

Jean des Murs and the Three *Libelli* on Music in BnF lat. 7378A: A Preliminary Report

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Abstract

Within the mid-fourteenth century Parisian manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 7378A, three as yet unedited music treatises are found, copied in a tiny, highly abbreviated script in a section of the manuscript devoted mostly to the music treatises of Jean des Murs. The incipits of the three treatises are as follows: ‘Omnes homines natura scire desiderant’, ‘Partes prolationis quot sunt’, and ‘Celebranda divina sunt officia in ecclesia’. Lawrence Gushee suggested that Jean des Murs may be their author, since Jean listed a book loan of a work authored by him with incipit ‘Omnes homines’ in the manuscript El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo, O.11.10, that contains his autograph annotations. This article focuses on the content of the second treatise, which appears to be closely related to Jean des Murs’s own *Compendium artis musicae*. The *Compendium* begins: ‘Partes prolationis quot sunt? Quinque’, whereas the answer to the same opening question posed in the BnF lat. 7378A treatise is ‘Quatuor’. The text of this treatise is considered as a witness to early *ars nova* theory as it relates to the theories propagated in Jean des Murs’s early works, and to the transmission of these texts within the layer of BnF lat. 7378A that is devoted to works by Jean des Murs and his contemporaries on music and astronomy.

Keywords

Jean des Murs – medieval music theory – *musica mensurabilis* – *ars nova* – medieval music notation

Introduction

On fols. 58r to 59v of the mid-fourteenth century manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 7378A (hereafter BnF lat. 7378A), a three-volume treatise on music was copied in a tiny, highly abbreviated script (see Figure 1 for a reproduction of fol. 58r).¹ These two folios commence a gathering of BnF lat. 7378A devoted mostly to fourteenth-century music theory, a gathering that also includes the earliest extant copy of Jean des Murs's groundbreaking *Notitia artis musicae*. The first of the three *libelli* echoes the famous beginning of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1.1), opening with the words 'Omnes homines natura scire desiderant' ('All humans by nature desire to know').²

Though unattributed in this their only source, Lawrence Gushee previously suggested that the author of BnF lat. 7378A's three *libelli* might be Jean des Murs, since Jean listed a book with the incipit 'Omnes homines' within a list of book loans in the Escorial manuscript (El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo, O.II.10).³ In this study, I assess the evidence for Jean des Murs's authorship, through an examination of the second of these as yet unedited *libelli*, and its close connections to Jean's innovative works on rhythmic notation.⁴ The complex textual relationship between the first *libellus* and the transmission of Jean des Murs's *Musica speculativa* and *Compendium musicae practicae*

1 For a codicological description of this manuscript, see Ulrich Michels, ed., *Johannis de Muris Notitia artis musicae et Compendium musicae practicae* ([Dallas, TX]: American Institute of Musicology, 1972), 24–6. See also Pascale Duhamel, 'L'enseignement de la musique à l'Université de Paris d'après le manuscrit BnF lat. 7378A', *Acta musicologica* 79 (2007), 263–89, at 263–66.

2 Other medieval texts used this famous phrase from the *Metaphysics* as an opening. For example, Richard de Fournival's *Bestiaire d'amour* opens 'Toutes gens desirrent par nature à savoir'. See Richard de Fournival, *Le Bestiaire d'Amour et la Responce du Bestiaire (vers 1250): édition bilingue. Publication, traduction, présentation et notes par Gabriel Bianciotto* (Paris, 2009). Another well-known example is Profatius's *Almanach perpetuum* (1300), which begins 'Quia omnes homines naturaliter scire desiderant et maxime res occultas'. Giuseppe Boffito and Camillo Melzi d'Eril, eds, *Almanach Dantis Aligherii sive Profhacii Judaei Montispezzulani Almanach Perpetuum ad annum 1300 inchoatum* (Florence, 1908).

3 Lawrence Gushee identifies the book loan to J. de Rothomago with the treatise in BnF lat. 7378A. See his 'New Sources for the Biography of Johannes de Muris', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 22 (1969), 3–26, at 12–13. Later, in his *Grove Music Online* article 'Johannes de Muris', Gushee made the suggestion that it might be a work of Jean des Murs's youth. See Lawrence Gushee, Matthew C. Balensuela and Jeffrey Dean, 'Muris, Johannes de', in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), available at <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [accessed 2 October 2018].

4 I am currently preparing an edition of the treatise.

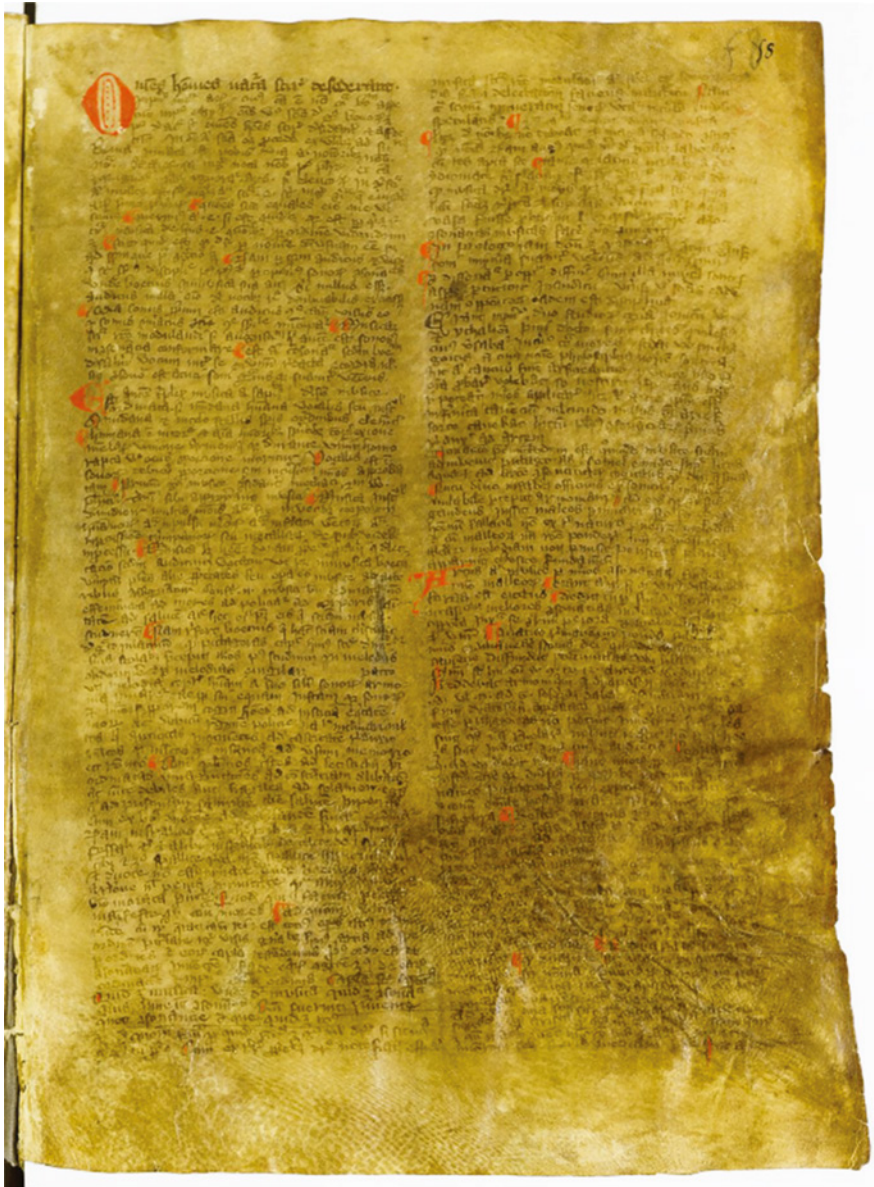


FIGURE 1 *The opening of the Omnes homines libelli, BnF lat. 7378A, fol. 58r*

will also be considered briefly. In order to better understand the place of the three *libelli* within the history of fourteenth-century music theory and their relationship to Jean des Murs's securely attributed works, some issues relating to the general chronology of Jean's writings on music and the ways in which he appears to have gradually developed, revised, and reformulated his music theory will first be outlined here.

Chronology of Jean des Murs's Treatises on Music Theory

The early 1320s have traditionally been viewed, especially in musicological scholarship, as Jean des Murs's most productive years.⁵ Gushee singled out the year 1321 in particular as a 'banner year'.⁶ The historiographical narrative of Jean des Murs's early productivity arose partly as a result of a remark Jean himself made in his *Canones tabule tabularum* on the personal significance of the year 1321. In this work on arithmetic, Jean first noted the numerological importance of the year 1321, a number he called 'supremely perfect' (*perfectissimus*) since it is composed of the numbers 1, 2, and 3.⁷ In the year 1321, he wrote, the art of producing and notating music (*notitia artis musice proferende figurande*), both mensural and plainchant, was clarified for him: 'every possible manner of descanting, not only through whole [notes] but right down to the smallest fractions'. He also acquired knowledge in three more areas: 'the most perfect

5 For a discussion of the importance of the year 1321 in the construction of chronologies relating to Jean des Murs's output, see Karen Desmond, *Music and the modern, 1300–1350: The ars nova in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, 2018), 85–90.

6 Lawrence Gushee, 'Jean des Murs and his Milieu', in *Musik—und die Geschichte der Philosophie und Naturwissenschaften im Mittelalter*, ed. Frank Hentschel (Leiden, 1998), 339–72, at 349.

7 MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 190 (hereafter Ob Digby 190), fol. 66r. Qtd. in Gushee, 'New Sources', 7. Michels also quotes this passage (as does Emmanuel Poulle, after MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, lat. fol. 246, fol. 81). See Ulrich Michels, *Die Musiktraktate des Johannes de Muris* (Wiesbaden, 1970), 2–3 and Emmanuel Poulle, 'Jean de Murs et les Tables Alphonsines', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 47 (1980), 241–71, at 244. Michels states the quotation is from the Ob Digby 190 copy of the *Canones*, as cited in François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1864), 265. However, an *in situ* comparison with the Digby manuscript indicates that Gushee's partial transcription is much closer to the version in Ob Digby 190 and Fétis must have copied from a different source since the passage quoted by Michels has entire phrases that differ from Ob Digby 190.

demonstration of the knowledge of squaring the circle, the exposition of the tables of Alfonso, king of Castile, and the genealogy of astronomy'.⁸

In their interpretation of this passage, scholars have proposed that Jean was referencing four specific treatises he wrote in 1321. The musicologist Heinrich Bessler suggested the first reference, to music, referred to Jean's treatise with the incipit 'Princeps philosophorum Aristotelis', which outlines for the first time Jean's new system for measuring rhythmic duration in polyphonic music.⁹ This treatise, probably Jean's most important and innovative work on music notation, survives in complete and fragmentary versions in fifteen manuscripts.¹⁰ Based on the text of the *Canones* passage, when Ulrich Michels subsequently edited this music treatise in 1972 he gave it the title *Notitia artis musicae* (hereafter *Notitia*).

Previously published work lists—by Ulrich Michels in 1970, and Emmanuel Poulle in 1980—reinforced this perception of Jean des Murs's unusually high productivity in 1321 compared with the later years of his life: each list contains several works with a suggested composition date of 1321, even though apart from the *Canones tabule tabularum* just one other work includes an explicit mention in its text of a 1321 date of composition.¹¹ My more recent assessment of Jean's productivity—which incorporates recent scholarship on Jean des Murs's astronomical writings—demonstrates instead a more steadily continuous and consistent activity throughout his working life (from the 1320s through to the mid-1340s).¹²

Where do Jean's other writings on music fit into his scholarly output? Jean wrote a treatise on Boethian speculative music theory—*Musica speculativa*—in 1323 (another version of it is dated 1325) (see Table 1 for a listing of his music

8 'Eodemque anno notitia artis musice proferende figurande tam mensurabilis quam plane ad omnem modum possibilem discantandi non solum per integra sed usque ad minutissimas fractiones, cognitioque circuli quadrature perfectissime demonstrata, expositioque tabularum Alphonsi regis castelle ac genealogia astronomie nobis claruit'. The quote is transcribed here from Ob Digby, fol. 66. See also Desmond *Music and the moderni*, 85–86.

9 Heinrich Bessler, 'Johannes de Muris', in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 17 vols. (Kassel, 1949–1986), 7:cols. 105–115.

10 For a full listing of the manuscript sources of *Notitia*, see appendix 4 of Desmond, *Music and the moderni*, 250.

11 *Kalendarium solis et lune*; see José Chabás and Bernard Goldstein, 'John of Murs Revisited: The *Kalendarium solis et lune* for 1321', *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 43 (2012), 412–37, at 411–12.

12 See appendix 6 of Desmond, *Music and the moderni*, 259–61. According to this works list, the present state of scholarship now places seven securely attributed works in the early 1320s; in the period from the late 1320s to the 1330s there are eight securely attributed works; and in the 1340s six more.

theory treatises).¹³ A counterpoint treatise of an unknown date is also often attributed to des Murs.¹⁴ The remaining writings on music focus on *musica mensurabilis* (that is ‘measurable’ or ‘mensural’ music), and are for the most part undated, except for a date of 1319 included in the explicit for book 2 of *Notitia* in the BnF lat. 7378A copy (this is the work Besseler dated to 1321 based on the *Canones* passage).¹⁵

Musica mensurabilis encompasses the subject of music theory dating back to the thirteenth century that codified rules for representing duration in music. It was distinct from *musica plana*, which theorised ‘unmeasured’ plainchant, and *musica speculativa*, which treated, in a speculative manner, the fundamental principles of music (musical ratios, consonance, the monochord, etc.). In the fourteenth century, the theory of *musica mensurabilis* became significantly more complex. Contemporaneous writers termed it the *ars nova* (the ‘new art’ of music), and they referred to the theory and music of the thirteenth century as the *ars antiqua*. In the *ars nova*, new note shapes were added, and new understandings of the pre-existent *ars antiqua* note shapes resulted in a greater variety of possible rhythmic durations.¹⁶

TABLE 1 *Musico-theoretical works attributed to Jean des Murs*

Modern title	Incipit
<i>Notitia artis musicae</i>	‘Princeps philosophorum’
<i>Musica speculativa</i>	‘Omnem doctrinam’ ¹⁷
<i>Compendium musicae practicae</i>	‘Partes prolationis quot sunt? Quinque’
<i>Ars contrapuncti</i>	‘Quilibet affectans scire contrapunctum’
<i>Libellus cantus mensurabilis secundum Johannem de Muris</i>	‘Quinque sunt partes prolationis’

13

Christoph Falkenroth, *Die Musica speculativa des Johannes de Muris: Kommentar zur Überlieferung und kritische Edition* (Wiesbaden, 1992).

14

On the *Ars contrapuncti* attributed to Jean des Murs, see Giuliano Di Bacco, *De Muris e gli altri: sulla tradizione di un trattato trecentesco di contrappunto* (Lucca, 2001).

15

Book 1 of *Notitia* is on speculative music theory.

16

In addition to the important work on the *ars nova* by Jean des Murs, writings on *ars nova* notation were attributed to Philippe de Vitry, who also wrote several widely disseminated music compositions in the new style.

17

This is the incipit for the main text that is common to versions A and B: the prologue to version A has the incipit ‘Etsi bestialum voluptatum’, and the prologue to version B has the incipit ‘Ideo sonum prius generari’.

But musicological datings of the first treatises to outline *ars nova* theory are speculative at best. Ulrich Michels dated four important works on the *ars nova* (Anonymous OP, Philippe de Vitry's *Ars nova*, Jean des Murs's *Compendium*, and Jacobus's *Speculum musicae*) by assessing their relationships to two treatises thought to be securely dated—Jean's *Notitia* (per Besseler's 1321 dating) and Jean's *Musica speculativa* of 1323—as well as to the papal bull issued by John XXII, dated 1324/5, that condemned novel polyphonic practices.¹⁸ In particular, Michels proposed that Jacobus's *Speculum musicae*, a lengthy critique of *ars nova* theory by a certain 'Jacobus' that quotes from several *ars nova* treatises, must predate the papal bull since Jacobus does not refer explicitly to it.¹⁹ Thus Michels dated the *Speculum musicae* to 1323/4, and all the other treatises prior to it; according to him, then, all these central works that set forth the *ars nova* system of notation—and the responses to it—were written between 1321 and 1324. If, however, Michels's dating of Jacobus's *Speculum musicae* is uncoupled from the papal bull, we are left with no firm date for the *Speculum*, and know only that it was written after Jean's *Compendium* and *Notitia*, since Jacobus quotes from both these works (but neither *have* to date from before 1324).²⁰ The early datings of all these music theory treatises have had

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- 18 An anonymous treatise known as Anonymous OP engages with Jean des Murs on some aspects of the *ars nova* set forth in Jean's *Notitia* and was dated before 1321 per Michels. Jean's own *Compendium* was thought to have followed *Notitia* (1322 per Michels); the *Ars nova* attributed to Philippe Vitry was proposed to have followed both these works (1322/3 per Michels). The fourth treatise Michels took into consideration was Jacobus's *Speculum musicae*, which quotes directly from three of Jean des Murs's works (*Notitia*, *Compendium*, and *Musica speculativa*) and from the Vitriacan *Ars nova*. For Michels's dating of *AnonOP*, see Ulrich Michels, 'Der Musiktraktat des Anonymus OP: Ein frühes Theoretiker-Zeugnis der Ars nova', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 26 (1969), 49–62, at 50. For the datings of the other treatises see Michels, *Die Musiktraktate*, 54–55. For Besseler's dating of the *Notitia*, see Heinrich Besseler, 'Studien zur Musik des Mittelalters II: Die Motette von Franko von Köln bis Philipp von Vitry', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 8 (1927), 137–258, 182. For more on the traditional datings of these treatises, see Desmond, *Music and the moderni*, 27–34.
- 19 For the most recent hypotheses on the identity of Jacobus, see Karen Desmond, 'New Light on Jacobus, Author of *Speculum musicae*', *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 9 (2000), 19–40; Margaret Bent, *Jacobus de Ispania, Author of the Speculum musicae* (Farnham, 2015); and Rob C. Wegman, 'Jacobus de Ispania and Liège', *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 8 (2016), 253–74.
- 20 Desmond, 'New Light on Jacobus', 35. For the most recent consideration of the dating of *Speculum musicae*, see Margaret Bent, *Jacobus de Ispania*, 53–61.

a significant impact on the historiographical narrative of fourteenth-century music, which, partly as a result of these datings, has tended to position the *ars nova* as a phenomenon of the late 1310s and early 1320s.²¹

I would posit that the two previously accepted premises outlined above that have informed this narrative of the *ars nova*—that Jean was unusually productive in the early 1320s, and the early datings for all the central *ars nova* theory treatises—are shaky at best, and rest on slim to no evidence. Adding the *libelli* of BnF lat. 7378A into the mix offers a further opportunity to reconsider current understandings of both the development and transmission of *ars nova* theory in the 1320s.

The Three *Libelli* of BnF lat. 7378A

MS El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo, O.II.10, first commented on by Guy Beaujouan in 1964, subsequently the subject of a 1969 article by Gushee, and most recently considered by Laure Miolo, contains two lists compiled by Jean des Murs to keep track of the books and equipment he loaned to friends and associates over a period of about 20 years.²² Items 13 and 14 on the second list (fol. 225v) were loans to a ‘Dominus J. de Rothomago’ (so probably either a Jean or Jacques from Rouen), who is described by des Murs as from Le Bec-Hellouin:

[13] Dominus J. de Rothomago monachus de Becco Helloyni habet tractatus meos de musica *omnem doctrinam*

[14] Item *omnes homines*²³

[13] Dom. J. of Rouen, monk of Bec Abbey, has my treatises on music ‘*Omnem doctrinam*’

[14] Also ‘*Omnes homines*’

21 Desmond, *Music and the moderni*, outlines a revised chronology for the *ars nova*, which positions its emergence as a phenomenon of the 1330s and into the early 1340s.

22 According to Gushee, the list extends over two decades and contains two dozen individuals to whom he loaned books: sixty works, of which two dozen were on astronomy (‘Jean des Murs and his Milieu’, 355). On the Escorial manuscript, see Guy Beaujouan, ‘Histoire des sciences au Moyen Âge’, in *École Pratique des Hautes Études*, IV^e section (Sciences historiques et philologiques), 97 (1964), 259–62. See also the contribution by Laure Miolo in this volume.

23 Gushee, ‘New Sources’, 12.

Jean des Murs's first loan to J. de Rothomago was his treatise *Musica speculativa*, identified with the incipit 'Omnem doctrinam'.²⁴ Thus the loan must have been made after 1323 (the date of Version A of the *Musica speculativa*). The next item had the incipit 'Omnes homines'—the reference that Gushee linked to the three *libelli* of BnF lat. 7378A, which have the same incipit—and both works are described by Jean des Murs, along with *Musica speculativa*, as 'my treatises on music' (emphasis mine).²⁵

Jean des Murs had some connections to the monastery at Le Bec-Hellouin: he was granted an expectative benefice there in 1329, and around 1330 he dedicated his *Kalendarium et Patefit* to its abbot, Geoffroy Faé; these associations have most recently been investigated by Philipp Nothaft.²⁶ Additional evidence from the Escorial MS suggests that Jean began documenting his book loans in that manuscript around the year 1330: on fol. 223v, where he began his list of book loans (which he then restarted, recopying the initial entries on a subsequent page that had a larger area of blank space), there is a table of the sun's sign entries for the year 1330, together with the corresponding ascendant, most likely compiled by Jean des Murs around 1330. Given the *mise-en-page* of fol. 223v, I have proposed the likelihood that Jean began his list of book loans c.1330 or later.²⁷ Thus, it was probably c.1330, that is, also the period of Jean

24 As noted above (n.17) Version A of the *Musica speculativa* has a prologue that begins 'Etsi bestialium voluptatum'. Version B has a prologue that begins 'Ideo sonum prius generari'. But there is a text tradition of this treatise that has neither prologue and begins 'Omnem doctrinam et omnem disciplinam ex praeexistenti cognition fieri'. Possibly it was this version of the text (*sans* prologue) that Jean des Murs loaned to J. of Rouen. For more on the complex dissemination of the *Musica speculativa*, see below pp. 60–1.

25 Gushee, 'New Sources', 13.

26 Emmanuel Poulle dated the *Patefit* to 1330 (citing the unpublished thesis by Joël Plassard, 'Projets de réforme du calendrier à Paris au début du XIV^e siècle' [École des Chartes, 1975]). See Emmanuel Poulle, 'The Alfonsine Tables and Alfonso x of Castille', *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, 19 (1988), 97–113, at 109. Nothaft, in his assessment of MS London, British Library Royal 12.C.xvii, further narrows the dating of both the *Patefit* and the *Sermo de regulis computistarum*, and examines the relationship between these two texts. See the appendix to C. Philipp E. Nothaft, 'John of Murs and the Treatise *Autores kalendarii* (1317): A Problem of Authorship', *Sudhoffs Archiv* 99 (2015), 209–29, at 227–28. Chabás and Goldstein, in their article on a newly discovered text by Jean des Murs dated to 1321 (the *Kalendarium solis et lune*), write that the *Patefit* expands on the *Kalendarium solis et lune* ('John of Murs Revisited', 424).

27 The table of the sun's sign entries is found at the top left of the page, most likely the first item copied. There are two other tables on this page that were likely copied after the solar table, since they are placed to the right of it, and below it. The book list was begun on fol. 223v, with a couple of entries squeezed into the space between the tables, and then restarted

des Murs's associations with Le Bec-Hellouin—when Jean loaned the *Musica speculativa* and a treatise with the incipit 'Omnes homines' to J. de Rothomago.

BnF lat. 7378A, the manuscript in which the three *libelli* with the incipit 'Omnes homines' are extant, is a manuscript of 143 folios, copied around the middle of the fourteenth century, probably in Paris.²⁸ Its parchment is of poor quality and written in a tiny, highly abbreviated cursive hand. Gushee's assessment of the manuscript in his 'Johannes de Muris' *Grove* article was that this 'unique manuscript [BnF lat. 7378A] is extremely difficult to decipher and awaits detailed study'.²⁹ The dimensions of the manuscript (225 × 150mm) are roughly equivalent to a modern paperback novel, yet approximately 1,200 to 1,300 words are compressed per page. (An average number of words per page in a modern paperback, by comparison, is about 500.)³⁰ In addition, several substantial sections of the parchment are badly worn and difficult to read, and the script that is legible is highly abbreviated.

BnF lat. 7378A is a crucially important manuscript in the history of music theory and a witness to some of the earliest copies of Jean des Murs's works and of those of his contemporaries. The second layer of the manuscript (that is, gatherings 4–9) in which the three *libelli* were copied³¹ also contains works by Jean's intellectual contemporaries on arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, including the *Tractatus de numeris harmonicis* by Levi ben Gerson, written at the request of Philippe de Vitry in 1343.³² Gathering 7—which is preceded by the earliest known copy of Version B of Jean des Murs's *Musica speculativa*

on fol. 225v where there was more space to expand the list. Thus, in all likelihood, the book list was begun in 1330 or later. On this see Desmond, *Music and the moderni*, 198–99, 202.

28 Gilles Rico proposes that the contents of the manuscript reflect the extracurricular interests of the arts faculty of the University of Paris. See his 'Music in the Arts Faculty of Paris in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries' (D.Phil. diss., Oxford University, 2005), 214.

29 Lawrence Gushee et al., 'Johannes de Muris', *Grove Music Online*.

30 Michels, *Johannis de Muris Notitia*, 24, gives slightly different measurements for fols. 20–85 (225 × 150mm) and the rest of the manuscript (225 × 165mm).

31 Layer 2 (fols. 20–85v), according to Michels (*Johannis de Muris Notitia*, 24), has seven gatherings: 20–25, 35–45, 46–57, 58–65, 66–77, 78–85. The treatises of layer 2 are copied across gatherings, but the mensural music theory treatises begin on a new gathering (gathering 7), opening with the *Omnes homines libelli*.

32 On Levi ben Gerson's arithmetical treatise, see Eric Werner, 'The Mathematical Foundation of Philippe de Vitry's "Ars nova"', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 9 (1956), 128–32; and more recently, Christian Meyer and Jean-François Wicker, 'Musique et mathématique au xive siècle: le *De numeris harmonicis* de Leo Hebraeus', *Archives internationales d'Histoire des Sciences* 50 (2000), 30–67.

and Levi ben Gerson's work on the harmonic numbers—opens with the three 'Omnes homines' *libelli*. (The contents and layout of gathering 7 is given in Figure 2.) The earliest known copy of Jean's *Notitia* directly follows the three *libelli*. Next is a central witness to the *Ars nova* music theory treatise that is attributed to Philippe de Vitry in its explicit, and which is possibly the earliest witness to the Vitriacan *ars nova* theoretical tradition.³³ The last works of the gathering are the texts of three prognostications on the conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, one each written by Levi ben Gerson, Jean des Murs, and Firmin de Beauval, for Clement VI in 1344 and 1345. Two of the three prognostications (by Jean and Firmin) are also recorded together in another manuscript now at Erfurt.³⁴

The origin of BnF lat. 7378A's second layer is uncertain, but it is probably Parisian. An explicit on fol. 14r places the copying of the first layer in Paris in the year 1362.³⁵ The second layer was not necessarily copied subsequent to the

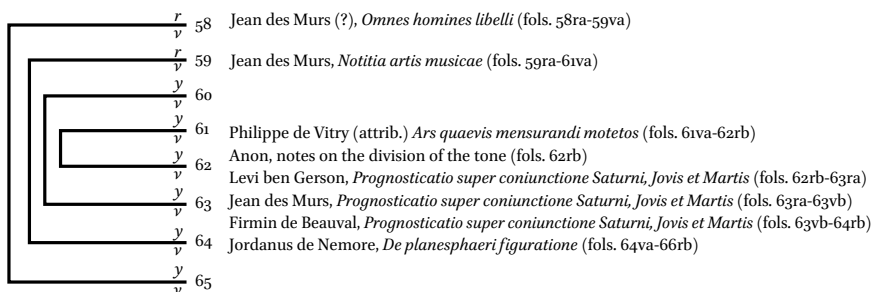


FIGURE 2 The contents and layout of gathering 7 of BnF lat. 7378A

- 33 On the *ars nova* music theory treatise attributed to Vitry see Sarah Fuller, 'A Phantom Treatise of the Fourteenth Century? The *Ars nova*', *Journal of Musicology* 4 (1985), 23–50, and Karen Desmond, 'Did Vitry Write an *Ars vetus et nova*?', *Journal of Musicology* 32 (2015), 441–93.
- 34 Erfurt, Universitäts- und Forschungsbibliothek, Amplon. F. 386, fols. 59v-61v. Jean des Murs and Firmin de Beauval were summoned by Pope Clement VI to Avignon in the autumn of 1344 to advise on calendar reform. Philippe de Vitry is known to have been in Avignon in the early 1340s, though whether he participated in the calendar reform conference is unclear. Margaret Bent and Andrew Wathey, 'Vitry, Philippe de', in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [accessed 2 October 2018]. See also C. Philipp E. Nothaft, 'Science at The Papal Palace: Clement VI and the Calendar Reform Project of 1344/45', *Viator* 46, no. 2 (2015), 277–302, at 281.
- 35 Danielle Jacquart, 'Rapport de la Table ronde: Les disciplines du quadrivium (Paris et Oxford, XIII^e–XV^e siècles)', in *L'enseignement des disciplines à la Faculté des arts (Paris et Oxford, XIII^e–XV^e siècle)*, eds. Olga Weijers and Louis Holtz (Turnhout, 1997), 239–47.

first layer, however, and thus could date from before or after 1362. There is one scribal note within the second layer. The last treatise of gathering 7 continues directly into gathering 8. Gathering 8 starts on fol. 66r, and in the right column of this page the scribe recorded his name: 'explicit planispherii deo gratias scriptum per nicolaum judeum' (fol. 66rb).³⁶ Nicolaus Judeus is documented at the faculty of arts in Paris along with his brother, the astronomer Thimon Judeus (aka Thémon le Juif) in 1349.³⁷ Thimon spent some time at the *studium generale* in Erfurt in the early 1350s, and his presence is again recorded at the Sorbonne from c.1355 to 1371.³⁸ It is conceivable that at least the second layer of BnF lat. 7378A (gatherings 4–9) may have been copied by Nicolaus c.1350 in Paris, and owned by either him or Thimon, especially in light of Thimon's links to the Sorbonne, where he may have had access to Jean des Murs's writings given the latter's presence there for several extended periods during the 1320s and 1330s.

Each book of the *Omnes homines libelli* treats a different aspect of music theory: the subject matter of the first *libellus* is speculative music theory; the second, with the incipit 'Partes prolationis quot sunt', is *musica mensurabilis*, and the third, with the incipit 'Celebranda divina sunt officia in ecclesia', is a short treatment of discant. In terms of approximate word count these texts may be compared with the *Notitia* and the *Compendium* (see Table 2). Taken together the *Omnes homines libelli* represent a substantial work of music theory, longer in fact than Jean des Murs's *Compendium*, and at approximately 4,000 words they approach the total length of the *Notitia* (including the nine conclusions).

36 This reference is the explicit to a copy of Jordanus de Nemore's *De planisphaerii figuratone*. On Jordanus's treatise, see Ron B. Thomson, *Jordanus de Nemore and the Mathematics of Astrolabes: De plana spera* (Toronto, 1978). Michels judged that the manuscript was executed for the most part by one hand, and thus suggested a date of 1362 for the copying of the entire manuscript (Michels, *Johannis de Muris Notitia*, 24). Jacquart disagrees and suggests various hands can be identified: 'Si la première partie du recueil actuel (qui comporte notamment la *Practica geometrie* de Dominicus de Clavasio) semble avoir été ajoutée a posteriori (peut-être seulement au temps de son entrée dans la bibliothèque de Colbert), l'ensemble formé par le reste paraît bien avoir été transcrit, par diverses mains, dans un même milieu' ('Rapport', 242). Jacquart also remarks that the *Quaestiones* on fols. 83r–85v, at the end of the second layer, are not in the hand of Nicolaus Judeus (ibid.).

37 Jacquart, 'Rapport', 242. On Thimon Judeus, see Henri Hugonnard-Roche, *L'oeuvre astronomique de Thémon Juif, maître parisien du XIV^e siècle* (Geneva, 1973).

38 Hugonnard-Roche, *L'oeuvre astronomique*, 11–24.

Circumstantial evidence, then—the positioning of these texts in BnF lat. 7378A (as the opening works at the beginning of this gathering focused on *ars nova* theory) and the possible reference to them in the Escorial MS—strengthens the hypothesis of Jean des Murs’s authorship.³⁹ The internal evidence of the theoretical content of the *libelli* and the relationship to the texts of Jean des Murs’s *Notitia*, *Compendium*, and *Musica speculativa* will now be considered.

Murisian Theory and the ‘Partes prolationis’ *Libellus*

The second *libellus* opens with the question ‘Partes prolationes quot sunt’ (‘How many parts of prolation are there?’). The author uses these words—parts of prolation—to describe the notes of the *ars nova* mensural system, each being a ‘part’ of the duration (prolation) of musical time. It is a turn of phrase that appears to originate with Jean des Murs. Previously, in the thirteenth century, musical notes were categorised as three separate *species*, which had three distinct visual appearances and formal definitions—the long, the breve, and the semibreve. Thirteenth-century music treatises on *musica mensurabilis* had a conventional format that described and defined each of these three note-species in turn. Jean des Murs, however, in his *Notitia* held that

TABLE 2 *Approximate word counts of Notitia, Compendium, and the Omnes homines libelli*













Modern title	Word count (approx.)
<i>Notitia</i>	5,500
1. <i>Theorica</i>	1,500
2. <i>Practica</i>	2,000
9 <i>Conclusiones</i>	2,000
<i>Compendium</i>	1,500
<i>Omnes homines libelli</i>	4,000
1. <i>Omnes homines</i>	2,100
2. <i>Partes prolationies</i>	1,200
3. <i>Celebranda divina</i>	600

39 In addition, there is a puzzle-like explicit at the close of the final *Omnes homines libellus* that strengthens the association with Jean des Murs. It was deciphered by Rob Wegman as a reference to Eleanor of Brittany, abbess of Fontevraud Abbey (personal communication, March 27, 2013). Jean conducted astronomical work for Eleanor at Fontevraud in 1326–27.

there were not separate species of musical notes, but instead only a single species of musical time that was divisible into a variety of durations according to a theoretical construct he termed the four degrees (*gradus*). Within each degree, there were three possible note durations in a proportional relationship of 3:2:1 (see Table 3). For example, within the second degree the relative values of the perfect long (worth 27 minims), imperfect long (worth 18 minims), and the breve (worth 9 minims) are in a 3:2:1 ratio.

Jean introduced this novel system of organizing rhythmic duration in the *Notitia*. In his *Compendium*, written after the *Notitia*, the *gradus* system is mentioned but glossed over quickly.⁴⁰ Instead, the *Compendium* begins with a more traditional summary of the various notes used in *musica mensurabilis*, describing for each their name, graphical appearance, and duration. This listing of note names and shapes comprises what Jean des Murs terms in his *Compendium* the ‘parts of prolation’.

TABLE 3 *Jean des Murs’s gradus system of note durations outlined in Notitia, book 2*

Note shape	Ratio (within each degree)	Duration (relative to minim)	Note names	Degree
	3	81	<i>longissima</i>	first degree
	2	54	<i>longior</i>	
	1	27	<i>longa</i>	
	3	27	<i>perfecta</i>	second degree
	2	18	<i>imperfecta</i>	
	1	9	<i>brevis</i>	
	3	9	<i>brevis</i>	third degree
	2	6	<i>brevior</i>	
	1	3	<i>brevissima</i>	
	3	3	<i>parva</i>	fourth degree
	2	2	<i>minor</i>	
	1	1	<i>minima</i>	

40 The *gradus* system is mentioned briefly two times in the *Compendium*: at the end of chapter 7, a figure outlining the four degrees is appended and introduced as follows ‘in hac figura patet in quatuor gradibus manifeste’; and in the following chapter on rests, the diagram of the rests is introduced in the following way: ‘Descriptio pausarum in quatuor gradibus singillatim’ (Michels, *Johannis de Muris Notitia*, 133, 135).

In terms of its rhetorical presentation, Jean des Murs's *Compendium* follows a question-and-answer format. The beginning of the 'Partes prolationis' *libellus* is structured similarly, with its long first chapter consisting of a series of thirty questions and answers. The first sections of the 'Partes prolationis' *libellus* and the *Compendium* have a high degree of textual concordance, though they are not identical, and the order of questions in the two treatises differs. The 'Partes prolationis' *libellus* begins with the shortest musical note, the minim, while the *Compendium* does the opposite, beginning its descriptions with the note of the longest duration, named in the *Compendium* as the *maxima*.

The most significant conceptual difference between these two treatises is that the 'Partes prolationis' *libellus* only identifies four 'parts of prolation', whereas the *Compendium* lists five. The *maxima* is *not* outlined in the first chapter of the 'Partes prolationis' *libellus*; later (in chapters 2–3) when the author refers to a long worth three longs, it is termed a *longissima* (within a description of the notes that comprise the first degree, namely the *longissima*, the *longior*, and the *longa*). The 'Partes prolationis' *libellus* uses the term *longissima* to describe the type of note that is termed a *maxima* in the *Compendium*. *Longissima* is the term Jean used in *Notitia*, where he also did not use the word *maxima*.⁴¹

A closer reading of the passage on the *maxima* in the *Compendium* suggests that it may have been a later addition to the 'parts of prolation'. The questions on the *maxima* break the flow of the text, and are inserted within a more general discussion of the nature of musical time. Following the discussion of musical time, Jean has a series of questions and answers on the remaining four parts of *prolatio*: the long, breve, semibreve, and minim. It may be that the extant version of the *Compendium* is a revision of a text that at first had outlined only four parts of prolation. That is to say, there may have once been an earlier version of the *Compendium* that resembled even more closely the text now surviving in the 'Partes prolationis' *libellus*.

The discrepancy between the four parts of prolation of the 'Partes prolationis' text and the five parts in the *Compendium* is representative of a move towards a simplification of *ars nova* theory in the *Compendium*. While in the *gradus* system the prolation or duration of musical time may be thought of as comprising four degrees or 'parts', where the first and third element of each degree exist in a 3:1 relationship, the last element of each degree also has a 3:1

41 *Notitia* 2.5.6 (ed. Michels, *Johannis de Muris Notitia*, 79). Jean des Murs also uses the term 'triplex longa' for this note value. See also the table appended to this chapter in several of the manuscript sources that also uses the term 'longissima' (ibid.).

relationship with the third element of the next degree. For example, the last element of the first degree, the long, is in a 3:1 relationship with the third element of the second degree, the breve (see Table 3). Thus, an understanding of the relationship between the third elements of each degree—the long, breve, semibreve, and minim—maps onto the concept of the four ‘parts’ of ‘prolation’. In the *Compendium*, however, this relatively complex conceptualisation of relationships is simplified so that ‘parts of prolation’ simply become the note shapes that are needed to represent the possibilities of the system, that is, the five note shapes—maxima (=longissima), long, breve, semibreve and minim.

After the thirty questions that open the ‘Partes prolationis’ *libellus*, chapter 2 abandons the question-and-answer format. Unfortunately, the verso of fol. 58 is considerably worn, and the ink quite faded, particularly its top half, thus making chapters 2 to 4 more difficult to decipher. It is not currently possible to see exactly where chapter 3 begins. Yet the general gist is clear: these two chapters focus on the *gradus* system, and are a much more expansive treatment of this theoretical construct than the two brief mentions found in Jean des Murs’s *Compendium*.

In these two chapters, the ‘Partes prolationis’ author describes how a single continuous pitch can be understood as being measured by four degrees (*gradus*) of duration, from the *longissima* to the unitary value of the minim (‘Omnis aut vox quantacumque frangibilis aut proluxa infra . . . quatuor gradibus includitur’),⁴² and lists the three notes within each of the four degrees. The author also indicates that an illustrative figure is appended to the end of the treatise that outlines the four degrees (‘Et isti .4. gradus qui ex perfectionibus disponitur ad [imperfeciones] ponuntur sicut in figuris in fine operis approbatur’). An illustrative table that outlines the four degrees *is* included in most manuscripts of the *Notitia*, although it is not actually appended either to the ‘Partes prolationis’ *libellus* or to the BnF lat. 7378A copy of *Notitia*, since the scribe of BnF lat. 7378A rarely included either diagrams or music examples in his copies of music theory treatises. We might assume that such a table was also originally included with the original exemplar for the ‘Partes prolationis’ *libellus*.⁴³

Chapters 5 and 6 of the ‘Partes prolationis’ *libellus* consider perfect and imperfect measure, and the notion that perfect and imperfect mensurations are convertible. That is to say, if a perfect mensuration contains 3 breves per long

42 Words that are difficult to fully decipher are indicated here by ellipsis, and conjectures within square brackets.

43 A caption for these diagrams is indicated at the end of the second *libellus* before the third *libellus* begins, but the diagrams themselves were omitted.

(this was called perfect *modus*), and an imperfect measure contains 2 breves (imperfect *modus*), then two mensural units of perfect *modus* are equivalent to three mensural units of imperfect *modus*, and two voices *can* sing these in these two different mensurations *at the same time*.⁴⁴ Although chapter 11 of the *Compendium* has one sentence on how perfect and imperfect measures can be combined in this way—and several *ars nova* motets, including some by Vitry, exploit this possibility—this again is a topic examined in more detail in *Notitia* (chapter 7).⁴⁵

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 of the 'Partes prolationis' *libellus* are on three topics that were grouped together in the *Compendium*, namely modes, ligatures, and rests, although in the *Compendium* the ordering is rests, ligatures, modes.⁴⁶ Jean des Murs's *Compendium* is focused on a summative coverage of topics most relevant to practical musicians and scribes, such as the exact interpretation and graphical appearance of ligatures and rests. Such practical matters were barely mentioned in *Notitia*—neither in book 2 nor in the *Conclusiones*. In fact, in the *Notitia*, Jean comments that these topics—rests, ligatures—had been adequately covered by the older masters and so he would not elaborate on them further.

One issue of terminology is worth noting within the discussion of ligatures in the 'Partes prolationis' *libellus*. The chapter on ligatures in 'Partes prolationis' has similar rules and language to those given in Jean's *Compendium* and also the later *Libellus*.⁴⁷ But perhaps significantly, the author of the 'Partes prolationis' consistently uses the term *cauda* (and not *tractus*) to describe the stems added to, or removed from, ligatures. Most fourteenth-century music treatises have the term *tractus*, including Jean des Murs's *Compendium* and *Libellus*. *Cauda* is used in the following group of treatises: Johannes Boen's *Ars*, the *Ars discantus* of the Ghent manuscript, and in the anonymous treatise

44 The simultaneous singing of different mensurations was anathema to the best-known critic of the *ars nova*, Jacobus, author of the *Speculum musicae*, who criticised modern 'irregular' songs where the mensural units do not begin and end together. See Roger Braggard, ed., *Jacobi Leodiensis Speculum musicae*, 8 vols. (Rome, 1955–73), 7:58.

45 *Notitia* 2.7 ('De tempore perfecto et imperfecto'), 84–85.

46 One manuscript source of the *Compendium* has the order ligatures, modes, rests. Michels notes that the chapter on rests is missing from MS Paris, BnF, lat. 14741, and is placed after the chapter on ligatures in the source MS Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 70/71 (Michels, ed., *Notitia*, 135).

47 However, the 'Partes prolationis' author refrains from describing the ligatures as having perfection or *proprietas*, as both the *Compendium* and *Libellus* do (following the standard descriptions found in Franco of Cologne and other thirteenth-century theorists).

on mensural music in a manuscript now in Erfurt and published by Johannes Wolf;⁴⁸ all of these are northeastern sources, and possibly relate to the scribe Nicolaus Judeus's origins in the Low Countries.

The relationship between the content and structure of the 'Partes prolationis' *libellus* and the two clearly attributed *ars nova* treatises of Jean des Murs is summarised in Table 4. This preliminary analysis suggests two possible hypotheses. First, that this is actually a treatise written by Jean des Murs, and represents an intermediary stage of thought between his authorship of the *Notitia* and the *Compendium*. The 'Partes prolationis' *libellus* transmits some concepts and terminology, and a format developed further in the *Compendium*. It retains, however, the lengthy treatment of the *gradus* system and the discussion of the combination of perfect and imperfect mensuration that were omitted from the *Compendium*.

The alternative hypothesis is that the *Omnes homines libelli* are not by Jean des Murs, but rather are a compendium by some other author, who has pieced together Jean des Murs's theories from a variety of sources. Though beyond the scope of this preliminary study, an analysis of the content of the first and third *libelli* should add weight to one or the other of these hypotheses. However, some significant connections between other works of Jean des Murs and the text of the first *libellus* can be provisionally outlined here.

TABLE 4 *Comparison between the topical coverage of the 'Partes prolationis' libellus and Notitia and Compendium*

<i>'Partes prolationis' libellus</i>		<i>Similarities to Notitia, Compendium</i>
c.1	Q & A on note figurations (4 parts of prolation)	≈ Q & A of <i>Compendium</i> (format and content, but 5 parts of prolation, also including the <i>maxima</i>)
c.2–4	<i>gradus</i> system	≈ <i>Notitia</i> (emphasis on the <i>gradus</i> system)
c.5–6	perfect and imperfect mensurations	≈ <i>Notitia</i> (more expanded discussion of perfect and imperfect mensurations)
c.7–9	rhythmic modes, ligatures, rests	≈ <i>Compendium</i> (rests, ligatures, rhythmic modes)

48 See Johannes Wolf, 'Ein anonymer Musiktraktat aus der ersten Zeit der "Ars Nova"', *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch* 21 (1908), 33–38.

The First *Libellus* of *Omnes Homines* and Its Concordances with Jean des Murs’s *Musica Speculativa* and *Compendium*

The ‘Partes prolationis’ *libellus* of the *Omnes homines* offers a fascinating bridge between the more abstract and conceptual *Notitia artis musicae* and the practice-based focus of the *Compendium*. The text of the first *libellus* also has complex connections to Jean des Murs’s *oeuvre* that have not been recognised previously. As mentioned, the first *libellus* is on speculative music theory (for a summary of its contents, see Table 5). Speculative music theory was also the subject of *Notitia* book 1 and the sole focus of Jean des Murs’s *Musica speculativa*, which itself is essentially an abridgment of Boethius’s *De*

TABLE 5 *Outline of the first libellus of Omnes homines and its textual concordances. The ll. numbers refer to the manuscript line numbers.*

<i>Omnes homines bk 1</i> (folio, line numbers)	<i>Content summary</i>	<i>Exact textual concordances</i>
58ra, ll. 1–8	On the opening statement of Aristotle’s <i>Metaphysics</i>	
58ra, ll. 8–15	On the four questions posed by Aristotle in his <i>Posterior Analytics</i> I: si est; quid est; quia est; propter quid est. On the definitions of music per Boethius.	= Noricus preface, par 1.
58ra, ll. 15–19	On Augustine’s definition of music.	= BnF lat. 14741 excursus and Noricus preface, pars 2–3
58ra, ll. 20–28	On the threefold division of music, and which disciplines consider them.	= BnF lat. 14741 excursus and Noricus preface, pars 2–3
58rb, ll. 28–32	On instrumental music	= Noricus preface, end of 4 th par
58ra, ll. 32–59	On the properties of music and their good/moral affect	= BnF lat. 14741 excursus and Noricus preface, middle of 4 th par (=58ra, ll. 35–55)
58ra, ll. 59–69	Introducing this work and the order of its chapters	

<i>Omnes homines bk 1</i> (<i>folio, line numbers</i>)	<i>Content summary</i>	<i>Exact textual concordances</i>
58rb, ll. 1–4	Augustine's definition of music	
58rb, ll. 5	Augustine on the derivation of 'musica' from 'moys'	= BnF lat. 14741 excursus
58rb, ll. 6–12	Further elaboration on this definition	
58rb, ll. 13–26	Definitions of consonance and dissonance; Pythagoras and the hammers	= BnF lat. 14741 excursus
58rb, ll. 27–55 to 58va, ll. 1–12	Pythagoras story, continued.	
58va, ll. 12–75	On the division of the tone into two semitones, including a consideration of the comma	
58va, ll. 76–77 to 58vb, ll. 1–16	On the species of consonance and dissonance	
58vb, ll. 17–38	Brief discussion of the division of the monochord	
58vb, ll. 38–40	Explicit	

institutione musica. The topics covered in the first *Omnes homines libellus* are similar to those covered in these other Murisian speculative writings: various traditional definitions of music; a discussion of the threefold division of music; the 'Pythagoras and the hammers' story; definitions of the music consonances and their ratios and their derivations on the monochord; the division of the tone.

A significant portion of the first *Omnes homines libellus* is textually concordant with an interpolation in an early fifteenth-century copy of Jean des Murs's *Compendium*. The MS Paris, BnF, lat. 14741, like gathering 7 of BnF lat. 7378A, transmits a central witness to the Vitriacan *Ars nova*. (This excerpt from the Vitriacan *Ars nova* actually follows on directly from Jean's *Compendium* with no palaeographical indication of the new text.) Within the BnF lat. 14741 copy of Jean's *Compendium* is a lengthy interpolation on the definitions of music (within chapter 6, 'Quid est musica' on fols. 2v–3r) that is not transmitted in any

other of the four manuscript copies of the *Compendium*.⁴⁹ Further searching for this text reveals that this interpolation in the *Compendium* is concordant with the unique prologue to the sixteenth-century copy of the *Musica speculativa* copied by the astronomer and mathematician Conrad Noricus (Konrad Tockler, 1470–1530, now with shelfmark Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 5274). The earliest version of this text, then, which also survives as these interpolations in later copies of Jean's *Compendium* and *Musica speculativa*, is the text within the first *Omnes homines libellus*.⁵⁰

It is difficult to say exactly how this passage ended up in three separate treatises, but it is reflective of the complicated manuscript transmission of des Murs's music writings.⁵¹ For example, of the fifteen manuscript sources for *Notitia*, only five actually transmit the version that Michels edited in 1972 (with book 1, book 2, and the nine conclusions), and the remaining manuscripts submit a variety of excerpts from one or both books. The nine conclusions that follow book 2 may have been a later addition to the treatise, and were also transmitted independently.⁵² The *Musica speculativa* has been most recently edited in a facing-page edition of its two versions that each have a different prologue: A (two of its twenty manuscripts have an explicit with the 1323 date),

49 The interpolation is in Michels, *Johannis de Muris Notitia*, 128–30, and the full version of the *Compendium* copied in MS Paris, BnF, lat. 14741, is transcribed in the *Thesaurus musicarum latinarum*, available at http://boethius.music.indiana.edu/tml/14th/ANO-QUAE_MPN1474 [accessed 2 October 2018]. The Vitriacan *Ars nova* (on fol. 4v) continues directly from the end of the *Compendium* with no palaeographical indication that it is a new treatise.

50 The prologue is on fol. 139r. Appendix 1 of the *Musica speculativa* edition in Susan Fast, *Musica (speculativa) Johannis de Muris* (Ottawa, 1994) has the text of the prologue (pp. 332–4). An online version of Fast's transcription is available in the *Thesaurus musicarum latinarum* at <http://boethius.music.indiana.edu/tml/16th/MURMNOR> [accessed 2 October 2018].

51 The topics covered in this *libellus* are replicated in a number of medieval music theory treatises, but I have not yet found any other textual concordances that are as lengthy or as exact. The 'Pythagoras and the hammers' story, for example, is retold in many medieval theory treatises, and is included by Jean des Murs in both his *Musica speculativa* (propositions 1 to 4 in Falkenroth, *Die Musica speculativa*, 92–115), and *Notitia*, book 1, chapter 3 (Michels, *Johannis de Muris Notitia*, 56–60). On a preliminary examination, however, the *Omnes homines* retelling does not appear to be textually concordant with either of these Murisian works. Further consideration especially of the sections of the *Omnes homines libellus* on the division of the tone (fol. 58va, ll. 12–75) and the monochord (fol. 58vb, ll. 17–38) would be particularly revealing, given Jean des Murs's in-depth and distinctive treatment of both these topics in his *Musica speculativa*.

52 Desmond, *Musica and the moderni*, 29–31.

and B (three of its twenty manuscripts have an explicit with the 1325 date).⁵³ The prologue to the B version of *Musica speculativa* is the same as the first two chapters of *Notitia*. In addition, there are a further three manuscripts of *Musica speculativa* that transmit a combined AB version, and another summary version transmitted in a further eleven manuscripts. A handful of both the A and B versions have no prologue at all and begin directly with the 'Omnem doctrinam' text.⁵⁴ Finally, the *Libellus practice cantus mensurabilis*, also attributed to Jean de Murs, is also transmitted in two textual traditions. The first tradition, the so-called 'maior recensio', which survives in over forty mostly German and Italian manuscripts, was edited by Christian Berkold in two separate versions A and B, but the second tradition (the 'minor recensio'), which is transmitted in six early and mostly French and English manuscripts, remains unedited.⁵⁵ In addition, a large section of the *Libellus* (chapters 5–6, 8–10) is textually concordant with the middle section of a treatise on the *ars nova*—the *Omni desideranti*—that was attributed in two of three sources to Philippe de Vitry.⁵⁶ An attempt at conveying the tangled threads of textual transmission of Jean's music treatises is given as Figure 3.

This tendency to revise and recast previous writings is also evident in Jean des Murs's astronomical works.⁵⁷ José Chabás and Bernard Goldstein noted the

53 The division of the transmission of *Musica speculativa* into two versions, A and B, was proposed by Michels (*Die Musiktraktate*, 18–19), a division that Falkenroth followed in his 1992 edition. The BnF lat. 7378A *Musica speculativa* was used as the base version for Falkenroth's B edition. In his review of Falkenroth's edition, Gushee questioned the claims of priority of either of the two prologues, especially since 'the preface to Version B is actually the first two chapters of Michels's *Notitia*'. See Lawrence Gushee, 'Review of Christopher Falkenroth, *Die Musica speculativa des Johannes de Muris: Kommentar zur Überlieferung und kritische Edition*', *Music & Letters* 76 (1995), 275–80, at 276.

54 This is how Jean des Murs referred to this treatise in his book loan list; see above, p. 47. The edition of the *Musica speculativa* by Susan Fast uses an AB version as the base text: M₁ = Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, C 241 Inf., fols. 126a–32v. This manuscript was produced in Paris in 1401, making it the 'second oldest securely dated copy', according to Fast, *Musica (speculativa) Johannis de Muris*, xxiii.

55 The edition of the 'maior recensio' is Christian Berkold, *Ars practica mensurabilis cantus secundum Iohannem de Muris: Die Recensio maior des sogenannten Libellus practice cantus mensurabilis* (Munich, 1999). For a brief discussion of the 'minor recensio', see the review of Berkold's edition by Edward H. Roesner, *Speculum* 78 (2003), 536–37.

56 Karen Desmond, 'Texts in Play: The *Ars nova* and its Hypertexts', *Musica disciplina* 57 (2012), 81–153, at 92–93.

57 Desmond, *Music and the moderni*, 99–102.

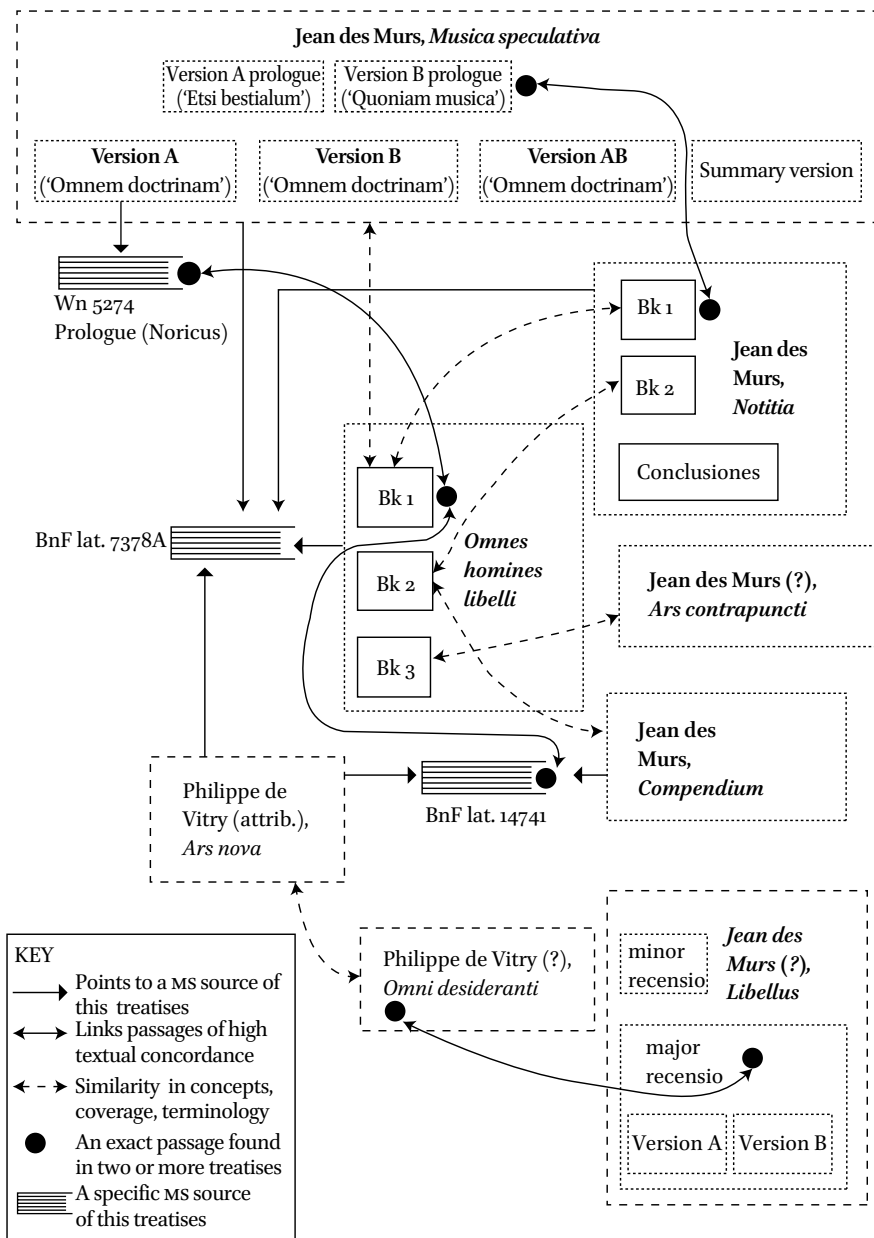


FIGURE 3 A visualization of the textual relationships between the *Omnes homines libelli* and other music theory treatises by Jean des Murs and Philippe de Vitry

following in their article on a recently discovered calendrical work by Jean des Murs, the *Kalendarium solis et lune*:⁵⁸

Several tables of his *Kalendarium* seem to indicate that this is a work that probably combines materials for [sic] various sources and composed in a hurry. In any case, it is not a fully finished product, and he later recast most of the tables in it, which shows John of Murs's rather exceptional capacity for innovation in constructing tables, mainly their formats, and generating new ones. John of Murs was indeed the most prolific table-maker among contemporary astronomers in Paris.

When Jean des Murs wrote his *Expositio*, possibly in 1321, he focused on only a few aspects of the new astronomy, either because he intended this work to have a limited scope, or because he perhaps he had not yet fully worked out (or did not yet have full access to) all elements of Alfonsine astronomy. Over the next two decades, he compiled, but then frequently reworked and revised, his innovative astronomical tables. While many aspects of the transmission of Jean des Murs's writings on music theory are bound up with interests and choice of a particular scribe in a particular time and place, and are not all reflective of their immediate exemplars, I would argue that the extant manuscripts of Jean des Murs's music writings also betray aspects of his compositional processes and working methods, and the likelihood that his notational theories were also developed over a number of years (and *not*, as previous historiographical narratives posit, within a burst of activity around 1321). The current print editions of these treatises obscure Jean des Murs's revisions to his music theory 'works', since they force their presentation into 'authoritative' versions. As for the *Omnes homines libelli*, if they are indeed by Jean des Murs, the fact that most of the theories transmitted in them are included or further developed in other of Jean des Murs's treatises might explain why there is only one extant copy of the *Omnes homines libelli*; since there was no need for continued circulation of that particular text if it had been adapted and expanded in other works. Further investigation of the content of the other two *Omnes homines libelli*, and on Jean des Murs's biography and scientific activities during the later 1320s, will hopefully add support to these hypotheses.

58 Chabás and Goldstein, 'John of Murs Revisited', 435.