

The *coniuncta* in Polish Sources: Late Medieval Theory and Practice

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Abstract: The term *coniuncta* occurs sporadically in theoretical sources in the second half of the 14th century, and on a wider scale during the 15th century. Related texts are to be found in Polish collections. This group contains a number of anonymous texts preserved in manuscripts held in the Biblioteka Jagiellońska in Kraków, and the University Library and Ossoliński Library in Wrocław. These manuscripts are examined. The treatises provide detailed information concerning the notational and performance practice connected to the *coniuncta* in *cantus planus* that they sometimes seem to be situated further towards the “practice” side than the “proper” musical records presented in graduals and antiphonals. All the instructions and guidelines relating to the transposition of melody, or the introduction of mutation and the use of appropriate intonation, are particularly worthy of scrutiny. They provide the evidence that the modification of the pitch system was closely related to a careful revision of the chant repertory.

Keywords: Gregorian notation, Polish manuscripts, *coniuncta*, theory and praxis

The term *coniuncta*, referring to the “irregular” semitones or whole tones which appear in some Gregorian melodies but do not fit into the framework of the traditional standard gamut, occurs sporadically in theoretical sources in the second half of the 14th century, and on a wider scale during the next century, particularly its last decades. Chant treatises representing what is known as the Johannes Hollandrinus tradition make up a significant part of these sources; among them are the treatises by Coussemaker’s Anonymous XI and László Szalkai, analysed in detail by Albert Seay and Dolores Pesce.¹ Related texts are also to be found in Polish collections. Apart from treatises by Magister Szydlowita and Johannes Valendrinus, already familiar from the published

¹ A. Seay, The 15th Century *Coniuncta*: A Preliminary Study. In: *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music*. Edited by Jan Larue. New York 1966, 723–37; Tom Ward, The Theorist Johannes Hollandrinus. In: *Musica Antiqua* 7, Acta Scientifica, Bydgoszcz 1985, 575–598; Dolores Pesce, *The Affinities and Medieval Transposition*, Bloomington–Indianapolis 1987.

editions, this group contains a number of anonymous texts preserved in manuscripts held in the Biblioteka Jagiellońska in Kraków, and the University Library and Ossoliński Library in Wrocław. It is these manuscripts to which I would like to pay particular attention in this paper.

Table 1: List of Polish theoretical sources concerning coniuncta

Gniezno, Biblioteka Katedralna (PL-GNd) 200

388–412: Magister Szydlovita, *Musica* (Ed. Wacław Gieburowski, Posen 1915)
Benedictine abbey of Łysa Góra (?), end of the 15th c.

Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska (PL-Kj) 1859

3–13: anonymous plainchant treatises
University of Kraków, ca 1447

Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska (PL-Kj) 1861

128–148: anonymous plainchant treatises (incomplete, cf. PL-Kj 1927, 213–228)
Kraków, ca 1445

Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska (PL-Kj) 1927

213–238v: anonymous plainchant treatise
University of Kraków, 1448

Wrocław, Biblioteka Ossoliński (PL-WRa) 2297/I

1–12: anonymous plainchant treatise
Kraków(?), 15th/16th c.

Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka (PL-WRu) IV.Q.37

288–302v : anonymous plainchant treatise
Wrocław, 15th c. (ca 1475?)

Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka (PL-WRu) IV.Q.81

251–286v: Johannes Valendrinus, *Opusculum monocordale* (Ed. Fritz Feldmann, Breslau 1938) Głogów (Glogau), 1454–1462

Arguments concerning *coniuncta* constitute one of the most significant elements linking together the treatises now regarded as belonging to the Johannes Hollandrinus tradition.² *Coniuncta* is defined in these treatises as a transmutation of the whole tone into a semitone or a semitone into a whole tone. The obvious point of reference for this transmutation is the Guidonian gamut. Transmutation concerns the change of the whole tone into a semitone between *A* and *B grave* above *Gamma Graecum* and four “new” semitones between *c–d*, *d–e*, *f–g* and *g–a*. Although there are differences as to the number of *coniunctae* in particular treatises, the prevailing view assumes the existence of eight *coniunctae*; seven from among them are most frequently illustrated by examples taken from chant melodies. These examples constitute a constant set, repeated with minor changes in all the treatises mentioned above. It is significant – as has been remarked by Oliver B. Ellsworth, Dolores Pesce and

² Cf. Inventory of Sources, in: Michael Bernhard (ed.), *Lexicon musicum Latinum* (LmL), vols 1–5, München 1992–2001.

recently Theodor Karp – that these arguments have many common features with the views expounded in the first of the treatises contained in the Berkeley manuscript, written in Paris in 1375.³ This treatise is also the oldest known transmission of such an approach to *coniuncta*.⁴

It is worth noting that the theory of *coniuncta* was disseminated relatively early through Central Europe. The earliest source from this region comes from Prague: it is an anonymous compilation with the incipit *Pro recommendatione artis musice*, created probably in 1402 and copied by Stanisław of Gniezno in Prague in 1431.⁵ Unfortunately the chapter concerning *coniuncta* lacks notational examples. Three incomplete copies of this compilation have been preserved in the Polish collections (the oldest one of these was made in Kraków in 1448, the next one, also from Kraków, was written after 1450, and the latest, a fragmentary one, comes from Wrocław). Further sources are: an anonymous chant treatise written in Kraków around 1450, an anonymous treatise from Wrocław, probably written before 1475, the treatise *Opusculum monocordale* by Johannes Valendrinus, copied and commented on about 1454–1462, the treatise *Musica Magistri Szydlowitzae*, probably written after 1475, familiar from the copy made around 1500 and lastly – dating to the same time – an anonymous chant treatise, perhaps written in Kraków, currently held in the Ossoliński Library in Wrocław.

The concept of *coniuncta* and its relation to chant repertory provides a convenient opportunity for examining the relationships between chant theory and practice on the one hand, and on the other – an opportunity for tracing the transformations in the theory of *musica plana* which took place under the influence of other areas of *ars musica*. Moreover, researchers have noted the fact that the theory of *coniuncta* was formulated relatively late, yet it concerns relatively early chants, which were considered to be irregular as early as the 11th century.⁶ The comments and observations which follow are based primarily on the source material preserved in the Polish collections. This source material is closely linked with the tradition prevalent in the whole of late medieval Latin Europe. I will concentrate on two questions: the first concerns the relationship between the theory of *coniuncta* and the practical repertory func-

³ Oliver B. Ellsworth, ed.: *The Berkeley Manuscript. Greek and Latin Music Theory II*, 1984, 1 and ff.; Dolores Pesce, op.cit.; Theodor Karp, *Aspects of Orality and Formularity in Gregorian Chant, Evanstin*, Ill.: Northwestern University Press 1998, 181–223.

⁴ Cf. article “coniuncta” in: *LmL V*.

⁵ Cf. E. Witkowska-Zaremba, Late Reception of Johannes Affligemensis (Cotto) in East Central Europe, in: *Cantus Planus. IMS Study Group. Papers read at the 6th Meeting Eger 1993*, ed. László Doboszay, Budapest 1995, vol. 2, 683–695.

⁶ Cf. Charles M. Atkinson, From “Vitium” to “Tonus acquisirtus”: On the Evolution of the Notational Matrix of Medieval Chant. In: *Cantus Planus. IMS Study Group. Papers read at the Third Meeting Tihany 1988*, ed. László Doboszay, Budapest 1990, 181–197.

tioning in Poland, while the second concerns the place of the theory of *coniuncta* within the context of elementary musical teaching.

ad 1) The arguments relating to the subject of *coniuncta* in five of the treatises are illustrated by notation examples.

Table 2: List of notation examples of *coniunctae*

Prima coniuncta (fa in B-mi)

Fuerunt sine querela, responsory (locus *calicem Domini*)
(Valendrinus, WRa 2297/I)

Sancta e t immaculata, responsory (locus *non poterant*)
(Kj 1859, WRu IV.Q.37, Szydlovita, WRa 2297/I,)

Emmendemus in melius, responsory (locus *et miserere*)
(Szydlovita, WRa 2297/I)

Secunda coniuncta (fa in E-lami)

Gloriosa sanctissimi, antiphon (locus *et precibus*)
(Kj 1859, Valendrinus, WRu IV.Q.37)

O crux gloriosa, antiphon (locus *o adoranda*)
(Szydlovita, WRa 2297/I)

Gaude Mario virgo, responsory (locus *interemisti*)
(Szydlovita, WRa 2297/I)

Salve regina, antiphon (locus *regina*)
(WRa 2297/I)

Tertia coniuncta (mi in F-faut)

Beatus servus, communio (locus *invenerit vigilantem*)
(Kj 1859, Valendrinus, WRu IV.Q.37, Szydlovita, WRa 2297/I)

Quae est ista, responsory (locus *per desertum*)
(Szydlovita, WRa 2297/I)

Quarta coniuncta (fa in a-lamire)

Fidelis servus, antiphon (locus *in tempore*)
(Kj 1859, Valendrinus, WRu IV.Q.37, WRa 2297/I)

Iustitiae domini, offertory (locus *recte*)
(Szydlovita)

Letare, introitus (locus *Letare*)
(Szydlovita)

Quinta coniuncta (mi in c-solfautl)

Alleluia. Assumpta est Maria in caelum
(Kj 1859, Valendrinus, Szydlovita, WRa 2297/I)

Sexta coniuncta (fa in e-lami)

Ite in orbem, responsory (locus *universum*)
(Valendrinus, Szydlovita, WRa 2297/I)

Immutemur habitu, antiphon (locus *ieiunemus*)
(Kj 1859, Szydlovita, WRa 2297/I)

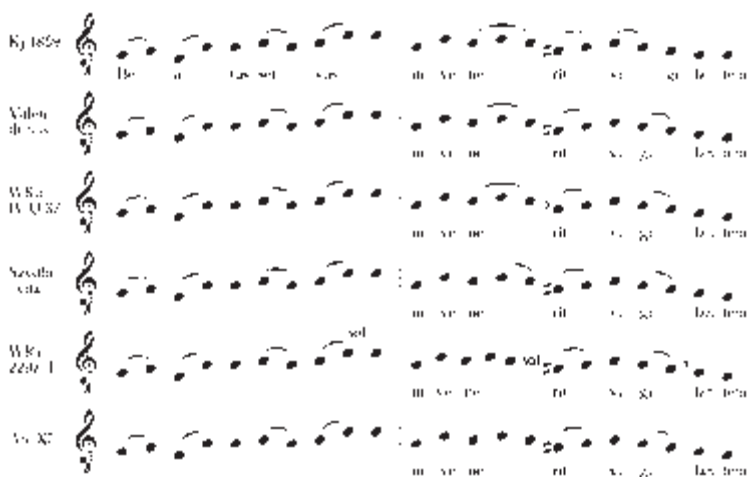
Adorate deum, introitus (locus *Adorate*)
(WRu IV.Q.37)

Septima coniuncta (mi in *f-faut*)*Hodie Maria virgo*, antiphon (locus *Maria*)

(Kj 1859, Valendrinus, WRu IV.Q.37, Szydlowita, WRa 2297/I)

As a rule these examples include the music incipit of the quoted chant, followed by the fragment containing the given *coniuncta*. It is puzzling that one rarely finds divergences in quoted melodies between particular treatises: usually they faithfully reproduce the same model. Shown below are two melodies (*Examples 1a–b*) quoted in all five treatises: the communion *Beatus servus*, illustrating the third *coniuncta*, and the antiphon *Hodie Maria virgo*, illustrating the seventh *coniuncta*; in both cases the *coniuncta* relates to the semitonium between *f* and *g* (for comparison I also quote both these chants according to Coussemaker's Anonymous XI).

However, there are significant differences in the manner of notating *coniuncta*. As a rule it has been assumed that both these *coniunctae* required the introduction of *mi* instead of *fa* in *clavis f-faut*, which was indicated by the *b durum* sign. This rule, however, is not followed by the anonymous author from the manuscript WRu IV.Q.37, who notates the *coniuncta in communion Beatus servus* using the *b flat* sign at the level of *g-solreut*. This sign should in this case be interpreted not as the lowering of the *g* note by *semitonium maius* (i.e., the introduction of a note lower than *f sharp* by a comma), but as a solmization hint, according to which the note *g-solreut* should be sung as *fa*, as a consequence of introducing *mi* at the *f-faut* note. A confirmation of such an interpretation seems to be provided by the notational solution adopted by the anonymous author from manuscript WRa2297/I: *f* is indicated by the sharp

*Example 1a*

Example 1b

sign, *g* – by the flat sign, while the note *a-lamire* is given the syllable *sol*. The use of flat sign for notating this *coniuncta* also brings to mind the instructions of the author from the Berkeley manuscript:⁷

it is signed on F with the sign #, where *mi* will be said, or on G with the sign b, where *fa* will be said. Its hexachord begins on D gravis, ending on B acuta... There is an example of this *coniuncta*, signed on F with the sign #, in the communion *Beatus servus*, where ‘*invenerit*’ is said, and in many other diverse songs.

The interchangeable use of sharp and flat signs would thus indicate that F# and G^b were regarded, at last in this case, as notational equivalents.

Theodor Karp, analysing the chants quoted by Berkeley Anonym as illustrations of particular *coniunctae* in his book *Aspects of Orality and Formularity in Gregorian Chant*, has brought together rich source material which shows the diversity of melodic readings functioning in the practical repertory. Similar diversity can also be observed in the Polish sources. As an example I quote selected readings of communion *Beatus servus* transmitted in the sources dating from the 13th to the 17th century (Example 2).

Seven out of the fifteen notations compared here present this composition in the untransposed form, with *finalis e*. One may also note a degree of continuity of certain monastic traditions. The Franciscan gradual from Płock dating from 1280 (PLm 2) contains notation which is very close to the “theoretical version”: the trace of the *coniuncta* is the semitone *e–f* on the syllable *–rit*. As the result of moving the *coniuncta* by a whole tone down to the regular posi-

⁷ The Berkeley Manuscript, op. cit. 59.

Example 2 displays ten staves of Gregorian chant notation, each representing a different manuscript source. The notation is square neumes on a four-line staff. The text 'Be-a-ti-mu-s tu-m De-u-m Pa-tri-em' is written below the neumes. The sources are: 1. Płock 1290 (Fin. 121 M), 2. Włocławek 1628 (WŁs I.F.415 P. 104 recto), 3. Włocławek 1628 (WŁs I.F.415 P. 104 recto), 4. Kraków 1267 (Kj 1267), 5. Silesia 19th c. (WRu I.F.415, WRu I.F.417, WAn BAW 2), 6. Silesia 19th c. (WRu I.F.415, WRu I.F.417, WAn BAW 2), 7. Wrocław 14th c. (WŁs I.F.415, WŁs I.F.417, WAn BAW 2), 8. Wrocław 14th c. (WŁs I.F.415, WŁs I.F.417, WAn BAW 2), 9. Wrocław 14th c. (WŁs I.F.415, WŁs I.F.417, WAn BAW 2), 10. Wrocław 14th c. (WŁs I.F.415, WŁs I.F.417, WAn BAW 2).

Example 2

tion on the Guidonian gamut, a fourth has been created in the position of the third on the syllables “-ne-rit.” The same variant can also be found in the Franciscan gradual dating from about 1630 (WLs 11). In another Franciscan manuscript from the same period (WLs 10) we find notation differing from the “theoretical version” only by the missing accidental at note *f*. Notation from a 15th century Kraków gradual (Kj 1267) seems to represent a contamination of both of these solutions. However, in the three manuscripts of the Cistercians from Silesia (WRu I.F.415, WRu I.F.417, WAn BAW 2) a different melodic expression has been introduced on the word *invenerit*, which eliminates the semitone on the syllable -rit.

The version transposed upwards by a fourth dominates among the compared transmissions of *Beatus servus*, representing equally the monastic (Premonstratenses and Benedictines) and the diocesan (dioceses of Kraków and Wrocław) manuscripts. In two of the sources (Wiślica Gradual from the 14th century (KIs RL 1) and the 15th century gradual from the Benedictine Abbey at Tyniec near Kraków (WAn 10809) one finds a virtual calk of the *Beatus servus* version presented by theorists. Both these manuscripts, transposing the chant by a fourth upwards, introduce also *b flat* in the initial section; the *coniuncta f sharp-g* on the syllable *-rit* in the word *invenerit* is expressed here as the semitone *b durum-c*. Such a notation is faithfully reflected in the instructions and notational example given in the treatise of Magister Szydlovita (GNd 200).

Such calks of the “theoretical version”, or transposed variants of particular chants which reflect faithfully the interval structure of the fragment containing the *coniuncta*, appear also among the transmissions of the responsorium *Sancta et immaculata*, quoted as an example of *coniuncta* on B flat and transmissions of the antiphon *Hodie Maria virgo* with the *coniuncta* on F’ sharp. The accuracy of these replications may even lead to the suspicion that it was the “theoretical version” which was a kind of re-transposition of the quoted chants. Such replications, however, are missing from the transmissions of the responsorium *Gaude Maria virgo*, quoted as an example of *coniuncta* on E flat, transmissions of *Alleluia Assumpta est Maria*, the chant quoted as an illustration of *coniuncta* on c sharp, and notations of the introit *Adorate deum*, quoted as an example of *coniuncta* on E’ flat.

The fact that the Polish and Silesian chant treatises belong to the scholastic tradition included in the concept “*traditio Johannis Hollandrini*”, pointed out earlier, combined with the close convergence of notational examples, clearly begs the question of how independent were the views presented there. However, it is difficult to doubt their link to the practical repertory which functioned in Poland and Silesia at that time. What is striking is the degree of detail given in the solmization instructions, in order to ensure correct intonation of the fragments containing *coniuncta*.⁸ Such instructions provide the evidence that *coniuncta* posed a real problem for the contemporary performance practice in the area of *cantus planus*.

ad 2) The *coniuncta* was not, however, regarded as a problem relating exclusively to *cantus planus*. The Prague compilation *Pro recommendatione artis musice*, known and copied in Kraków, states that *coniuncta* appears both

⁸ Cf. WRa 2297/I, f. 11v: “Tercia coniuncta actipitur inter g et f graves et signatur in f gravi per b quadrum sic quod loco fa debet cantari mi; aut fa, non tamen dulciter sed aspere cantari debet, cum sol in gsolreut causando semitonium, quamvis ibi tonus regularis debet cantari...”

in *cantus simplex* and *cantus mensuralis*.⁹ The anonymous treatise from manuscript K_j 1859 relates the phenomenon of *coniuncta* also to instrumental music, and gives the notational sign, characteristic for early German tablature, used by organists to indicate accidental¹⁰. Similar views can be found in other treatises from the Johannes Hollandrinus tradition, such as Coussemaker's Anonymous XI and László Szalkai. One can suppose therefore that the doctrine of *coniuncta* was meant to widen the traditional Guidonian gamut and lead to producing a uniform standard system, applicable equally to *cantus planus*, and *cantus mensuralis* and *cantus organicus*. A system of this kind might have been the 12 steps octave. These criteria appear to be met by the system of 10 *coniunctae* (with A flat added above Gamma Graecum), proposed in the anonymous treatise from the Berkeley manuscript (only eight *coniunctae* are illustrated with examples from the chant repertory).

Table 3: System of 10 *coniunctae* in the anonymous treatise in the Berkeley manuscript

Γ	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	a	b ^b	b	c	d	e	f	g	aa	bb ^b	bb	cc	dd	ee
[*]	*		*	*	*		*	*			*	*	*	*					*		

The solutions adopted in Polish and Silesian treatises are less radical. The system of 8 *coniunctae* is dominant.

Table 4: System of 8 *coniunctae* in treatises K_j 1927, K_j 1861, K_j 1859, Valendrinus, WRu IV.Q.37 and Szydlovita

Γ	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	a	b ^b	b	c	d	e	f	g	aa	bb ^b	bb	cc	dd
	*			*	*	*	*				*	*	*	*						

This system is represented visually as two types of diagrams. The first type is the “manus Guidonis”, with the *coniunctae* indicated in the appropriate positions, transmitted in *Opusculum monocordale* by Johannes Valendrinus and in the treatise by Szydlovita (Figures 1a–b).

The second type of diagram, sometimes described as “decachordum musicae”, includes all the basic elements of the late-medieval pitch system, the axis of which is the 19-note *G*Graecum – *dd duplicatum* scale: clefs, arrangement of hexachords and *coniunctae* symbolised respectively by the *bmolle* and *bdurum* signs. Such diagrams are transmitted in the treatises of

⁹ K_j 1927 f227v: “Ut autem omnis ambiguitas in cantu simplici vel mensurali tollatur, aliquid de coniunctis musicalibus breviter disseramus. Sunt enim nonnulli cantus, in quibus semitonia extra loca septem semitoniorum predictorum contingit reperire, qui cantus per coniunctas musicas sepius decantatur.”

¹⁰ K_j 1859 f.7v: “Item mensuriste in quibus locis committi coniuncta aliqua ad notandum<?> eandem ponunt tale signum #. Organiste virgulam per modum crucis eciam adiungunt... Cantus planus sine hiis et mensuralis nequaquam potest cantari, igitur memorie retinendum.”

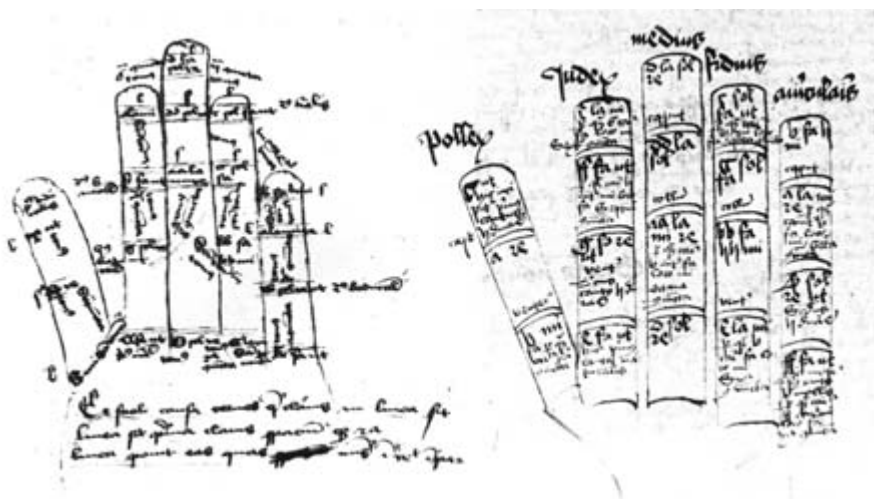


Figure 1a: PL-WRu IV.Q.81, f. 262r (olim 257)

1b: PL-GNd 200, f. 390v

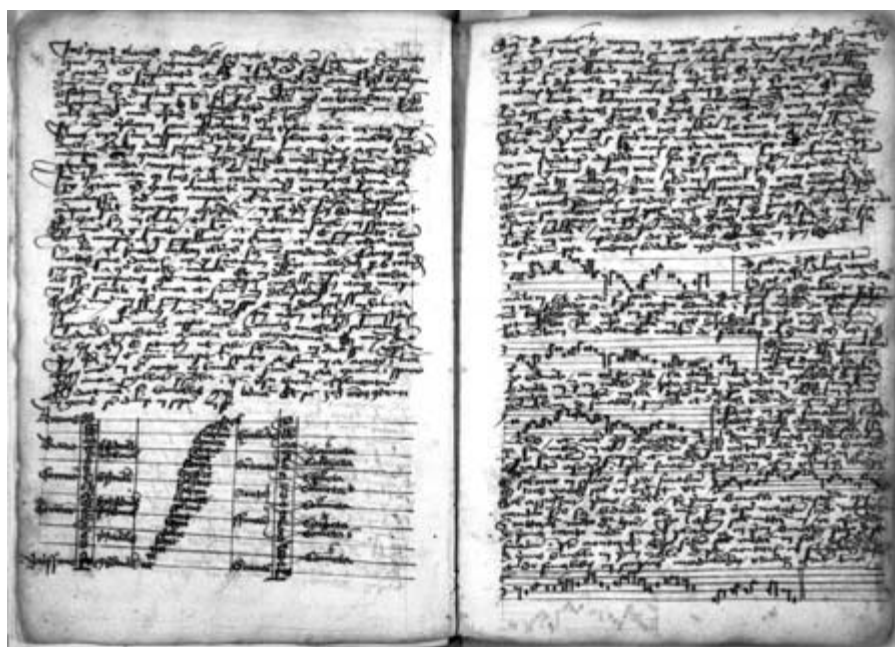


Figure 2a: PL-Kj 1859, f. 3v



Figure 2b: PL-Wru IV.Q.81, f. 267r (olim 262)



Figure 2c: PL-Wra 2297/I, f. 3v

Anonymous K_j 1859, Johannes Valendrinus and Anonymous Ossolineum (WRa 2297/I) (Figures 2a–c).

The anonymous author of the treatise transmitted in the Ossolineum manuscript mentioned above describes also a system which includes eleven *coniunctae*. Beyond the eight indicated already, described as “*coniunctae usitatae*”, the author distinguishes three “*coniunctae inusitatae*” between *C* and *D graves*, *cc* and *dd excellentes* and *dd* and *ee (extra manum) excellentes*:¹¹

Table 5: System of 11 *coniunctae* in treatise WRa2297/I

Γ	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	a	b ^b	b	c	d	e	f	g	aa	bb ^b	bb	cc	dd	ee
	*	*	*	*	*	*					*	*	*	*					*	*	
	u		i	u		u	u				u	u		u	u				i	i	

(u = *coniuncta usitata*; i = *coniuncta inusitata*)

The introduction of three *coniunctae* which – as pointed out by the author – are called “*inusitatae*” because they rarely appear in chants, seems to be dictated above all by the logic of the system. It is worth noting here that this system (omitting the three lowest notes) reflects faithfully the range of contemporary keyboard instruments.¹²

The system based on eleven *coniunctae* is represented visually in the diagram of the division of the monochord included as part of *Accessus to Musica speculativa* by Johannes de Muris in manuscript 568 of Biblioteka Jagiellońska in Kraków¹³ (Figure 3).

The system resulting from this division is as follows:

Table 6: Pitch system in MS 568 of Biblioteka Jagiellońska in Kraków (ca 1460)

ff	Γ	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	a	b ^b	b	c	d	e	f	g	aa	bb ^b	bb	cc	dd	ee
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*					*	*	*	*				*	*		

In the late medieval classifications of music, *musica plana*, understood as a set of principles relating to *cantus planus*, represented, together with *musica mensuralis*, the area of musical practice, *musica practica*. Chant treatises functioned also as elementary textbooks and the knowledge transmitted in

¹¹ WRa 2297/I, f.10v: Unde <coniuncte> sunt duplices, quedam sunt usitate, quedam inusitate. Coniuncte inusitate sunt tres. Prima actipitur inter *C grave* et *D grave* et figuratur per *h quadrum* in *C-faut*. Secunda actipitur inter *c-solfa* et *dd-lasol* et figuratur per *h quadrum* in *c-solfa*. Tercia actipitur inter *dd-lasol* et *ee-la* et figuratur per *b rotundum* in *e-la*. Et dicuntur coniuncte predictae tres inusitate quia non sunt communes in usu canticum. Coniuncte vero usitate sunt octo, quarum numerus patet.

¹² Scale *B – ee* with the semitonia *cis*, *dis*, *fis*, *gis*, results from the division of the monochord “Pro clavicordiis et organis vel aliis instrumentis musicalibus” included in the 15th-century Wrocław manuscript PL-WRu IV.Q.43 (ed. Ch. Meyer, *Mensura monochordi. La division du monocorde (IXe–XVe siècles)*, Paris 1996, 148).

¹³ Ed. Ch. Meyer, op.cit., 182.



Figure 3: PL-Kj 568, f. 80r

them concerned not only *cantus planus* but, to some extent, all the areas of contemporary study of music. This area, “common” to all *ars musica*, includes above all the pitch system, the elementary principles of which were at that time given explanations only in treatises of such kind. Visual representations of the pitch system, given in chant treatises, particularly diagrams of the *decachordum musicae* type, may be treated as an indication that *coniunctae* were not regarded as an exceptional phenomenon, concerning only certain chant melodies, but constituted an essential element of that system. The quoted liturgical chants might have served, in a sense, to legitimise the system formulated in this way.

Moreover these treatises provide such detailed information concerning the notational and performance practice connected to the *coniuncta* in *cantus planus* that, looked at from the point of view of the relationship between theory and practice, they sometimes seem to be situated further towards the “practice” side than the “proper” musical records presented in graduals and antiphonals. In this context, all the instructions and guidelines relating to the transposition of melody, or the introduction of mutation and the use of appropriate intonation, are particularly worthy of scrutiny. They provide the evidence that the modification of the pitch system was closely related to a careful revision of the chant repertory.