

THE NOTATION-TYPES OF TRECENTO MUSIC

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Compositions of the *Trecento* repertory are copied in one of two basic types of notation, commonly referred to as Italian notation and French notation.¹ In Italian notation the brevis is consistently used as the principal metrical unit. The completion of each brevis value is indicated by *puncti divisionis* (points of division) except when followed by a ligature, longa, or brevis, in which cases the *punctus* is superfluous. The meter within each brevis unit can be divided into four (*quaternaria*), six in duple meter as two groups of three (*senaria imperfecta* or *senaria gallica*), six in triple meter as three groups of two (*senaria perfecta* or *senaria ytalica*), eight (*Octonaria*), nine (*novenaria*), twelve (*duodenaria*), or the rarely used three parts (*ternaria*). The meter or *tempus* is often but not necessarily indicated by a letter symbol (q, i or g, p or y, o, n, d, and t respectively) written within or above the staff. Rhythm is determined either by the combined use of semibreves, minims, semiminims, and other unique note shapes; or by the application of the principles of *via naturae* or *via artis* (discussed by Marchetus de Padua in his treatise *Pomerium musicae mensuratae*) to brevis units notated exclusively with semibreves.² The longa in Italian notation is equal to two breves.

In French notation however, each of four degrees (the duplex longa, longa, brevis, and semibrevis) are divisible into either and only two or three of the next smallest degree. Thus, meter is determined by the imperfection or perfection of the maximodus, modus, tempus, and prolation respectively. The basic metrical unit of a given composition may be either the longa or the brevis. In fact as Gilbert Reaney has observed, most French music of the fourteenth century is written in brevis notation.³ The rhythm within and the duration of each metrical unit is determined by the

principles of perfection, imperfection, and alteration applied progressively from beginning to end of a given piece. As a result, the Italian application of the *punctus divisionis* to mark the close of each metrical unit is unnecessary in French notation. The *punctus* is used only sparingly to indicate a perfection (*punctus perfectionis*), signify alteration (*punctus alterationis*), point out separation of metrical units (*punctus divisionis*), or indicate syn-copation (*punctus demonstrationis* or *syncopationis*) in complicated or otherwise ambiguous situations.

In Italian *Trecento* sources many pieces have some concordances in French and others in Italian notation.⁴ Several compositions are preserved in all extant sources exclusively in French or Italian notation. In many instances that a French-type of notation is employed, it appears throughout a composition with the mensuration chosen and changed in direct relationship to its equivalent Italian *tempus*. This usually results in the replacement of the larger metrical unit (longa) by the smaller (brevis) and vice-versa, sometimes repeatedly within a given piece. This practice of course does not strictly adhere to the characteristics of French notation, but rather adopts the French system in a unit for unit substitution for the Italian system (see the table of equivalents below). In some of these French-type

Italian Notation			French Notation	
UNIT	Tempus		UNIT	Mensuration
BREVIS	Quaternaria	q	BREVIS	Tempus Imp, Prolatio Imp
BREVIS	Senaria Imp	i/g	BREVIS	Tempus Imp, Prolatio Per
BREVIS	Senaria Per	p/y	BREVIS	Tempus Per, Prolatio Imp
BREVIS	Octonaria	o	LONGA	Modus Imp, Tem Imp, Pro Imp
BREVIS	Novenaria	n	BREVIS	Tempus Per, Prolatio Per
BREVIS	Duodenaria	d	LONGA	Modus Per, Tem Imp, Pro Imp

concordances even the Italian *tempus* indications are given. Compositions which are copied in this manner cannot be considered examples of true French notation. This practice may be classified instead as French notation modified to the first degree (F¹).

There is a substantial group of compositions in the *Trecento* repertory, copied according to French principles, which involve no internal change between a longa mensuration (o or d) and a brevis mensuration (q, i, p, or n). These pieces may be considered as examples of true French notation (F).

Also present in *Trecento* sources are a few concordances which interpolate the Italian *puncti divisionis* as well as Italian *tempus* indications within an otherwise true French-type notation. This variety may be classified as French notation modified to the second degree (F²).

Following is a table of all concordances for each of the ninety non-unica madrigals and cacce in the *Trecento* repertory, listing the type of notation in which each is copied (I, F, F¹, or F²). The Italian *tempus* letter symbols (q, i, p, o, n and d) are consistently used to indicate either the *tempus* if a piece is copied in Italian notation, or the Italian *tempus* equivalent to the French mensuration if a piece is copied in F, F¹, or F². Should alternation (a) occur between two different *tempi* within a given section, that section begins with the first and ends with the last *tempi* indicated. All pieces not otherwise indicated as cacce (c) are madrigals.

COMPOSER and COMPOSITION	METER		SOURCES					
	1st Sect	2nd	FL	FP	LB	PI	PN	Others
BARTOLINO								
DA PADOVA								
1. Alba colomba	oi(a)	d	I		I		I	
2. Donna legiadra	oio(a)	dn	I				I	
3. I bei sembianti	i	o	I				I	I (ME)
4. Inperial sedendo	opopip	pq	I			I	I	I (FC) I (LM) I (ME)
5. La douce cere	oi(a)	p	I	I	I	I	I	I (FC)
6. La fiera testa	o	p	I			I		
7. L'aurate chiome	oio(a)	d	I				I	
8. Qual legge move	o	p	I		I		I	I (FC)

COMPOSER and COMPOSITION	METER		SOURCES					
	1st Sect	2nd	FL	FP	LB	PI	PN	Others
9. Quando la terra ⁵	oio(a)	n	I		I		I	
10. Se premio di virtù	oio(a)	dnd(a)	I				I	
DONATO.								
11. Faccia chi de (c)	o	d	F				F	
12. I' fu' già bianc'uccel	op	d	F ¹		F ¹			
13. I' fu' già usignolo	o	p	F ¹				F ¹	
14. L'aspido sordo	i	p	F		F			
15. Lucida pecorella	i	d	F ¹	F ¹			F ¹	
16. Seguendo 'l canto ⁶	q	d	IF ²	F ¹			F ¹	
17. Sovran'uccello	oioip	d	I	I				
18. Un bel girfalco	op	d	I				I	
19. Un cane, un'oca	oio(a)	n	I	I				
GHERARDELLO								
20. Con levrieri	od	d	F	F	F			
21. Intrand'ad abitar ⁷	odn	n	F ¹	F ¹			F ¹	
22. Per prender caccia- gion ⁸	od	d	F ¹	I				
23. Sotto verdi fraschetti	o-ip(a)	d	F ¹	I	F ¹	F ¹		
24. Tosto che l'alba (c)	i	i	F	F	F	F		
GIOVANNI DA CASCIA								
25. Agnel son bianco	oio(a)	d	I	I		I	I	
26. Appress'un fiume	dnd	d	I	F ¹	I			I(GA)
27. Donna già fu' gen- tile	oio ⁹	d	I	I				
28. La bella stella ¹⁰	oip	ipi(a)	I	I		I		I(FD) I(VR)
29. Nascoso'l viso ¹¹	dnd(a)	ndn(a)	I	F ¹				I(VR)
30. Nel mezzo a sei pa- von	o ¹²	d	F ²	I			I	F(VO)

COMPOSER and COMPOSITION	METER		SOURCES					
	1st Sect	2nd	FL	FP	LB	PI	PN	Others
31. O perlaro gentil ¹³	oio	d	I	I	I	I		
32. O tu! cara scienza ¹⁴	oio(a)	io	I	I	I		I	
33. Più non mi curo ¹⁵	dnd	i	F ¹	I	I			F ¹ (VO)
34. Sedendo all'ombra ¹⁶	i	dn	F ¹	I	I			
35. Togliendo l'un al- l'altra ¹⁷	iop	dpd	IF ²	I			IF ²	
JACOPO DA BOLOGNA								
36. Aquila altera ferma	o	p	I	I		I	I	I(FC)
37. Di novo è giunto	o	d	I	F	I	I	I	
38. Fenice fu' et vissi	o	p	I				I	
39. I' mi son un che	i	d	I	I			I	I(FC)
40. In verde prato	i	d	F ¹	I				
41. I' senti già come l'arco	qp	d	I				I	
42. Lo lume vostro	p	p	I	F			I	
43. Nel bel giardino	o	d	I	I		I	I	I(FD)
44. Non al suo amante	o	d	I	F		I	I	I(FC)
45. O cieco mondo	o	d	I	I		I	I	I(FC) I(OB) I (PU)
46. O dolce appress'un bel perlaro ¹⁸	o	o/d	F	I	I	F	I	
47. O in Italia	o	p	I	F ¹			I	
48. Oselletto selvag- gio(c)	o	d	I	I		I	I	I(PU)
49. Oselletto selvaggio	p	p	I	F	I		I	
50. Per sparverare(c)	o	dp		F ¹	I			
51. Posando sovr'un ac- qua	p	p	I	F		F	I	I(GA)
52. Prima virtute ¹⁹	o	o	F	I	I	F	F ²	
53. Sì com'al canto	i	d	I	I	I		I	

COMPOSER and COMPOSITION	METER		SOURCES						
	1st Sect	2nd	FL	FP	LB	PI	PN	Others	
54. Sotto l'imperio	o	d	I	I		I	I	I(FC)	
55. Tanto che sia	o	d	I	I			I		
56. Un bel sparver ²⁰	o	p	I	I		I	F ² I		
57. Vestissi la cornachia	p	o	I				I		
FRANCESCO LANDINI									
58. Così pensoso(c)	i	o	F ¹	F ¹	F ¹				
59. Fa metter bando	d	o	F	F					
60. Lucca nel prato	o	o	F		F				
61. Mostrommi amor	io	d	I				I		
62. Musica son, che mi dolgo ²¹	o	d	F	F	F				
63. Non a Narcisso	d	o	F	F			F		
64. O pianta vaga	o	p	F ¹	F ¹					
65. Per la 'nfluenza	o	p	F ¹		F ¹				
66. Si dolce non sonò	d	o	F	F	F	F			
67. Tu che l'oper altrui	o	d	I	I					
68. Una colomba can- dida	o	p	I		I				
LORENZO									
69. Apposte messe(c)	d	o	F	F					
70. Di riv'a riva	d	p	F ¹	F ¹					
71. I' credo ch'i' dor- mia ²²	i	d	F ¹		F ¹				
72. Ita se n'era ²³	dnd(a)	oio	F ¹		F ¹				
73. Nel chiaro fiume	d	io	F ¹	F ¹		F ¹			
74. Povero zappator	d	pi	F ¹		F ¹				
75. Sovra la riva	o	d	F	F		F			
76. Vidi nel ombra ²⁴	qp	o	F ¹	F ¹	I	F ¹		F ¹ (VO)	

COMPOSER and COMPOSITION	METER		SOURCES						
	1st Sect	2nd	FL	FP	LB	PI	PN	Others	
NICOLÒ DA PERUGIA									
77. Da poi che 'l sole(c)	i	p	F		F				
78. Nel mezzo già del mar	i	p	F	F			F		
79. Non dispregiar virtù	oio	p	I		I	I			
80. Passando con pen- sier(c)	o	n	F ¹				F ¹		
81. Povero pellegrin	o	p	F ¹		F ¹				
PAOLO									
82. Se non ti piacque	o	p			I	I			
83. Tra verdi frondi ²⁵	o	p				I			
PIERO									
84. Quando l'aria co- mincia	o	d			F			I(VR)	
VINCENZO									
85. In forma quasi(c) ²⁶	q	-	F		F ²				
86. Ita se n'era	o	d	I		I	I			
87. Nell'acqua chiara(c) ²⁷	i	-	F		F ²	F			
ZACHARIAS									
88. Cacciando per gu- star(c)	q	-	F					F(ME) F(SV)	
ANONYMOUS									
89. De sotto 'l verde ²⁸	q	d	F					I(VR)	
90. Segugi a corta(c) ²⁹	q	p	I	F					

It may be observed in the above table that among the major *Trecento* sources only *VR* and *PN* are not represented by examples of true French notation. *VR* is of course copied exclusively in Italian notation and serves as the earliest and most authentic example of the same. It is of interest however, that a source as relatively late as *PN* preserves thirty-one concordances (thirty madrigals and one caccia) in Italian notation, with only one piece entirely in French modified (F^2) and another having its first section in F^2 with the *ritornello* in I.

It seems likely that a conscious effort was made by the three copyists³⁰ of the Italian section of *PN* to follow Italian practice. It is apparent from an error in *PN*'s version of Giovanni's *Nel mezzo a sei pavon* (measure 21) that a French version must have served as the model. As seems to be the case for Jacopo's *Prima virtute* and *Un bel sparver, puncti divisionis* were supplied by a copyist who, in both cases, was working from a model in French notation. In the first sections of both pieces and in the *ritornello* of the former, superfluous *quaternaria puncti* were added to the French mensural equivalent of *octonaria*, giving a pseudo-Italian appearance. The transformation of the *ritornello* of the latter from French brevis to Italian brevis notation was a minor task for the copyist.

Also noteworthy is the exclusive representation of three relatively older composers in *PN* (Bartolino, Giovanni, and Jacopo). Later composers, represented in other sources by pieces predominantly in French notation, are conspicuously absent from *PN*. As Fischer has observed, the Italian section of this manuscript has many attributes relating it to the early *Trecento* tradition and linking it to a northern geographical area similar to the provenance of *VR*. Also not unlike *VR*, *PN* contains a relatively large number of anonymous *unica* compositions.³¹

Also revealed in the above table is a marked relationship between the concordances contained in *FL* and *PI*. In only two of the thirty-seven pieces common to both sources the types of notation preserved in each is not identical. This approximately ninety-five percent rate of agreement significantly surpasses that of any other pair of major sources.

The manuscripts *FL* and *FP*, having the greatest number of pieces (fifty-two) in common, disagree in eighteen of them as to the type of notation employed. In addition to a significant thirty-four percent rate of disagreement, neither source tends to favor French or Italian notation in these eighteen pieces. In nine of the *FL* concordances French notation is used

against the Italian in *FP*, while in the remaining nine the exact opposite is true!

Although *FL* usually transmits each composition in the same notation as the majority of its concordances (French or Italian), it does appear that in three cases (Donato's *Seguendo 'l canto*, Giovanni's *Nel mezzo a sei pavon* and *Togliendo l'un all'altra*) an attempt was made to Italianize a French model. However, it is quite possible that the pieces were already preserved in this manner before they were entered into *FL*. Note, for example, the agreement with the concordance of *Togliendo* in *PI*.

Quite interesting in *FL* is the presentation of two different versions of Lorenzo's *Ita se n'era* on 45v-46 (version « A ») and 46v (version « B »). The latter is copied in the usual French-modified (F^1) while the former, with the help of special note forms, is molded into a pseudo-French notation employing the brevis as the metrical unit for the entire piece. Version « A » is a unique example of notation which does not strictly satisfy the characteristics of F, F^1 , F^2 , or I. It was perhaps contrived by the copyist of *FL* to demonstrate an alternative in brevis notation to the practice of longa-brevis exchange in version « B ». The notation of the latter version (F^1) is also preserved in *LB*, tending to substantiate the hypothesis that it was in this type of notation that Lorenzo had originally written the piece. Five of the remaining seven compositions by Lorenzo are also preserved in type F^1 .

With twenty of the thirty-eight pieces in *LB* copied in Italian notation, there is some evidence that this type was preferred over the French. Only in *LB* concordances of the two cacce by Vincenzo were *puncti divisionis* added to otherwise pure French notation. Also, the only example of Lorenzo in Italian notation is found in *LB* (*Vidi nel ombra*). Furthermore, with two exceptions (Gherardello's *Sotto verdi frascetti* and the anonymous *Segugi a corta*), concordances in *LB* appear in French notation only when all other versions are also copied in the same.

Of the extant fragmentary sources only *VO* preserves French versions of its three concordances. The fragments *FD*, *GA*, *OB*, and *PU* are all represented by pieces copied in Italian notation. The compositions found in *LM*, *ME*, and *SV* employ the notation-type which in each case is unanimously agreed upon in all concordances.

The notation-types most frequently recurring in the total concordances preserved of each individual composer may reveal their respec-

tive notational preferences. In the table below the composers are arranged according to notation-types most frequently used, from the predominantly Italian to the predominantly French:

		I	IF ²	F ²	F ¹	F
Bartolino	(34)	34	—	—	—	—
Paolo	(4)	4	—	—	—	—
Jacopo	(88)	73	1	1	3	10
Giovanni	(40)	31	2	1	5	1
Piero	(2)	1	—	—	—	1
Vincenzo	(9)	3	—	3	—	3
Nicolò	(12)	3	—	—	4	5
Donato	(20)	6	1	—	9	4
Gherardello	(16)	2	—	—	7	7
Lorenzo	(21)	1	—	—	15	5
Landini	(27)	6	—	—	7	14
Zacharias	(3)	—	—	—	—	3

Several strong tendencies may be observed. It is most significant that not only were all of Bartolino's and Paolo's pieces apparently composed in Italian notation, but also that none were transmitted in French versions in any of the extant manuscripts. On the contrary, disregarding the single piece by Zacharias, no similar exclusive transmission in French notation applies to another composer. It is therefore probable that pieces originally copied in Italian notation were consequently copied in the same manner, while those originally in French were subject to Italianization. However, one must also admit the possibility of transformation from Italian to a French-type in light of the concordances for Giovanni's and Jacopo's compositions. No composition of either composer is copied in French notation in all sources. Moreover, only two pieces (Giovanni's *Togliendo l'un all'altra* and Jacopo's *Prima virtute*) are copied in a French-type of notation in a majority of concordances, with the F² type appearing in both cases.

It is the opinion of the author that if all *Trecento* sources were available for examination, the actual amount of transformation from one notation-type to another would be found to be relatively minimal. In ad-

dition to the consistent use of Italian notation for all concordances of Bartolino's pieces, similar consistencies may be noted in the concordances of each composition by Landini, Nicolò, Donato (with one exception), and Lorenzo (also one exception). The marked predominance of I in the works of Bartolino, Jacopo, and Giovanni; F¹ in the works of Lorenzo; and F in the works of Landini clearly suggests that these notation-types were used by the respective composers, themselves. Also evident in the comparison of notational variation or unanimity among the concordances of each composer's works, is the apparent fact that some composers actually used different types of notation for different pieces.