it is unlikely that the University of Paris or any of the Colleges attached to it enters into consideration as the scene of official teaching on music by Philippe de Vitry. As Max Haas has emphasized, instruction in practical areas of performance and notation such as are treated in Franco's *Ars cantus mensurabilis* and the *ars nova* handbooks was not part of the university curriculum, but took place at an elementary stage of study prior to matriculation as a student in the faculty of arts.<sup>74</sup>

The dossier on pre-arts music study beyond the elements of plainchant is conspicuously bare. In the absence of concrete information, we may wonder how prevalent instruction in *musica mensurabilis* was, and whether it may not have been confined to those clerics with special aptitude for and interest in music, pursued electively in small, rather private groups. (Inevitably, those intriguing references to singing schools of Johannes de Vaillant and a fourteenth-century Johannes de Garlandia at Paris come to mind.)<sup>75</sup> Jacques of Liège's insistence upon the learned character of gatherings at which he heard motets (in both traditional and modern styles) performed, while partly calculated to justify his aesthetic preferences still deserves attention as informed testimony that elaborate polyphony was the domain of a specially initiated few.<sup>76</sup> The trained singers in the chapels of the Paris colleges could well have been ardent participants in and an eager audience for modern experimental music, but the institutional or extra-institutional context within which the "moderns" flourished is largely a blank.

It seems at least reasonable to assume that as a composer of motets in a novel style that broke with past performance conventions Philippe de Vitry would have had to instruct those who were going to sing and notate his music in the new practices he observed.<sup>77</sup> Some communication on his *ars nova* would then certainly have taken place by 1316, the year several motets presumed to have been composed by de Vitry were copied into a special edition of the *Roman de Fauvel*. Pursuing this line of thought, de

<sup>73</sup>J. Launoy, *Regii Navarrae Gymnasii Parisiensis Historia Pars Prima* (Paris, 1677), pp. 21–39. The statutes stipulate two masters, one in theology and one in grammar. The records of those present indicate an enlarged staff of one doctor in theology, one master of arts, and two grammar masters.

<sup>74</sup>M. Haas, "Studien zur mittelalterlichen Musiklehre I," pp. 323–456.

<sup>75</sup>See U. Günther, "Jehan Vaillant," *The New Grove Dictionary*, vol. 19, p. 487, and K.-J. Sachs, *Der Contrapunctus*, p. 178.

<sup>76</sup>*Speculum musicae* Book VII, CSM 3:7, p. 95, l. 9, 11. Johannes de Grocheio also remarks (c. 1300) on the specialized audience of perceptive intelligentsia toward which motets were directed (E. Rohloff, *Die Quellenhandschriften zum Musiktraktat des Johannes de Grocheio*, [1972], p. 144, l. 183).

<sup>77</sup>In this connection, Johannes de Muris' emphatic insistence that whatever can be sung can be notated is apposite (CSM 17, p. 84, 94, 96).



Vitry's reputation as a teacher and theorist would be an offshoot of his primary role as creator, performer, and "coach" of his own extraordinary works which demanded new skills from singers and copyists.<sup>78</sup> His activity would have been tied in with actual music-making and specific practical issues, and with creation of a climate of acceptance for his unconventional works. Judging from Jacques of Liège's reports of diverse modern opinions (de Vitry's mixed among them), he would also have shared his thoughts with others who were involved with the musical avant-garde.

At least one major objection to this reflection requires commentary. The earliest motets in the de Vitry canon are not ascribed to him in the musical sources, but accrue to him in part on the basis of citation in presumed versions of the *Ars nova*.<sup>79</sup> To deprive de Vitry of a treatise might seem to strip him of the early layer of his musical works. But the teaching tradition interpretation does not really weaken a case which in any event is founded on common sense supposition bolstered by stylistic criteria; it simply involves a shift in ground. Rather than supposing that de Vitry wrote a treatise and that therefore the advanced works mentioned in it are his, the argument runs that a teaching tradition emanates from Philippe de Vitry, and that the motets cited to exemplify the most novel facets of the new teaching are very likely his.<sup>80</sup> As under the traditional hypothesis, under the teaching tradition concept the compositions can continue to be taken as both an impetus and a focus for de Vitry's teaching on new practices in *musica mensurabilis*.

The dramatic scenario in which Philippe de Vitry announces a new art in a written manifesto has profoundly shaped twentieth-century attitudes toward the relationship *ars vetus/ars nova*. The two are commonly understood as opposites, the confrontation between them confirmed by selective reading of the more polemical passages in the final book of the *Speculum musicae*. Placing the *vetus/nova* pair within its cultural context, Max Haas has recently argued that the two mesh in an unbroken continuum in which the *nova* is a complementary extension of the *ars vetus*.<sup>81</sup> Although independent of the *Ars nova* hypothesis, this position is reinforced when past assumptions about an authoritative de Vitry treatise are discarded and at-

<sup>78</sup>Although independently founded and different in nuance, this assessment is not far from that of R. Bockholdt, who sees Philippe de Vitry as more of a practitioner than a systematic theorist ("Semibrevis minima und Prolatio temporis," *Die Musikforschung* XVI (1963), 21). A contrary opinion is expressed by L. Finscher who downplays de Vitry's status as a composer and emphasizes his role as theoretician, court functionary, poet, etc. ("Die 'Entstehung des Komponisten' Zum Problem Komponisten-Individualität und Individual in der Musik des 14. Jahrhunderts," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* VI (1975), 32. The difference in conjunctural opinions only draws attention to the dearth of definite information on de Vitry's life and career.

<sup>79</sup>E. Sanders, "The Early Motets of Philippe de Vitry," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXVIII (1975), 24–25, and "Vitry, Philippe de," *The New Grove Dictionary*, vol. 20, p. 27.

<sup>80</sup>The citations concerned are not limited to the *Ars nova* representatives, but occur in other works, for example, *Omni desideranti* and the *Compendium totius artis motetorum*.

<sup>81</sup>"Studien zur mittelalterlichen Musiklehre I," pp. 385–89. Haas draws a parallel between the categories *logica vetus/logica nova*, long established in the universities, and the *ars vetus/ars nova* of Parisian music theory. In the case of logic, the terms designate complementary, not conflicting, groups of texts.

tention is widened toward the full spectrum of writings on new practices. The programmatic announcements of intent to expound upon the new art consistently link the *ars nova* with the *ars vetus* as complementary components of *musica mensurabilis*, as the following excerpts show.

CS III Anonymous IV

Si quis artem musicae mensurabilis tam veterem quam novam sub compendio exemplo prospicere desideret, in huius puncti sedulo dicta tam veterum quam modernorum et opiniones eorundem, si idem sedulo studeat, complete reperiat.<sup>82</sup>

CS III Anonymous III

Quoniam per ignorantiam artis musicae multi, et maxime temporibus modernis, cantando delirant, ideo de arte musicae breve compendiolum, Deo juvante, propono, et veterem ac novam artem in isto compendiolio manifestare intendo.<sup>83</sup>

*Breve Compendium* (Seville reading)

Omni desideranti notitiam artis [musicae] mensurabilis tam nove quam veteris obtinere, certas regulas huic presentes sub brevi compendio pro posse meo propono fideliter assignare, cujus antiquitatem per Franconem notum omnibus tradidisse, novitatemque per Philippum in majori parte subtiliter invenisse.<sup>84</sup>

*Ars quevis mensurandi motetos* (P 7378A)

Dicto de longis, brevibus, ligaturis et pausis prout [in] veteri arte ordinantur et cognoscuntur, dicendum est de brevibus, semibrevibus et minimis, prout in nova arte et secundum modernos ordinantur et pronuntiantur.<sup>85</sup>

All four statements couple *ars nova* with *ars vetus*. They announce the two not as antimonies, but as complementary components of *ars musicae mensurabilis*. The attitude is no superficial bow to the past, but penetrates to the base of the pedagogical method. The *ars vetus* is not simply the frozen dogma of an earlier generation, it is the living foundation of the *ars nova*. The new art is rooted in the old, conceived and presented pedagogically as an extension of, not an alternative to, established practice.

The continuum from old to new is most cogently expressed in the similarity principle, a declaration that the same relationships hold at the short-

<sup>82</sup>“Anyone who wants to survey polyphonic practice, the old as well as the new, under an abbreviated format may find out all about it here in the sayings and opinions of both our predecessors and the moderns, if he studies them assiduously.” CSM 30, p. 33.

<sup>83</sup>“Because many through ignorance of [correct] musical practice go wildly astray in singing, especially in modern times, I therefore put forth, with God’s help, a brief compendium on musical practice. In it I intend to reveal both the old and the new practice.” CSM 8, p. 84.

<sup>84</sup>“For all desiring to obtain knowledge of polyphonic practice, the new as well as the old, I purpose faithfully to set forth definite rules, presenting them within a brief compendium to the best of my ability. The older rules known to all have been transmitted through Franco, while the new for the most part have been subtly discovered by Philippe.” H. Anglès, “Dos Tractats Medievals de Música Figurada,” *Festschrift für Johannes Wolf*, (1929), p. 6, modified slightly with reference to Seville, Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina, MS 5-2-25, f. 63.

<sup>85</sup>“Having discussed longs, breves, ligatures and rests just as they are arranged and understood in the old practice, it is now necessary to discuss breves, semibreves and minims just as they are arranged and performed in the new practice and according to the moderns.” CSM 8, p. 63, l. 17–20.

value end of the temporal spectrum (minim : semibreve) as at the long-value end (long : breve). A typical statement of the principle is:

Sicut se habet brevis ad longam, sic semibrevis ad brevem, et minima ad semibrevem.<sup>86</sup>

CS III Anonymous III states it even more simply:

Sciendum est quod sicut in veteri arte est, ita in nova.<sup>87</sup>

Among other virtues, the similarity principle is independent of any specific scheme of relationships, binary or ternary, and is extensible through the entire scale of durations, from the longest to the shortest notes. It is in fact the germ of the *modus-tempus-prolation* system. Although it comes to the fore in the early tracts on *ars nova*, the similarity principle springs from the *locus classicus* of the old art, Franco's *Ars cantus mensurabilis*. As stated there, it is confined to a limited sphere of action:

De semibrevis autem et brevis idem est iudicium in regulis prius dictis.<sup>88</sup>

Franco does not fully develop the implications of this statement in his teaching (e.g. he does not speak of imperfection of a breve by a single semibreve, the analogue of imperfection of a long by a single breve), but the theoretical principle is there to be exploited by a later generation.

Although there is certainly cause for tension between older and newer teaching, the modest *ars nova* tracts just quoted seem blind to it. Far from polemical in intent, they purpose chiefly to transmit knowledge necessary for performing a current repertory of music. Because that repertory includes compositions in both newer and older idioms and notations, singers must learn the conventions observed in each.<sup>89</sup> The path to the new art is in any case through the old. It may be objected that aspects of the new art—the independent existence of imperfect longs and imperfect breves, the extension of the temporal spectrum from very long to very short durational values—break irreconcilably with the old. In retrospect, and from a purely abstract point of view, this may appear to be the case, but it is not an overt theme in the texts themselves. It becomes an issue only when logical ques-

<sup>86</sup>“Just as the breve is to the long, so is the semibreve to the breve, and the minim to the semibreve.” CS III Anonymous IV, CSM 30, p. 37. This principle is the foundation of Johannes de Muris' method as exemplified in the nine *Conclusiones* that close his *Notitia artis musicae* (CSM 17, pp. 87–105).

<sup>87</sup>“Know that just as it is in the old *ars*, so it is in the new.” CSM 8, p. 85.

<sup>88</sup>“The same judgments as in the rules just given [i.e. concerning longs and breves] apply to semibreves and breves.” *Franconis de Colonia Ars cantus mensurabilis*, ed. G. Reaney and A. Gilles, CSM 18 (1974), p. 38. On the sense of *idem est iudicium*, see M. Haas, “Studien zur mittelalterlichen Musiklehre I,” pp. 387–88.

<sup>89</sup>Note especially the references to singing and to performance (*pronuntiare*) in the second and fourth passages just quoted.

tions about the rational foundations of the art are raised. CS III Anonymous IV, for instance, comfortably incorporates an account of six-fold modal classification (the rhythmic modes) and a description of two-fold modal classification (perfect/imperfect) within his manual. The two stand at opposite ends of the work and are just reported, not presented as conflicting schemes.<sup>91</sup> The author makes no attempt to reconcile them. The word *perfectio* even holds over from the old art into the new as the term for the prime mensural unit in imperfect *modus*, even though that unit is now not ternary but binary:

Modus autem imperfectus est quando duo tempora ponuntur pro una perfectione.<sup>91</sup>

The *Compendium totius artis motetorum* holds to a similar locution of *perfectio perfecta* (perfect mode) and *perfectio imperfecta* (imperfect mode).<sup>92</sup> Because his mind is systematically inclined, Jacques of Liège reacts to such incongruous language, but it is no cause for concern in a pragmatic sphere.<sup>93</sup>

In course of time, the *vetus/nova* distinction disappears from the pedagogical texts. A growing new repertory consigns the old Franconian repertory to oblivion. What had been the new art became simply the normal and current practice and gained its own systematic superstructure and rational infrastructure. The movement from the pluralistic, unsettled, confused state of affairs eloquently invoked by Jacques of Liège to the settled situation codified in the *Libellus cantus mensurabilis* has not been adequately traced or explained. Did Philippe de Vitry contribute to this stage of normalization? His later motets have come down to us inscribed in a notational system markedly different in premises from that in the *Roman de Fauvel*, the source most proximate to the early *ars nova* teaching. Given the relationship between the *Omni desideranti* compendium and the *Libellus cantus mensurabilis*, and the loose association of the one with Philippe de Vitry, the other with Johannes de Muris, does some collaborative effort between the two men enter into the realm of plausibility? The question probably admits no answer. In any event, the emergence of a single practice based in principle on uniform precepts is yet another area of inquiry that begins to emerge more sharply from behind the scrim of the *Ars nova* hypothesis.

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<sup>90</sup>Compare CSM 30, pp. 33–34 with pp. 40–41.

<sup>91</sup>“However, imperfect mode occurs when two *tempora* are put for a perfection.” CSM 30, p. 40.

<sup>92</sup>J. Wolf, “Ein anonymes Musiktraktat aus der ersten Zeit der ‘Ars Nova’”, *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch* 21 (1908), p. 37.

<sup>93</sup>*Speculum musicae* Book VII, “Ch. X,” CSM 3:7, p. 25, l. 7.