

Philippe de Vitry, motet “In virtute nominum” / “Decens carmen edere” / “Clamor meus”
 Text, translation and notes from Anna Zayaruznaya, *The Monstrous New Art: Divided Forms in the Late Medieval Motet*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 235-6. © 2015. Cambridge University Press. Reproduced by permission of Cambridge University Press.

Triplum¹

5	In virtute nominum quam plures ignari conditores carminum falso predicari gaudent, dictis hominum putantes equari.	In the virtue of the names [given them], a great many ignorant [people] rejoice to be falsely praised as makers of poems, thinking that they equal the words of the folk [praising them].
10	Miscet impericia talium delusa, non evitans vicia scribendi preclusa, placidis immicia, sinceris obtusa, alba nigris, tristia letis, et profusa	The foolish inexperience of these people, not avoiding forbidden vices of composition, mixes the rough with the gentle, the obscure with the plain, white things with black, the sorrowful with the joyous, and writes concise things into overly excessive ones
15	nimis arat brevia sub inepta Musa.	under [the guidance of] a tasteless Muse.
20	Heccine congeries verborum enormis est picture species picta multiformis,	Is not this formless heap of words a kind of picture painted with many shapes,
25	ut si pictor faciat caput femininum, cui plumas adiciat et collum equinum, residuum finiat in piscem marinum?	as though the painter were to make a female head, to which he might add feathers and the neck of a horse, [and then] finish the rest out as a sea-fish? ²

Motetus³

5	Decens carmen edere quicumque volentes thema decens capere debent et decentes esse: thema promere posse mencies honeri succumbere non li[n]quunt prudentes.	Anyone wishing to write a fitting poem should take a fitting subject and himself be fit [for the work]; Those [falsely] pretending to be able to put forth a topic are not allowed by the wise to take on the burden [of writing].
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10	Si scribendi tragicus stilus est in primis, in medio comicus non sit, nec in ymis: unus enim modicus, alter est sublimis.	If the tragic style of writing is at the outset, let the comic not be in the middle or at the end: for one is humble; the other, elevated.
15	Verborum coniugium rite celebretur, adeo quod vicium minime causetur, et nichil improprium	Let the marriage of words be duly celebrated, so that it may by no means cause an error, and nothing improper
20	eminus aptetur, secus enim precium carmen non meretur.	should be accommodated from afar, otherwise the poem will not merit reward.
Tenor ⁴	Clamor meus.	My din.

¹ Ed. A. G. Rigg, PMFC vol. V, supplement, 13, text 28 (R), with a division into stanzas, an added comma in l. 11, and preferring “ut si” to his “utsi” in l. 21. The following additional changes have been made on the recommendation of Zoltán Rihmer, based on his consultation of I-IV 115 (Iv) and F-Pn 2444 (P): 2 quam plures P] quamplures R; 3 carminum P] crimum R; 16 Musa P] forma R, Iv. Rihmer has translated the first stanza and greatly improved my translation of the rest.

² Ll. 21–26 paraphrase Horace, *Ars poetica*, 1–4: “Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam / iungere si velit et varias inducere plumas / undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum / desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne. . .”

³ Ed. A. G. Rigg, 13, text 29, with stanza breaks added and commas deleted in ll. 2 and 6, and added in l. 16. The following additional changes have been made in consultation with Rihmer, who has also greatly improved my translation: 7 succumbere] subcumbere Iv, succubere P; 8 li[n]quunt] liqunt Iv, norunt P; 16 punctuation added; 19 improprium P] inproprium Iv.

⁴ On the liturgical context of the tenor see Alice Clark, “Concordare cum materia: The Tenor in the Fourteenth-Century Motet,” Ph.D. diss., Princeton University (1996), 262.