

Accent, Meter, and Rhythm in Medieval Treatises

“De rithmis”¹

MARGOT E. FASSLER

This paper is dedicated to Michel Huglo
in honor of his sixty-fifth birthday.

164

During the second half of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, composers at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris created a new style of polyphony.² As the new style developed, it required a new type of notation that could indicate duration more accurately. As the rhythmic style and its notation grew more complicated, a body of theoretical literature evolved to explain them.³ It was only after the notation had developed and the first theorists began to describe the style, that the first surviving manuscripts were written.⁴ Unfortunately, then, we have no manuscripts from the crucial decades between 1160 and 1230, from the time in which we could witness the slow evolution of first a new style of polyphony, and second a

¹ I am grateful for the advice of Professors Hugh Davis and Claude Palisca in the preparation of this work.

² According to Craig Wright, Leonin was born ca. 1135 and died ca. 1201. See “Leoninus, Poet and Musician,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* (hereafter *JAMS*) xxxix (1986), 31–32. Perotinus apparently was of the next generation.

³ The Vatican organum treatise has been seen as the first work to describe the Parisian practice. See *Der Vatikanische Organum-Traktat*, ed. Friedrich Zaminer (Tutzing, 1959). For a new view of the date of this work, see the paper of Stephen Immel, forthcoming in *Das Ereignis “Notre Dame,”* the papers of a symposium held at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel in April, 1985. Leo Treitler takes yet another view in “Der Vatikanische Organumtraktat und das Organum von Notre Dame de Paris: Perspektiven der Entwicklung einer schriftlichen Musikkultur in Europa,” *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis* VII (1983), 23–31.

⁴ For discussions of dating of central Notre Dame sources, see Rebecca Baltzer, “Thirteenth-Century Miniatures and the Date of the Florence MS,” *JAMS* XXV (1972), 1–18; Mark Everest, “Notre Dame Polyphony, the Johannes Grusch Atelier, and the Production of Music Books in Mid Thirteenth-Century Paris,” in *Das Ereignis “Notre Dame”* (Wolfenbüttel, 1985) (forthcoming); and articles by David Hiley, Sonya Patterson, et al. in *Journal of the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society* IV (1981).

new notational practice.⁵ The absence of manuscripts from the formative decades has left many central issues open to speculation, including the evolution of the rhythmic modes.⁶ Most important, however, the intellectual and aesthetic climate that fostered this new style of music has never been described or explained. We have yet to understand why Parisian polyphonists turned so forcefully to the rhythmic dimension of music.

The attempt to understand the earliest layers of Notre Dame polyphony has often led to the study of Parisian poetry, particularly to *conductus* texts. The polyphonic *conductus* repertory has seemed a plausible link between the untexted *clausulae* of the *Magnus liber* and poetic theory. On the one hand, *conductus* have poetic texts that could have been subject to the rules of contemporary poetry. On the other hand, they also have long untexted, melismatic *caudae* that seem analogous to the *clausulae*. Scholars have long believed that in at least some of these works, there was significant interplay between the rhythm of the texts and the modal rhythms of the music. Moreover, it is clear that composers of the period were poets as well, and therefore that even the untexted polyphony of the *Magnus liber* may have some sort of poetic model.⁷

Yet the ways in which music and texts are interdependent have proved controversial topics, as have the very natures of sequence and *conductus* texts themselves. Thus we are left with a series of troublesome questions: how were the texts of sequences and *conductus* understood by poets and musicians from the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries? Were the texts of *conductus* and sequences “modal,” that is, were patterns of long and short duration important to them? Was there an early tradition, pre-dating the development of the rhythmic modes,

⁵ For a view of twelfth-century polyphony in the vicinity of Paris, see Michel Huglo, “Les débuts de la polyphonie à Paris: les premiers organa Parisiens,” *Forum musicologicum: Basler Beiträge zur Musikgeschichte*, vol. 3 (Winterthur, 1982). The examples recorded here are all of an archaic style, predating the dramatic rise of rhythmic polyphony at Notre Dame. They do, however, testify to an active polyphonic tradition in the area. The Vatican organum treatise too, regardless of what its date may be, does not provide information about the development of the rhythmic modes.

⁶ The modern understanding of how the rhythmic modes evolved is expressed in the writings of Ernest Sanders. See, for example, his “Duple Rhythm and Alternate Third Mode in the 13th Century,” *JAMS* XV (1962), 282–89. For an explanation of the musical reasons for the modes evolving as they apparently did, see Edward Roesner, “The Emergence of *Musica mensurabilis*,” presented at the symposium, *Das Ereignis “Notre Dame,”* and forthcoming in the collected papers. Craig Wright has demonstrated that Leonin’s metrical poetry has little to do with the development of the modal system as we know it from the theorists and the earliest sources. See “Leoninus, Poet and Musician,” 29–31.

⁷ See Craig Wright, “Leoninus, Poet and Musician,” and Margot E. Fassler, “Who was Adam of St. Victor? The Evidence of the Sequence Manuscripts,” *JAMS* XXXVII (1984), 233–69.

that understood conductus and sequence texts in terms of such patterns? What role did accent play in the shaping of Parisian sequence and conductus texts? And the most significant query: what view of rhythm was held in Parisian literary circles of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries and how might this view have affected composers, both of monophonic and of polyphonic works? Some answers to these questions can be found in the substantial group of treatises on rhythmic poetry developed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries for the purpose of teaching the art of writing conductus or song texts, sequences, and similar types of poetry; at least one of these treatises is Parisian.⁸

The first part of discussion to follow provides an historical preface to twelfth- and thirteenth-century treatises "De rithmis." The second section presents an analysis of the twelfth-century "De rithmico dictamine." In the third part, attention focuses on a thirteenth-century Parisian view of rhythmic poetry as found in the "Ars rithmica" of the grammarian John of Garland. Discussion closes with a summary of what the treatises "De rithmis" have told us about late-twelfth- and early-thirteenth-century attitudes toward rhythm, meter, and accent in rhythmic poetry from the period. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss in detail the numerous ways in which attitudes toward accent, rhythm, and meter in treatises "De rithmis" may have affected Parisian composers, both those who wrote monophony and those who wrote polyphony, we will, nonetheless, be in a better position to begin this work once those attitudes have been studied and explained.⁹ We can begin to understand, for example, what Parisian composers took with them to their polyphonic practice from the monophonic repertoires in which they excelled, and, just as significantly, what they did not.

Since classical antiquity the subject of rhythm has belonged to the realms of both poetry and music.¹⁰ Augustine's *De musica*, the most im-

⁸ These works have never received the treatment they deserve, either from musicologists or from students of literature. Most are available only in the outdated and problematical editions of Giuseppe Mari, *I Trattati medievali di ritmica latina* (Milan, 1899) and reprinted in *Bibliotheca musica bononiensis*, Series 5, no. 1 (Bologna, 1971). This collection is hereafter abbreviated as "Mari." The "Ars rithmica" forming part of the seventh chapter of John of Garland's *Parisiana poetria* is included in Mari and has been edited anew and translated by Traugott Lawler (New Haven, 1974). Discussion in this paper will depend upon Lawler's edition of Garland; it is the best text now available. See, however, Gian Battista Speroni, "Proposte per il testo della 'Parisiana Poetria' di Giovanni di Garlandia," *Studi medievali* XX (1979), 585-624.

⁹ A view of the influence of Parisian monophonic practice on the development of Notre Dame polyphony is found in Margot E. Fassler, "The Role of the Parisian Sequence in the Evolution of Notre Dame Polyphony," *Speculum* LXII (1987) (forthcoming).

¹⁰ There is no accurate simple definition of the term "rhythm" (or "rhythmics") and no consistent historical tradition to explain its significance. Useful overviews of the subject

portant early medieval treatment of rhythm, is a discussion of rhythm and meter as found in verse.¹¹ The emphasis on rhythm as part of the science of music, but also as related to the sound of words, was transmitted to later medieval writers via a definition of music presented in both Cassiodorus and (in a slightly differing version) in Isidore of Seville:¹²

Isidore (*The Etymologies*, lib. 3, cap. 18)¹³

Musicae partes sunt tres, id est harmonica, rythmica, metrica. Harmonica est quae decernit in sonis acutum et gravem. Rythmica est quae requirit incursionem verborum, utrum bene sonus an male cohaereat. Metrica est, quae mensuram diversorum metrorum probabili ratione cognoscit, ut verbi gratia, heroicon, iambicon, elegacon, et cetera.

found in *The New Grove VI* ("Rhythm") and *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*, Wilhelm Seidel, ("Rhythmus/numerus") reveal the elemental ways in which the meaning of the term rhythm changed throughout the ages of Western history. A concise explanation of the differences between metrics and rhythmics is found in Richard Crocker, "Musica rhythmica" and "Musica metrica" in *Antique and Medieval Theory*, *Journal of Music Theory* II (1958), 2–23. A useful discussion of the same subject, but as it is found in literature, is Arthur Glowka, "The Function of Meter According to Ancient and Medieval Theory," *Allegorica* VII (1982), 100–09. Thomas Mathiesen "Rhythm and Meter in Ancient Greek Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* VII (1985), 159–80 offers an introduction to a subject "almost totally unexplored by modern scholars."

¹¹ Because the direct influence of Augustine on medieval music treatises is difficult to trace, the extent to which his writings shaped the new sounds of the twelfth century is not yet understood. There can be no doubt, however, that Augustine's *De musica* and his *De ordine* exerted a profound influence on twelfth-century art and aesthetics. For an introduction to Augustine's *De musica* and the basic bibliography on the subject, see William Waite, *The Rhythm of Twelfth-Century Polyphony* (New Haven, 1954), Marsha Colish, "St. Augustine's Rhetoric of Silence Revisited," *Augustinian Studies* IX (1978), 15–24 and Michel Huglo and Nancy Phillips, "Le *De musica* de saint Augustin et l'organisation de la durée musicale de IXe au XIIe siècles," *Revue des études Augustiniennes* XXXI (1985).

¹² The classic study of changing definitions of music remains Gerold Pietzsch, *Die Klassifikation der Musik von Boetius bis Ugolino*, Studien zur Geschichte der Musiktheorie im Mittelalter I (Halle, 1929). An important addendum to Pietzsch's history is Calvin Bower, "Natural and Artificial Music: The Origins and Development of an Aesthetic Concept," *Musica disciplina* XXV (1971), 17–23. The classification of music and its history is a much-neglected subject.

¹³ *Etymologiae*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911). Isidore transforms the three categories by expanding Boethius's third category of music, "musica instrumentalis," (the music that humans make with instruments) with a tradition also found in the Latin grammarians and Augustine that music should be divided according to how it is made, by the voice, by blowing into something, by striking strings or drums, etc. See Boethius, *De institutione musica*, ed. Godfrei Friedlein (Leipzig, 1867) I, ii, p. 189 and Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, II, vii. Isidore discusses harmonics as sung music, metrics (called "organica") as music made by blown instruments, and rhythmics as music made by struck instruments. The term "organica" was part of the three-fold definition of music found in fragments once attributed to the Grammarian Censorinus, a figure cited by Cassiodorus in his section on music in the *Institutiones*. See "Fragmenta et Excerpta Metrica," ed. Henricus Keil in *Grammatici Latini* (Leipzig, and rpt. Hildesheim, 1961) VI, 609.

The parts of music are three: harmonics, rhythmics and metrics. Harmonics discerns the high and the low in sounds. Rhythmics is that which inquires after the joining of words, whether the sound hangs together well or ill. Metrics is that which knows the measure of the different meters by proven theory; as, for example, of the heroic, the iambic, the elegaic, etc.

Because Boethius's *De institutione musica* (the standard source behind all medieval discussions of music from the Carolingian period through the early thirteenth century) discusses harmonics almost exclusively,¹⁴ Isidore's definition held little interest for early medieval theorists. Yet it reasserted itself occasionally, usually provoking some sort of attempt at explaining what the terms rhythm and meter meant to the theorist drawing upon the tradition.¹⁵ Aurelian of Réôme, the Carolingian scholar who wrote an early treatise on medieval chant, is something of an exception in that he combined material from Boethius, Isidore, and Latin poetic and grammatical theory to fashion his definition of music.¹⁶ He seems to have derived his discussion of rhythm from the chapter "De rithmo" of Bede's *De arte metrica*.¹⁷ We find, therefore, a significant blending of the poetic and the musical understanding of rhythm in this writer from the mid-ninth century. For Aurelian, as for Bede, rhythm pertained to a particular type of poetry, one in which there was a certain similarity to metric poetry, but which does not scan by the system of metrics. Rather, in this poetry, the number of syllables to a line and the judgment of the ear govern the structure of the verse.¹⁸

¹⁴ For a study of the extent and nature of Boethius's influence on early medieval theorists, see Calvin Bower, "The Role of Boethius' *De institutione musica* in the Speculative Tradition of Western Musical Thought," in *Boethius and the Liberal Arts: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Michael Masi, Utah Studies in Literature Linguistics XVIII (Berne, 1979), 157-74.

¹⁵ A partial listing of medieval theorists who comment on rhythm can be found in "Rhythmus/numerus" in *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*.

¹⁶ For further discussion of Aurelian, see the introduction and notes to *Musica disciplina*, ed. Lawrence Gushee, *Corpus scriptorum de musica* XXI (Rome, 1975). Because it is so clearly a compilation, Gushee warns us against calling it "the first medieval treatise on plainchant."

¹⁷ The passage in Bede is itself highly derivative. His main sources are the fourth-century Marius Victorinus and the seventh-century Audax. See Bede, *De arte metrica*, ed. C. B. Kendall, *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina 123 A, 138-39.

¹⁸ The example from an Ambrosian hymn is found in Bede as well. But Bede chose Ambrose to illustrate the principles of metrical verse, seeming to think that the hymn is rhythmic as well. The choice of this example shows how far removed Bede was from the tradition of classical Latin versification: Ambrose's hymns and early Latin hymns that may be by Ambrose are metrical, not rhythmical. They respect the laws governing long and short syllables and are in iambic dimeter. It is only the fact that they have a set number of syllables per line that allows Bede to discuss them in his section "De Rithmo." See discussion in F. J. E. Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry* (Oxford, 1953) Chapter 1, William Beare, *Latin Verse and European Song: A Study in Accent and Rhythm* (London, n.d.),

Rithmica est, quae incursionem requirit verborum, utrum sonus bene an male cohereat. Rithmus namque metris videtur esse consimilis quae est modulata verborum compositio, non metrorum examinata ratione, sed numero sillabarum atque a censura diiudicatur aurium, ut pleraque Ambrosiana carmina, unde illud: "Rex eterne Domine rerum Creator omnium," ad instar metri iambici compositum. Nullam tamen habet pedum rationem sed tantum contentus est rithmica modulatione. Qui scintillam vel perparvam habet metrorum, hic cognoscere valet nostrum de hac re sermonem. Etenim metrum est ratio cum modulatione, rithmus vero est modulatio sine ratione, et per sillabarum discernitur numerum.¹⁹

Rhythmics inquires into the joining of the words, whether the sound hangs together well or ill. Rhythmics seems to be very similar to metrics; but rhythmics is a measured composition of words, analysed not by the system of metrics, but by the number of the syllables, and it is judged by the discrimination of the ears: such are most Ambrosian hymns. Hence the following: "Rex aeterne Domine, rerum creator omnium," is composed in the likeness of iambic metre, yet it has no scheme of feet; on the contrary, it is shaped merely with a rhythmic measurement (modulation). Whoever knows even the least spark of metrics can understand our discourse in this matter. For meter is system with measure (ratio cum modulatione), but rhythm is measure without system, and is discerned through the number of the syllables.²⁰

In later discussions of rhythm from the ninth through the twelfth centuries, the blend of musical and poetic theory found in Aurelian became lost.²¹ The discussions of rhythm in the *Scholia enhiriadis*, the *Commemoratio brevis*, and the commentary on Martianus Capella by Remi of Auxerre all treat the idea of rhythm as the system of proportion underlying the chant.²² The most famous of the discussions in this tradition is chapter 15 of the *Micrologus* by Guido of Arezzo.²³ The eleventh-

224–30 and Dag Norberg, *Au Seuil du Moyen Age: Etudes linguistiques, metriques et littéraires* (Padova, 1974), 135–49.

¹⁹ *Musica disciplina*, ed. Gushee, 67.

²⁰ For another translation, see Joseph Da Ponte, *The Discipline of Music: Musica Disciplina*, Colorado Music Press Translations III (Colorado Springs, 1968), 11–12.

²¹ This fact seems to bear out Gushee's early thesis that Aurelian's treatise was the last representative of the "grammatical or rhetorical approach to church music." He now qualifies this idea, claiming that it does not give credit to the continuing force of this tradition on writings about music. See *Musica disciplina*, ed. Gushee, 13.

²² The relevant passages from these three treatises are conveniently located in Wilhelm Seidel, "Rhythmus/numerus." The commentary of Remigius on Martianus Capella is discussed in some detail in Edgar de Bruyne, *Etudes d'esthétique médiévale* (Bruges, 1946), vol. 2, Chap. 4, "L'esthétique musicale."

²³ See Crocker, "'Musica rhythmica' and 'Musica metrica.'" Crocker's treatment of this famous passage should be read along with Nino Pirrotta, "'Musica de sono humano' and the Musical Poetics of Guido of Arezzo," *Medievalia et humanistica* VII (1976), 13–27.

century Guido is, however, a harbinger of the future: he does use the parallel between poetry and music to make his points. And, indeed, in the thirteenth century and in Paris, the concept of rhythm as it belongs to the poetic tradition was again to become part of the art of music.

The tradition of writing rhythmic poetry is, we have seen, an old one.²⁴ Until the eleventh century, however, this poetic style was commonly associated with the “vulgar” poets and secular verse, hymn texts being the single exception.²⁵ But in the course of the eleventh century, when the writing of rhythmic poetry became increasingly important in western Europe,²⁶ the tradition came to exert itself in all types of sacred poetry, in texts for hymns, tropes, sequences, and other liturgical and paraliturgical forms.²⁷ The first theoretical treatise to reflect this surge of creativity is the “De rithmis” of Alberic of Monte Cassino.²⁸

It is immediately clear in this short but detailed work that rhythmic poetry has achieved a prestige it did not have in Bede’s time; Alberic makes no apologies for the rhythmic style. His introduction describes two types of rhythmic poetry:

Rithmorum alii sunt in quibus consideratur mensura tantum sillabarum sine omni longitudinis et brevitatis consideratione. Alii sunt in

²⁴ Augustine’s “Psalm against the Donatists” is traditionally cited as the first in a long tradition of Christian poems composed in rhythmic verse. For an edition of this famous work, see *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* LI (Leipzig, 1908). Augustine discussed the poem himself in the *Retractions* and in letter 101. For two opposing views of this subject, see H. Vroom, *Le psaume abécédaire de saint Augustine et la poésie latine rythmique* (Nijmegen, 1933) and Dag Norberg, *Introduction à l'étude de la versification latine médiévale* (Stockholm, 1958), 88–89.

²⁵ See, for example, discussion in Bede, op. cit.

²⁶ Both the development of rhythmic verse and its *modus operandi* are highly controversial topics. Dag Norberg has attempted to refute the long-standing scholarship of Meyer (*Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur mittellateinischen Rhythmis* [Berlin, 1905–36], 3 vols.), by explaining that rhythmic poets attempted to follow the schemes of the metrical tradition in a variety of ways. Rhythmic poems following trochaic models, for example, present a fairly rigid adherence to a pattern of regularly alternating accent; rhythmic poetry of quasi-iambic structure, on the other hand, is freer in its use of regular accent patterns.

²⁷ The changes wrought in new liturgical texts written in the eleventh and twelfth centuries by the influx of rhythmic poetry are many. A concise table of the transitions in various areas of development can be found in Sarah Fuller, “Aquitanian Polyphony of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California, Berkeley, 1969) 11–14. Scholars have long recognized that the new poetry, all of which was sung, had a dramatic influence on musical style. An outline indicating differences between St. Gall *Agnus Dei* tropes from the Carolingian period and a later St. Gall repertory with rhythmic texts can be found in Gunilla Iverson, *Tropes de l’Agnus Dei*, *Corpus Troporum* IV (Stockholm, 1980), 293–302.

²⁸ My discussion of this work is indebted to the exemplary edition by Hugh H. Davis, “The ‘De rithmis’ of Alberic of Monte Cassino: A Critical Edition,” *Mediaeval Studies* XXVIII (1966) 198–227. Alberic’s importance as a poet has been established by O. J. Blum in “Alberic of Monte Cassino and the Hymns and Rhythms Ascribed to Saint Peter Damian,” *Traditio* XII (1956), 87–148.

quibus cum certo et determinato numero sillabarum etiam longitudo et brevitas est prospecta. Quod est apertius dicere: rithmi pariter sunt et metra. Sunt autem aliqui rithmorum de quibus edisserere decrevi per regulam.²⁹

There are some “rhythmi” in which only the measure of the syllables is considered, without any consideration of long and short quantity. There are others with a sure and determinate number of syllables in which long and short duration is considered as well. That is, to speak more plainly, they are both “rithmi” and metrical verses. And they are some of the rhythmic verse types which I decided to explain by rule.³⁰

Alberic sets forth descriptions of both types of verse, some in which only the number of syllables matters (the first three examples),³¹ and others for which the accent of the penultimate syllable is crucial to the structure of the verse (all the rest). In this second type, a concern inherited from the metrical tradition is more apparent. Alberic’s definition of rhythmic poetry, when viewed through the examples he presents to illustrate it, seems not to have meant that he thought some “rithmi” were completely metrical. It was merely clear to him that many “rithmi” borrowed patterns found in metrical schemata. But when they did so, they reflected them through accent rather than duration and used them at cadences.³² Alberic’s discussion of a “rithmus” with twelve syllables per line illustrates his method:

Diadecasillabus³³ rithmus est qui ex membris constantibus ex duodecim sillabis constat. Rithmus iste dupliciter habet rationem compositionis. Nam interdum ita ponitur ut prior pars uniuscuiusque membra

²⁹ Hugh Davis, “De rithmis,” 208.

³⁰ Dag Norberg states that there was a type of rhythmic poetry in which only number of syllables and nothing else was a consideration; this seems to be Alberic’s first type.

³¹ The first example Alberic gives to illustrate verse that is structured by syllable count alone, is that type which parallels Sapphic verse. For discussion of this type of rhythmic poetry, see Norbert, *Introduction*, 124–25.

³² Alberic was, as were later theorists “De rithmis,” concerned with the penultimate syllable of each line or grouping of words within a line. The cadence and its accent serve to punctuate and define lines, and sometimes line segments, in rhythmic poetry. When Alberic speaks of this cadence, he often does so in terms of meter, thus providing his rules and the poetry they describe with a patina of learnedness. Hugh Davis, 221, reflects on Alberic’s descriptions of accentual cadences: “The formula throughout the treatise is *producta penultima accentu* (the word order is sometimes changed, and a finite verb used instead of the participle)—‘the penult held by reason of the word accent’—and the meaning is . . . that the next-to-the-last syllable in the . . . verse . . . receives the stress because it is long, or, more precisely from the point of view of medieval rhythemics, it receives the word accent.”

³³ Davis retains what is probably a bastardized version of “duodeca . . .” (the preface signifying “twelve”) in his edition because he tries to be faithful to the archetype behind both manuscripts used in his edition whenever possible. This word seems to have belonged to it.

ex quinque sillabis constet, penultima accentu producta; pars vero posterior conficiatur ex septem sillabis penultima accentu correpta. Constat autem rithmus huiusmodi ex membris plerumque quinque, aliquando tamen ex quattuor, nonnumquam ex tribus.³⁴

A twelve-syllable rithmus is one which consists of lines of twelve syllables. This rithmus has a system of composition of two parts. For frequently it is constructed thus: so that the first part of each line consists of five syllables, with the penultimate syllable long by accent; but the latter part is made of seven syllables with the penultimate short by accent. Moreover, a rithmus of this type consists most often of five lines, but sometimes of four, sometimes of three.

172

Alberic's concerns in his "De rithmis" are clear. This master of rhythmic poetry has decided to prescribe for others certain rules about the structure of such verse. In fact he attempts to demonstrate that there is indeed a "ratio" or system for this type of verse. Several principles govern such poetry: 1. all rhythmic verse employs syllable count as its main structural feature; 2. the verse is punctuated at the ends of its lines, and sometimes in groupings within the lines, by an accentual cadence; 3. the structure of the entire strophe, the number of lines and patterns within lines of a strophe, is often prescribed as well. But Alberic does not mention rhyme, for this feature of rhythmic poetry was to become characteristic in the course of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.³⁵ It is unfortunately the case that one cannot be completely clear about the actual use of long and short syllables in the rhythmic verse described by Alberic. Although it is clear that the rhythmical poetry he describes took something from metrics, it is difficult to tell precisely what it is. When he speaks of "a long syllable by reason of accent," does Alberic mean that the syllable was really read or, more properly, sung with long duration? This question, of great importance to students of medieval music, does not seem to have interested either medieval theorists concerned with rhythmical poetry or modern students of this verse.³⁶

³⁴ Hugh Davis, "The 'De rithmis,'" 211.

³⁵ It is clear that from the very beginning rhyme played some role in rhythmic verse. Even the "Psalm against the 'Donatists'" shows frequent use of rhyme. But the dramatic increase in the use of rhyme in the twelfth century separates the later rhythmic repertoires from their ancestors. The reasons for this extensive use of rhyme in rhythmic poetry beginning in the late eleventh century remains a difficult subject. Vernacular poets, particularly the Germans, probably played a major role in developing the eleventh-century taste for rhyme. See Ulrich Ernst and Peter-Erich Neuser, *Die Génèse der europäischen Endreimdichtung* (Darmstadt, 1977).

³⁶ The best full-scale studies of the application of duration to rhythmic poetry have been Ugo Sesini, "Le Melodie troubadouriche nel canzoniere provenzale della Biblioteca Ambrosiana," *Studi medievali* XVII (1939), 1-101 and Roger Dragonetti, *La Technique poétique des trouvères dans la chanson courtoise* (Bruges, 1960). Both these scholars attack the application of the system of rhythmic modes, which developed in Paris during the thirteenth century, to most twelfth-century monophonic repertoires. We will return to this question in the pages to follow.

The total penetration of the poetic and musical arts by the rhythmic style described by Alberic of Monte Cassino was the most significant single event of the twelfth century in either of these realms. Both poetry and music were completely transformed by this new poetics, and in a variety of ways. The new rhythmic poetry was always sung and its development insured a new period of interaction between the arts of poetry and music. As we might expect, at the close of the most intense period of creativity, a new theoretical tradition rose up to explain the art of rhythmic poetry to students—students, we may assume, of both poetry and music. For such an art demanded knowledge of both these; it operated through the uniting of words and music under a system of common aesthetic goals. But the tradition of writing rhythmic poetry had, for some time, come under the aegis of the rhetoricians and the grammarians.³⁷ It is, then, no wonder that the first theoretical treatises to follow the fervent poet/composers of the early twelfth century grew out of the tradition of Alberic of Monte Cassino.

It is surprising that until this time, medieval treatises "De rithmis" have been left out of most discussions of Parisian monophony and polyphony.³⁸ Certainly, the treatises present problems: they do not exist, for the most part, in modern editions. Nor has there been any systematic attempt to locate more such treatises.³⁹ Unfortunately, therefore, the following discussion of these works is limited because so little work, especially paleographical work, has been done on them. It is impossible, in

³⁷ James Murphy says of the treatises "De rithmis": "In the late nineteenth century Giovanni Mari collected a number of texts dealing with *rithmus*. He pointed out that it was studied at Vercelli, Vienna, Paris, Lyons, Blois, Orleans, Tours, and Rheims, usually in connection with grammar. It is important to note that these studies seem to have been separate from the studies of that type of rhythmical prose called the *cursus*, which was used in its own way in the *ars dictaminis*, or art of letter-writing." See *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley, 1974), 157–58.

³⁸ The treatises edited by Mari were cited by William Waite in *The Rhythm of Twelfth-Century Polyphony* and more recently by Janet Knapp in "Musical Declamation and Poetic Rhythm in Notre Dame Conductus," *JAMS* XXXII (1979), 383–408. Waite followed through with a detailed introduction to John of Garland's "ars rithmica," although the focus of his discussion remains the identity of John the Grammarian. See his "Johannes de Garlandia, Poet and Musician," *Speculum* XXXV (1960), 179–95. But, controversial though the subjects of accent, meter, and rhythm in Latin texts from the period have been, these treatises have not formed a part of most discussions of the Notre Dame sources. Indeed, these theorists receive the fullest treatment known to me in Sarah Fuller's dissertation mentioned above in note 27, "Aquitanian Polyphony of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," 179–97.

³⁹ Unfortunately, Geoffrey Bursill-Hall, *A Census of Medieval Latin Grammatical Manuscripts*, Grammatica speculativa IV (Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt, 1980), 2 vols., does not include treatises "De rithmis." The omission is not surprising because the treatises are difficult to categorize. James Murphy says "... there was separate grammatical study of the phenomenon known as 'rithmus.' We do not yet know in detail the relation between this comparatively abstract investigation and the much more practical use of the 'cursus' in letter-writing theory." See *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 158. This paper will argue that the treatises "De rithmis" are practical rather than speculative.

most cases, until this work has been completed, to go beyond the very general specifications of Mari regarding essential things such as dating and places of origin. And yet, it is well past the time that these works and the understanding they contain was made a part of the modern study of late twelfth- and thirteenth-century Parisian music. The treatises, vital though they are, have not been examined perhaps because they belong to the study of both poetry and of music. Thus, no specialist in either of these fields has chosen to investigate them and the particular practice they describe. But it is precisely their dual allegiance that makes them so directly relevant to the art of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The treatises contained in Mari's edition are listed below, with indications of present locations.⁴⁰ It is clear that the twelfth-century "De rithmico dictamine" provides a kind of beginning for the entire tradition. In fact, all the other treatises are modeled after it, to greater or lesser degrees. The treatise that seems the closest to the "De rithmico dictamine," the "Regulæ de rithmis," has also been dated to the twelfth century. The "Ars rithmica" by the Parisian grammarian John of Garland presents a departure from the tradition of the "De rithmico dictamine."⁴¹ John's early thirteenth-century view, a Parisian view, seems to have influenced later redactions of the "De rithmico dictamine."⁴²

Medieval Treatises "De rithmis"

1100

1. *De rithmico dictamine*

Laon 465

Florence, Bibl. Med. Plut. 13, 22

Paris, B.N.lat. 15462

London, Bodleian, Laud. misc. 707

Milan, Bibl. Ambros. 465

Verona, Bibl. Cap. 247

London, B.L.Cotton, Cleo. B VI

2. *Regulæ de rithmis*

Admont 759

⁴⁰ For discussion of the relationships between these works, see Giuseppe Mari, "Ritmo latino e terminologia ritmica medievale," *Studi de filologia romanza* VIII (1899), 35–88.

⁴¹ William Waite argued that John of Garland the music theorist and John of Garland the Grammarian were one and the same. See his "Johannes de Garlandia, Poet and Musician." This position is currently out-of-favor: see especially the introduction to *Johannes de Garlandia: De mensurabili musica*, ed. Erich Reimer (Wiesbaden, 1972), vol. 1, 1–17.

⁴² For a discussion of the scholarship on the date of John of Garland's *Poetria parisiana*, the treatise that contains his "Ars rithmica" at its close, see the translation and edition of this work by Traugott Lawler, *The Parisiana poetria of John of Garland*, xii–xv. Lawler suggests that the treatise was originally written ca. 1220 and subsequently revised approximately a decade later. William Waite emphasized the importance of John the Grammarian's work on music. Because his theory that John the Grammarian and John the Theorist are one is currently disregarded, Waite's understanding of the importance of John the Grammarian in the history of Parisian music has also been ignored for some time.

1200

3. John of Garland, *Parisiana poetria* (ca. 1220)
(Several MSS)

1250

4. Redaction of the Arsenal (ca. 1260)
Paris, Bibl. Arsenal 763

5. Laborinthus of Everhard the German (before 1280)
(Several MSS)

6. Recension of Master Sion of Vercelli (d. 1290)
Novara, Bibl. Cap. 136

1400

7. Breve of Munich
Munich, Bibl. Reg. lat. 9684

8. Nicholas Tibino

It is clear at the outset that the twelfth-century “De rhythmico dictamine”⁴³ is far different from its eleventh-century ancestor, the “De rithmis” of Alberic of Monte Cassino. The author of the treatise has a new definition of ‘rithmus’: ⁴⁴

Rithmus est consonans paritas sillabarum sub certo numero comprehensarum.⁴⁵

175

Rithmus is a consonant (or rhyming) equality of syllables grouped by a precise number.

Rhyme has become an essential part of the definition of a “rithmus.”⁴⁶ In addition, the author tells us that his major concern is to describe the lines of the verse, which he calls “distinctiones,”⁴⁷ and the groupings of

⁴³ “Dictamen” is the art of letter writing. This popular subject inspired numerous practical manuals from the eleventh century on, one of the earliest authors whose work survives being Alberic of Monte Cassino. It became customary to close sentences with rhythmical patterns and thus, the “Ars rhythrica” was related to medieval dictamen. For a useful introduction to this subject and further bibliography, see E. J. Polak, “Dictamen,” *The Dictionary of the Middle Ages* IV, 173–77. For study of the manuals on letter writing, see William D. Patt, “The Early ‘Ars dictaminis’ as Response to a Changing Society,” *Viator* IX (1978), 133–55, and Martin Camargo, “The *Libellus de arte dictandi rhetorice* attributed to Peter of Blois,” *Speculum* LIX (1984), 16–41.

⁴⁴ Caesar of Cremona, an obscure figure about whom nothing is currently known, was mentioned by the author of a fifteenth-century “ars rhythrica” now in Melk (Ms. Melk 873). This author attributed the “De rhythmico dictamine” to Caesar and said that he wrote other things as well. See Lawler, *Parisiana poetria*, 333–35 for quotations from the Melk treatise and further commentary.

⁴⁵ Mari, 11.

⁴⁶ Indeed, Traugott Lawler translates “rhythmus” as a “rhymed poem.” This is probably not, however, the meaning of the term in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Accent and syllable count were equally as important to the style as was rhyme.

⁴⁷ “Distinctio” is the word Guido used in Chapter 15 of the *Micrologus* to describe a unit or phrase of melody.

these lines, which he calls “clausulae.” Thus, whereas Alberic was concerned primarily with the rhythmical patterns within individual lines (which he called “membra”), this author is very concerned with the relationships between lines within a clausula and by the shapes of four syllables at the least and sixteen at the most. A clausula should contain two lines at the least and five at the most.⁴⁹ The placement of rhyme or “consonance” depends on accent: if the penultimate syllable has a strong accent, then both the penultimate and the ultimate are rhyming syllables:

Veneratur Delia castitatis diva,
dimittantur Veneria gaudia furtiva,
nam salutis anime hec est sublativa,
illa super omnia nobis est nociva.⁵⁰

But if the penultimate is weak, then the rhyme should begin with the antepenultimate and continue through to the line’s end:

Luctu fessus, confectus senio,
genu tremens labante venio;
quam sinistro sim natus genio
nullo capi potest ingenio.⁵¹

Clausulae are categorized by how many different rhymes they have. A monotongus rhythmic clausula has one rhyme or tone (“thonggus” is Greek for “sound,” but the word came to mean “tone” in the Middle Ages), a diptongus has two rhymes, and a triptongus has three. Both the latter types can have caudae at the end, lines that are different from the others in the clausula, in syllable count, in accent pattern, and in rhyme (or in a combination of these). Thus the caudae serve to punctuate individual clausulae, but also to relate them. The cauda of one clausula can be consonant or dissonant (that is, rhyming or non-rhyming), with the cauda of a subsequent strophe. A cauda can also be “continens” (or adjoining):⁵² such a cauda, through its rhyme, initiates the rhyme of the

⁴⁸ The opening sentence of the treatise reveals all these concerns: “Ad habendam rithmici dictaminis noticiam, primo videndum est quid sit rithmus et quot ex sillabis distinctio constare debeat, et ex quot distinctionibus clausula sit, et ubi sit observanda consonantia.”

⁴⁹ Mari, 11–12.

⁵⁰ Mari, 12.

⁵¹ The strophe is the second of the “Lamentatio Oedipi.” The accent pattern alternates regularly between strong-weak in the first part of each line, to weak-strong in the last part of each line. But it is only the last part of the line which is specifically mentioned here. In other words, the accentual cadences of the first half of the lines are as tightly controlled as are the final cadences, but only the final cadence of each line has rhyme.

⁵² Mari chose the reading “concidentes” instead of “continentes,” although the latter appears in three manuscripts, and is the word chosen by later redactors of this work.

following clausula. The example below from the treatise illustrates several of these points; it is triptongus because it has three different end rhymes. There are two clausulae with caudae and the caudae are not consonant, they are continentes, or adjoining.

Vale, doctor, flos doctorum,
gemma, decus clericorum;
cetum vincis nam proborum
rithmicando.

Cunctos vincis compenendo,
cunctis spes es in solvendo,
et de te nulla perpendo
nisi bona.⁵³

In the final section of the treatise, the author describes four particular styles of “rithmis”; the styles permit the patterning of lines throughout a given clausula. In the most sophisticated of the styles, lines are related by transposition of rhythmical phrases, the transposition initiating a new rhythmical cadence:

Ihesu Christe, miserere,
fac me digne penitere;
penitere fac me digne,
ne eterno tangar igne;
igne tangar ne eterno,
regno frui fac superno.⁵⁴

In this style, the syllable count and the accentual patterns are the same from line to line. The interrelated sounds of the vowels are suspended and transformed upon a stationary grid of accent or beat.⁵⁵ The poetry,

“Concententes” makes only imperfect sense here, whereas, the meaning of “continentes” is clear and fits the sense.

⁵³ Mari, 15.

⁵⁴ Mari, 16. Mari chose to edit the third line of this clausula as “Ne eterno cremer igne.” I have rendered the line differently, using other manuscripts of the work and the authority of later redactions.

⁵⁵ It is essential to realize the striking difference between poetry such as this and the dactylic hexameters produced by twelfth- and thirteenth-century poets continuing in the metrical style. The dactylic hexameter, the meter of the *Aenead* of Vergil, was far and away the most popular meter for medieval poets who had cultivated an understanding of Latin metrical versification. The hallmark of this verse is its variety: a line of dactylic hexameter always ends with a spondee; the first five feet, however, may consist of either dactyls or spondees. Thus a line may be as long as seventeen syllables or as short as thirteen. There are also available a number of caesural pauses, and although these often serve to emphasize a usual ictus on the first and fourth feet, neither they nor the ictus are absolutely standardized. Of course, in metrical poetry word accent does not determine the patterns of the feet or of the ictus and can, in fact, often does, contrast with the emphases produced by these other features of the verse.

then, has two strongly defined and immediately apprehendable dimensions: the ongoing, fairly predictable thrust of its accentual pattern, carefully controlled by syllable count, and the variety of vowel sounds, themselves interrelated through rhyme, that unfold as the poem is sung. It is very different, on the one hand, from the metrical verse described above in note 55, and, on the other hand, unlike the “rithmi” composed by Alberic of Monte Cassino because of its dependence upon rhyme.⁵⁶

The “De rithmico dictamine” was revised several times by medieval authors. Although all redactions follow the structure of the “De rithmico dictamine” and often use the same examples to illustrate rules, there are several important shifts in these later works. The “Regulæ de rithmis” survives in Admont 759, a manuscript dated to the twelfth century by Zarnacke.⁵⁷ The “Regulæ” offers a slightly different definition of rhythmic verse from that examined earlier:

Rithmus enim est congrua diccionum ordinatio, consona, continenter sillabarum aequalitate prolata. Dicitur autem rithmus a graeco rithmos, idest numero, quoniam certa lege numerorum constitutus est. Numerus ergo in ipso notandus est, primo quidem in distinctionibus, postmodum vero in sillabis et consonanciis.⁵⁸

A rhythmical poem is an harmonious, rhyming ordering of phrases, continuously produced with a uniformity of syllables. It is named from the Greek “rithmos,” that is from number, for by a fixed rule of numbers is it constructed. Number, then, should be observed in it first in lines, and after in syllables and rhymes.

The “Regula” expands immediately upon the definition proposed by the “De rithmico dictamine,” acknowledging from the start that all aspects of a rhythmical poem are measured by number. The treatise also transforms the phrase “consonans paritas” used by the “De rithmico dictamine” into what may be a more explicit description of equality of syllables. Both Bede and Alberic failed to address this matter directly; some other redactions of the “De rithmico dictamine” employ its phrase in this position. But the author of the “Regula” seems to say that all syllables in a rhythmic poem are equal, giving the impression that duration is simply not a factor in this style of poetry.⁵⁹ Modern scholars can be grateful for

⁵⁶ For discussion of Alberic’s poetry, see Blum, “Alberic of Monte Cassino and the Hymns and Rhythms Ascribed to Saint Peter Damian.”

⁵⁷ See Friedrich Zarncke, “Zwei mittelalterliche Abhandlungen über den Bau rhythmischer Verse,” *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig: philologisch-historische Classe* XXIII (1871), 40–41.

⁵⁸ Mari, 28.

⁵⁹ We will see that John of Garland the Grammarian was even more explicit in this regard.

this possible attempt at clarifying a difficult point, a point on which most twelfth-century authors are silent. Perhaps this need for explanation arose along with the use of terminology borrowed from metrics to describe the accent patterns of rhythmic verse.⁶⁰ This terminology shows up first in the work of John the Grammarian and will be discussed later in this study.

The treatises described thus far present a twelfth-century picture of rhythmic poetry and attitudes toward accent, meter, and rhythm within that verse. Accent is the controlling force behind this poetry: accent rules the cadences and the rhyme which punctuates them. Meter apparently has no place in this poetry, except insofar as the accentual patterns themselves can be viewed as transformations of certain metrical patterns. Lengthening and shortening of syllables is mentioned only with regard to cadences, and always in relation to accent. Rhythm is taken to mean the variety of numbers or proportions found in the verse: a rhythmic poem has a specific number of syllables per line, a specific number of lines per strophe, and strophes often punctuated by caudae, lines that are distinguished from those clausulae to which they are attached. These caudae help to organize the relationships between the strophes or clausulae. Thus the poems are "rhythrical" (in the twelfth-century sense of the word) because they are accentual yet precisely measured in certain of their features. Rhyme and accent, always related in this poetry, have such power because they always exist within the frameworks of the lines, the clausulae and, ultimately, the poem itself. With all the importance given to number and proportion in this tradition, it seems that metrical feet, where each long syllable equals two short syllables, would have been mentioned were they employed.

The "De rithmico dictamine" was an influential treatise, existing in several manuscripts from a variety of places; it also served as the inherited body of information around which later authors structured works on rhythmic poetry. The actual pieces it describes are taken from the widespread repertoires of rhythmic poetry, sacred and secular, written in the twelfth century: sequences, planctus, conductus, liturgical dramas, versus, secular songs, and so forth.⁶¹ Thus we can assume that the

⁶⁰ Redactions found in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, Ms. 763 and in the late thirteenth-century redaction attributed to Magister Sion both describe accentual patterns in metrical terms. See Mari, 24 and 17-19. These descriptions, particularly the more detailed work of Magister Sion, reveal that the theorists were trying to describe the force of the accent throughout the entire line, and not just at the cadence. It has been clear that accentual patterns related to structures found in metrical verse have always operated in rhythmical poetry. It has long been just as clear that the two types of verse are dramatically different and operate under entirely different sets of rules. Yet, to express certain groups of accent patterns, the theorists borrowed from metrics, using spondees, dactyls, and iambs to describe relationships of strong and weak accents.

⁶¹ The work of identifying quotations from the treatises "De rithmis" remains to be done. Many of the quotations are from inner strophes, and simple incipit checks are not

practice described was generally accepted throughout Western Europe. To discover refinements upon this practice offered by particular places, we must turn to the repertoires of rhythmic poetry specifically created by them. It is fortunate for the study of Parisian rhythmic poetry and its music that there is both an important treatise "De rithmis" and a significant body of poetry, the sequences and the conductus, that are known to have been created in twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Paris.

At the very beginning of his *Parisiana poetria*, John of Garland greatly expands upon the traditional understanding of *dictamin*, using "prosa" as a word for his newly-invented subject. All prose, John says, "is pithy and elegant discourse, not in meter but divided by regular rhythms of clausulae."⁶² In addition to letter writing, John lists some examples including *historia* or rhymed offices, and *rithmus* which, he says, "we use in the proses or sequences of the liturgy."⁶³ But *rithmus* must be treated separately, at the end of his work, because it is a species of music.⁶⁴ John then offers a definition of music taken from Boethius, but greatly truncated:

But note that the rhythmic is a species of music, as Boethius says in his *Art of Music*: "The art of music embraces three general areas; one such area deals with instruments, a second area with making songs; the third is theory, which assesses those instrumental works and songs. . . . And a musician is a man who has the skill to assess, by his systematic knowledge and by careful thought coupled with a sensitivity for music, meters, rhythms, and all varieties of songs . . . and lyric poetry." Concerning which things we will speak at the end.⁶⁵

John draws upon the absolute authority of Boethius, but picks the parts of the text that suit his particular meaning: a musician is a man who understands both music and poetry. And, according to John, the two arts are joined by *rithmus*, the musical-poetical style found in the sequences.

particularly helpful. Mari began this work, but he did not have the *Analecta hymnica* and other modern sources to help him.

⁶² See Lawler, *Parisiana poetria*, 4–5. This work is hereafter abbreviated as *Par. poet.* Translations are from Lawler unless otherwise indicated. Lawler says of John's definition: it "seems to be John's own, and rather a definition of *dictamin* in its broad sense of stylized prose than of prose itself," 227. John the Grammarian was also a composer. See G. Vecchi, "Modi d'arte poetica in Giovanni di Garlandia e il ritmo 'aula vernal virginalis,'" *Quadrivium* I (1956), 256–68.

⁶³ *Par. poet.*, 6–7.

⁶⁴ Lawler believes that the *ars rithmica* included in Book VII of the *Par. poet.* may have been added as an afterthought when the work was revised in the 1230s. I find the reasons for this theory tenuous and, for the time being at least, consider John's "ars rithmica" as part of the original work. In fact, passages such as this introduction make it seem fairly well integrated.

⁶⁵ See *Par. poet.*, 6–7 and Boethius, *De institutione musica*, ed. Godfrey Friedlein (Leipzig, 1867), I, 34.

The “Ars rithmica” of John of Garland is by far the longest section of his *Parisiana poetria*. In this work, John transformed the tradition of the “De rithmico dictamine” into something new. He stated in the introduction to the *Parisiana poetria* that rithmus for him was part of the art of music, thus forcefully repositioning the art of rhythmic poetry.⁶⁶ “Rhythmus” no longer belongs to poetry and grammar alone; John has given it back to the art of music.⁶⁷ To further explain this position, John wrote a long introduction to his “Ars rithmica.” Music, John says, “is divided into the cosmic, which embraces the internal harmony of the elements, the human, which embraces the harmony and concord of the humors, and the instrumental, which embraces the concord evoked by instruments.” But then, John returns us to the tradition of Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville, stating that the third division of music has three branches: “mellicam,⁶⁸ metricam, et rithmicam.”⁶⁹ By “musica

⁶⁶ The Commentary on the *Anticlaudianus* of Alan de Lille by Radulphus de Longo Campo, dating from around 1213, anticipated John by dividing *musica instrumentalis* into *musica metrica*, *melica*, and *rhythmica*. See *In Anticlaudianum Alani Commentum*, ed. Jan Sulowski (Warsaw, 1972), 190–91.

⁶⁷ The background to his works require further study, with particular attention to William of Conches and Thierry of Chartres, both of whom taught in Paris in the twelfth century. The *Heptateuchon* of Thierry of Chartres, a treatise on the liberal arts, was lost in the destruction of the Bibliothèque Municipale of Chartres in 1944; a filmed copy survives. For discussion of this work, see Edouard Jeanneau, ‘*Lectio Philosophorum*: *Récherches sur l’École de Chartres*’ (Amsterdam, 1973). The need for further research into the manuscript tradition and sources of John’s writings has been recently emphasized by Geoffrey Bursill-Hall. See his “*Johannes de Garlandia: Forgotten Grammarian and the Manuscript Tradition*” and “*Johannes de Garlandia: Additional Manuscript Material*,” *Histo-riographica lingistica* III (1976), 155–77 and VI (1979), 77–86.

⁶⁸ The use of “mellicam” for “harmonicam” is discussed by Pietzsch, *Die Klassification der Musik*, 73–93. Pietzsch was apparently unaware of the Commentary by Radulphus de Longo Campo.

⁶⁹ See *Par. poet.*, 160–61. John expresses this relationship in another of his works, *De triumphis ecclesie*:

Musica cuncta ligat, mundana, humana, sed inde
Instrumentalis triplex calle meat;
Se melicae metrica, metricae se rithmica jungit,
Sed melicae dulcis est via secta triplex.
Dat studiis enarmonicam variisque choreis,
Aptam cromaticam ditonicamque cubis (tubis).

Waite discussed this passage (“John of Garland,” 185–86) and offered the following translation: “Music links all things: *musica humana*, and *musica instrumentalis*, but the latter is divided into three paths: metrics, which is joined to melody, and rhythm (united with) metrics. But the sweet path of melody is in turn divided three ways. It offers enharmonic music for study, chromatic music suitable for various dances, and diatonic music for instruments.” Waite, of course, tried then to reconcile the definition of music in the works of John the Grammarian with that of John the music theorist. He did this by arguing that John’s category “*musica melica*,” permitted three subdivisions and that the third of these, diatonic music, included practical music making. Therefore, it could have contained the divisions found in John the theorist: *musica plana*, *mensurabilis*, and *instrumentalis*. The argument seems forced: *instrumentalis* becomes both genus and species.

rithmica,” however, he no longer means the abstract laws of proportion cited by music theorists from the time of the ninth century. Instead, he means the “rithmi,” the sung poetry of the *versus* and *conductus*, of the late sequences and of several other genres as well.

When we compare John’s “ars rithmica” to the “De rithmico dictamine,” we find that other shifts have occurred besides the one described above. The old system of organization is still discernible; clearly John drew upon the tradition of the “De rithmico dictamine.” But he has gone his own way, using new terminology and highlighting the use of ictus or beat in rhythmic poetry. John divides the types of rithmi in two: those that cadence like iambus and those that cadence like spondees. A quasi-iambic line closes with the pattern weak-strong (short-long) and a quasi-spondaic with the pattern strong-weak (long-short).⁷⁰ In other words, a line closes with the accent either not on the penultimate (what I call quasi-iambic) or on the penultimate (what I call quasi-spondaic).⁷¹ This is the same distinction made by the “De rithmico dictamine,” but John uses terminology borrowed from metrics and does not connect the patterns with rhyme. Instead, he turns immediately to ictus, saying that the simplest rhythmic poem has a line of two beats. He then jumps ahead of himself and illustrates with a quasi-iambic line that has two metra, each of which has two beats or “percussiones” (or four beats in the line altogether):⁷²

Iam lúcis órto syderé.

In the discussion to follow, John is clear about the importance of beat in a line of rhythmic poetry. Simple poems, poems whose lines are all of the same type, are categorized by number of percussiones: a dispondaic line has two beats, a trispondaic line has three, and a quadrispondaic line has four.⁷³ All examples of quasi-spondaic lines are consistently patterned strong-weak throughout; word accent and beat are

⁷⁰ Quidam uero rithmus cadit quasi metrum iambicum, quidam quasi metrum spondaicum. “Iambus” in hoc loco intelligatur “dictio cuius penultima corripitur”; iambus enim constat ex breui et longa. “Spondeus” hic dicitur “dictio stans ad modum spondei.”

(A certain “rithmus” cadences as iambic meter, as it were; another, as spondaic meter, as it were. Let “iambus” in this place be understood thus, “a word whose penult is short”; for an iambus consists of a short and a long. “Spondaic” here is called a word standing in the fashion of a spondee.) *Par. poet.*, 160.

⁷¹ The reasons he chose to call the pattern long-short “spondaic” (what would usually be called “trochaic”) remain obscure.

⁷² A simpliciori igitur erit inchoandum, scilicet a rithmo qui constat ex duabus percusionibus, quia, cum rithmus imitetur metrum in aliquo, illud metrum quod est brevius constat ex duabus percusionibus, sicut iambicum dimetrum, quod constat ex duabus metris, et metrum ex duabus percusionibus, . . . *Par. poet.*, 160–61.

⁷³ *Par. poet.*, 160–63.

in perfect agreement. Quasi-iambic rhythmic poems, on the other hand, are only illustrated by lines of four beats. John tells us that a quasi-iambic line may have either seven or eight syllables. In some of his examples, however, the accents of individual words do not follow an iambic pattern of weak-strong throughout; only the cadences are consistently weak-strong:⁷⁴

Ave, plena gratia,
Ave, culpa uenia.

In others, the pattern is weak-strong throughout (except, in this example, for the opening of the third line):

Maria, perge previa,
Nos transfer ad celestia,
Prius emundans uitia.

We have seen that what John calls spondaic lines (what we might call trochaic) are consistently patterned long-short and are described in terms of “percussiones” or beats. What he calls iambic lines occasionally exhibit inconsistency in the patterns found throughout individual lines. John has tried to make beat or ictus the governing force of individual lines of rhythmic poetry, regardless of their type. He finds no difficulty in doing this as long as he keeps to lines that proceed strong-weak, the typical pattern of the Parisian sequences and most conductus as well, but when he attempts to discuss lines of a weak-strong or quasi-iambic cast, he gets into trouble. Rhythmic poetry of an iambic cast has always been less consistent accentually than rhythmic poetry of a trochaic cast.⁷⁵

In classical iambic meter, the ictus falls on the second half of the foot, or on the long. When this meter gets transformed into rhythmic poetry where longs and shorts no longer matter, the beat or ictus still falls on the strong or second half of the foot. Thus iambic lines are “upbeat” lines. But the natural force of the Latin language usually puts the accent on the first syllable of two-syllable words. Words with more than two syllables are governed by the “penultimate law”: if the penultimate syllable of a word is long, it receives the word accent; if it is short, the word accent falls on the ante-penult.⁷⁶ As it happens, then, many three-syllable words have a strong accent on the first syllable as well, but four-

⁷⁴ *Par. poet.*, 162–65.

⁷⁵ See note 26 above.

⁷⁶ I have cited Rosenmeyer, Ostwald, and Halporn, *The Meters of Greek and Latin Poetry* (New York, 1963), 126, but any handbook of Latin poetics would supply similar information.

syllable words, like those of two syllables, usually have accents on the first and third syllables. Poets writing accentual or rhythmic Latin verse, therefore, favor patterns of long-short. It is far easier to find words—two-, three- or four-syllable words—that are patterned long-short than the other way around and, therefore, easier to be consistent in following a regular system of accent when using such words.

In the next part of his treatise, the discussion of composite rithmi, John attempts to extricate himself from the difficulties of working with quasi-iambic lines, lines that are often irregular in patterns of word accent. He begins by stating that simple rithmi have only one type of line, but composite rithmi, which are to be preferred, combine “spondees” and “iamb.” The rhymes or “consonances” produced by these combinations occur according to laws of proportion found in discant and organum.⁷⁷ As Waite pointed out, Garland has tied the concept of consonance or rhyme in rhythmic poetry to the idea of consonant intervals in music.⁷⁸

The idea is far-reaching and complicated; the method of application is simple and, actually, of little consequence, except that it reveals something of Garland’s mind-set. Although the passage is a difficult one, Garland seems to be saying that rhymes occur in the second, third, fourth, or fifth lines of a strophe. In these occurrences, one can find the proportions that produce consonant intervals. John has worked hard to provide a musical framework for combining lines of different types of rhyme, those with the accent on the penultimate (quasi-spondaic) and those with the accent on the antipenultimate (quasi-iambic). He con-

⁷⁷ Consonancie rithmales habent se ad proportionem sexualteram et sexquiteriam, cuiusmodi proportiones contingent in musica: in secundo ut in duplo, sicut inter vnum et duo, ubi est dupla proportio; in tercio, sicut inter duo et iij, vbi est sexualteria proportio; in quarto, sicut inter tria et quatuor, ubi est sexquiteria proportio. Contingit etiam consonanciam esse in secundo et tercio, in quarto et in quinto, in discantu et organo; et hoc ad modum dyapente, que consistit in v vocibus, uel ad similitudinem dyatessaron, que consistit in 4 vocibus, vel ad similitudinem dyapason, que est consonancia consistens in pluribus; comprehendit enim dyapente et dyatessaron. *Par. poet.*, 164–65. Waite offers the following translation: Rhythmic consonances are in the proportions *sesquialtera* and *sesquiteria*. Proportions of this sort occur in music in the second number, as in two, that is, between one and two, where there is a duple proportion; in the third number, as between two and three, where there is the proportion *sesquialtera*; and in the fourth number, as between three and four, where there is the proportion *sesquiteria*. The consonance in rhythm can be in the second, third, fourth, or fifth (line), as in discantus and organum; and this is in the manner of the diapente which consists of five tones, or like the diatessaron, which consists of four tones, or like the diapason, which is a consonance consisting of several consonances, for it contains the diapente and diatessaron. Waite, “Johannes de Garlandia,” 190.

⁷⁸ See Waite, “Johannes de Garlandia,” 190–91. As Waite says, Garland goes beyond the usual definition of consonantia as identical rhyme. Dissimilar rhyme is also a consonance for him. It is undoubtedly for this reason that he rejects the conventional term *dissonantia*, usually applied to a new rhyme, in favor of the word *differentia*.

cludes this section by leading the reader through all the possible combinations of lines his fertile scholastic brain can imagine.⁷⁹

It is clear to us, however, as it must have been to John himself, that the lines he describes as “iamb” in his examples do not always have consistent patterns of weak-strong throughout, although their cadences are consistently accented in this way. To cover for this inadequacy, John introduces the following principle:

Et nota quod spondaica differencia in iambico rithmo incipit ab imo et tendit in altum in scansione, et addicione vnius sillabe ut sit similis iambico. In spondaico rithmo iambica differencia incipit ab alto et tendit in imum scandendo, subtracta vna sillaba ut sit similis spondayco.⁸⁰

And note that a spondaic variation in an iambic rhythmic poem begins with a weak syllable and moves upward in scansion, and with the addition of one syllable that it might be similar to the iambic. In a spondaic rhythmic poem an iambic variation begins with the strong and moves downward in scansion, with one syllable subtracted that it might be similar to the spondaic.

The multitude of rhythmic poems that are “spondaic” but that contain what John would call “iambic differentia” are now accounted for. The iambic lines attempt to follow the accentual pattern of the spondaic (strong-weak), except for the cadence, which follows the pattern strong-weak-strong. The example John gives following this rule is a poem for St. Catherine. It exhibits the familiar versification found throughout the Parisian sequence repertory: rhyming couplets in what we would call trochaic dimeter are punctuated by trochaic lines that are short one-syllable. These punctuating lines rhyme with each other, producing the scheme *aab aab*. John calls such a poem spondaic with iambic variation in the third and sixth lines.

Vita nobis exemplaris,
Vita tota militaris
Katerine floruit:

⁷⁹ I cannot resist quoting from John’s catalogue of types that occurs close to the end of his “ars rithmica”: “I said above that there are five types of simple spondaic rhythmic poems, each of which may take an iambic variation, making five more types, or ten in all. There are three types of simple iambic rhymed poems, two-membered, three-membered, and four-membered; introducing a spondaic variation, in either the third, fourth, or fifth line, makes three types; these with the three iambics already mentioned make six types, and those six added to the ten types of spondaics make sixteen types . . . (omitting several types). . . . These twenty types along with the sixteen spondaic types just treated make thirty-six types in all, and there is no rhythmical poem which is not reducible to one or another of these types.” *Par. poet.*, lines 1148–1167, 185–87.

⁸⁰ *Par. poet.*, 172.

Virgo, gemma virginalis,
Norma uita triumphalis
Nos pugnare docuit.

In his tortuous explanation of this phenomenon, John has reconciled cadence, historically the controlling force behind the shape of rhythmic lines, with accentual pattern. He still wishes to assign priority to the cadences strong-weak and weak-strong, clearly believing that the pattern of the cadence should be found consistently in the rest of the line. But John also began with beat or percussio in his definition of rhythmic poetry. He also wants word accents to fall in regular patterns so they can coincide with the beat or ictus. His scheme allows him to think that his cadential patterns are historically accurate, but that he allows for regularity throughout the rest of any given line by adding or subtracting the first syllable. Thus a line with an “iambic cadence” can begin with a downbeat: “Katerine floruit,” and a line with a “spondaic” cadence can begin with an upbeat: “Que culpam conculcasti.”⁸¹

There is more to John’s treatise than what has been presented here. For example, he also mentions the caudae or punctuating final lines that were so important in the “*De rithmico dictamine*.” But John includes the caudae in his discussion of the differentiae, interpreting them under the aegis of variation as described above.⁸² Thus the concept of controlled or regulated variability runs like a thread throughout the entire treatise.⁸³ John’s major concerns are for creating an intellectual framework for cadence and beat in the lines of rhythmic poetry and for removing any conflicts between the two.⁸⁴ He is also determined to do this, in so much as it is possible, by using terminology proper to metrical poetry and to the art of music.

We have uncovered the twelfth-century understanding of rhythmic poetry in the “*De rithmico dictamine*,” (a work surely known in the Parisian schools),⁸⁵ and have examined a unique Parisian treatise from around 1220 that expands upon the widely-circulating twelfth-century

⁸¹ *Par. poet.*, 172.

⁸² See *Par. poet.*, 184–85.

⁸³ He had complete disdain for a poet who made rhythmic verse with no regard for rules, however: “That makes forty-two, or forty-four if we count the two I have just excepted, and as far as I can see there are no more to be found, unless you want to write like the dabblers who do not care about rules as long as the last words rhyme, that is, as long as one verse matches the one before it with the same number of syllables.” *Par. poet.*, 195 (translation by Lawler).

⁸⁴ In metrical poetry, of course, ictus and word accent are frequently at odds.

⁸⁵ The several later recensions of the “*De rithmico dictamine*” edited by Mari, have received little attention in this study. In spite of the numerous subtle shifts of detail which they provide, however, they remain squarely in the tradition of their twelfth-century source.

tradition. We now have a view of late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Parisian attitudes toward meter, accent, and rhythm in rhythmic poetry. This is essential for complete understanding of both monophonic and polyphonic repertoires composed in Paris in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries: sequences, conductus, and motets (although to a lesser degree) all have texts created in the rhythmic style described in the *Parisiana poetria*.

What would the rhythmic style have meant to a Parisian composer who wrote texts and music for monophonic sequences and conductus? We can say with some assurance that the treatises "De rithmis" offer no system of long and short syllables to composer/poets from the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Rhythmic poetry, as it was understood in this period, appears to consist of syllables of equal duration. When one finally does find the music of rhythmic poetry rendered in notation expressing duration, that is, in the late thirteenth century, it undoubtedly occurs as a result of the rhythmic modes of polyphonic music being adapted to monophonic repertoires.⁸⁶ The influence travels, in this case, from the polyphonic repertoires to the monophonic, and not the other way around.⁸⁷ The aesthetic of rhythmic poetry owes little to metric poetry at this late period. Theorists such as John of Garland who discuss both metrical and rhythmical poetry are careful to distinguish between the two styles. But rhythmic poetry is no longer considered a style

⁸⁶ It has long been believed that the complete system of rhythmic modes developed in the discant sections of Parisian organum. Most scholars accept the theory that mode 1 (long-short) has historical priority over the other five; it predominates in the earliest layers of Parisian polyphony. The theorists state that the original values of the longs and breves were 2 and 1 respectively. Only later did the long come to have three counts.

⁸⁷ Several scholars have recently recognized the apparent futility of superimposing the rhythmic modes upon monophonic repertoires, Latin or vernacular. See, for example, Ruth Steiner, "Some Monophonic Latin Songs Composed around 1200," *The Musical Quarterly* LII (1966), 59–70 and Hendrik van der Werf, *The chansons of the troubadours and trouvères: a study of the melodies and their relation to the poems* (Utrecht, 1972). Yet, because the tradition of transcribing monophonic repertoires in the modes is an old one, dating back to Ludwig and his students, it has died out only slowly. An introduction to the vast bibliography defending the "modal position" can be found in Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Music: The Sixth Liberal Art*, (Toronto, 1980), 158–60. None of the works cited here, however, discusses the treatises on rhythmic poetry described in this study. The tradition of transcribing music with rhythmic texts into the rhythmic modes persists in the edition of the Parisian conductus by Gordon Anderson and is defended in the writings of Brian Gillingham. Gillingham traces the history of the modal interpretation of rhythmic poetry in the introduction to his *The Polyphonic Sequences in Codex Wolfenbüttel 677* (Henryville, 1982). He makes his case by using a variety of theorists from Augustine to Grochaeo, but also cites authors such as Matthew of Vendome and Geoffrey of Vinsauf, who were clearly discussing metrical and not rhythmic poetry itself. It should be mentioned that no scholar has been able to find any consistent patterns of ligatures or note shapes that indicate use of the rhythmic modes in the monophonic repertoires of the Florence manuscript; polyphonic settings of most conductus are also notated without rhythmic indications in the Notre Dame manuscripts.

for the unlearned; it has a respected tradition and a theoretical literature of its own.

The treatises "De rithmis" and the poetry they describe do demonstrate a clear emphasis on word accent and the regular patterning of the accents of individual lines. In the treatises within the earlier tradition of the "De rithmico dictamine," there is strong emphasis on the regulation of cadences. At cadences, rhyme or consonance and word accent are absolutely dependent upon each other. The thirteenth-century grammarian John of Garland places even more emphasis on the importance of accent than did the twelfth-century theorists. Composers of music for rhythmic poetry, usually poets themselves, had to come to terms with the accentual lines and cadences that were an essential feature of the texts they wrote and set to music. Throughout the twelfth century, composers found ways of incorporating the idea of rhyme and accent into music.

Most important of all, however, the carefully patterned, rhythmical framework of the sequence and conductus poetry offered twelfth-century composers a new environment in which to create music. I have argued elsewhere that the dramatic, new developments found in Parisian polyphony from the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries are, in part, attempts to import the familiar rhythmic phrases and the framework of the clausulae of rhythmic verse into an earlier polyphonic practice.⁸⁸ A tradition of writing sequences at the Cathedral of Notre Dame and elsewhere in Paris produced a new type of melody, a dependence on beat and rhythm, and a realization that the pause in sharply rhythmical music has a powerful effect.⁸⁹ All these stylistic features evolved through the particular interaction of music and rhythmic poetry that occurred in twelfth-century Parisian monophony.

The rhythmic grid or framework supplied by a text of rhythmic poetry was transformed in a variety of ways when Parisian composers transported it into their polyphonic writing.⁹⁰ But the polyphonic genres that first became "rhythmicized" by Parisian composers, organum purum and discant, were without texts of rhythmic poetry. To create the rhythmic pulse, the series of stressed and unstressed syllables provided by the text in their monophonic music, Parisian composers learned to use patterns of intervals that were alternately consonant and

⁸⁸ See Fassler, "The Role of the Parisian Sequence." For a general view of this subject, see Leo Treitler, "Musical Syntax in the Middle Ages: Background to an Aesthetic Problem," *Perspectives of New Music* IV (1965), 75-85.

⁸⁹ It is important for the sake of this argument to remember that the great repertory of late sequences written in twelfth-century Paris probably were created first by Adam of St. Victor and other composers in residence at the Cathedral of Notre Dame. See Margot E. Fassler, "Who was Adam of St. Victor? The Evidence of the Sequence Manuscripts."

⁹⁰ Several possibilities are discussed in Fassler, "The Role of the Parisian Sequence."

dissonant. Thus the rhythmic grid or framework as found in discant clausulae governed the vertical dimension of the music, and the listener is aware of the "rhythm" of the music because of its harmonic structure.

The subject of accent in *Notre Dame* polyphony has stirred controversy in recent scholarship.⁹¹ The difficulties of resolving this controversy are diminished by understanding the aesthetics of rhythmic poetry as known by Parisian composers of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. In their practice of setting rhythmic texts, particularly sequence texts, Parisian composers grew accustomed to creating short, rhythmically articulated phrases that unfolded against the relentless trochaic beat of the poetry. It was doubtless Leoninus's generation that brought a melodic style inherited from the sequence composers to Parisian organum purum. In the generation of Perotinus, however, the entire rhythmic grid or framework described in this study was taken into Parisian polyphony. The tenors of the discant clausulae supplied a framework with their steady, ongoing, consistently patterned phrases. Above these tenors, upper voices were able to move with increasing freedom as composers gained skill in regulating the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the music simultaneously.⁹²

It can be said, then, that stress accent, a key element in the rhythmic monophonic style, was replaced by harmonic accent when this rhythmic style was imported into Parisian polyphony. Instead of a stress accent, Parisian composers began to give the consonant, "on beat," notes of musical phrases longer duration. And thus, we have the beginning of the first rhythmic mode, and, indeed, of the entire modal system.⁹³ In the monophonic genres, rhythmic patterns were created primarily by stress accent; in the polyphonic genres of the early *Ars antiqua*, rhythmic patterns were created by alternating consonant and dissonant intervals and

⁹¹ Three recent articles present differing, although not necessarily incompatible, views of the subject of rhythm in *Notre Dame Polyphony*: Leo Treitler, "Regarding Meter and Rhythm in the *Ars Antiqua*," *The Musical Quarterly* LXV (1979), 524–58; Ernest Sanders, "Consonance and Rhythm in the Organum of the 12th and 13th Centuries," *JAMS* XXXIII (1980), 264–86; and Sarah Fuller, "Theoretical Foundations of Early Organum Theory," *Acta musicologica* LIII (1981), 52–84.

⁹² For discussion of these styles and musical examples, see Fassler, "The Role of the Parisian Sequence."

⁹³ Theoretical texts from the thirteenth century that superimpose metrical patterns upon the fully-developed modal system do not prove that metrical poetry contributed to the rise of the modal system and the new style of polyphony at *Notre Dame*. Such texts are rather attempts to explain the rhythmic modes and give them an historical basis. In fact, when one studies metrical poetry from the period it is difficult find any similarities between its *modus operandi* and that of modal polyphony. The rhythmic modes have patterns of long and short notes, as did metrical poetry, but the similarity appears to end there. The patterns of sound found in modal music are borrowed directly from patterns found in rhythmic poetry.

by making the consonant intervals long and the dissonant intervals short.

In conclusion, then, I would say that the primacy of stress accent in Parisian monophony does not suggest that stress accent itself was important in a similar way for Parisian polyphony. Instead, late twelfth-century Parisian composers brought accentual patterns into their compositions by new means. In their early polyphony, primarily settings of the melismatic portions of plainchant melodies, they had no texts. And so they turned to the rhythmical regulation of consonance and, later, of duration to create the rhythmical patterns they so admired in their texted monophonic works. Once this system of creating accent had developed, text accent was no longer needed to give music rhythm; composers had learned to create strongly-marked accentual patterns through sheerly musical means.⁹⁴ This, of course, was the great triumph of the Notre Dame school. Parisian composers undoubtedly took this new and decisive step in the history of Western music because accent had become so important to them that they could not do without it. This taste for strongly-marked accentual patterns developed in the course of the twelfth century and resulted from the constant setting of the new style of poetry described in this study.

⁹⁴ Once composers learned to create accent in music without text, a new aesthetic overtook the art of music. The polyphonic *conductus* and the early *motet*, therefore, stand at the crossroads of two aesthetic systems; they are the first texted settings of music already possessing an accentual system of its own. The new perspective offered by this study suggests that the interaction between text and music in the early *motet* is an especially fruitful area for study.