Johannes de Grocheio
Ars musice

Edited and translated by
Constant J. Mews, John N. Crossley,
Catherine Jeffreys, Leigh McKinnon,
and Carol J. Williams

TEAMS • Varia

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

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MEDIEVAL INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo

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The Library of Congress has already cataloged the paperback and hardcover as follows:

Johannes, de Grocheo, fl. 1300.
[Ars musice. English]
Ars musice / edited and translated by Constant J. Mews ... [et al.].
p. cm. -- (Teams . varia)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-58044-164-3 (clothbound : alk. paper) -- ISBN 978-1-58044-165-0 (paperbound : alk. paper)
1. Music theory--Early works to 1800. I. Mews, C. J. II. Title.
ML171.J5913 2011
781--dc23

2011024658

ISBN (paperback) 978-1-58044-165-0
ISBN (hardcover) 978-1-58044-164-3
ISBN (ebook) 978-1-58044-187-2

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Acknowledgments

This project of editing and translating the *Ars musice* of Johannes de Grocheio was generated within an interdisciplinary medieval Latin reading group within the School of Historical Studies at Monash University (in Melbourne, Australia), that brought together specialists in intellectual history, musicology, and history of science. This was a collective endeavor that could not have been brought to fruition without the generous support of the Faculties of Arts and of Information Technology at Monash University and the Australian Research Council (Discovery Project 0555959). We are also profoundly grateful to a number of individuals who have helped us with this project, in particular Nancy van Deusen, Charles Burnett, and Rodney Thomson. Others who have given assistance in various ways include Alexander Fidora, Mary Wolinski, Margaret Bent, and librarians at the British Library, the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek in Darmstadt, and St. John's College, Oxford. We have also benefited from the opportunity to present ideas about Grocheio and his milieu at a range of places, initially at a symposium of the International Musicological Society held at Monash University in 2004, at the seminar of Jean-Claude Schmitt at the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris, as well as at Johns Hopkins University and Texas A&M University and at a conference held at Monash University in July 2006 on the theme of Communities of Learning in medieval Europe. We are also profoundly grateful to TEAMS for venturing into new territory by accepting a treatise on music theory. An interdisciplinary project such as this necessarily involves learning from a wide range of people and fields of expertise. Responsibility for any errors is of course entirely our own.

Abbreviations

ALD1	Aristoteles Latinus Database 1. Turnhout: Brepols, 2003.
AM	Johannes de Grocheio, *Ars musice*
BL	British Library
BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
CS	Edmond de Coussemaker, ed., *Scriptores de musica medii ævi novam seriem a Gerbertina alteram*, 4 vols. (Paris: Durant, 1874–76; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1963)
CUP	Heinrich Denifle, ed., *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1889–97; repr. Brussels: Culture and Civilisation, 1964)
GS	Martin Gerbert, ed., *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica sacra potissimum*, 3 vols. (St. Blaise: Typis San-Blasianis, 1784; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1963)
JAMS	*Journal of the American Musicological Society*
MGG	*Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik*, ed. Friedrich Blume, 17 vols. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1949–86); rev. ed., ed. Ludwig Finscher, 29 vols. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1994–2007)
Rohloff 1943	Ernst Rohloff, *Der Musiktraktat des Johannes de Grocheo nach den Quellen neu herausgegeben mit Übersetzung* (Leipzig: Kommissionsverlag Gebrüder Reinecke, 1943)
Rohloff 1972	Ernst Rohloff, *Die Quellenhandschriften zum Musiktraktat des Johannes de Grocheio. In Faksimile herausgegeben nebst Übertragung des Textes und Übersetzung in Deutsche, dazu Bericht, Literaturschau, Tabellen und Indices* (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1972)

Introduction

The *Ars musice* of Johannes de Grocheio

> It is thus the intention of the present work, as much as we can, to explain to them music. . . . (*AM* 0.2) But it is not easy for us to divide music correctly. . . . The parts of music are many and diverse according to diverse uses, diverse idioms, or diverse tongues in diverse cities or regions. If, however, we divide it according to the use of the people in Paris . . . our intention will be seen to be sufficiently accomplished. (*AM* 6.1)

These comments of Johannes de Grocheio (Jean de Gruchy) about the difficulty of describing music illustrate a driving concern of a remarkable treatise, composed in Paris during the late thirteenth century, quite possibly in the 1270s.[1] Grocheio is aware of the enormous range of types of music performed in different ways in different places. How can he impose order on this enormous subject matter? He decided to resolve this question by structuring his discussion around the practice of music that he observed in the city of Paris, organized into three main "branches": music of the people (*musica vulgalis*),[2] composite or regular, "which they call measured music" (*musica mensurata*), and ecclesiastical music (*musica ecclesiastica*), which he claims derives from the other two (*AM* 6.2). The originality of Grocheio's treatise has attracted considerable scholarly interest.[3] It has long been recognized as a unique source of information about musical life in medieval Paris.[4] Through his treatise, Grocheio enables a modern reader to become aware of the complex auditory environment of that city in the late thirteenth century as well as of its intellectual vitality at a particularly vibrant moment in its history.

Grocheio provides a series of observations on the subject of *musica*, the theory of which, he complains, is little attended to "in our days" (*AM* 0.5). He discusses a variety of subjects, including theoretical fundamentals such as the "principles" (*principia*) of music and music notation, as well as theory specific to measured and ecclesiastical music. Early studies of Grocheio's treatise broached the main area of concern that has characterized much subsequent interest: *musica vulgalis*.[5] Grocheio's comments about measured music have received some attention, as have his comments about ecclesiastical music, particularly because of his comparison of ecclesiastical forms with the forms

of *musica vulgalis*.[6] Other points of interest in his treatise include discussion of the principles of natural scientific enquiry as elucidated in the works of Aristotle and criticism of the Boethian divisions of music into *mundana*, *humana*, and *instrumentalis*.[7] A detailed listing of the contents of the treatise follows this introduction.[8]

Grocheio's treatise survives in two medieval manuscripts: Darmstadt, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, MS 2663, fols. 56r–69r, and London, British Library, MS Harley 281, fols. 39r–52r. Darmstadt 2663 is a fourteenth-century miscellany of otherwise homiletic and liturgical commentaries, including works by David of Augsburg (d. 1272) and a French-language copy of the *Elucidarium* of Honorius Augustodunensis. BL Harley 281 is an early fourteenth-century anthology of music-theoretical tracts and tonaries, including works by Guido of Arezzo, Petrus de Cruce, and Guy of Saint-Denis. Grocheio's treatise was first edited in 1899 by Johannes Wolf, who knew only the Darmstadt copy.[9] Ernst Rohloff completed a dissertation on the treatise in 1925, also focusing on the Darmstadt copy, publishing a commentary and edition in 1930 and 1943.[10] Only in 1972 did Rohloff consider both manuscripts of the treatise in a new edition, *Die Quellenhandschriften zum Musiktraktat des Johannes de Grocheio*, that included facsimile reproduction of both manuscripts, even though his transcriptions may not always have been fully accurate.[11] The following year, Albert Seay produced the only complete English translation that has been available until now.[12] In 1993, Christopher Page edited afresh and translated excerpts of the treatise relating to secular music but left large sections untouched.[13]

We only know about Grocheio's name from the Darmstadt copy of his treatise, the final rubric on fol. 69r reading: "Explicit theoria magistri iohannis de grocheio." The spelling *Grocheo* is given in the table of contents to Darmstadt 2663 (fol. Tv: "Musica magistri joh de grocheo"); nonetheless, the spelling *Grocheio* is preferred here as the final rubric in the Darmstadt copy, although in a display script, is in the same hand as the text of Grocheio's treatise.[14] A colophon has also been added in this hand: "Scriptori flamen sacrum tribuat decus."[15] An enigmatic feature of the rubric on fol. 69r is that it is followed by the word *regens* (i.e., "teaching") in a different hand and not agreeing grammatically with "magistri iohannis de grocheio." In between the rubric and the colophon, and partially obscured by both, is a word construed as *Parisius* ("in Paris").[16]

The treatise has been given several titles. Johannes Wolf used the title *Theoria*, reproducing the rubric on fol. 69r of the Darmstadt copy ("Explicit theoria"). While no opening rubric is given to the work in this manuscript,

Rohloff preferred *De Musica*, claiming that it derived from Grocheio's words: "De tertia vero puta de musica est speculatio presens" (*AM* 22.5). Elsewhere, however, Grocheio refers to his own work as "de doctrina musicali" (*AM* 0.1) rather than as "de musica."[17] The table of contents to Darmstadt 2663 (fol. Tv) identifies the treatise as *Musica*. The author is not identified by name in BL Harley 281; the rubric "Incipit prologus in arte musice" precedes the prologue, "Incipit tractatus" (fol. 39r) introduces the treatise proper, and "Explicit tractatus musice" (fol. 52r) follows it. The title *Ars musice*, which is employed in the present edition, derives from the opening rubric to the Harley copy.[18]

Grocheio's Norman Background and Parisian Milieu

There can be little doubt about the Norman origin of Johannes de Grocheio, first identified by Christopher Page almost two decades ago.[19] Grocheio speaks as if from personal experience about a certain type of *cantilena* sung "in the West, namely in Normandy" ("versus occidentem puta in normannia"—*AM* 9.6). He also refers his audience to a discourse (*sermo*) that he had addressed to Clement, monk of the Norman abbey of Lessay ("ad clementem exaquiensem monacum"—*AM* 9.1). *Grocheio* ("Gruchy/Grouchy") itself is an established Norman name, although there are several places in Normandy called Gruchy/Grouchy and thus several possibilities for where Grocheio may have come from (see figure 1). Page speculated that Grocheio might have been related to the noble branch of the de Grouchy (*de Groci*) family, whose earliest known representative is identified in a mid-eleventh-century charter by Hugo *de Groci*.[20] Yet little is known about this branch of the family prior

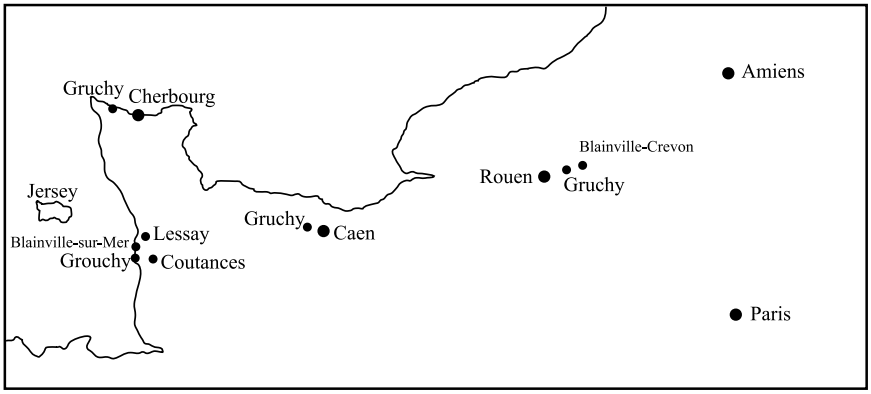

Figure 1. Gruchys in Normandy

to the fourteenth century, other than that two brothers, Robert and Henry de Grouchy, served Louis IX on crusade in 1248.[21] Settlements bearing the Gruchy name include one at the tip of the Cotentin peninsula, some thirty-five miles from Coutances, and another near Caen.[22] As Robert Mullally observed, however, Grocheio's acquaintance with Clement of Lessay makes it more likely that he was connected to the Gruchy on the western coast of the Cotentin, just south of Blainville-sur-Mer, thirteen miles from the Benedictine abbey at Lessay and less than eight miles from Coutances, the episcopal centre of the Cotentin.[23] This Gruchy, originally a Viking settlement from the ninth century, is likely to have been the site from where members of the de Gruchy family moved to different parts of Normandy, becoming a significant family in the Cotentin in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[24]

Grocheio's connection to Lessay may have been an old-standing family one, for in 1172 Richard and Thomas *de Groceio* witnessed a charter of the priory of Bohon (some twenty miles from Gruchy), alongside abbot Peter of Lessay.[25] The abbot was a significant figure in the region, from 1221 being a member of the cathedral chapter of Coutances.[26] In 1228, a William de Groceio, identified as a knight and royal servant, gave land to the Premonstratensian abbey of St. Nicolas de Blanchelande near Coutances, and thus was likely to have been from the Gruchy at Blainville-sur-mer.[27] In 1273, a Haretot de Grouceio bequeathed tithes to Jean d'Essay (Jean of Lessay), bishop of Coutances (1250–74).[28] Whatever his exact links to William and Haretot, the music theorist Johannes de Grocheio (Jean de Gruchy) inherited the name of a well-known Norman family. If he came from the Cotentin branch located in Gruchy near Blainville-sur-Mer, as seems likely because of his association with Clement of Lessay, his family may have been of only modest social standing within the duchy, but significant enough for him to have had familiarity with seigneurial culture in the region.

Recognizing that musical practice differed from region to region, Grocheio declared his intention to describe music as practiced by "the people in Paris" (*AM* 6.1) thereby suggesting the locale for the composition of his treatise. His role as a teacher is implied by his stated aim to "explain . . . something in brief about musical teaching" (*AM* 0.1) and the grammatically clumsy addition of *regens* to the rubric bearing his name in Darmstadt 2663. Norman allusions within Grocheio's treatise invite the proposal that he was a member of the Norman nation of the Faculty of Arts in Paris.[29] One college with which Grocheio could have been connected through his Norman background was the College of the Treasurer, established in 1266 by William de Saane, treasurer of the diocese of Rouen (ca. 1240/53–ca. 1280),

specifically for students (twelve in arts and twelve in theology) from the diocese of Rouen.[30] Whereas the college founded in 1259 by Robert of Sorbonne (1201–74), a canon of the cathedral of Notre Dame, was uniquely for graduates studying theology, the College of the Treasurer deliberately covered students in both arts and theology. The College of the Treasurer, situated next to the Sorbonne, was endowed with a significant library that included the works of Aristotle and commentaries of Averroes.[31] Although Grocheio is more likely to have come from the diocese of Coutances, the possibility that he was connected through his family to the influential political and educational milieu of Rouen cannot be discounted.

Other evidence, however, suggests a link between Grocheio and another college in Paris: the College of Saint-Denis. This college was originally established before 1229 adjacent to the Dominican monastery of Saint-Jacques (founded 1217) to give a university education to a dozen monks destined for senior positions in the abbey.[32] As Sieglinde van der Klundert discovered, Grocheio's teaching was certainly known to Guy of Saint-Denis, who wrote his *Tractatus de tonis* probably around 1301.[33] Although Guy does not identify Grocheio by name, he cites the *Ars musice* directly and borrows key ideas otherwise particular to Grocheio, including his definition of *tonus* (*Tractatus de tonis* 1.1.11–19, cf. *AM* 26.1), his identification of consonances and concords as the principles of music (*Tractatus de tonis* 1.1.88–161, cf. *AM* 2.2ff.), and his explication of a threefold perfection in sound (*Tractatus de tonis* 1.1.300–322, cf. *AM* 3.3).[34] Although Grocheio never identifies himself as a monk, he does have familiarity with certain unusual liturgical practices described by Guy and presumably practiced at Saint-Denis.[35] Guy's intellectual debt to Grocheio's teaching raises the possibility that he had himself been taught by Grocheio at the College of Saint-Denis, either when it was still situated adjacent to the Dominican house of Saint-Jacques or in its new location on the Quai des Augustins, which could have been operational by the 1270s.

The account books of Saint-Denis first mention payment for an external teacher in 1229/30, recording payment of 43 *solidi* for "the robe of their teacher."[36] This was not a large amount, given that a single manuscript, such as a book of computus, could cost 60 *solidi* to copy and was much less than the sum given to a later *magister de Grecia* or visiting mendicant professors of theology.[37] Given that Grocheio opens his *Ars musice* by saying that he had been asked by certain *iuvenes* to explain something briefly about musical teaching, and that these friends had "for a long time given very great support for the necessities of [his] life" (*AM* 0.1), we can suggest that he composed his treatise as *magister iuvenum* at the College of Saint-Denis, and that these

young monks were the people who had sustained him as a teacher. Even if his name suggests that he was related to a distinguished Norman family, he clearly relied on his friends in Paris for support.

The *Ars musice* and Scholastic Thought in Thirteenth-Century Paris

The *Ars musice* includes direct reference to authors and works that point to teachings in the Faculty of Arts in Paris from the second half of the thirteenth century. Nothing is known about Grocheio's education before—and activities after—his sojourn in Paris. Nonetheless, he appears to have been profoundly influenced by the wave of interest in the scientific works of Aristotle, the study of which had been prohibited by the bishop of Paris in 1210, and again by the papal legate in 1215 (on pain of excommunication), but which gradually became widely known in Paris during the course of the thirteenth century.[38] By 1245, these scientific texts were beginning to be used widely within the curriculum, and by 1255, the four nations of the Faculty of Arts had agreed on a complete curriculum of Aristotle's works on natural science.[39] Grocheio's own education seems to have taken place in the decade 1255–65, when Aristotelian scientific thinking was becoming fully established within the Faculty of Arts.

The method of enquiry Grocheio utilizes to describe music in the *Ars musice* draws on taxonomic systems outlined in Aristotle's *Physica* (*AM* 0.3) and *De animalibus* (*AM* 8.1). Grocheio also refers to the tenth book of the *First Philosophy* (*Prima philosophia*), or the *Metaphysica*, in relation to the concept of prime measure (*prima mensura*) (*AM* 16.1).[40] Two other works on natural science by Aristotle are alluded to but neither is named explicitly: Grocheio reiterates Aristotle's argument that celestial bodies in motion produce no sound (*AM* 5.6), as elucidated in *De caelo* 9.1, and he also maintains that all sound is produced by striking, "as has been shown in discourses about the soul" (*AM* 12.1), as found in *De anima* 2.8. The *Physica*, *Metaphysica* (books I–IV), and *De anima* were first translated into Latin from the Greek by James of Venice between 1125 and 1150. Gerard of Cremona (d. 1187) introduced *De caelo* to Latin readers through his translation from the Arabic, while Michael Scot (d. ca. 1234) pioneered translation of *De animalibus* from the Arabic before 1220 and also translated the *Metaphysica* (books II–X and XII) between 1220 and ca. 1234.[41] These translations were superseded by those prepared ca. 1260–71 by William of Moerbeke (ca. 1215–86), who either translated anew or revised the entire extant corpus of Aristotle's works on natural philosophy.[42] It is difficult to identify the translations of Aristotle

that Grocheio used, because he elucidates Aristotle's ideas not through direct citation from any of the then-known Latin translations but through paraphrase, which often involves the conflation of otherwise disparate concepts. Grocheio's reference to Aristotle's *De animalibus* as a single book in the tripartite version (*De historiis animalium*, *De partibus*, and *De generatione*) as in Scot's translation, rather than the quinary version of Moerbeke, suggests that Grocheio may have been familiar with the former.[43]

Grocheio refers to other philosophers by name. Plato is mentioned several times in relation to notions about the reflection of the "world soul," the innateness of music in humans, and the demonstration of nature through number (*AM* 1.2, 2.5, and 4.9). In relation to the latter, Grocheio cites the *Timaeus*, which was widely known in the Middle Ages through the early fifth-century translation of Chalcidius.[44] Introductions to philosophy from the period 1230–40 confirm that the *Timaeus* and Boethius's *Consolatio philosophiae* were still studied in Paris.[45] Grocheio mentions John of Damascus's notion of the human soul as being in the image of the Creator (*AM* 3.4). One source for this is John's *De fide orthodoxa*, translated into Latin in the 1150s by Burgundio of Pisa.[46] Over one hundred manuscripts of Burgundio's translation survive, close to half of which were copied during the thirteenth century.[47] Grocheio also quotes verbatim (*AM* 9.5) from one of Seneca's *Epistolae morales ad Lucilium*, which circulated widely in the thirteenth century.[48]

The *Ars musice* contains a number of references to other intellectual disciplines, in particular, to quadrivial arts aside from *musica*. In *arithmetica* Grocheio assumes familiarity with cubic and perfect numbers (*AM* 17.1) and with five kinds of proportions (*AM* 2.8). Both of these are found in Chalcidius's version of the *Timaeus*, and they also occur in Boethius, to whom Grocheio explicitly refers. A knowledge of algorism, or at least the use of "figures" (*figurae*), is implied by the inclusion of Hindu-Arabic numerals in Grocheio's treatise—this is almost to the exclusion of roman numerals in BL Harley 281 while the Darmstadt copy uses arabic numerals only. Grocheio also mentions computus as one of three disciplines that churchmen "ought not to ignore" (*AM* 22.4). Sources for algorism and computus are *De arte numerandi* and *Computus*, the first two of three works that represent the Parisian teachings of John of Sacrobosco (ca. 1195–1236).[49] Within astronomy, Grocheio refers to the *aux* (*AM* 4.12), that is, the apogee in planetary motions, noting that there are many uses of this word. Such multiple uses are found in the *Theorica planetarum*, a summary of Ptolemaic astronomy sometimes attributed to Gerard of Cremona, often transmitted in the thirteenth century with the three works of Sacrobosco.[50]