Musica Iagellonica 2025

eISSN 2545–0360

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An Unknown Music Treatise in the Franciscan Antiphoner from Kraków

The library of the convent of Poor Clares at the Church of St. Andrew in Kraków holds two precious 13th-century manuscripts, a Gradual and an Antiphoner, which seem to be among the oldest specimens of these books representing the post-Haymonian Franciscan tradition.[1] The second, probably copied in

[1] *This publication results from a project under the direction of Paweł Figurski entitled "*Liturgica Poloniae*. Catalogue of Polish Liturgical Manuscripts. Part 1: Codices Copied until ca. 1300," funded from the Polish state budget within the program of the Ministry of Education and Science (Poland), entitled "National Program for the Development of the Humanities", project number NPRH/DN/SP/495426/2021/10. The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewer of the article for his detailed, insightful and valuable comments and corrections to the text and the edition.

Haymo of Faversham, the fourth minister general of the Franciscan Order prepared his Ordinal of Breviary and Missal in 1243–1244. Compilation of Gradual based on Haymo's correction and introducing square notation, which replaced the Beneventan music script, can be dated to 1250 approximately (see Stephen van Dijk, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy. The Ordinal by Haymo of Faversham and Related Documents (1243–1307)*, Vol. I (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1963): 68–94, 110–120). The Gradual from Kraków (Library of the Poor Clares, ms. 205) was copied around 1260 and the Antiphoner (*ibidem*, ms. 207), probably some fifteen years later. On the Gradual from Kraków see among others: Henryk Cempura, "Trzynastowieczne liturgiczne rękopisy franciszkańskie w Polsce w świetle wyników badań Van Dijka i Walkera". *Archiwa, biblioteki i muzea kościelne* 12 (1966): 75–82; Fulgencjusz Bąk. "Średniowieczne graduały franciszkańskie", *Musica Medii Aevi* 3 (Kraków, PWM, 1968); Barbara Miodońska, *Małopolskie malarstwo książkowe 1320–1540* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1996): 16, 52–53;

the third quarter of the 13th century, opens with a bifolium containing the so-called "Parisian tables" of the antiphons for weekdays sung at Lauds in the last days before Christmas (f. 1r–2v), which is not uncommon for the liturgical books of the Friars.[2] The "tables" issued at the general chapter of Pisa in 1263 to "dispense with the tiresome calculations required in the *ordo breviarii*",[3] are followed by a music treatise unknown from elsewhere (two columns of f. 2v). Unfortunately, only the beginning of the treatise survives; the gathering that once contained the remainder is now lost (at f. 3r the Antiphoner begins). Probably due to its incomplete state, the treatise has never been published, although it was briefly mentioned in musicological studies by Polish authors.[4] The possible importance of the text to the study of music in Franciscan order justifies, I hope, the present edition of it in such an incomplete form.

The treatise occupies a part of the first and the whole second column of f. 2v and is written by the same scribe who copied the Parisian tables which precede it and the Antiphoner which begins on f. 3r. The manuscripts must have been copied after 1260, as the antiphon *Hic vir de vanitatibus* (f. 208r) for St. Francis appears in a version corrected by the friars at the chapter of Narbonne of that year. The presence of the Office for the Holy Trinity suggests that its production can be situated between 1263 and 1279, when Franciscans celebrated the feast before its definitive acceptance in the 14th century. *Historia de sancta Clara*, which was known before 1293, is still

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Jerzy Pikulik, *Polskie graduały średniowieczne* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, 2001), passim; Marian Szczotka, "Trzynastowieczny graduał ms. 205 z Biblioteki klarysek krakowskich w świetle polskiej i europejskiej tradycji liturgiczno–muzycznej. Studium źródłoznawcze", *Archiwa, biblioteki i muzea kościelne* 71 (1999): 253–368 (part 1) and 72 (1999): 353–443 (part 2); Mirosław Perz, "The Sacred and Profane in Polish Music Sources and Painting of the Fifteenth Century" in *Ars Musica—Ars Sacra,* ed. David Hiley, Tutzing 2007 (=Regensburger Studien zur Musikgeschichte 4): 41–56 (esp. 45–47, 53, 56); Budzińska–Bennett, Agnieszka. "Poor Clares, Rich in Music: Unique Polyphonic *Benedicamus Domino* Settings from Southern Polish convents in the Late 13th and Early 14th centuries", *Early Music* 50, 4 (2022): 435–450 (esp. 443–447). The Antiphoner, far less studied, is mentioned in the above-mentioned article by Cempura.

[2] Cf. Stephen van Dijk, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy. The Ordinal by Haymo of Faversham and Related Documents (1243–1307)*, Vol. II (Texts) (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1963): 399–408.

[3] S. van Dijk, *Sources*, Vol. I, Leiden 1963: 140.

[4] Hieronim Feicht, "Muzyka liturgiczna w polskim średniowieczu", *Musica Medii Aevi* 1 (Kraków, PWM 1965): 19; H. Cempura, "Trzynastowieczne liturgiczne rękopisy franciszkańskie": 82; Jerzy Morawski, *Historia muzyki polskiej. T. 1, Średniowiecze. Cz. 1. Do roku 1320,* (Warszawa, Sutkowski Edition Warsaw, 2006): 80, 88.

absent. The place of origin of the manuscript is unknown. The antiphon for St. Stanislaus, added by a later hand on f. 247v, confirms the presence of the Antiphoner in Kraków around the turn of the 15th century. The Poor Clares settled in Kraków in 1309–1316 after a somewhat uneasy stay at provisional foundations in Zawichost and Skała, and it is uncertain if they were the first owners of the book.

The first bifolio (ff. 1–2), containing the Parisian tables and the treatise, seem to have always been a part of the volume. The scribe is the same and f. 1r is left blank typically for the beginning of a book at that time. The tables, although usually added to Franciscan breviaries rather than antiphoners, could have certainly been helpful also for users of the latter.[5] The treatise that follows seems to have been conceived as a short and serviceable introduction for singers, a kind of a "scientific" gloss to the *Ista rubrica* preface of the Franciscan Graduals, where basic information on music notation can be found.

The text from the Antiphoner is also focused on practical issues: intervals and notation. Customary general introduction concerning the definition, classification, or inventors of music is absent. The treatise begins, instead, with considerations about the fundamentals and goals of music as one of the liberal arts.[6] In grammar and logic, the author says, more complex units (syllables, words, sentences, etc.) are formed from basic elements (like letters in grammar) and judged according to the purposes of a particular art. One would expect that in music the principal elements analogous to letters (in grammar) and terms (in logic) should be pitches constituting longer melodic passages, just like in the 15th chapter of Guido's *Micrologus,* where the music-poetry analogy is considered:[7]

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[5] For early sources of the tables see: S. van Dijk, *Sources*, Vol. I: 241–246.

[6] One of the treatises belonging to the so-called Iohannes Hollandrinus tradition has a similar incipit: *Musica est ars ex septem artibus liberalibus una*, but the content of this (certainly later) text is different. Cf. Treatise X, ed. Christian Berktold in *Traditio Iohannis Hollandrini*, ed. Michael Bernhard and Elżbieta Witkowska-Zaremba, Vol. IV: *Die Traktate IX–XIV: The Treatises IX–XIV*, (München, Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2013):, 111–144.

[7] *Guidonis monachi Aretini Micrologus*, cap. XV, ed. A.M. Amelli (Romae, Desclée, Lefebvre et S. Edit. Pont., 1904): 34–35. Translation adapted from Richard Crocker, "Musica Rhythmica and Musica Metrica in Antique and Medieval Theory", *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1958): 2–23 (esp. 12).

Igitur quemadmodum in metris sunt litterae et syllabae, partes et pedes, ac versus; ita et in harmonia sunt phthongi id est, soni, quorum unus, duo vel tres aptantur in syllabas, ipsaeque solae vel duplicatae neumam, id est, partem consituunt cantiolenae, et pars una vel plures distinctionem faciunt.	Just as in poetry there are letters and syllables, words, and feet and verses, so in harmony there are phtongi, that is sounds, of which one, two, or three are fashioned into syllables; and these, either alone or repeated, constitute a neume, that is a part of a song; and one or more parts make a phrase, that is a suitable place to breathe.

Surprisingly, the author compares more and more complex syntactic units of grammar and logic to increasingly larger music intervals with the unison as the principal element ("musica constat ex unisonis"). The concept of unison as a source of other intervals ("principium aliorum modorum") or other consonants ("principium omnium consonantiarum") can be found in late 13th- and 14th- century texts, for instance, in *Summula musicae Guidonis* or in an anonymous treatise belonging to the Johannes Garlandia tradition.[8] Later authors, including Iohannes Legrense, Iohannes Tinctoris and Guillelmus Monachus, attribute this opinion to Boethius ("secundum Boetium"), probably on account of his considerations on unity and equality as a source of numbers and proportions, respectively.[9]

Even if the concept of the emergence of the plurality of intervals from unison is present in scholarly reflections on music, its analogy to the units of grammar and logic remains an awkward idea. A similar association appears only, as far as I know, in a treatise *Summa musicae*, written at the beginning of the 13th century, possibly in Würzburg. The text, preserved in a manuscript in the library of the abbey in Sankt Paul im Lavanttal, was first edited by Gerbert

[8] Cf. *Lexicon musicum Latinum medii aevi*, *digitalisierte Fassung im Wörterbuchnetz des Trier Center for Digital Humanities*, Version 01/25, https://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/LmL?lemid=U00021 (21.10.2025).

[9] "Unisonus autem secundum Boetium non est consonantia, sed fons et primordiale principium omnium consonantiarum, sicut unitas non est numerus, sed fons et primordiale principium omnium numerorum". Ibid.; for considerations of Boethius on unity and equality see chapter II, 7 and 15 of his *De institutione musica* (*Anicii Manii Toorquati Severini Boetii De Institutione Arithmeica libri duo, De Institutione Musica libri quinque*, ed. Godefredus Friedlein (Leipzig, Teubner, 1867), p. 232: (II,7) "Est autem, quemadmodum unitas pluralitatis numerique principium, ita aequalitas proportionumTribus enim praeceptis, ut in arithmetica dicum est, multiplices proportiones ex aequalitate producimus, ex conversis vero multiplicibus superparticulares habitudines procreamus." For the English translation see: Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music. Translated, with Introducion and Notes,* by Calvin M. Bower (New Haven and London, Yale UP, 1989): 57, 67.

and more recently with a brilliant translation and study by Christopher Page.[10] In the 11th chapter of this "manual written *c.* 1200 for masters teaching boys to sing plainchant and to appreciate Latin eloquence",[11] the question of a limited number of intervals is considered:[12]

Cum due note combinari habeant novem modis ita ut ex eis novem intervalla formentur, non absurde queret aliquis, cum note pluribus modis et supra diapason et infra habeant coniungi, quare musicus tantum novem contentus est intervallis. Ad quod dicendum est quod in qualibet arte sic est. Quidquid impedit finem artis illuminare iure debet ab arte removeri. Sicut in Grammatica, que finaliter intendit congruum, errare dicantur barbarismus et soloecismus, et quod magis mirum est, etiam cacemphaton evitatur, sic et diale[c] tica, que intendit facere de re dubia, dum venatur syllogisticam necessitatem inutiles coniugationes propositionum extricat, qualis est coniunctio duarum affirmationum in secunda figura et ceteras huiusmodi paralogisticas phantasias.

Since two notes are combined in nine ways, so that nine intervals may be formed from them, it would not be foolish if anyone were to ask why the trained musician *(musicus)* is content with only nine intervals, since hexachord degrees can be combined in many ways, both above and within the octave. We may answer that it is the same in every art. Whatever hinders the attempt to illuminate the final purpose of an art should be rejected. Just as in grammar, whose purpose is harmonious utterance, barbarism and solecism are declared to be errors and (what is more striking) cacemphaton is also avoided, so also dialectic, which strives to make doubts out of a matter, discards useless conjunctions of propositions, when hunting down a logically inevitable conclusion, such as the collocation of two affirmations in the second figure and other paralogical phantasies of this sort.

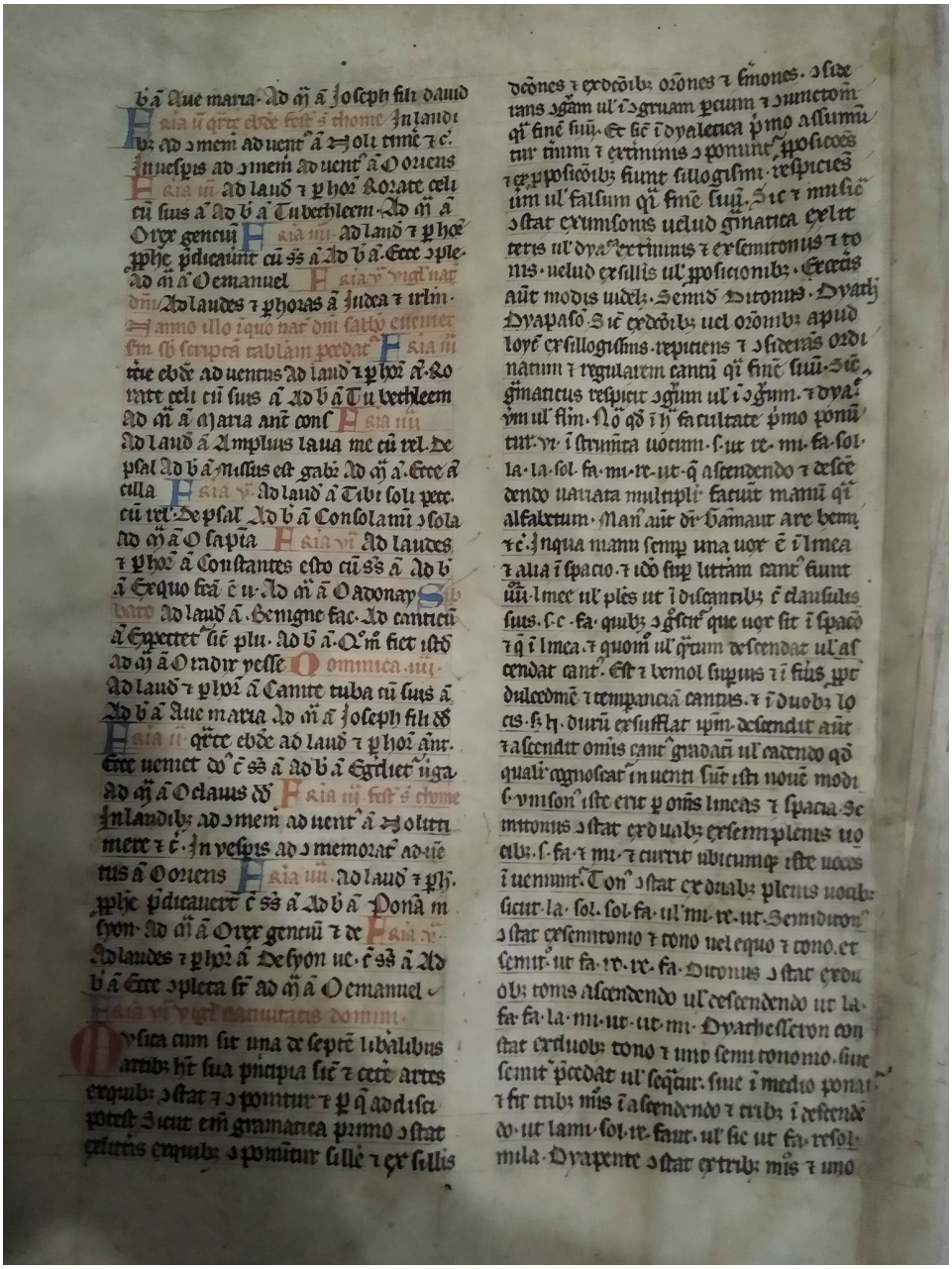
The subject of analogy is different, but the idea of juxtaposition of intervals and grammatical/dialectical units is present in both texts, and it is possible that the kind of teaching manifested in the *Summa* could be the starting point for the slightly convoluted reasoning of the author of the treatise from ms. 207.

Worth noting is also his use of terminology, which is sometimes very idiosyncratic. He calls the syllables of a hexachord "instrumenta vocum", a term that seems not to appear in this context elsewhere. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the authors of the above-mentioned *Summa musicae*, also quite

[10] Martin Gerbert, *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica sacra potissimum*, III, St. Blasien 1784: 190–248; *Summa musicae: A thirteenth-century manual for singers*, ed. Christopher Page, (Cambridge University Press, 1991) (=Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs).

[11] *Summa musicae*, p. XI.

[12] Translation by Ch. Page in *Summa musicae*, p. 83. Latin text on p. 166.



Kraków, Library of Poor Clares, ms. 207, f. 2v

uniquely, use a similar expression—"instrumentum musicae"—for the Guidonian "Hand" (Manus), which is, of course, a teaching tool strictly associated with solmisation. In his concise remarks on the musical Hand, the author seems instead to focus on explaining its practical connection with staff notation. The effect is slightly confusing: one is not sure if two "bemol superius and inferius" should be imagined on a diagram of a musical hand/scale or rather as a notational sign on the staff. The latter is suggested by a remark that "bemol" is used to "sweeten" the melody and it is "blown away" (the Latin verb used is "exsufflare") by b-durum. It can be mentioned in passing that the term "bemol" (instead of b-molle or similar), if not merely an effect of scribal error, seems to be quite exceptional in the 13th century literature and may have been influenced by French?/English? vernacular terminology.[13]

Familiarity with French sources or French polyphonic repertoire could be surmised from mention of "discantus cum clausulis suis" ("discants with their clausulae") written on a staff of more than four lines. The term "clausula" in context of polyphony ("discantus") brings to mind the meaning assumed in the treatise of Coussemaker's Anonymous IV, where "clausulae sive puncta" are discant sections in rhythmic modes substituting melismatic passages in *organa* of the Parisian school (it is worth noting that whereas *vox principalis* is noted on a four-line staff in Parisian sources, the polyphonic embellishment appears in fact on five-line staves). However, the text is corrupted and unclear here almost certainly the word "clausulis" should be emended to "claviculis", which makes the whole passage comprehensible.[14]

The unique text from the Kraków antiphoner is unfortunately damaged but it seems that it was not an extensive and thorough treatise and its purpose was rather practical. The author might have been a Franciscan friar, he could have known a text or teaching of the kind present in *Summula musicae* and he was definitely acquainted with polyphonic music. The local, Polish provenance of the text is, in my opinion, doubtful. Even if the antiphoner was copied in Poland (which is questionable), the scribe was not its author as he did not

[13] According to the entry "Bémol" on the website of the *Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales*, it appears in the French language in the 14th century, one of the earliest examples being a passage from Roman de Fauvel: "La furent ou palais signees Ben escriptez et bien notees Par bemoulz et fausses musiques". See: https://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/bémol (22 .10.2025).

[14] I owe this suggestion to the anonymous reviewer of the article to whom I am very grateful.

understand it properly in some places. Hopefully, other copies of the text will be found in the future to shed more light on both the provenance of the antiphoner of the Poor Clares of Kraków and the practical teaching of music in Franciscan circles.

Latin text and translation

[f. 2v, col. a] Musica cum sit una de septem liberalibus artibus, habet sua principia, sicut et cetere artes, ex quibus constat et componitur et per que addisci potest. Sicut enim gramatica primo constat ex litteris, ex quibus componuntur sillabe et ex sillabis [f. 2v, col. b] dicciones et ex diccionibus oraciones et sermones, considerans congruam vel incongruam parcium coniunctionem[15] quasi finem suum, et sicut in dyalectica primo assumuntur termini et ex terminis componuntur proposiciones et ex proposicionibus fiunt sillogismi, respiciens verum vel falsum quasi finem suum, sic et musica constat ex unisonis velud gramatica ex litteris vel dyalectica ex terminis, et ex semitoniis et tonis velud ex sillabis vel proposicionibus.
Ex ceteris autem modis videlicet: semiditonus, ditonus, dyathesseron, [dyapente et] dyapason, sicut ex diccionibus vel oracionibus apud loyicum ex sillogismis,[16] re[s]piciens et considerans ordinatum et regularem cantum quasi finem suum, sicut gramaticus respicit congruum vel incongruum et dyalecticus verum vel falsum.
Nota quod in hac facultate primo ponuntur VI instrumenta vocum, scilicet: ·ut·re·mi·fa·sol·la·la·sol·fa·mi·re·ut·, que ascendendo et descendendo variata multipliciter faciunt manum quasi alfabetum.

Since music is one of the seven liberal arts, just like the other arts it has its own principles, of which it consists and is put together and through which it can be learned. Just as grammar is composed of letters, from which syllables are put together, and from syllables words, and from words written and spoken texts, contemplating as its goal the agreement or disagreement between parts that have been joined together, and just as in dialectics, one firstly posits terms from which terms are put together propositions, and from propositions syllogisms are composed, regarding truth or falsehood, so, too, music consists of unisons—like grammar of letters and dialectics of terms—and semitones and tones, as if from syllables or propositions. [Music is] also composed of intervals: i.e. of a minor third, major third, fourth, [fifth] and octave, as if from words or orations, [and] in logic from syllogisms, and its purpose is an orderly and regular chant, similarly as grammar looks at what is consistent or inconsistent, and dialectic at what is true or false.

It should be noted that in this faculty six syllables are first established, that is, namely: ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la—la, sol, fa, mi, re, ut, which, altered repeatedly by ascending and descending, create a „hand," like an alphabet.

[15] *ms.* parcium et coniunctionem
[16] *ms.* silogissmis

Manus autem dicitur Gamma·ut, a·re, be·mi etc. In qua manu semper una vox est in linea et alia in spacio, et ideo super litteram cantus fiunt IV linee vel plures, ut in discantibus, cum claviculis[17] suis, scilicet ·c·, ·f· a quibus[18] cognoscitur, que vox sit in spacio et que in linea, et quomodo vel quantum descendat vel ascendat cantus.

Est et bemol superius et inferius propter dulcedinem et temperanciam cantus, et in duobus locis; sed ·h· durum exsufflat ipsum. Descendit autem et ascendit omnis cantus gradatim vel cadendo, quod qualiter cognoscatur inventi sunt isti novem modi, scilicet:

Unisonus—iste erit per omnes lineas et spacia. Semitonus constat ex duabus[19] semiplenis vocibus scilicet: ·fa· et ·mi·, et currit ubicumque iste voces inveniuntur.

Tonus constat ex duabus plenis vocibus sicut: ·la·sol·, ·sol·fa·
Semiditonus constat ex semitonio et tono vel [ex] equo et tono et semitonio, ut: ·fa·re·, ·re·fa·
Ditonus constat ex duobus tonis ascendendo vel descendendo, ut: ·la·fa·, ·fa·la·, ·mi·ut·, ·ut·mi·
Dyathesseron constat ex duobus tonis[20] et uno semitonio,[21] sive semitonus precedat vel sequatur, sive in medio ponatur. Et fit tribus modis in ascendendo et tribus in descendendo, ut: ·la·mi·, ·sol·re·, ·fa·ut·, vel sic: ·ut·fa·, ·re·sol, ·mi·la.

Dyapente constat ex tribus modis et uno||

The hand, in turn, designates [the sequence] Gamma-ut, a-re, be-mi, and so on. In which hand the *voces* are always either on a line or in a space. And this is why there are four lines (or more, as in discant) above the text of a song, along with their clefs, such as .c. and .f., from which one can tell which vox is in a space and which on a line, and how, or by how much the melody descends or ascends.
[The notation also uses] a higher and lower b-molle sign used in two places for the sake of sweetness and gentleness of melody; but a natural "b" blows it out [makes it sing on a higher pitch]. Each melody, however, descends or ascends gradually or abruptly, and to distinguish it, nine intervals were devised, namely:
Unison—this will always occur [when a pitch is repeated] on all lines and spaces.
A semitone, [which] consists of two semi-full voces, i.e., fa and mi, and runs wherever these syllables appear.
A tone consists of two full voces, such as: la-sol, sol-fa.
A minor third consists of a semi-tone and a tone, or similarly of a tone and a semi-tone: fa-re, re-fa.
A major third consists of two ascending or descending tones, such as: la-fa, fa-la, mi-ut, ut-mi.
A fourth consists of two tones and one semi-tone, whether the semi-tone precedes or follows the two tones, or appears in the middle. And it appears in three ways in the ascending motion and three [ways] in the descending motion: la-mi, sol-re, fa-ut, or like this: ut-fa, re-sol, mi-la.
A fifth consists of three tones and one [semitone] |

[17] *ms.* clausulis [!]
[18] *ms.* ·c·fa· quibus
[19] *ms.* ex duabus ex
[20] *ms.* tono
[21] *ms.* semitononio

Summary

The library of Poor Clares at St. Andrew's Church in Kraków holds the 13th century Gradual and Antiphoner. The first bifolio of the latter contains the so called Parisian tables of the antiphons for the Lauds in the last weekdays of Advent and a music treatise, unknown from elsewhere, unfortunatelly preserved only fragmentarily. The treatise begins with original considerations on the principles of music as one of the liberal arts. Then "Musical Hand", music notation and intervals are briefly described using quite peculiar terminology. The article includes edition of the text, which is an interesting source for the study of music teaching in Franciscan circles.

Keywords: Theory of music, the Franciscan Order, Poor Clares, Franciscan Antiphoner