GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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NOTE VALUES

maxima: 𝍧
long: 𝍦
breve: 𝅜
semibreve: 𝅝
minim: 𝅗𝅥
semiminim: ♩

Mensuration: one way of indicating note value relationships through a series of signs, devised in the fourteenth century and employed throughout the Renaissance to show how many of one note value were contained within the next larger note value. The levels indicated were major *modus* (long:maxima), minor *modus* (breve:long), *tempus* (semibreve:breve), and prolation (minim:semibreve). For *modus* (mode) and *tempus* (time), the term "perfect" indicated that the larger value contained three of the smaller; "imperfect" indicated that the larger value contained two of the smaller. For *prolatio* (prolation), these same divisions were usually indicated by "major" and "minor", respectively, although theorists sometimes give "perfect" and "imperfect". Furthermore, any note, such as breve or semibreve, referred to as "perfect" or called a "perfection" means that it is divisible into three of the next smaller note value. Any note referred to as "imperfect" is divisible into two of the next smaller note value.

Common Types

Perfect *tempus* with major prolation (⊙):
1 𝅜 = 3 𝅝; 1 𝅝 = 3 𝅗𝅥; 1 𝅜 = 9 𝅗𝅥 (3 × 3 𝅗𝅥)
Imperfect *tempus* with major prolation (☉):
1 𝅜 = 2 𝅝; 1 𝅝 = 3 𝅗𝅥; 1 𝅜 = 6 𝅗𝅥 (2 × 3 𝅗𝅥)
Perfect *tempus* with minor prolation (○):
1 𝅜 = 3 𝅝; 1 𝅝 = 2 𝅗𝅥; 1 𝅜 = 6 𝅗𝅥 (3 × 2 𝅗𝅥)

Imperfect *tempus* with minor prolation (C):
1 ♮ = 2 ◊; 1 ◊ = 2 ♩; 1 ♮ = 4 ♩ (2 × 2 ♩)

Note that the verbal indication for *tempus* often preceded that for prolation, however several sources, mostly Italian, indicate prolation before *tempus*.
The main note value or *tempo* (see below) in each of the above mensurations is the breve. The *tactus* or *battuta* (i.e., beat), however, falls on the semibreve.
Two versions of these mensuration signs occur commonly in diminution, where the long behaves like a breve, and the breve like a semibreve, so that a long occupies one *tempo*, the (subdivided) beats of which fall on the breve.

Φ: 1 ♮ = 2 ♮; 1 ♮ = 3 ◊; 1 ◊ = 2 ♩;
1 ♮ = 12 ♩ (6 × 6 ♩)
Ȼ: 1 ♮ = 2 ♮; 1 ♮ = 2 ◊; 1 ◊ = 2 ♩;
1 ♮ = 8 ♩ (4 × 4 ♩)

mesure (Fr.): "disposition, arrangement, façon."[1] In the Franco-Burgundian *basse danse*, a *mesure* was a specific arrangement of dance step-units. Nine prescribed *mesures* were possible, although additional variants are found in surviving choreographies. The *mesures* are classified into three principal types: *grande, moyenne*, and *petite*, according to the number of *pas double*(*s*) they contain (five, three, or one, respectively). Each may subsequently be classified as *(très) parfaite, plus que parfaite,* and *imparfaite*, according to the occurrence or omittance of *pas simples* following the *pas double*(*s*) and the number of *desmarches* (three or one) before the final *branle* step.[2] The opening of any *basse danse majeure* features a *reverence* plus a *branle* step as a "prefix" to the first *mesure*. (See I. The dances and their steps, Table 2.)

1 *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330–1500)*, ATILF: Analyse et traitement informatique de la langue française, s.v. "mesure", accessed 24 November 2020, atilf.fr/dmf/definition/mesure.

2 Br9085 lists four subclassifications of *mesure*, giving *très parfaite* and *parfaite* as two different possibilities, but it only defines *très parfaite*. According to Toulouze, only three subclassifications of *mesure* exist, *parfaite, plus que parfaite*, and *imparfaite*; Toulouze defines *parfaite* with the same description as that used for *très parfaite* in Br9085.

misura (It.): "a measure, a rule, a proportion, a meane, a temper."[3] According to Domenico da Piacenza, *misura* "governs everything quick or slow according to the music"; it is "a slowness tempered with quickness", like "waves [which] rise with slowness and fall with quickness".[4] This definition suggests that the term embodies the composite ideas of mensuration and *tactus*. The four principal types of dance in Italy are referred to as the four *misure—bassadanza, quadernaria, saltarello,* and *piva*—since a proportion may be derived among their relative speeds or pulses. The practical mensuration signs applicable to each type of *misura* in surviving musical examples may be summarized as follows:[5]

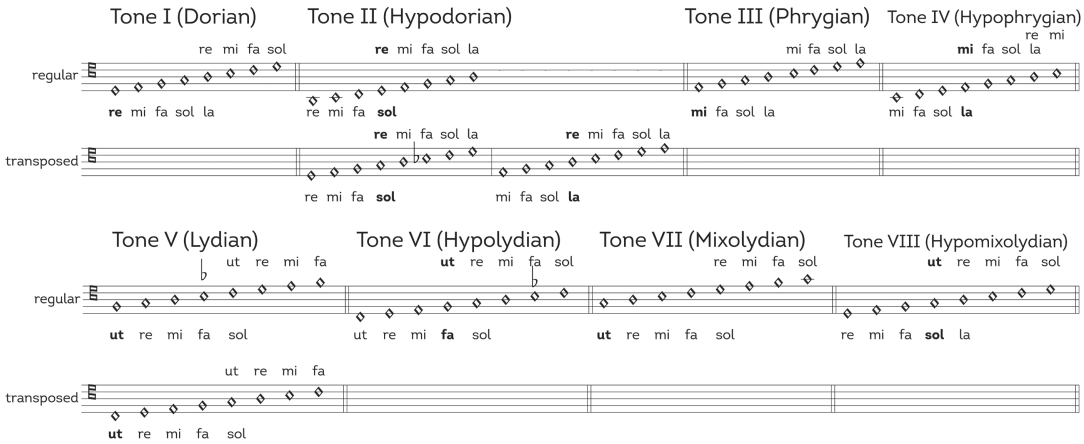
bassadanza: 𝅝
saltarello: 𝅗𝅥 or 𝅝
quadernaria: 𝅗𝅥
piva: 𝅝, 𝅗𝅥, or 𝅗𝅥𝅂

Musica recta and *musica ficta:* the complete musical system available to musicians in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. *Musica recta* ("right" or "true" music) comprises the diatonic pitches (white keys of the piano) from G (Γ-*ut*) to e″, the span of which was known as the gamut. *B*-flat was admitted as the one "accidental" note. Two types of designation applied to each note of this system. A letter name (*littera*), A-G, situated its absolute place on the musical staff or the musical hand. The application of one, two, or three vocables or "voices" (*voces musicales*: *ut - re - mi - fa - sol - la*) to any note (solmization) defines its intervallic relationships relative to the notes surrounding it. The groups of six vocables, known as deductions (and now most often referred to as hexachords), all share the same construction of tones (T) surrounding a central semitone (S), T-T-S-T-T, regardless of whether the hexachord's propriety is "hard", beginning on *G* and rising through the square *B* (natural) to *E*; "soft", beginning on *F* and rising through the round *B* (flat) to *D*; or "natural", beginning on *C* and rising to *A*. All the notes beyond the gamut—above, below, or in between—constituted *musica ficta* ("feigned" music). The most common occurrence of *musica ficta* was through the application of

3 Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words*, 318.
4 Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 13.
5 Nevile, *The Eloquent Body*, 117, gives a similar table.

the function of vocables *mi* (as ♯) or *fa* (as ♭), which defined the semitone, to a note that did not carry that vocable in a given context. Application of *musica ficta* resolves the *mi-fa* dissonances of tritone, augmented fifth, and augmented or diminished octave that could result within the otherwise perfect consonances of fourth, fifth, and octave. To sweeten cadences, the application of *musica ficta* assures the harmonic movement of a major sixth to an octave, in places where the penultimate harmony does not typically contain the defining leading tone.

Musical tones: combinations of different species of *diapente* (fifth) plus *diatessaron* (fourth), which overlap by one note, to form the tone octave—a specific arrangement of tones and semitones—used to construct a single melodic line. Each tone has commonly recurring, inherent melodic shapes and figurations that outline its inner *diapente* and *diatessaron*, and each has one note that marks its "usual" final point of arrival (called "final", shown below in bold), akin to the tonic of a modern musical key. The following chart shows all the regular tones (finals on *d*, *e*, *f*, and *g*)—although not all are found in the tenors of Br9085—plus the transposed versions of each tone found in the manuscript.



Step-Unit: reference term for the step or steps that occupy one *tempus/tempo* of a dance:
French: 1 *Reverence* (*R*), 1 *desmarche/reprise* (*r*), 1 *branle* (*b*), 2 *pas simples* (*ss*), 1 *pas double* (*d*)
Italian: 1 *riverencia,* 1 *ripresa,* 2 *continentie,* 2 *sempi,* 1 *doppio*

Tempo (It.), tempus (Lat.): "time". Today, the Italian word refers to the speed at which a musical composition is performed. For dance masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was a "measure of motion" in the form of a reference note value, that is, the principal time unit (note) in a given composition and its divisions (see mensuration). Throughout Chapter 1, *tempus* refers to the reference note value of French dances, and *tempo* refers to the reference note value of Italian dances.