

MUSICOLOGICAL STUDIES AND DOCUMENTS

23

JOHANNES COCHLAEUS

TETRACHORDUM MUSICES

Introduction, Translation and Transcription

by

CLEMENT A. MILLER



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MUSICOLOGY

1970

MUSICOLOGICAL STUDIES AND DOCUMENTS

ARMEN CARAPETYAN

General Editor

TETRACHORDUM MUSICES

by

JOHANNES COCHLAEUS

CONTENTS

Title Page of 1511 Edition	1
Introduction	2
Chapter Headings	14
Letter to Antonius Kress	17
Tract I	19
Poem by Heinrich Glarean	33
Tract II	34
Tract III	47
Letter to Willibald Pirckheimer	60
Tract IV	62
Appendix I	89
Appendix II	90
Appendix III	92
Bibliography	96
Index	98

INTRODUCTION

The first edition of *Tetrachordum Musices*, which is the basis of the present edition, was published at Nürnberg in 1511. As the title page indicates, it was written primarily for the school of St. Lorenz in Nürnberg, where Cochlaeus had become rector in 1510. The treatise quickly became popular, and between 1512 and 1526 six more editions were produced by printers of the town.

The musical contents of *Tetrachordum Musices* are derived, with certain important exceptions, from an earlier printed treatise entitled *Musica*, which exists in three editions. Each of these enlarges the contents of the preceding edition. In chronological order they are:

1. *Musica*, an anonymous treatise now at the Vienna Nationalbibliothek. A publisher, place of publication, and date are lacking.¹

2. *Musica*, an anonymous treatise that has been the property of the University of Leipzig since 1507. It also lacks information on a publisher, place of publication, and date.²

3. *Musica* by J. Wendelstein, printed in 1507 at Cologne by Johannes Landen. On the title page a poem by the Florentine poet Remaclus includes the humanistic version of the author's name, Johannes Cocleus.

Mantuani³ has proven conclusively that Cochlaeus is the author of the three prints, and that each edition of *Musica* is a development of the preceding one, beginning with 25 chapters in the Vienna *Musica*, then growing to 31 chapters in the Leipzig *Musica*, and finally reaching the Cologne *Musica* of 1507 with its 57 chapters. The Leipzig *Musica* must also have been printed by Landen in Cologne, since both the font of the print and the wood blocks of musical examples are the same as the Cologne imprint of 1507. Cochleus owned the wood blocks and gave them in turn to various printers of later editions. In this way many musical examples of these two editions appear also in *Tetrachordum Musices* of 1511, as well as in its subsequent editions.

¹ See J. Mantuani, "Ein unbekanntes Druckwerk," in *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Verein für Bibliothekswesen*, VI, 1902, p. 7.

² It is the *Anonymi Introductorium Musicae*, ed. by H. Riemann, in *MfM* XXIX (1897), p. 147ff., and XXX (1898), p. 1ff. ³ *Op. cit.*

FIRST TRACT OF COCHLAEUS'S *TETRACHORDUM*:

Some general elements of music

CHAPTER 1

Definition of Music

What is music? It is the science of modulating correctly, as Augustine states.¹ Or it is the ability to weigh differences of high and low sounds by sense and by reason, as Boethius says.² Or it is the knowledge of melodic species and those things that are related to melody, as Bacchius states.³

What is the source of the term music? According to some its source is: *Mois*,⁴ which the Egyptians call water because it was found near water, and moisture is needed to produce a tone; or the nine Muses who preside over poetry and song, for ancient theologians on gods as Orpheus, and philosophers as Plato, wished the muses to be considered a concord of heavenly bodies; a muse (*musa*), a kind of high-pitched instrument, as a pipe (*tibia*), which is blown by human breath, or a cithara, which is played by hand, or an organ (*organum*), which is activated by bellows; or the Greek word *musa*, which means song (*cantus*). As Vergil writes, "Sylvestrem tenui musam meditaris avena"⁵, and so Orpheus in *Hymns* believes that the muses are named by contraction from *Meluse*, for they seem to be nothing but *melos*, that is, harmonious song.

CHAPTER 2

Division of Music

How is music divided? Into three types. First, according to Richardus,⁶ music is threefold, namely, mundane, human, and instrumental; each of these is divided into three parts.

¹ *De Musica*, in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, XXXII, 1081.

² *De Musica*, V, 1.

³ *Bachii Senioris, Introductorio Artis Musicae*, in Mcibom, *Antiquae Musicae Autores Septem* (Amsterdam, 1652), I, 1.

⁴ Concerning the etymology of *mois* and its relation to Moses, see Noel Swerdlow, "Musica Dicitur A Moys, Quod Est Aqua," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XX (1967), p. 3.

⁵ *Ecologues* I, 2.

⁶ Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173), *Excerptum Allegoricarum*, lib. I, cap. 10. Cochlaeus's entire first division of music follows Richard's text closely. It is in Migne, vol. 177, col. 198, but attributed to Hugo of St. Victor, although it is now considered to be by Richard. See J. Chatillon, "Le contenu... du 'Liber exceptionum'... de Richard de S. Victor", in *Revue du Moyen âge latin* IV, p. 23. Richard's chapter on music, nonetheless, comes from Hugo's *Eruditionis Didascalicae*, lib. II, cap. 13 (in Migne, vol. 176, col. 756).

Which keys are *confinales*? They are *a, b, c*. The seventh and eighth Tones sometimes have a *confinalis* on low *C*.

What is a final note or key? The lower note in the interval of a fifth. What is a *confinalis*? The upper note in the interval of a fifth, for a *confinalis* should be a fifth from its final. But when the seventh and eighth Tones end on *G*, they do not have a *confinalis* above because of the excessive highness of the keys. Sometimes, but rarely, they end on low *C*.

Yet in mensural music *confinales* are accepted at will as long as a song keeps the same consonance. In this way all Tones in figural song can avail themselves of a *confinalis* on the fourth above the final by singing *fa* on *b fa mi*. The systems of Tones can be understood from the subjoined notes.



You see, therefore, how an authentic Tone is divided on the *confinalis* and a plagal Tone is divided on the final. I call the median tone the one which divides a fifth and a fourth, and which is common to both. In authentic Tones, therefore, the final note is always the lowest, while in plagal Tones a fourth lies below it. So a song in an authentic Tone should not begin as high as its plagal begins.

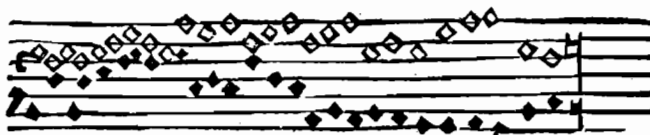
CHAPTER 3

Range and Ambitus of Tones

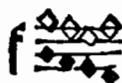
What is the ambitus of a Tone? It is the distance that the rule of very Tone allows it to move, that is, how far each should ascend or descend from its final.

From this two rules result. First, every authentic Tone regularly ascends to the octave above the final, or more freely to the ninth or tenth above, and descends to a second below the final. Second, every plagal Tone

8. Between two perfect consonances it is fitting to place several similar or dissimilar imperfect consonances, as one, two, three, or four thirds, and one or more tenths. The following is an example.



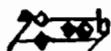
9. Several ascending parallel sixths can rarely or never be used in note-against-note counterpoint, although many descending sixths can be written if the last sixth is followed by the octave it requires, as at (f).



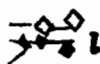
10. Sometimes a tenth can follow a sixth if the tenor descends a third or fourth. A third can also follow a sixth if the tenor ascends a fourth, as at (g).



11. In a discant, resolution to the closest consonant should be sought, as when discant and tenor on a soft third move in contrary motion to a unison, as at (h).



But from a hard third they move in contrary motion to a fifth, as at (i).



12. When a discant a third above a tenor rises one step, the tenor descends a fifth, so that together they form an octave. Also, when a tenor an octave below a discant rises a fifth, the discant descends one step, so that the octave moves very nicely to a third, as at (k).

