

Rethinking

Ars Subtilior:

Context, Language, Study and Performance

Submitted by

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to the University of Exeter as a dissertation for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Medieval Studies

June, 2010

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Abstract

This dissertation attempts to re-contextualise the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century musical phenomenon now referred to as the *Ars subtilior*, in terms of our modern understanding of it, as well as its relationship to wider late medieval culture. In order to do so I re-examine the processes used to formulate existing retrospective definitions, identify a few compelling reasons why their re-evaluation is needed, and propose an alternative approach towards this goal. My research has led me to analyse the modern preoccupation with this repertoire, both in musicology and performance, and to explore external influences impinging on our attitudes towards it. Having outlined current attitudes and the problems of their crystallisation, I seek to re-contextualise them within medieval culture through a survey of the surviving physical evidence. The resulting observations highlight the difficulties we face when looking at the material. Above all, they point at the problems created by using narrow definitions of this style, whether these are technical, geographic, temporal or intellectual. My observations shed some light on the scale, complexity and relevance of the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon. The next step is to look at the music itself by analysing the use and function of stylistic features that distinguish the style. As my goal is to conceptualise the style as a whole, and not merely isolate interesting events within it, the variety of stylistic features examined is wider than those traditionally defined as characteristic of *Ars subtilior*. A series of case-studies examine the validity and usefulness of my conceptualisations, and attempt to couple modern inquiry into technique with an understanding of its place within medieval culture and society. In my conclusion, I attempt to bring the different strands together by proposing a new conceptualisation of the *Ars subtilior* which takes our understanding of medieval history and thought-patterns as a starting point, and proves useful also in a modern context. My proposal revolves around the concept of ‘exceptionality’ within a culture that seeks legitimacy. I have formulated it to make sense of the apparent appeal of this music to medieval performers, audiences, patrons, composers, compilers and collectors. Status and meaning was created by attracting attention to a work as a whole, or specific locations within its music or text, through the deviation from older or newly created norms. At the heart of my conceptualisation though, are its modern implications. My goal in this work is to transcend the technicalities of the *Ars subtilior* and supply scholars and performers with the tools to interpret and perform its music expressively, finding meaning in this unique musical phenomenon.

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Warsaw8054	Warsaw, National Library III. 8054
Wm*	London, Westminster Abbey Library, 21
WolkA	Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2777
WolkB	Innsbruck, Universitätsbibliothek, without shelfmark (Wolkenstein)

Star indicates non-musical collections

Abbreviations

<i>AfM</i>	Archiv für Musikwissenschaft
<i>AM</i>	Acta Musicologica
<i>BJHM</i>	Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis
<i>CAMLR</i>	Canadian Association of Music Libraries Review
<i>CMM</i>	Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae
<i>CR</i>	Current Musicology
<i>DM</i>	Die Musikforschung
<i>EM</i>	Early Music
<i>EMH</i>	Early Music History
<i>FSM</i>	Freiburger Schriften zur Musikwissenschaft
<i>GLMT</i>	Greek and Latin Music Theory
<i>GSLI</i>	Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana
<i>HE</i>	Higher Education
<i>HMS</i>	Harlaxton Medieval Studies
<i>IRASM</i>	International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music
<i>JAMS</i>	Journal of the American Musicological Society
<i>JEBS</i>	Journal of the Early Book Society
<i>JHI</i>	Journal of the History of Ideas
<i>JMT</i>	Journal of Music Theory
<i>JOWG</i>	Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft
<i>JRMA</i>	Journal of the Royal Musical Association
<i>JVL</i>	Jahrbuch des Vorarlberger Landesmuseumsvereins
<i>MA</i>	Music Analysis
<i>MD</i>	Musica Disciplina
<i>MTS</i>	Music Theory Spectrum
<i>MGG</i>	Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart
<i>ML</i>	Music & Letters
<i>MS</i>	Musica e storia
<i>MSD</i>	Musical Studies and Documents
<i>PMA</i>	Proceedings of the Musical Association
<i>PMFC</i>	Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century
<i>PMM</i>	Plainsong and Medieval Music
<i>PNM</i>	Perspectives of New Music
<i>RBM</i>	Revue belge de Musicologie / Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Muziekwetenschap
<i>RIM</i>	Rivista italiana di musicologia
<i>RISM</i>	Répertoire International des Sources Musicales
<i>RM</i>	Revue de Musicologie
<i>RR</i>	Romantic Review
<i>SBM</i>	Schweizer Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft
<i>SIM</i>	Sammelbände der internationalen Musikgesellschaft
<i>SM</i>	Studi Musicali
<i>SMASH</i>	Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
<i>SRLI</i>	Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures
<i>TAB</i>	The Art Bulletin
<i>TJM</i>	The Journal of Musicology
<i>TMQ</i>	The Musical Quarterly

<i>TMT</i>	The Musical Times
<i>TNI</i>	The National Interest
<i>TVNM</i>	Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis
<i>UH</i>	Urban History

B	Ballade
Cr	Credo
Gl	Gloria
K	Kyrie
R	Rondeau
San	Sanctus
V	Virelai

C	Tempus imperfectum prolatio minor mensuration (modern 2/4 time)
O	Tempus perfectum prolatio maior mensuration (modern 3/4 time)
Ⓒ	Tempus imperfectum prolatio maior mensuration (modern 6/8 time)
Ⓓ	Tempus perfectum prolatio maior mensuration (modern 9/8 time)

For clarity's sake, note-names appear in capitals, unless the context requires octave differentiation.

Introduction

It is widely acknowledged by both performers and scholars of medieval music that something special happened in French music in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. At first glance, every aspect of this repertoire seems surprising, from its technical and virtuosic exuberance, through its survival nearly exclusively in non-French sources, to our inability to locate plausible situations and occasions for its performance.

Scholars coined many terms to describe this phenomenon, ranging from *Fin de siècle* to *Late ars nova*, from *Avant-garde* to *Mannerism*. Each term carried with it its own connotations, significations and prejudice. Over the last half-century it was the term *Ars subtilior*, coined by Ursula Günther in 1963,¹ which became the most widely used name for this music, and a myriad of studies and performances attempted to define it, how it worked and what it might have sounded like. By now, many of its technical elements are understood, much historical knowledge has been gathered and its sound has slowly seeped into academic, concert-going and recording-buying audiences' consciousness. Still, these efforts have not yet resulted in a consensus over the original context of this music, its sound or aesthetics. We do not have an explanation for its rise and decline, nor a coherent conceptualisation through which its contents can be understood.

One dissertation cannot aim to set the record straight on all these accounts, and I do not pretend even to attempt to answer every question pertaining to the *Ars subtilior* in this study. Indeed, whole sections of this thesis are dedicated to arguing that gaps will always remain in our knowledge and that interpretation is never likely to remain stable. That is after all, the reason for continued scholarship. My aim here is to take a step back and re-evaluate the state of our knowledge and understanding of the *Ars subtilior*, reconfiguring and widening its scope in order to suggest a possible synthesis of the information. My approach interprets the deviation from normal practice and the confinement of musical, technical and visual expectations as a central stylistic, practical and social characteristic. This idea can assign meaning to the musical extremities found in this music, transforming them from virtuosic experimentation into a stylistic language. The formulation of this musical language can explain the longevity and popularity of the *Ars subtilior*, factors which remain an oddity if

¹ See Ursula Günther, 'Das Ende der ars nova', *DM*, xvi (1963), pp. 105-121.

this music is interpreted as a play on abstract technicalities. This concept of ‘transgressing expectations’ also offers a social use for this music. An association of this music with uniqueness, self-awareness and authority would have appeal to the social pretention of all who were involved in its production and consumption. It can therefore reinforce the role of the *Ars subtilior* as a relatively long-lasting, socially expedient, expressive cultural force within music history. Rather than a style single-mindedly aiming at complexity, it can support its own mainstream usage, and encompass different degrees of preoccupation with its different characteristics. Having such a contextualised understanding of this style can act as a gateway to performers and scholars. The formulation of an expressive language within which this music operates can allow the analysis of *Ars subtilior* music for alternative modes of expression on top of its technical configuration. In turn, this can give performers access to this music’s expressive qualities and breathe new life into its modern reconstruction and consumption, disseminating these findings and their emotional sensitivities to audiences at large.

It has long been recognised that in evaluating both modern output and historical documents, materials cannot be taken at face value. Both the study and understanding of history are always influenced by external forces, be they different aspects of the materials analysed, modern cultural and political context, or the personality of those undertaking it. Performances and recordings are nearly universally taken as manifestations of personal artistic creativity and expression. Analysing such creations, which are based on or deal with historic themes, causes further problems within the relationship between product and the original cultural context of the materials used. On top of the personal, ahistoric and expressive considerations which come into play, the availability of personnel, format limitations, audience expectations, and an enhanced exposure to commercial and market forces are also major influences on the final performance outcome.

Awareness of such external influences does not protect my own work from their power, as the most banal of comparisons can attest. The way I approach the *Ars subtilior* is very different to the way Ursula Günther did when she coined the phrase. We carry different ‘cultural baggage’, have access to different materials and have different goals in undertaking our work. These unavoidably influence the outcomes of our research. The context in which Günther coined the term is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1 below. For the sake of

comparison it should suffice to point out that academia was central for Günther's relationship with her subject. It furnished her with her training, was her gateway to this repertoire, and was the intended resonating chamber for her work. Her formulation of *Ars subtilior* characteristics was therefore designed to include distilled, technical, irrefutable criteria which answered the academic demand of style-definition at the time of her writing. I came to this music through performance, appreciating it and its sources before knowing what it is and where it comes from. As a result, it is important for me to approach scholarly work in such a way as to make its outcomes transferrable into the realm of performance. Expressive performance requires the formulation of a musical language with which to understand the works performed. This language can of course be intuitive, or be formed by a culture wholly different from that in which the music performed was conceived. Historically-minded performers though, have to acquire a range of stylistic musical languages. Intuition and sensitivity are still important in this process, but so is understanding. Therefore, my rethinking of *Ars subtilior* style requires the formulation of an interpretable musical language by which this music can be understood and expressed, as well as analysed and contextualised. Such a musical language is undoubtedly far removed from our own. Its formulation involves the same kind of intellectual adjustment required to understand any aspect of the Middle Ages, but with the added difficulty of the emotional connotations of any music. It follows that in order to avoid modern musical intuition when defining the expressive qualities of the *Ars subtilior*, one has to follow the same large analytical route required for all scholarly reevaluation. Recognition of our current conceptualisations and their origins can help decipher their relevance. Understanding the limitations of our knowledge can help contextualise the music without being prescriptive. Searching within the musical and social context for clues can enable us to propose a tentative model for an appropriate stylistic language. Probing such a model can help determine if the resulting stylistic language is acceptable, namely, capable of making sense of the *Ars subtilior* on its own terms and within its original cultural context, useful in this music's modern analysis, and applicable in its performance. This thesis will attempt to follow through this process.

Chapter 1 will follow the chronological historiography of thought and practice concerning *Ars subtilior* music, from the inception of modern musicology to the present. The history presented here does not attempt to discuss every article nor every concert in which this music has featured. Instead, some demonstrative instances will be highlighted in order to show the

changing influences on the preoccupation with this topic. Exposing some of these political, institutional, economic or personal influences can better our understanding of past scholarship and recordings. It can allow us to ignore statements which are irrelevant to our current cultural climate without dismissing the entire argument.

Chapter 2 revolves around the surviving musical sources. It takes as its starting point the multiplicity of attitudes to the *Ars subtilior* attested to by the preceding chapter. The music manuscripts are used to discern the relevance and extent of different aspects of this style within late medieval culture and to trace some of the interactions between the *Ars subtilior* and other cultural forces. The examination will progress from the uncontroversial to the relatively unconventional. It will start with some thoughts about the relevance of different criteria for determining style, followed by the identification of an uncontroversial reference point. This reference point is provided by a group of manuscripts which, on the grounds of their survival and size, have formed the basis of modern conceptualisations of *Ars subtilior*, regardless of their medieval importance or centrality. After examining the relationship between Günther's original characterisation of this style and the contents of these manuscripts, the relevance of these parameters to other sources is evaluated. The discussion then broadens to include other parameters which become relevant when considering manuscript sources and their context. A large number of sources – connected to the defined 'formative group' of manuscripts through contents, composer-ascription and concordance – are examined and assessed for their degree of relevance to our understanding of what we may term *Ars subtilior*. This construction highlights the difficulty in separating single determinants of style, or limiting the definition of *Ars subtilior* to a small number of sources. It presents this phenomenon as a widespread and flexible cultural force, which was not unified under a single goal or usage, and which managed in different guises to become relevant to relatively wide sections of society.

The following chapter continues the investigation of the surviving evidence, but this time in search of socially contextualising information away from the music itself. When trying to trace patterns of patronage and the careers of individuals an array of relevant sources is on offer: from literary references (including song texts) to administrative documentation; from private communication to overarching cultural clichés; from ascription patterns to sources' subsequent use and history. Each order of evidence comes with its own difficulties. All

medieval evidence suffers from some degree of incompleteness. Furthermore, each kind of evidence has a different level of relevance and usefulness to attempts at defining style. Finally, there is often a disparity between the information given by different kinds of sources, or between it and the musical evidence. To further complicate things and as Chapter 1 attests, problems of interpretation are also important here. These include the intensity of analysis of different materials, intentionality in modern preoccupation as well as in medieval production, and problems of identification of historic personalities all contribute to undermine the easy formulation of an overall picture. The chapter explores these problems, providing examples of individuals or courts relevant to the *Ars subtilior* for each one. The resulting mass of information demonstrates that even with the tentative state of our knowledge, it is clear that this phenomenon was widespread and circulated in a number of social strata, reinforcing the similar conclusions of Chapter 2. It also highlights that a definition of this style would have to provide a mechanism to explain not only its musical contents, but also its social relevance and performance possibilities.

In Chapter 4 the musical features of the style take centre stage. Sections from individual works are presented in order to describe the technical workings of this style, but more importantly, their practical effect as structural and expressive compositional tools. As with the manuscript survey of Chapter 2, the behaviour of features which are not usually considered central to the *Ars subtilior* will also be examined. This is due to the centrality of such elements as melodic construction and harmonic boundaries in the definition of any integrated musical style. On top of such unavoidable characteristics, other tendencies such as generic distribution, voice and text setting possibilities, language and character of texts, and the use of sequences or canon instructions are explored as the formulation of a stylistic language cannot be based only on the exceptional. The sum of features examined also suggests that the less extravagant stylistic features play an important part in giving this music its unique character, and should not be excluded from consideration. The chapter concludes with the detection of trends within these features and their combination, considered also through temporal and geographic affiliations. The concepts of exceptionality and of a graded approach to the use of each technique are combined to form an expressive and functional palette in the hands of a skilled composer. The chapter ends with a short discussion of the margin of error in our appreciation of local phenomena within this music. It explores some

of the effects of both medieval and modern errors, as well as the consequences of legitimate editorial decisions in shaping our attitudes on the technicalities and aesthetics of this style.

Chapter 5 consists of four case studies. Here I test the validity of the attitudes put forward in Chapter 4 concerning the different stylistic features of the *Ars subtilior* and the usefulness and practicality of the concepts that govern them. Since an accepted, convincing transcription of S Uciredor / Rodericus' *Angelorum psalat* (**Ch**, f. 48v) has yet to come to light, this song is used here to examine *Ars subtilior* expression away from its sounding results.² Instead, an examination of the expressive content of structural elements such as setting, register and modal behaviour is looked at, augmented by similar analyses of its text, notation and visuality. Antonello da Caserta's *Amour m'a le cuer mis* (**ModA**, f. 32v-33) can be considered a traditional *Ars subtilior* ballade. It is taken here to exemplify the effective structural planning undertaken in the use of different stylistic features, and their combination into a meaningful whole. It presents the *Ars subtilior* as a coherent language, rather than a style interest only in the eccentric and incomprehensible. The relevance of works which do not show clear and obvious grounds for identification as *Ars subtilior* is examined using the anonymous *Je suis cellui* (**Paris**, ff. 154 & 156-154v & 156v). The recent rediscovery of this work offers a unique opportunity to approach an unknown work with attitudes formulated elsewhere, testing their validity. The last case study takes the most widely copied songs of the period, which are P. de Molins' *De ce que foul pense*, Johannes Vaillant's *Par maintes fois*, Guillaume de Machaut's *De petit peu* and the anonymous *Jour a jour ma vie*, *Or sus vous dormes trop*, *Je languis d'amere mort*, and *En discort sont Desir et Esperance*. Many of these songs are not generally considered as belonging to the *Ars subtilior*, but all of them were copied also into the 'formative group' of manuscripts defined in Chapter 2, showing at the very least some relevance to this style. Through an analysis of some of the different forms that these songs take in different sources, their appeal to compilers of *Ars subtilior* music will be examined, leading to the wider question of the relationship between an apparently specialist taste and the surrounding simpler styles. The chapter will end with a discussion of the ways in which each case study fits into a wider notion of *Ars subtilior*, and the effect single pieces have on our idea of this style.

² It seems reasonable to believe that S Uciredor is an inversion of Rodericus, as one is a very likely name and the other one is not. I shall therefore use the inversion for the rest of my dissertation. See pp. 207-10 for more details concerning possible identifications and political affiliations.

The concluding chapter consists of my own proposal for the formulation of a conceptual framework for understanding the *Ars subtilior*. It tries to rethink our concepts of what defines the style, of its technical and expressive workings, and of its place within social and intellectual medieval culture. The model is based on a shift from the transgression of expectations as a central but mostly unconscious element in the process of stylistic change into a prime and mostly self-aware stylistic characteristic. Attention is attracted by deviation from inherited norms, which still govern contemporaneous production of more functional types of music, as well as from newly formed expectations created within a piece. Meaning and expression are therefore created by the combination of transgressing techniques used, the degree of use, and the interactions between the locations marked out as important by these transgressions and the text or overall structure of the work. The plethora of stylistic features which are open to minute manipulation result in a style which while assigning worth, ability and authority to the exceptional, still allows subtle expression, and does not demand absolute extremes of each work which is affiliated to it. I believe its process is simple enough to permeate the unconsciousness of practitioners of many cultural layers, but at the same time is versatile enough to make sense even of the most extreme examples of the *Ars subtilior* repertoire. This model also fits in with our understanding of the intellectual, social and political currents of the time. It can transform our interpretation of this music into a useful social and political tool in the legitimisation efforts of aristocratic, bourgeois and intellectual patrons, a weapon in the arsenal of composers, performers and compilers competing in an expanding musical market, and a status-giving, high-register source of intuitive pleasure to its audiences.

In short, this work centres on a search for ‘*Ars subtilior* expressivity’, by which I mean the intentional and purposeful creation and manipulation of meaning – emotional or intellectual – within the fabric of composed music. The formulation of such a language will allow us to better understand compositional processes, allow performers to amplify this music’s contents in practice, and underpin its consumption and enjoyment in both its original and current contexts. Even if my stylistic model is generally accepted and is found to be beneficial to our historical understanding, analytic study and performance possibilities, it is unlikely to be the only viable solution to the *Ars subtilior* conundrum. There will still be much work to be done in clarifying the details of the resulting stylistic language and its interaction with society’s pressures. In any event, I hope that by proposing my conceptual

synthesis, even competing definitions would have to be reconsidered in a wider view of this style, where no element pertaining to it is to be sidelined or marginalised. My suggestions should therefore be seen as a starting point for debate rather than its end. Finally, I find vital importance in the ability of my idea to bring together historical and analytical research and performance under the same conceptual framework. I believe much can be learned by having closer links between the two activities, to the benefit not only of musicians and scholars, but also of audiences and through them, general culture.

Before progressing to the work itself, I would like to thank all those who taught me everything I know or tolerated me while I was at it. As they are too innumerable to count, I would like to privilege here but a few of those who participated more actively with the development of this dissertation. First, my heartfelt thanks to Yolanda Plumley and Giuliano Di Bacco for their supervision and support, skilfully and patiently stirring my work into more productive avenues, and offering helpful comments on many versions of each chapter. Deep gratitude is extended to all those who kindly shared with me some of their unpublished work, or helped me in conversation to hone my ideas. Along with Yolanda Plumley and Giuliano Di Bacco these include Marc Lewon, Karin Paulsmeier-Smith, Mark Everist, Anne Stone, Martin Kirnbauer, Jacques Boogaart, Anthony Musson, Paweł Gancarczyk, Crawford Young, Michał Gondko, Tamsyn Rose-Steel and Andy Elliot. Thanks to Philippe Vendrix for giving me permission to use relevant facsimile images. I am ever thankful to all those who helped me with my English, Latin and French, including Elizabeth Rumsey, Yolanda Plumley, Giuliano di Bacco, Katharine Hawnt, Marc Lewon, Leofranc Holford-Strevens, Nicoletta Gossen, Emma Cayley, Fabrice Fitch, Els Janssens, Kirsty Whatley, Giovanni Cantarini, and Nicolas Savoy. I blame Jonny Tyack for sending me down this route. I would not have been able to complete this work without the invaluable support of family and friends. On top of those already mentioned, I would like to thank my parents, brothers, sister and cousins, both through blood and law, as well as Randall Cook, Alain Moirandat, Gawain Glenton, Gabriele E. Lewon, the Potters, and of course Julian and Wilfred. Finally, and with an apology for being a bit too early for the theme of this work, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife with the only words which describe my feeling:

Mon cuer, m'amour et quanque je desir

1. *Ars subtilior* research and performance – a historiography

Studying history is never objective, as the layers of interpretation heaped on the Middle Ages can attest. This is easily demonstrable even when looking at studies which aim to explore not the Middle Ages themselves but subsequent attitudes to this period, and has special relevance to artistic production concerning it.³ Therefore, when considering both scholarly and musical performances concerning the *Ars subtilior*, three main considerations should be kept in mind. First is factual authenticity, meant not as an absolute comparison between past and present, but to the validity and completeness of the scientific argument and the integrity of its translation into performance. Second, one has to consider the cultural context from which the work arises, both in terms of the state of scientific and technical knowledge at the time, and of the overall intellectual and political atmosphere by which it is surrounded. Third is the relationship between the work and its acknowledged background. This involves its interaction with similar endeavours, as well as the personal, expressive and individualistic core which led to the inception of the work in the first place. The following survey will attempt to make use of these guidelines in its examination of *Ars subtilior*'s modern history.

The coining of the term *Ars subtilior* to refer to music demonstrating features such as special note-shapes, cross-rhythms and syncopation with an approximate chronological correspondence with the Great Schism (1378-1417) did not mark the starting point of preoccupation with this style.⁴ It did not even mark an endpoint to the use of earlier tags such as *late Ars nova* and *Mannerism* or to musicological attempts to find more suitable ones, creating at times a confusing mix of terms both in professional and popular literature. Still, this is a very small corner of a varied and wide-ranging period, which itself tends to receive disproportionately little attention in both research and performance. In order to understand its

³ See Norman Frank Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1992); Marcus Bull, *Thinking Medieval: An Introduction to the Study of the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Veronica Ortenberg, *In Search of The Holy Grail* (London & New York, 2006), and Umberto Eco, 'Dreaming of the Middle Ages' in Umberto Eco, *Faith in Fakes: Essays* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1986), pp. 61-85. An attempt to systematise an approach to deal with creative representation of the Middle Ages is found in Andy Elliot, *Re-creation and Representation: The Middle Ages on Film* (PhD. diss. for the University of Exeter, forthcoming).

⁴ See Günther, 'Das Ende', pp. 119-120. Until further definitions are attempted for different characteristics of this style, the term *Ars subtilior* will be used in a similar fashion.

early context, my survey will begin with the emergence of modern musicology, and include also some of the wider attitudes towards medieval music and the Middle Ages.

This chapter will follow the continuous gathering of knowledge and its availability to the general public through performance, presenting it side by side with the external irrelevant influences which shaped the opinions and products considered. Consequently, the materials available today will not only be presented, but some light will be shed on their contextual relevance. It will proceed chronologically in six sections. The first contextualises the emergence of modern musicology before its institutionalisation, examining the context in which the first musicologists considered their own efforts and the way they treated their materials. The second section will describe the activities of the first generation of institutionalised musicologists as regards medieval music, and the problematic aspects which plagued their endeavours and left a mark on subsequent scholarship. The following section starts off with the first modern performances of medieval music, and examines the developing attitudes and competing definitions for the *Ars subtilior* before the coining of this term. Section four encompasses Ursula Günther's early work and circumstances, and the revival of interest in this repertoire in the decade following her act of legitimisation. The next period describes the establishment of both study and performance of *Ars subtilior* music in the 1970s and 1980s, and the new pressures on it, from the business world without, and the ideas of New Musicology within. The last section traces the fragmentation of ideology in study and performance discernable in the 1990s and the new century, as far as can be discerned from such a short distance. The chapter concludes with some provisos to the schematic separation of the attitudes described, and some overarching remarks concerning the need to distinguish this repertoire from its historical surroundings.

Pre-institutional musicology

The history of musicology does not begin with the subjects' institutionalisation, and the institutionalisation itself did not happen in a vacuum. The fathers of musicology – Sir John Hawkins, Charles Burney, Johann Forkel, and François-Joseph Fétis, to name but a few⁵ – all

⁵ Sir John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (London, 1776); Charles Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period, to which is prefixed a Dissertation on the Music of the Ancients* i-iv (London, 1776, 1782, 1789, 1789 respectively); Johann Nicolaus Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (Leipzig, 1788-1801); *Ueber die Theorie der Musik, insofern sie Liebhabern und Kennern nothwendig und nützlich ist* (Göttingen, 1777); *Ueber Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke* (Leipzig, 1802), among other publications; François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique* (Brussels, 1835–44).

shared a common intellectual environment. Researching music before the institutionalisation of musicology was assumed to be the domain of the well-to-do male amateur. He would be expected to be able to operate independently and fund his own activities, which inevitably led to the results of his activities being personal and individualistic.⁶

When these early writers dealt with elements pertaining to medieval music, they either catalogued information without interpreting it, or analysed the music in search of precedents for phenomena from their own time.⁷ The second approach, while allowing for the appreciation of the genius required to create this music, necessitated a view of medieval music as ‘the bottom of the historical pile’ and therefore as of bad quality. This fitted the prevailing popular notions concerning the middle-ages in the mid-nineteenth century. Whether positive or negative, attitudes towards this period were heavily imbued with notions of primitivism.⁸

Throughout the nineteenth century the institutionalisation of musicology was led by German-speaking countries. The term *Musikwissenschaft* itself appeared as early as 1827 in the title of a work by Johann Bernhard Logier, and was widely used by the early 1860s.⁹ Institutionalisation first occurred in the conservatory. This institution was a softer target for reform, being purely musical and less traditionalist. 1843 saw the opening of Felix Mendelssohn’s new conservatory in Leipzig. As its first prospectus explains, this new

⁶ See Finn Mathiassen, *The Style of the Early Motet*, (Copenhagen, 1966), pp. 9-10, or for a musicological quarrel which seemed to have led to the avoidance of a duel by suicide see John Haines, ‘The Footnote Quarrels of the Modal Theory: A Remarkable Episode in the Reception of Medieval Music’, *EMH*, xx (2001), pp. 87-120.

⁷ For catalogues see Martin Gerbert, Freiherr von Hornau, *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica sacra potissimum* (St Blasien, 1784) and its supplements by Charles-Edmond-Henri de Coussemaker in *Scriptorum de musica medii aevi nova series a Gerbertina altera* (Paris, 1864-76). As examples of early historical research see Raphael Georg Kiesewetter, *Geschichte der europäisch-abendländischen oder unsrer heutigen Musik* (Leipzig, 1834), where an evolutionary model of music history is presented, leading constantly upwards towards the musical epitome of the early 19th century; *Schicksale und Beschaffenheit des weltlichen Gesanges vom frühen Mittelalter bis zu der Erfindung des dramatischen Styles und den Anfängen der Oper* (Leipzig, 1841) selected musical incidents with the express goal of showing a developmental link leading to the invention of opera, or Carls von Winterfeld, *Johannes Gabrielli und sein Zeitalter* (Berlin, 1834), where music before 1600 is referred to as a ‘Heilige Tonkunst’ (a holy musical art), implying a negative attitude towards all that followed. For Kiesewetter, Fétis and Perne, see also Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 158-162.

⁸ This tag is used in every chapter of Ortenberg, *In Search*, whether the context is the purity of the English Church or the self justification of Romantic ideals.

⁹ See Johann Bernhard Logier, *System der Musikwissenschaft und der praktischen Composition mit Inbegriff dessen was gewöhnlich unter dem Ausdrucke General-Bass verstanden wird*, (Berlin, 1827, translated into English the same year), and Vincent Duckles and Jann Pasler, ‘Musicology, §I: The Nature of Musicology, 2. Origins: Musicology as a Science’ *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 10 October 2007) <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

institution was to provide “higher education in music, both theoretical and practical: in all branches of music regarded as a science and an art”.¹⁰ This meant the inclusion of history and analysis in the curriculum, which gave the impetus for new concepts of analysis and interpretation (such as hermeneutics) to be developed there. By the end of the nineteenth century, conservatories saw their role as ‘the defenders of tradition’, regarding new developments with suspicion. As Peter Cahn put it,

“Music from Bach to Beethoven was regarded as ‘the model for all time’ and the tried and tested basis for musical education. More modern trends could not be banned from the piano classes and operatic training, but “our students should form their taste and build a secure foundation for their opinions above all on the works of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven” (B. Scholz, annual report of the Hoch Conservatory, Frankfurt, 1883-4, pp.8ff).”¹¹

Older music, it seems, is barely worth mentioning. As institutions geared towards training performers and promoting performances, conservatories defined the tastes of the wider public. The conservatory graduate was to disseminate such attitudes to the rest of the public, be they lay listeners or the first generation of musicologists working their way into the universities at the time.

University and concert-hall: the beginnings

Tuition does not necessarily equate with rigorous scholastic preoccupation. Those music courses which were offered in nineteenth century universities were mostly designed for the cultural enrichment of gentleman-scholars rather than for a professional preoccupation with music. Such attitudes to music-teaching were of course common as far back as the Middle Ages themselves.¹²

¹⁰ See Paul Röntsch (ed.), *Bericht über die ersten 75 Jahre des Königlichen Konservatoriums zu Leipzig, erstattet zum 2. April 1918* (Leipzig, 1918); George B. Sauffer, ‘Leipzig, §II: After 1763 4. Education’ *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 10 October 2007) <http://www.grovemusic.com>, and Peter Cahn, ‘Conservatories, §III 1790-1945 3. Germany and central Europe (ii) 1843-1918’ *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 10 October 2007) <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

¹¹ Peter Cahn, ‘Conservatories, §III 1790 – 1945 3. Germany and central Europe (ii) 1843 – 1918’ *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 10 October 2007) <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

¹² For the number, rank and status of tutors and courses concerning music at Leipzig University in 1872-3, see James Morgan Hunt, *German Universities: A Narrative of Personal Experience Together With Recent Statistical Information, Practical Suggestions, and a Comparison of the German, English and American Systems of Higher Education* (New York, Press of G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1874), p. 372, available at <http://www.archive.org/details/germanuniversiti00hartuoft>. For Medieval attitudes see Christopher Page, *The Summa Musicae: A Thirteenth-Century Manual for Singers*, (Cambridge, 1991), p. 14-16 on the use of music-treatises in school-teaching, and notes there on the use of more general Latin texts.

The first stable, non-personal chairs of musicology were established in German-speaking countries towards the turn of the nineteenth century.¹³ France followed in the beginning of the twentieth century, while England and Italy (for different reasons) took longer. As late as 1915 Waldo Selden Pratt could still postulate that, “It may even be that sometimes there will be in the faculties of certain large institutions a professorship of «musicology»”.¹⁴ The conditional, even apologetic tone of this remark shows that a full generation after the establishment of musicology as a university discipline, its existence in this context was still not taken for granted.

Most early musicologists turned their gaze, at least to a degree, towards periods preceding the musical Canon.¹⁵ This, presumably, differentiated them from their conservatory-based counterparts, and was used to bolster their newly found positions within the university. The foremost preoccupation was with periodisation and definition of ‘styles’. This was achieved by singling out leading historical figures and describing their activities, borrowing terminology from established disciplines such as general and art history, philology and textual criticism.¹⁶ This borrowing was useful to both scholars and audiences: the use of pre-existing terminology allowed scholars to contextualise their activities within the accepted cultural-scientific framework, and at the same time supply readers with recognised points of reference while dealing with new information. As with earlier efforts, forays into the historical unknown were undertaken in comparison with the present. Editions were published and attempts at reconstructed performances were made, but the music they contained did not become part of mainstream culture.¹⁷ Thus musicologists found themselves working on

¹³ Strasbourg created the first readership (1875) and professorship (1897), Gustav Jacobsthal being appointed to both, Vienna followed in 1898, where Guido Adler was the incumbent of the new professorship. Individualised, one-off appointments did occur earlier. See Pamela M. Potter, ‘Musicology, §III: National traditions of Musicology, 4. Germany and Austria, (i) 19th Century’ *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 10 October 2007) <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

¹⁴ Waldo Selden Pratt, ‘On Behalf of Musicology’, *TMQ*, i (1915), pp. 1-16, esp. p. 16. One of the chores of Pratt’s hypothetical professor would be to “unfold the broad outlines of the science and to demonstrate [...] its intellectual dignity among other sciences”. See also Patricia Debly, ‘Pirates, Humpty Dumpty and a Brazilian Bishop: The Myth of Musicology’, *CAMLR*, xxix (August 2001), pp. 33-40, esp. p. 36.

¹⁵ See Glen Stanley, ‘Musicology, §II Disciplines of musicology, (1) Historical method’ *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 10 October 2007) <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

¹⁶ See, for example, the overview of earlier efforts in Guido Adler, ‘Style-Criticism’, *TMQ*, xx (April, 1934), pp. 172-6, esp. p. 172.

¹⁷ Editions included Charles-Edmond-Henri de Coussemaker, *Œuvres complètes du trouvère Adam de la Halle* (Paris, 1872); Hugo Riemann, *Sechs bisher nicht gedruckte dreistimmige Chansons* (Leipzig, 1892); Sir John Stainer, *Early Bodleian music 1: Dufay and his contemporaries* (New York & London, 1898); Guido Adler and Oswald Koller, *Trienter Codices*, i-ii, in *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, xiv, xv, (1900, 1904); Guido Adler, *Trienter Codices*, iii, in *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, xxii (1912); Rudolph von Ficker and Alfred Orel, *Trienter Codices*, iv, in *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, liii (1920); Rudolph von

materials detached from their own culture, the details and influence of their activities remaining largely within the walls of academia.

This created an unseen rift within the field of musicology. On the one side there was research dedicated to furthering understanding of the Canon. As the music it dealt with was routinely played, its results trickled down to society at large through translation into performance. Audience and professional feedback could then keep musicological ideas in check. On the other side, work on materials from outside the Canon was not subject to outside technical and aesthetic critiques, allowing it to be more dogmatic. Non-specialists would be exposed to it only when the results of such research were taken up to further non-musical, political or ideological concepts. Suitable musicological work could be circulated by the state in order to promote nationalism, for instance. In this context, no intellectual challenge can be valid: criticism from within the nation would not only be irrelevant, but could be considered ideologically harmful and therefore potentially dangerous both to the state and the individual critic. Criticism from without would be completely expected, and *a priori* dismissed on grounds of it being politically motivated.

As there was no public demand for performances of music from without the Canon, realisations of medieval music had to remain linked either directly to scholarship, or to the same non-musical forces which adopted favourable results from scholarship.¹⁸ As such, early concerts were all spectacles, where the music was presented as ‘exotica’ in the service of some other idea. They were to be enjoyed as curiosities, as Avant-garde events, as educational or cultural enrichment, or maybe even at times as presenting objects of ridicule. Thus, all medieval concerts in the first third of the twentieth-century could be understood as markers of authority and tradition for the host institution. They all contained anthologies of the entire medieval repertoire, and were presented as distinctively different from the musical Canon.

Ficker, *Trienter Codices*, v-vi, in *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, lxi, lxxvi (1924, 1933) (the series was continued with Rudolf Foltzinger, *Trienter Codices*, vii, in *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, cxx (1970)). On November 12th, 1895 four Viola players from the Royal College of Music performed a few Dufay songs at the end of a paper by Sir John Stainer. See Sir John Stainer, ‘A Fifteenth-century MS. Book of Vocal Music in the Bodleian Library, Oxford’, *PMA*, xxii (1895-6), pp. 1-22.

¹⁸ For links to scholarship see previous footnote. For the wider context and programmes of the Sainte-Chapelle, Paris (1914), Leipzig (1922, 1924), Vienna (1927 celebrations of Beethoven’s centenary, 1929), and Swiss (Zürich, Bern and Basel, 1928) concerts, see Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, pp. 48-55, especially footnotes 118 and 138.

Not yet *Ars subtilior*

None of the anthology-concerts mentioned above contained a single *Ars subtilior* work, even though the two manuscripts which contain the bulk of this music had already re-emerged by the time musicology entered the university.¹⁹ Both **Ch** and **ModA** were dramatically introduced to the musicological community in an 1869 pamphlet by Coussemaker.²⁰ As the detailed study promised in this publication never materialised, it took some time for musicologists to get access to these manuscripts' contents. Once this happened, the problematic relationship this music had with the accepted evolutionary accounts of music history made its reception difficult. As there was no appetite to change the evolutionary concept, it was much easier to dismiss it as an anomaly. The French affiliation of this music, in content and interest, complicated things further.²¹ The surge of nationalistic feeling following the Napoleonic period and the politicisation of intellectual endeavour were coupled with the rise of historicism in all the humanistic disciplines during the nineteenth century. The German dominance over musicology sealed the fate of attitudes towards “French” music. Early commentators ignored it with ease, dismissed it as of bad quality, or as disappointing on grounds of superficiality. A piece could be designated “remarkable chiefly for its cacophony”,²² and even Friedrich Ludwig, one of the more reasoned voices of the time, wrote that,

“It is an extremely difficult task, to try aesthetically to approach one of the more complex Ballades, for example from the Codex Chantilly, with regards to its melody and rhythm; how disappointing is the kernel that hides behind the shell! With its array of well over a dozen simple note forms – quite apart from the various colours of those note forms, often

¹⁹ Both **PR** and **Pit** were available to French scholars from earlier on in the 19th century, but as their (relatively smaller) *Ars subtilior* output was mixed in with a host of other styles, it did not create special interest or recognition of the phenomenon as a separate entity.

²⁰ See Charles-Edmond-Henri de Coussemaker, *Les Harmonistes du XIV^e siècle* (Lille, 1869), and Anne Stone, *The Manuscript Modena, Biblioteca Estense, a.M.5.24: Commentary* (Lim Editrice, 2005), p. 21-22. The same publication also announced the resurfacing of other sources such as **Iv**. **Ch** was bought from private Florentine hands by the Duke of Aumale in 1861. See Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone, *Codex Chantilly, Bibliothèque du Château de Chantilly, Ms. 564: Introduction and Facsimile* (Brepols, Epitome Musical: Turnhout, 2008), pp. 103-112. **ModA** was first referred to in 1868 in Antonio Cappelli, *Poesie musicali dei sec. XIV, XV, XVI* (Bologna, 1868). See Anne Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, p. 21.

²¹ The Duke of Aumale for example, was interested in **Ch** chiefly for the motet texts which linked it to the French (and therefore his) royal family. See Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone, ‘Buying Books, Narrating the Past: Owning a Medieval Manuscript in the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, *JEBS*, vii (2004), pp. 84-101, esp. pp. 84-90.

²² See Harry Ellis Wooldridge, *The Polyphonic Period, Part II: Method of Musical Art, 1300-1600*, in *The Oxford History of Music II* (Oxford, 1905), p. 42, reproduced in Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, p.288 (footnote 24). The comment referring to a work by Cesaris, hardly the first name on the list of experimental *Ars subtilior* composers. Wilkinson also analyses Riemann’s sidelining of French in favour of Italian fourteenth-century style, in light of the prevailing intellectual, political and religious attitudes of his day on pp. 28-31.

two of these colours next to one another in the same note – it is, fortunately, unique in the history of music . . . What a different effect, on the other hand, the Italian Trecento has on us!”²³

The complete lack of public performances in which audiences could evaluate such statements did not seem to bother the authors of these claims, or prevent their tacit acceptance.

By the end of the nineteenth century, two more sources containing a substantial number of *Ars subtilior* compositions re-appeared. Both **FP** and **Ox** attracted attention to their main repertorial corpus with little consideration given to the minority *Ars subtilior* presence in each.²⁴ This can be further demonstrated by the near-complete lack of interest shown towards **Cyp**, which could not demonstrate direct ties to any well known composer, popular repertory, or fashionable ideological cause. This manuscript was rediscovered by Wilhelm Meyer in 1902, and even though it was seen by Ludwig and Wolf, a published inventory of it appeared only some twenty years later, in an article dedicated to the descriptions of new sources.²⁵ In a review of the 1999 facsimile edition of this manuscript, Leech-Wilkinson describes its modern history as having “begun with disaster and continued with neglect”, citing Richard Hallowell Hoppin as its main (if not sole) champion in the 1960s, and the renewed interest in it appearing only after a conference dedicated to it in 1992.²⁶

A better technical understanding of the entire medieval repertory was achieved through Johannes Wolf’s book on the history of mensural notation.²⁷ This new-found accessibility did not seem to change the intellectual attitude and emotional response to the music of the *Ars subtilior*. While the music of the Middle Ages grew in popularity between the wars, this

²³ Friedrich Ludwig, ‘Die mehrstimmige Musik des 14. Jahrhunderts’, *Sammelbände der internationalen Musikgesellschaft*, iv (1902-3), pp. 16-69, esp. 46. Translation taken from the reproduction in Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, p. 162. On researchers’ dislike of their source-materials see *ibid.* pp. 76 and 179.

²⁴ **FP** was first described in Adolfo Bartoli, *Indici e cataloghi, VII:1 manoscritti panciatichiani della Biblioteca nazionale di Firenze* (Rome, 1887). For **Ox** see Stainer’s publications in footnote 17 above.

²⁵ See Heinrich Bessler, ‘Studien zur Musik des Mittelalters. I. Neue Quellen des 14. und beginnenden 15. Jahrhunderts’, *AfM*, vii (June, 1925), pp. 167-252. The inventory appears on pp. 212-217, the Meyer, Ludwig and Wolf connection on p. 209, footnote 5.

²⁶ See Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (review), ‘*The Codex J.II.9, Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria: Facsimile Edition*’ *PMM*, x (2001), pp. 91-94.

²⁷ See Johannes Wolf, *Geschichte der Mensural-Notation* (Breitkopf and Härtel, 1904). The importance of this publication is rehearsed in Otto Kinkeldey, ‘Johannes Wolf (1869-1947)’, *JAMS*, i, (spring, 1948), pp. 5-12, where it is claimed that, “There was at that time only one other scholar in the world who had ploughed deeply in the same field. Friedrich Ludwig [. . .] then a private scholar living in Potsdam” (p. 9), and that the publication “opened the floodgates for a copious stream of new investigation” (p. 5).

repertory did not receive a substantial boost until the 1940s.²⁸ The negative attitude towards *Ars subtilior* song is evident whenever the matter was addressed directly. Heinrich Bessler claimed this music “betrays in all respects the end of an era whose creative powers are on the wane”,²⁹ establishing the notion of an *end of era* music and coining the still popular term *late Ars nova*. Thrasybulos Georgiades, following Nazi and racist ideas, dismissed the entire musical output of the fourteenth century as “a distraction, a temporary elaboration of linear writing tangential to the forward march of sonorous (and by implication Nordic) thinking”.³⁰ A single positive voice in relation to the generation preceding Dufay was that of Erna Dannemann, but it did not turn out to be particularly influential.³¹

These attitudes are mirrored also in early recordings. In 1957 Gilbert Reaney surveyed the available recordings of medieval music.³² He concluded that very little medieval music can be found on record, and the little there is appears only within anthologies such as *Anthologie Sonore*, *History of Music in Sound*, *Oiseau-Lyre*, and *Archive*. From this meagre crop only one paragraph treats *Ars subtilior* music. Reaney marks as “noteworthy” the work by Guillaume de Van for its inclusion of four songs from **Ch** and a Gloria and a ballade from **Cyp**. While considering the **Cyp** recording to be “exciting”, he considers the **Ch** recording to be “badly and monotonously performed”.³³ No wonder these recordings did not set the public's imagination on fire.³⁴

²⁸ Mathiassen links the surge of interest in *Ars antiqua* polyphony between the World Wars to a rebellion against Romanticism and a new taste for professionalism in the age of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. See, Mathiassen, *The Style of the Early Motet*, p. 11. A different evaluation of this apparent surge in the popularity has to do with an attempt to revive easy music-making at home as both a political and economic tool in a nationalist regime's arsenal. Germany was also spearheading this development. Johannes Wolf, *Geschichte der Musik in allgemeinverständlicher Form, Erster Teil: 'Die Entwicklung der Musik bis etwa 1600'* (Leipzig, 1925); *Sing- und Spielmusik aus älterer Zeit herausgegeben als Beispielband zur allgemeinen Musikgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1926), and *Chor- und Hausmusik aus alter Zeit I-IV* (Berlin, 1926-1927), were all publications aimed at such audiences. Clearly, *Ars subtilior* had no place in such a context either.

²⁹ An opinion softened only when he could detect an Italian influence at work. See Heinrich Bessler, *Musik des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Potsdam, 1931), translated in Jehoash Hirshberg, *The Music of the Late Fourteenth Century: A study in Musical Style* (PhD. diss. for the University of Pennsylvania, 1971), pp. 1 on, where other examples abound.

³⁰ See Thrasybulos Georgiades, *Englische Diskanttraktate aus der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1937) pp. 67-9 and 83, translated in Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, p. 186. For more on Nazi musicology, see Pamela Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich*, (New Haven & London, 1998).

³¹ See Erna Dannemann, *Die spätgotische Musiktradition in Frankreich und Burgund vor dem Auftreten Dufays* (PhD. diss. for Heidelberg University; Leipzig, Strassbourg, Zürich: Heitz & Cie., 1936).

³² See Gilbert Reaney, ‘Medieval Music on the Gramophone’, *ML*, xxxviii (April, 1957), pp. 180-190.

³³ See Reaney, ‘Medieval Music’, p. 189.

³⁴ See also Denis Stevens, ‘The Musician's Gramophone: The History of Music in Sound: Volume III’, *TMT*, vc (February, 1954), pp. 82-83. He ends his review lamenting that, “Several of these records are well worth having. Others fall down through lack of careful supervision during actual preparation and recording of

Reaney's emotive comments underline an important process in the performance of medieval music after WWII, namely its gradual independence from the academy, and the establishment of "early music as a profitable business".³⁵ This resulted from a cultural need to move away from the immediate past, combined with the new availability of materials following the foundation of the American Institute of Musicology and the complete-edition movement. This change did not occur instantaneously, and would not have happened at all without musicology providing a critical mass of information for performers to work with.

The 1940s saw a musicological resurgence in interest in the technicalities of the style, as well as biographical and archival work.³⁶ Aesthetic appreciation was still for the most part avoided. The impetus for change was Willi Apel's notation book, which made this and other repertoires accessible to more researchers.³⁷ In it, Apel coined the still common *mannerism* term. By treating this repertory in a separate chapter he established it as an independent unit. Apel described the more complicated works as "pathological cases", impossible to execute and therefore "intellectual sophistries" not designed for performance.³⁸ By the 1950s he had softened his approach, probably due to the post-war, positivistic, 'back to the basics' attitude with its unease about the previously dominant speculative concepts.³⁹ In the introduction to his edition of *Ars subtilior* songs (in itself an extremely influential publication),⁴⁰ Apel refers back to the statements made in his notation book and remarks that, "Today, after more extended studies in this field, I should prefer a somewhat more cautious statement".⁴¹ He then went on to suggest the unsuitability of using current or later historical harmonic analysis-methods when looking at this music (without suggesting an alternative), and tried to

the material. There are many errors in the musical examples given in the Handbook, but I doubt whether anyone will mind. After all, this is only medieval music."

³⁵ Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, p. 78. For more trends and their explanation through context see *ibid.* pp. 140, 180.

³⁶ See Friedrich Gennrich, *Übertragungsmaterial zum Abriß der Mensuralnotation des XIV. und der ersten Hälfte des XV. Jahrhunderts* (Nieder-Modau, 1948), designed as a collection of facsimiles to counterpart Wolf's notation book. The sixteen plates from **Ch** are enumerated in Elizabeth Randell Upton, *The Chantilly Codex (F-CH 564): The Manuscript, its Music, its Scholarly Reception* (PhD. diss. for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2001), p. 133. This is also the time of the first recordings analyzed by Greene.

³⁷ See Willi Apel, *The Notation of Polyphonic Music 900-1600*, (Cambridge Mass., 1942). The 1949 print is available online at <http://www.archive.org/details/notationofpolyph017670mbp>.

³⁸ Apel, *The Notation*, p. 403. In the next page he concedes that, "there are a number of pieces which are quite remarkable for their musical qualities and charm".

³⁹ For this force in general musicology, see Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), published also as *Musicology* (Fontana, London, 1985), pp. 31-59. For a similar case concerning Machaut, see overview of Reaney's work in Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, pp. 182-184.

⁴⁰ See Willi Apel (ed.), *French Secular Music from the Late Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge Mass., 1950).

⁴¹ Apel, *French Secular Music*, p. 7.

date pieces according to degrees of complexity. Later still, Apel compared *Ars subtilior* rhythms (approvingly) to Stravinsky, claiming medieval musicians were able to execute rhythmic combinations which were considered impossible to execute by musicians of his day.⁴² This view demonstrates a complete forsaking of the evolutionary developmental model. This attitude is interesting in itself as it led to the creation of another popular tag for this repertoire, namely as *Avant-garde*.⁴³

The impact of these works was very uneven – the most positive attitudes were expressed in a lecture to non-specialists which was published in an article-collection nearly three decades after it was given. The 1950 edition was extremely influential, but more for the music it contained than for its introductory notes. The most influential of Apel's writings was undoubtedly his still commonly-used notation book. It is also interesting to note that in spite of his change of opinion Apel did not revise his negative pronouncements in any of the subsequent editions and reprints of his book.⁴⁴ Accordingly, his earliest and most negative view became the most influential one, shaping the attitudes not only of late-medieval specialists, but also of music students and performers in general.

Before Apel, scholars tended to analyse change according to differences between musical instances in a group of chronologically organised manuscripts. By opting to analyse stylistic and notational change as independent of manuscript sources, Apel's work led to a change in attitude towards dating and style. As one could not build on a chronological succession of objects, an alternative method of organisation and differentiation had to be defined. This led to the "primacy of the song's composer in determining its significance, and the primacy of form as the most significant characteristic of the songs."⁴⁵ This is of course useful, and to a degree has medieval precedents,⁴⁶ but should be adopted with some ambivalence. After all, the accidental route to survival and the sometimes erratic ascription habits of medieval scribes should make us very cautious in thinking that the amount of works surviving by any

⁴² See Willi Apel, 'Mathematics and Music in the Middle-Ages', in *Atti XIII Convegno di Studi 'Musica e Arte Figurativa nei secoli X-XII'*, Todi, 15-18 ottobre 1972 (Todi: Accademia Tudertina, 1973), pp. 135-65, esp. pp. 162-4, reprinted as Willi Apel, *Medieval Music* (Stuttgart, 1986), pp. 122-153, esp. 150-152.

⁴³ For the lasting nature of this tag see Maricarmen Gómez, 'Quelques remarques autour du virelai Tel me voit et me regarde de Jacomi de Senleches, un exemple de l'avant-garde musicale au temps de Gaston Fébus', in Jean-Pierre Darrigrand (ed.), *L'amour courtois des troubadours à Fébus*, (Orthez, 1995), pp. 145-155.

⁴⁴ See Upton, *The Chantilly Codex*, p. 142. Apel is discussed at length *ibid.* pp. 134-158.

⁴⁵ Upton, *The Chantilly Codex*, p. 137.

⁴⁶ The standard organisation of Troubadour manuscripts follows individual poet-composers arranged according to social rank. Machaut *Remède de Fortune* and **Cyp** demonstrate awareness and preoccupation with form as a systematisation tool.

one composer is indicative of his original output, or that we have the right ascriptions to the right pieces, or that pieces transmitted anonymously are not in fact by a composer known to us.⁴⁷

In the notation book, Apel restricted this repertoire to northern Italy and the bordering regions of France. This tentative view was then amplified, notably by Gombosi, and became consensus.⁴⁸ The ‘episode in the south’ idea is so entrenched that it still resonates today even though its factual basis has been refuted.⁴⁹ This designation is doubly dismissive, both in the use of the term ‘episode’ which implies an unimportant blip in history, and the shrinking in general relevance as mirrored in its supposed geographical distribution. Another negative label which took root at this time was *fin-de-siècle*,⁵⁰ hinting at abnormality and temporary departure from taste and reason.

As materials became more accessible, reinvigorated musicologists examined specific technical characteristics, as well as archival or biographical evidence.⁵¹ While these efforts

⁴⁷ The discrepancy between the works ascribed to Machaut outside of his collected-works manuscripts and his actual output is demonstrative on all three accounts. While the latter presents him as the head-figure of fourteenth-century artistic production, relying only on the former would paint him as a minor composer compared to Solage and Trebor. Without comparison with the collected-works sources, we would not have known that most of Machaut’s works surviving in other sources were actually by him. For the wrong ascriptions in **Str**, see p. 99 below. For a list of Machaut compositions and their ascriptions outside his collected-works manuscripts see Wulf Arlt, ‘Machaut, Guillaume de §9. Reception’, *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 25 November 2007), <http://www.grovemusic.com>. It does not include the appearance of *Ma fin est mon commencement* and *Ita missa est* in **PaDA** (Oxford part). See Michael Scott Cuthbert, *Trecento Fragments and Polyphony Beyond the Codex* (PhD. diss. for Harvard University; Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2006), p. 117. For double, conflicting or wrong ascriptions in **Ch** see Plumley and Stone, *Codex Chantilly*, pp. 149-152. A number of pieces within the *Ars subtilior* repertory were ascribed to known composers on grounds of similarity of style. See the case of *Le mont Aon* discussed pp. 104-5 below. For an extreme case in which style consideration led scholars to believe that pieces are too different to be by the same composer is that of Jean Haucourt / Johannes de Altacuria. See Richard Hallowell Hoppin and Suzanne Clercx-Lejeune, ‘Notes biographiques sur quelques musiciens français’, *Les colloques de Wégimont II – 1955: L’ars nova: Recueil des études sur la musique du XIVe siècle* (Paris, 1959), pp. 63-92 (esp. p. 77) and Reinhard Strohm, *The Rise of European Music 1380-1500* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 140 for claims that the two must be different people, and arguments countering this notion in Yolanda Plumley, ‘Haucourt’, *MGG2*, Personenteil, 8, cols 857-58, and ‘Musicians at Laon Cathedral in the early Fifteenth Century’, *UH*, xix (2002), pp.19-34.

⁴⁸ See Aple, *The Notation*, p. 403 and Otto Gombosi (review), ‘*French Secular Music of the Fourteenth Century* by Willi Apel’, *TMQ*, xxxvi (October, 1950), pp. 603-610, especially p. 607.

⁴⁹ For a supporter of this view, see for instance Reinhard Strohm, ‘Centre and Periphery: Mainstream and Provincial Music’, in Tess Knighton and David Fallows (eds), *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music* (Berkeley California: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 55-59, esp. p. 58; ‘The Ars Nova Fragments of Gent’, *TVNM*, xxxiv (1984), pp. 109-131, esp. p. 118, and *The Rise*, pp. 62-4. For the revised point of view see Plumley, ‘An ‘Episode in the South’? Ars Subtilior and the Patronage of French Princes’, *EMH*, xxii (2003), pp. 103-168 or Anne Stone, ‘The Ars Subtilior in Paris’, *MS*, x (2002), pp. 373-404.

⁵⁰ Most notably Nino Pirrotta, ‘“Dulcedo e “subtilitas” nella pratica polifonica franco-italiana al principio del ‘400’, *RBM*, ii (1948), pp. 125-132.

⁵¹ For one area of technical preoccupation see the acrimonious and inconclusive exchange concerning key signatures in Edward Elias Lowinsky, ‘The Function of Conflicting Signatures in Early Polyphonic Music’,

resulted in an increase of knowledge concerning this repertory, most studies tended to avoid musical, harmonic and aesthetic analysis.⁵² Interest in the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon was growing, but it remained sporadic in nature. While being acknowledged, it was still regarded as somewhat unapproachable, esoteric or secondary to the established areas of musicological activity such as the oeuvre of Machaut, Dufay, or the Magnus Liber Organi. This was the context in which the term *Ars subtilior* was coined.⁵³

A new beginning

Günther's own circumstances play a large part in the story: as a result of post-war travel restrictions, Günther had to use Ludwig's transcription for her work. Ironically, this gave her a better overall grasp of late medieval music than any other scholar at the time other than Bessler, who worked with the same transcriptions in the 1920s, but went on to work on later periods. In comparison to Bessler, Günther had the advantage of being able to approach the subject with less ideological baggage. Following an interview with her,⁵⁴ Leech-Wilkinson explains this difference as follows:

“Partly, this was due to the extraordinary obstacles placed in her way as a woman working for a doctorate in medieval music in Germany. The disapproval of her supervisor, Heinrich Husmann, forced her to form her own view and spared her (exceptionally for a German student at that time) the close supervision of a senior scholar

TMQ, xxxi (April, 1945), pp. 227-260; Richard Hollowell Hoppin, ‘Partial Signatures and Musica Ficta in Some Early 15th-Century Sources’, *JAMS*, vi, (Autumn, 1953), pp. 197-215; Edward Elias Lowinsky, ‘Conflicting Views on Conflicting Signatures’ *JAMS*, vii, (Autumn, 1954), pp. 181-204; and Richard Hollowell Hoppin, ‘Conflicting Signatures Reviewed’, *JAMS*, ix, (Summer, 1956), pp. 97-117. Another case is Günther's early work. See Günther, *Zehn datierbare Kompositionen der Ars Nova*, (Hamburg, 1959); ‘Die Anwendung der Diminution in der Handschrift Chantilly 1047’, *AfM*, xvii (1960), pp. 1-21; ‘Der Gebrauch des tempus perfectum diminutum in der Handschrift Chantilly 1047’, *AfM*, xvii (1960), pp. 277-297; ‘Datierbare Balladen des späten 14. Jahrhunderts’ *MD*, xv (1961), pp. 39-61 and xvi (1962), pp. 151-174. For codicological studies see Nino Pirrotta, ‘Il Codice di Lucca’, *MD*, iii (1949), pp. 119-138, and v (1951), pp. 115-142; ‘Il Codice Estense lat. 568 e la musica francese in Italia al 400’, *Atti della Reale Accademia di Scienze, Lettere e Arti di Palermo*, iv, 5-6 (1944-46), pp. 101-154; G. Reaney, ‘The Manuscript Chantilly, Musée Condé 1047’, *MD*, viii (1954), pp. 59-113, ‘The Manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canonici Misc. 213’, *MD*, ix (1955), pp. 73-104, ‘The Manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Fonds Italiens 568 (Pit)’, *MD*, xiv (1960), pp. 34-63; Leo Schrade, ‘The Chronology of the Ars Nova in France’ *les colloques de Wégimont*, ii 1955, (Paris, 1959), pp. 36-62; Richard Hollowell Hoppin, ‘The Cypriot French Repertory of the manuscript Torino’, *MD*, xi (1957), pp. 79-125; Hoppin and Clercx-lejeune, ‘Notes biographiques’; Suzanne Clercx, *Johannes Ciconia, un musicien liégeois et son temps*, (Brussels, 1960). Another important if not direct contribution was Kurt von Fischer, *Studien zur italienischen Musik des Trecento und frühen Quattrocento* (Bern, 1956).

⁵² On this tendency in post-war medieval musicology see Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, pp. 187-203.

⁵³ Hirshberg sensed this change taking place in the late the 1950s, but claimed that at the time of his writing, a revised synthesised general attitude towards this period had not yet materialised. See Hirshberg, *The Music of the Late Fourteenth Century*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ Held on 17 June 1998.

with a line of his own. Consequently she had no choice but to work from the ground up, taking the materials to hand – above all the music and the published work on it.”⁵⁵

By 1963 Günther has already demonstrated the scientific usefulness of, as well as the need for more attention to be given to the music of the latter fourteenth century.⁵⁶ Enough material has been published to make it all but impossible to dismiss this repertoire as uninteresting or irrelevant. Coining a new term to replace Besseler’s *Late Ars nova* and Apel’s *mannerism* had as much to do with the expressed purpose of doing away with the baggage with which these terms came, as with the stated and more musicological attempt at better defining the limits of style periods in the late Middle Ages.⁵⁷ It was most and foremost an act of legitimisation.

This act was very timely – the decade following Günther’s article saw a transformation in the treatment of the *Ars subtilior*. By its end, all the polyphony from **Cyp**, **Ch**, most of **ModA**, and collections from **PR** and other sources were available in modern editions, accompanied by a steady stream of dissertations and articles, dealing with style and chronology, biography, notation, theory, and manuscript studies.⁵⁸ This period also saw the

⁵⁵ Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, p. 185.

⁵⁶ To the list given in footnote 51 one should add *Der musikalische Stilwandel der französischen Liedkunst in der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (PhD. diss. for the University of Hamburg, 1957); ‘The 14th-Century Motet and its Development’, *MD*, xii (1958), pp. 27–58; ‘Das Wort-Ton-Problem bei Motetten des späten 14. Jahrhunderts’, in Eberhardt Klemm (ed.), *Festschrift Heinrich Besseler zum sechzigsten Geburtstag* (Leipzig, 1961), pp. 163–78; ‘Die Mensuralnotation der Ars Nova in Theorie und Praxis’, *AfM*, xix-xx (1962-3), pp. 9–28; ‘Chronologie und Stil der Kompositionen Guillaume de Machauts’, *AM*, xxxv (1963), pp. 96–114; and ‘Die Musiker des Herzogs von Berry’, *MD*, xvii (1963), pp. 79–95.

⁵⁷ Günther, ‘Das Ende’, p. 107.

⁵⁸ Editions included Richard Hallowell Hoppin (ed.), *Cypriot-French Repertory (15th c.) of the Manuscript Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale, J.II.9, CMM*, xxi (4 vols) (American Institute of Musicology, 1960-3); Gordon K. Green, *The Secular Music of the Chantilly Manuscript, Musée Condé 564 (olim 1047)* (PhD. diss. for Indiana University, 1971), included all the music not yet available in other publications; Ursula Günther (ed.), *The Motets of the Manuscripts Chantilly, Musée Condé, 564 (olim 1047) and Modena, Biblioteca estense, a.M.5.24 (olim lat. 568)*, *CMM*, xxxix (American Institute of Musicology, 1965); Willi Apel, *French Secular Compositions of the Late Fourteenth Century*, 3 vol. *CMM*, liii (American Institute of Musicology, 1970-2); Nigel E. Wilkins, *A 14th-Century Repertory from the Codex Reina (Paris, Bibl.Nat., Nouv.Acq.Fr., 6771)*, *CMM*, xxxvi (American Institute of Musicology, 1966). Other works included Margaret Paine Hasselman, *The French Chanson in the Fourteenth Century* (PhD. diss. for the University of California at Berkeley, 1970); Willi Apel, ‘The Development of French Secular Music During the Fourteenth Century’ *MD*, xxvii (1973), pp. 41-60; Ursula Günther, ‘Problems of Dating in Ars Nova and Ars Subtilior’, in Agostino Ziino (ed.), *L’ars nova italiana del Trecento IV: Atti del 3 Congresso internazionale sul tema “La musica al tempo del Boccaccio e i suoi rapporti con la letteratura” (Siena - Certaldo 19-22 luglio 1975), sotto il patrocinio della Società Italiana di Musicologia* (Certaldo, 1975), pp. 289-301; Hirshberg, *The Music of the late Fourteenth Century*; Ursula Günther, ‘Zur Biographie einiger Komponisten der Ars Subtilior’ *AfM*, xxi (1964), pp. 172-199; ‘Eine Ballade auf Mathieu de Foix’, *MD*, xix (1965), pp. 69-81; ‘Die Mensuralnotation der Ars Nova’; Nors S. Josephson, ‘Vier Beispiele der Ars Subtilior’, *AfM*, xxvii (1970), pp. 41-58; ‘Rodericus, Angelorum Psalat’, *MD*, xxv (1971), pp. 113-26; Margaret Bent, ‘Musica Recta and Musica Ficta’, *MD*, xxvi (1972), pp. 73-100; Wolf Frobenius (ed.), *Johannes Boens Musica und seine Konsonanzenlehre, FSM*, ii (Stuttgart, 1971) available also at

release of the first commercial recordings of *Ars subtilior* song, introducing it also into the public imagination.⁵⁹

This did not mean the end of the marginalisation of the music in question, especially as far as anthologies and text-books were concerned. These books had by their very nature the largest readership and influence on non-specialists. Hirshberg notes that the 10 pages Jacques Chailley devoted to the period 1375-1425, in his 1969 *Histoire musicale du moyen âge* discuss only Dunstable, his English contemporaries, and the early years of Binchois, Dufay and what he termed as the “Burgundian-Flemish school”. Upton comments on the problematic position the *Ars subtilior* holds in music-history course-programmes and in newer text-books by Yudkin, Atlas and Hoppin. Tanay felt the need to criticise other labels of this repertoire for being “always adequate to account for phases of aberration from stylistic norm” within the context of a narrative of music-history three and a half decades after Günther’s original act of legitimisation. All these instances demonstrate how entrenched dismissive and problematic attitudes towards this style remain even to this day.⁶⁰

Before progressing any further, the newly relevant dichotomy between research and commercial performance requires a few words about the relationship between the two activities.

As a general tendency, the more the entertainment industry is involved in performance, the less influence scholarship has. The early performances and recordings had marginal commercial relevance, making their justification entirely ‘scientific’. At the other extreme, entertainment-driven productions enabled some scholars to disregard performance as artistic

http://www.chmtl.indiana.edu/tml/14th/BOENARSM_MVBM8-24.html; Wulf Arlt, ‘Der Tractatus figurarum: ein Beitrag zur Musiklehre des “Ars subtilior”’, *SBM*, I (1972), pp. 35-53; Nigel E. Wilkins, ‘The Codex Reina: A Revised Description’, *MD*, xvii (1963), pp. 57-74; Kurt von Fischer ‘Reply to N.E. Wilkins’ Article on the Codex Reina’, *MD*, xvii (1963), pp. 75-78; Gilbert Reaney, ‘New Sources for Ars Nova Music’ *MD*, xix (1965), pp. 53-67; Ursula Günther, ‘Die ‘anonymen’ Kompositionen des Manuskripts Paris, B.N., fonds it. 568 (Pit)’ *AfM*, xxiii (1966), pp. 73-92; ‘Bemerkungen zum älteren französischen Repertoire des Codex Reina (PR)’, *AfM*, xxiv (1967), pp. 237-252; ‘Das Manuscript Modena, Biblioteca estense, αM.5,24 (olim lat. 568)’, *MD*, xxiv (1970), pp. 17-67.

⁵⁹ See Studio der frühen Musik, ‘Frühe französische Musik – Das Vogelrufvirelai’ (Telefunken “Das Alte Werk” AWT 8043, 1964); Studio der frühen Musik, ‘Johannes Ciconia’ (EMI “Reflexe IC 7243 8 26468 2 2, 1972); The King’s Singers & The Early Music Consort of London – David Munrow, ‘The Art of Courtly Love’ (EMI SLS 863, 1973).

⁶⁰ See Hirshberg, *The Music of the Late Fourteenth Century*, p. 6; Upton, *The Chantilly Codex*, p. 145, and Dorit Tanay, “‘Nos Faysoms Contre Nature...’: Fourteenth-Century *Sophismata* and the Musical Avant Garde”, *JHI*, lix (1998), p. 29-51, esp. 29, and *Notating Music, Marking Culture: The Intellectual Context of Rhythmic Notation, 1250-1400*, (American Institute of Musicology, 1999).

distraction from rigorous factual research, or allowed knowledgeable performers to replace authenticity with postmodernist interdisciplinarianism or emotional succour as the goal of their work.⁶¹ This state of affairs has the potential to limit the scope of research, and allow the acceptance of many uninformed performances. Performers were always exposed to popular imagination and prejudices, general fashion, economic restraints, entrepreneurial ambition, and attitudes towards performers and the act of performance. As performance became more business-oriented, these influences became central to performer's activities.⁶² This led to a growing reliance on notions of taste and opinion in performances, which could then be used to justify the unconscious entrenchment of misinformation.⁶³

Musicologists and performers also tend to use different language when discussing similar phenomena. The shared tendency to be influenced by previous works and be judged by it defines etiquette for each activity. This makes crossover work problematic and translation from one idiom to the other at times very difficult.⁶⁴

Musicians often have difficulties in accommodating the difference between a 'feeling' for the way the music works and the scientific limitation on the 'body of evidence' and axioms concerning what is or is not 'provable'. Many scholars critiquing performances or recordings find it difficult to separate the legitimacy of their objective knowledge from the not-always-relevant subjectivity of their taste, let alone the modern cultural history which led them to form their aesthetic preferences, or the non-musical pressures endured by the performers.

Still, a complete separation between study and performance was never aimed for, and is not conducive to either activity, as each brings different considerations in treating the same

⁶¹ For scholarly attitudes see Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, pp. 188-189. The website of the Mediva! ensemble (www.mediva.co.uk) announces that, "Mediva's credo is to bring passion and life to music of previous times and go beyond authenticity experimenting with jazz, improvisation, theatre and dance". In the introduction notes to the booklet of his 'Triste Plaisir' recording (Raumklang 2208, 2006), Randall Cook follows a brief account of the seemingly never-changing landscape of cruel and senseless human behaviour with the following, typically candid and poignant words: "For me, for almost three decades, an instant transformation to a better place has involved delving into the world of 15th Century Burgundian music [. . .] This recording also represents our quiet revolt to the present-day world in that we believe in the wonderful phrase: "less is more" [. . .] We would like to share with you a collection of chansons that touch our hearts, and hope that they can touch some of yours."

⁶² See p. 44-7 and 49-51 below.

⁶³ This is one of the main points of Leech-Wilkinson's *The Modern Invention* book, even though he seems keener to demonstrate this process in relation to one side of the divide than to the other.

⁶⁴ See Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music*, pp. 182-217.

materials. Performing scholars or researching performers are rather common,⁶⁵ and the marketplace often blurs the border between the two. Scholars are often asked for their expert opinion in reviewing recordings or concerts, and performers are frequently asked to teach or expand on their supposedly well-founded ideas and choices. In such instances, another gap becomes apparent: namely between the extent of the scientifically ‘provable’, and the larger set of decisions necessary for performance.⁶⁶ The personalisation required to overcome it is always evident when scholarly formats are used to describe artistic endeavour, whether it is dealt with directly or swept under the carpet.⁶⁷

Performers have to confront another linguistic gap: the medieval musical language is markedly different from that of the Canon. As a result, many performers resort to using external means to ignite audiences’ interest. In relation to the *Ars subtilior*, these are usually its presentation as incomprehensible or psychedelic, or linking it with non-musical ideas that attract attention away from the musical style itself.⁶⁸ Commercial and scholarly interests can coincide, as the 1973 use of the term *Avant-garde* in both article and recording-notes to describe the *Ars subtilior* demonstrates.⁶⁹

For a host of cultural and practical reasons, no major ensemble has yet taken the *Ars subtilior* as their main preoccupation, making it impossible to discuss trends pertaining only to it. Subsequently, this style plays a minor part also in studies of the relationship between scholarship, culture and the performance of medieval music.⁷⁰ The recordings mentioned

⁶⁵ See the involvement of Gilbert Reaney with the London Medieval Group, Christopher Page with the Gothic Voices, or the scholarly work of Pedro Memelsdorff.

⁶⁶ Page begins ‘Going Beyond the Limits: Experiments with Vocalization in the French Chanson, 1340-1440’, *EM*, xx (August, 1992), pp. 446-459 by announcing that, “To study the performance of medieval music is to approach the edge of a cliff. We can go so far and then the evidence abruptly comes to an end, leaving a sheer drop into a sea of troubles where performers must navigate as best they can.”

⁶⁷ See Safford Cape, ‘The Machaut Mass and its Performance’, *Score*, xxv (1959), pp. 38-57 and xxvi (1960), pp. 20-9; Andrew Parrot, ‘Performing Machaut’s Mass on Record’, *EM*, v (October, 1977), pp. 492-495; Andrea von Ramm, ‘Style in Early Music Singing’, *EM*, viii (1980), pp. 17-20; Christopher Page, ‘Polyphony Before 1400’, in Howard Mayer Brown and Stanley Sadie (eds), *Performance Practice: Music Before 1600* (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1989), pp. 79-106; ‘Going beyond the limits’; Donald Greig, ‘Ars Subtilior Repertory as Performance Palimpsest’, *EM*, xxxi (2003), pp. 196-209; ‘‘Sing to the Mike’’: Authenticity and Performance in Early Music Recording’ paper given during the second CHARM symposium (London, September 17th-18th 2005), available on <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/content/events/s2Greig.pdf>. An example of a work pertaining to performance undertaken from a more purely scientific stance could be found in Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, ‘Articulating Ars Subtilior Song’, *EM*, xxxi (2003), pp. 6-18.

⁶⁸ See p. 44 below. It is perhaps notable that the first commercial recording of *Ars subtilior* song (see footnote 59 above) was promoted with the romantic picture of a bird-song to excuse the vagrancies of the style.

⁶⁹ See Apel, ‘The Development’, p. 55 and Munrow, ‘The Art of Courtly Love’ (*EMI, His Master’s Voice*, SLS 863 / OC 191 05410-2).

⁷⁰ For articles that do treat this theme, see footnotes 67 and 107, and pp. 49 below.

below are but a few of those presenting this repertoire. The entire pool of *Ars subtilior* recordings represent but a fraction of the output of ensembles interested in this music. Many of the best known specialist medieval ensembles avoid it altogether in their recordings. I have chosen the examples below to represent both general trends and their specific relevance to *Ars subtilior* productions, leaving the task of compiling a complete discography for another opportunity.⁷¹

Art, science and everything in between

The newly invigorated ‘back to basics’ attitude in 1950s and 1960s scholarship has parallels with the analytic approach to performance. Andrea von Ramm’s career-summing article is a good example here.⁷² As a member of the *Studio der Frühen Musik* ensemble and a teacher at the *Schola Cantorum Basiliensis*, Ramm was instrumental in shaping the face of medieval-music-performance in the third quarter of the twentieth century. Her article centres on the technical and expressive requirements of performing different medieval repertoires, systematised in order to demonstrate the variety the period offers.⁷³ The *Ars subtilior* comes out as an intellectualised and inexpressive style which gives special attention to structure.⁷⁴ The attempt to make performance a scholarly activity builds on approaching the performance act (and use of singing technique) in a scientific way, rather than by following current research. Whether or not one agrees with the results, her timing, location and popularity meant that these attitudes had a wide-ranging influence on continental musicianship. The very fact that the *Ars subtilior* is treated independently demonstrates its acceptance as a style-period. Thus the performing community followed in the footsteps of scholarship in treating this music as separate and self-contained.

⁷¹ The recording by Ensemble Organum discussed below (pp. 41-2) is the only one of 32 releases to contain *Ars Subtilior* music (the first track of this CD was used also in a compilation of the ensemble’s output). Ensembles which worked extensively with this repertoire are Gothic Voices (six out of 23 CDs include at least one *Ars subtilior* work), Ferrara Ensemble (four out of ten CDs), Alla Francesca (four out of 13 CDs) and Huelgas Ensemble (five out of 51 Releases). Four out of the nine CDs by Mala Punica are constructed upon the *Ars subtilior* repertory, with minor appearances also in some of the other five (the inclusion of a Matteo da Perugia contratenor in ‘d’Amor Ragionando’, *Arcana* 22). Ensembles which avoided this repertory in their recorded output include among others Anonymous 4, Hesperion XX / XXI, New-York Pro Musica, the Clemencic Consort, Ensemble Gilles Binchois, Sequentia, Micrologus, the Hilliard Ensemble, Diabolus in Musica, Ensemble Unicorn, and La Reverdie.

⁷² See Ramm, ‘Style in Early Music Singing’.

⁷³ “It is not the aim of the chart to discuss these styles aesthetically, but to show a fairly cast variety, presented by a singer for other singers.”, Ramm, ‘Style in Early Music Singing’, p. 20.

⁷⁴ For her, central to its successful execution is an understanding of the meaning of the text, of the sociological context of the work, vocal agility, and rhythm (referring to the impulses of the language). Of secondary importance are *Klangreiz* (interplay between sound and meaning, formal organisation, etc.), diction, and melodic expression. Of least relevance is the character and sound of the language, personal narrative expression, control and changes of voice-register, vibrato, and improvisation.

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw a push towards the scientification of performance and the industrialisation of education. In the universities, the pressures to adopt business-models and demonstrate usefulness led to the popularity of publishing large edifices and conceiving new systematisation techniques.⁷⁵ In performance, this led to a renewed involvement of scholars in musical production, and the vogue for recording entire, externally-defined repertoires.⁷⁶ This systematic approach to performance was attractive as it made recordings scientifically justifiable and easier to label, catalogue and promote.⁷⁷ The scientific connection was also supposed to appeal to researcher and student, hinting that such recordings should find a place in scientific libraries, thus opening a new market.

Some of the earliest examples of recordings entirely dedicated to the *Ars subtilior* fall into this category.⁷⁸ Turbulent musicological times, though, prohibited their straightforward reception. ‘Ce Diabolic Chant’ was presumed to be the first of a series of planned recordings, which would systematically record the complete oeuvre of known late-fourteenth-century composers. The promise did not materialise, as its timing made it an early victim of *a-cappella*-theory-led criticism.⁷⁹ Reviews both in *Gramophone* and *Early Music* made a point

⁷⁵ For a general account concerning English universities See Michael Lewis Shattock, ‘How Should British Universities Plan for the 1980s?’, *HE*, xi (1982), pp. 193-210. An example of large-scale editing is Gordon K. Greene (ed.), *French Secular Music: Manuscript Chantilly, Musée Condé 564*, in *PMFC*, xviii-xix, Monaco, 1981-1982). In the realm of analysis, see Jehoash Hirshberg, ‘Hexachordal and Modal Structure in Machaut’s Polyphonic Chansons’, in John Walter Hill (ed.), *Studies in Musicology in Honor of Otto E. Albrecht* (Kassel and Basel, 1980), pp. 19-42. This remains attractive. For a recent impressive example of interdisciplinary systematisation, see Cuthbert, *Trecento Fragments*, where, on top of the mathematical language used to represent information, the appendix to Chapter 1 also includes explanations of mathematical models of probability and instruction in computer programming to demonstrate their practical use in the context of his subject.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Stanley Boorman (ed.), *Studies in the Performance of Late Medieval Music* (Cambridge, 1983). In Günther’s contribution to this volume for example (‘Fourteenth-century Music with Texts Revealing Performance Practice’, pp. 253-270), she concludes that the modern ideal is for all performances of medieval music to be done from original notation, and that her chapter’s role is to ease performer’s labour when this ideal is not attainable. For other examples see the scholarly contributions to CD booklets, or the involvement of Page with the Gothic Voices below.

⁷⁷ In the marketplace, scientific usefulness was easily exchanged with a ‘genius tag’ for composer-based collections.

⁷⁸ See Medieval Ensemble of London, ‘Matteo da Perugia – Secular Works’, *L’Oiseau-Lyre DSLO 577* (1979); ‘Ce Diabolic Chant’ *L’Oiseau-Lyre “Florilegium” DSDL 704 LP*, (1983, rereleased as *Decca “L’Oiseau-Lyre” 475 9119 CD*); Ensemble Organum, ‘Codex Chantilly’ (*Harmonia Mundi HMA 1951252*, 1986 re-released 2006).

⁷⁹ For this assumption, see David Fallows (review), ‘The Medieval Ensemble of London ‘Ce diabolic Chant’ Decca Florilegium DSDL 704’, *EM*, xi (October, 1983), pp. 557-558. The recording was a victim of two more unfortunate happenstances: the use of Reaney’s misreading of ‘chant’ instead of ‘chaut’ in the phrase chosen to head the recording (see Gilbert Reaney (ed.), *Early Fifteenth Century Music*, *CMM*, xi vol. 4 (American Institute of Musicology, 1969), pp. 13-16, pointed out in Fallows’ review), and the recording of *Si con cy gist* (**Ch**, f. 31v) just before a satisfactory resolution of the song’s notational puzzle was published in Laurie Koehler, ‘Subtilitas in Musica: A Re-examination of Johannes Olivier’s ‘Si con cy gist’’, *MD*, xxxvi (1982), pp. 95-118. For more on this piece see pp. 117, 181, 190 and ex. 4-43 below.

of emphasising negatively the use of instruments in over half of the songs presented.⁸⁰ Fallow's review of this recording is also interesting in its assertion that *Ars subtilior* music is not often recorded as it is particularly unfitting to studio recording habits, and aspects of it make record producers uneasy.⁸¹

The *a-cappella* movement is noteworthy for its pretext of 'objective' study as a basis for a calculated attempt at influencing popular tastes and opinions concerning performance.⁸² The positivistic attitude and conscious attempt to present its results as objectively correct affected the music of the *Ars subtilior* much as it did the rest of the late-medieval repertoire: it characterised medieval music as clean, clear, blended, and uninvolved, tending towards the abstract and away from the personal and expressive.⁸³ That Sound was as important as Concept is borne out by the relative lack of interest in the Ensemble Organum recording, which kept a rather strict separation between voices and instruments, but adhered to rather different sound-aesthetics.

The booklet text of the 'Codex Chantilly' recording follows the standard coupling of a scholarly introduction (in this case by Günther) and personal justification by the ensemble director (Marcel Pérès). The inclusion of a scholarly text in such recordings gives them an authoritative character, a place in the cutting edge of musical production,⁸⁴ and an added justification as a bridge between education and entertainment. As a counterweight, the first half of Pérès' text is dedicated to the complexity, strangeness and difficulty of this music, while the remainder deals with the limitation of scholarship. Themes discussed include the reconstruction of a lost oral tradition to match the surviving written one; his belief in a non-

⁸⁰ Iain Fenlon (review), 'The Medieval Ensemble of London 'Ce diabolic Chant' Decca Florilegium, DSDL 704', *Gramophone*, lx (1983), p. 958. While Fallows, being the better established and more careful reviewer, presents his preferences as well-known opinions which may or may not be true, Fenlon has no qualms about being blunt to the point of rudeness, and dismisses this element of the recording without even feeling the need to justify himself. This and other cases are examined in Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, esp. p. 137.

⁸¹ Fallows, 'The Medieval Ensemble', p. 557.

⁸² Central articles were Christopher Page, 'Machaut's 'Pupil' Deschamps on the Performance of Music: Voices or Instruments in the 14th-Century Chanson', *EM*, v (October, 1977), pp. 484-491, and David Fallows, 'Specific Information on the Ensembles for Composed Polyphony, 1400-1474', pp. 109-160, in Stanley Boorman (ed.), *Studies in the Performance of Late Medieval Music* (Cambridge, 1983). The chronicles of this movement is extensively described in Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, pp. 88-156. For the self-aware manipulation of public taste, see *ibid.* pp. 107, 132-138.

⁸³ Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, pp. 92, 131-132. For other, non-intentional outcomes see *ibid.* pp. 141-143. For other origins of the Gothic Voices aesthetic, see Page 'The English *a cappella* Renaissance', *EM*, xxi (1993), pp. 452-71, and Donald Greig, 'Sight-reading: Notes on *a cappella* Performance Practice', *EM*, xxiii (1995), pp. 124-150.

⁸⁴ This, like many other recordings, stresses the use of new, corrected editions, or work directly from the manuscripts.

dogmatic treatment of both music and instrumentation in the middle ages; the search for freedom and grace when dealing with the deliberately complex; and finding the ‘right’ sound and tone for this music.

These two contrasting approaches to performance – uninvolved, abstract clarity versus increasingly subjective exoticism – came to dominate the performance of medieval music, with English (and to some extent English-speaking) groups tending to the former, and those active in mainland Europe moving towards the latter. That this split was entrenched in the 1980s suggests that both approaches went in different directions in their reaction to the main new force in musicology at the time, namely *new musicology*.

New musicology was fuelled both by academic work in other fields (especially literary criticism), and non-academic processes such as the rise of civil and human rights movements, commercialism and individualism. With its emphasis on freedom of approach and subjectivity, it was as relevant to medieval music as any other topic. Still, the contempt shown by its proponents towards traditional concepts of the objectivity (or even relevance) of terms such as History, Truth and Knowledge did not penetrate far into medieval musicology.⁸⁵ Attacks on authenticity, critical technique, and positivism as either impossible or *passé*, were less harmful in the medieval context, as positivistic attitudes were still yielding enough new information so that questioning them was irrelevant.⁸⁶ As the majority of researchers’ work tended to stay clear of questions of authenticity, musical analysis and performance, *new musicology* had little with which to compensate scholars for the positivistic sacrifices it demanded. The foremost champions of medieval resistance to this trend were Brett, Strohm and Bent.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ This manifested itself in the avoidance of the more creative musicological attitudes in medieval scholarship. For an appraisal of such approaches as zoomusicology, music geography and theomusicology (as well as better established attitudes, see Patricia Debly, ‘Pirates’ and ‘The Myth of Musicology: Part II’, *CAMLR*, xxxii (2004), pp. 21-42, also available at <https://www.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/caml/article/view/1356/679>.

⁸⁶ For such attacks see Richard Taruskin, ‘On Letting the Music Speak for Itself: Some Reflections on Musicology and Performance’ *TJM*, i (1982), pp. 338-349; Edward Toner Cone, ‘The Authority of Music Criticism’, *JAMS*, xxxiv (1981), pp. 1-18; For relevant pre-Kerman work, see Leo Treitler, ‘Musical Syntax in the Middle Ages: Background to an Aesthetic Problem’, *PNM*, iv (1965-6), pp. 75-85; ‘On Historical Criticism’, *TMQ*, liii (1967), pp. 188-205; ‘The Present as History’, *PNM*, vii (1969), pp. 1-58.

⁸⁷ See Philip Brett, ‘Facing the Music’, *EM*, x (1982), pp. 347-350; Reinhard Strohm, ‘Musical Analysis as Part of Musical History’, in Raffaele Pozzi (ed.), *Tendenze e metodi nella ricerca musicologica: Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Latina 27-29 Settembre 1990)* (Florence, 1995), pp. 61-81, and to a degree “‘La harpe de mélodie’” oder Das Kunstwerk als Akt der Zueignung’, in Hermann Danuser, Helga de la Motte-Haber, S. Leopold and N. Miller (eds), *Das musikalische Kunstwerk: Geschichte-Ästhetik-Theorie: Festschrift Carl*

Medieval scholars stuck to their strong-points and invigorated their positivistic efforts and, when possible, attempting to translate their findings into musical performance. These activities included the reformulation of musical language and analytical technique;⁸⁸ the affiliation of stylistic development with intellectual rather than sociological trends;⁸⁹ pure archival research;⁹⁰ the publishing of facsimile editions,⁹¹ and the editing and translating of theoretical treatises.⁹²

Dahlhaus zum 60. Geburtstag (Laaber, 1988). For the sense of impending crisis and an attempt to pull the ranks together, see Margaret Bent, 'Fact and Value in Contemporary Scholarship', *TMT*, cxxvii (1986), pp. 85-89, an address given in her capacity as president of the American Musicological Society at the plenary session of the meeting of the American Musicological Society, the College Music Society, the Society for Ethnomusicology and the Society for Music Theory in November 1985. Bent also revisited and expanded on the argument in Margaret Bent, 'The Grammar of Early Music: Preconditions for Analysis', in Cristle Collins Judd (ed.), *Tonal Structures in Early Music* (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 15-59.

⁸⁸ Most importantly Sarah Fuller, 'On Sonority in Fourteenth-Century Polyphony: Some preliminary Reflections', *JMT*, xxx (1986), pp. 35-70. A wider context for her work is given in Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, pp. 157-215 (The similar formulation of the "PIP principle" by Marcus Jans of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis counters Leech-Wilkinson's argument that this approach was only enabled by the *A capella* tradition). Another analytical model proposed to modernize Reaney's reliance on modes (Gilbert Reaney, 'Modes in the Fourteenth Century, in Particular in the Music of Guillaume de Machaut', in Pieter Fischer (ed.), *Organice Voces: Festschrift Joseph Smits van Waesberghe* (Amsterdam, 1963), pp. 137-143), was based on hexachords. See Hirshberg, 'Hexachordal and Modal Structure'. The concept of modal-types also originated in this decade (Harold Stone Powers, 'Tonal Types and Modal Categories in Renaissance Polyphony', *JAMS*, xxxiv (1981), pp. 428-470), but made relevant to medieval music (Peter M. Lefferts, 'Signature Systems and Tonal Types in the Fourteenth-Century French Chanson', *PMM*, iv (1995), pp. 117-147) and in particular *Ars subtilior* music (Yolanda Plumley, *The Grammar of Fourteenth Century Melody: Tonal Organization and Compositional Process in the Chansons of Guillaume de Machaut and the Ars subtilior* (New York, Garland, 1996)) only in the next. A less overarching approach can be seen in Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'Machaut's *Rose, Lis* and the Problem of Early Music Analysis', *MA*, iii (1984), pp. 9-28.

⁸⁹ See Dorit Tanay, *Music in the Age of Ockham: The Interrelations between Music, Mathematics, and Philosophy in the Fourteenth Century* (PhD. diss. for the University of California at Berkeley, 1989).

⁹⁰ See Walter Pass, 'Die Musik in den mittelalterlichen Meßstiftungen Vorarlberger Archive', *JVL*, cxxii-xxciii (1979), pp. 372-374; Craig Wright, *Music at the Court of Burgundy, 1364-1419: A Documentary History* (Henryville, Pa., 1979); Andrew Tomasello, *Music and Ritual at Papal Avignon 1309-1403* (UMI Reaserch Press, 1983); Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400-1505: The Creation of a Musical Centre in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1984); Frank D'Accone, 'Una nuova fonte dell' "Ars nova" italiana: il codice di San Lorenzo, 2111', *SM*, xiii (1984), pp. 3-31; Reinhard Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford 1985); Charles Everett Brewer, 'A Fourteenth-Century Polyphonic Manuscript Rediscovered', *SMASH*, xxiv (1982), pp. 5-19; *The Introduction of the 'Ars Nova' into East Central Europe: A Study of Late Medieval Polish Sources* (PhD. diss. for City Universtisy of New York, 1984); 'The Historical Context of Polyphony in Medieval Hungary: An Examination of Four Fragmentary Sources', *SMASH*, xxxii (1990), pp. 5-21.

⁹¹ See F. Alberto Gallo (ed.), *Il codice musicale Panciatichi 26 della Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze* (Florence, 1981); John Nádas and Agostino Ziino (eds), *The Lucca Codex: Il Codice Mancini* (Lucca, 1990); David Fallows (ed.), *Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Canon. Misc. 213*, (Chicago & London, 1995); Karl Kügler, Isabella Data and Agostino Ziino (eds), *Il codice J.II.9, Torino, Biblioteca nazionale universitaria* (Lucca, 1999); Anne Stone (ed.), *Il Codice a.M.5.24 (ModA)* (Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2003); Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone (eds), *Codex Chantilly* (2008). It is clear from this list that the *Ars subtilior* was an unintentional beneficiary of this trend as many sources peripheral to this style were published before the central ones.

⁹² See Jan Herlinger (ed. and trans.), *Prosdócimo de Beldomandi, Contrapunctus: A New Critical Text and Translation*, in *GLMT*, i, (Lincoln, 1984); Oliver B. Ellsworth (ed. and trans.), *The Berkeley Manuscript, University of California, Music Library, MS. 744 (olim Phillipps 4450), A New Critical Text and Translation*, in *GLMT* ii (Lincoln, 1984); Philip Evan Schreur (ed. and trans.), *The Tractatus Figurarum, A New Crtical Text and Translation*, in *GLMT*, vi (Lincoln, 1989).

Performers not involved with the *A capella* movement were more exposed to the social and intellectual trends embodied by *new musicology*. As a result, a growing sense of personalisation and exoticism characterised their projects. An early incident of the trend of portraying *Ars subtilior* as difficult, mystical or psychedelic can be found in Ensemble P.A.N.'s 'Ars Magis Subtiliter' recording.⁹³ The booklet text (by Alejandro Enrique Planchart), programming, performance style, and indeed critical reception, all point in the direction of the 'alternative' market. The booklet claims that while being able to "charm and dazzle at first sight", some pieces "can be understood only by the performers themselves". The place of the performer is thus elevated, while the listeners should just allow themselves to be swept away. This very much conforms to the romantic (as well as business oriented) concept of performance. Add to this the suggestion that the "fumeurs" made use of opium or hashish, and the mysterious, exotic (if not outright subversive) quality of this music gains dramatic importance. The group's flexible rhythms and sound-production techniques also help bring about an air of uncertainty and unpredictability to this recording. In an editorial review from amazon.com, David Vernier writes that, "this recording effectively captures the mood and spirit of an age that experienced the horrors of the Black Death, the Hundred Years War, the great papal schism, and the appearance of great literary works such as *The Canterbury Tales* and the poetry of Petrarch".⁹⁴ Some English reviewers stuck to their guns, and even as late as 1994 centred wholly on disapproving of the combination of voices and instruments.⁹⁵

By this point, the voice/instrument argument became rather sterile. Not much new information has been gathered, but simple repetition was not satisfactory.⁹⁶ Supporters of purely vocal performance tried finding technical and aesthetic reasons for discouraging the use of instruments, many of which are not valid.⁹⁷ Many ensemble leaders, having to work to

⁹³ New Albion 021 CD, 1989.

⁹⁴ David Vernier (editorial review for Amazon.com), 'Ars Magis Subtiliter', available at <http://www.amazon.com/Secular-Music-Chantilly-Codex/dp/B000000R2J>.

⁹⁵ See Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (review), 'Ensemble Project Ars Nova', *EM*, xii (May, 1994), pp. 337-338.

⁹⁶ Inconclusive attempts to breath new life into the discussion can be found in Dennis Slavin, 'In Support of "Heresy": Manuscript Evidence for the *a cappella* Performance of Early 15th-Century Songs', *EM*, xix (1991), pp. 178-90 and Lawrence Earp, 'Texting in 15th-Century French Chansons: A Look Ahead from the 14th Century', *EM*, xix (1991), pp. 194-210. For a favourable but not more convincing attempt to translate their ideas into performance see Page, 'Going beyond the limits'.

⁹⁷ In his review, Leech-Wilkinson interprets the aesthetic choices of the group (softness of instruments compared to voices, later also apparent in the work of Ensemble Ferrara) as technical limitations, making his point invalid. He also claims performances including instruments have to be quick, which in my view depends entirely on the specific instruments and players and in no way is the result of the very use of instruments. A

survive and nearly always being instrumentalists themselves, kept using instruments, hanging on to scraps of evidence or inconsistencies in some *a-cappella* arguments to justify their position, or simply ignored the opposition.⁹⁸ Thus, this argument gradually lost its integrity. One side tried promoting aesthetic preferences on technical grounds while the other obscured technical limitations with aesthetic reasoning. Both arguments made use of scientific language to do so.

Towards a new century

The culmination of these pressures led to a sense of fragmentation in both performance and study in the 1990s. Some ensembles took subjectivity to the extreme, allowing themselves immense creative freedoms. This is of course helped by the entertainment business, where spectacles are attractive to both organisers and audiences. The most influential of the more extreme examples immediately relevant to the *Ars subtilior* repertoire is Pedro Memelsdorff and Ensemble Mala Punica.⁹⁹

Mala Punica recordings and performances follow minutely orchestrated scores, not only of the original melodic lines, but also extensive preludes, postludes, interludes and additional voices, highlighting specific characteristics of a piece, or simply creatively expanding them.¹⁰⁰

Even such expansive arrangements – clearly created to inject interest and excite modern audiences¹⁰¹ – claim to be done in the name of probing the limits of scientific truth. This claim is substantiated by Memelsdorff's reputation as a prolific scholar. The 'Helas Avril' booklet (by Memelsdorff), claims that, "No musical notation could be more precise, intimate

third point was that the use of instruments rules out a harmonic conception and understanding of this repertoire, which is again entirely circumstantial.

⁹⁸ Promoters also tended to support instruments, as variety and sound-changes usually figure highly on their wish-list.

⁹⁹ Relevant recordings are 'Ars Subtilis Ytalica' (*Arcana* 21, 1993), 'En attendant' (*Arcana* A23, 1995), 'Missa Cantilena' (*Erato* 17069, 1996), and 'Hélas Avril' (*Erato* 8573-82 163 2, 2000).

¹⁰⁰ For a didactic example of creativity, see Ciconia's *Sus un fontain* (in 'En attendant'), where in order to attract attention to the quotations the Vielle (playing the tenor part) stops playing while they are sung (only in conjunction with the quoted text). For freer creativity see, for example, Matteo da Perugia's *Andray soulet* ('Hélas Avril'), which is expanded to last 3'30" including a triple-time section and the introduction of a number of new melodic ideas. Taken in a similar tempo, a run-through of the notated music (it is impossible to say how many times, if at all, this little canonic work was intended to be repeated) lasts at most 30". These expansions follow certain tendencies. See Yolanda Plumley (review), 'A More Subtle Art? Six Ars Subtilior Recordings', *EM*, xxvi (august, 1998), pp. 499-502.

¹⁰¹ Many performances are also visually planned and orchestrated, including special stage arrangements and lighting effects. At times Memelsdorff conducts the other musicians.

and less ambiguous than that used by Matteo da Perugia ... He notated down every chromaticism, every vocal inflection, each tiny ornament and instrumental interlude". It goes on to suggest that all if not most previous musicology on Matteo was "sluggish" and "passed summary, superficial judgement on his songs – long before arriving at any real understanding of them", and that his recording deciphers the notation of Matteo's tonality for the first time, and "restores" the "responsorial relationship as prescribed in *ModA*" in the use of voices and instruments.

These extraordinary claims do appear with a 'get-out clause', which states that the choice of instrumentation was "up to us", as was the decision "to experiment with the 'silent sections' – what the 'solo' instruments play under the voice and what the voice does during the instrumental interludes", but even these choices – as well as the use of vocal dynamics and agogics – are given a scientific guise by being presented as experiments that, "offer different solutions in each piece", or as following iconographical evidence or the writings of medieval theorists such as Philippe de Vitry and Nicole Oresme.

This attitude not only presents the performer as a virtuosic-genius, but adds an extra level of mystical geniality concerning the arrangement (and arranger). Inexplicable magic has to be administered to turn the surviving materials into palpable works of art.¹⁰²

Here again, scholarship (together with critique) and musical production operate in unconnected plains, making the resulting discussion between them meaningless. Not only are the instrumentation choices made following the talents of the director and those he or she wants to work with, a large part in the way materials are dealt with follow entrepreneurial ambitions rather than scholarly responsibilities.¹⁰³ The scientific justification or discrediting of the aural results becomes therefore a game undertaken for non-scientific (and sometimes

¹⁰² Such attitudes are well established and can be traced from Mendelsohn's version of Bach's *Matthäus-Passion* through to Ficker's version of *Sederunt principes*. The personal responsibility this attitude entails (especially when the arranger also conducts) is not dissimilar to romantic orchestral habits where a clear borderline is drawn between the creative genius and those executing his bidding. It has little to do with the reconstruction of medieval performance practices.

¹⁰³ It is very difficult to imagine Memelsdorff believing that his realisation of each piece is the only scientifically correct or historically accurate possibility, even if we do understand the heavy compositorial and instrumental involvement to be his genuine belief stemming from objective scholarly analysis, rather than an outlet for his impressive creativity and outstanding instrumental skills. I can therefore understand the continual emphasis on the scientific validity of these recordings only as part of the marketing package, it playing a similar role to the choice of publicity-shot location or concert dress. On those choices see Greig, 'Sight-reading', esp. p. 136-139.

non-musical) means, and cannot be seen as an open, frank discussions about the best way to get closer to historical accuracy.

The lack of unity in scholarly attitudes resulted in large-scale projects tending to inhabit clear-cut borders and stand as self-contained units.¹⁰⁴ Larger works were of course accompanied by a steady stream of more specific articles.¹⁰⁵ The cumulative sum of these activities had a substantial effect, as the two *Ars subtilior*-centred conferences hemming in this period can attest. While the 1992 conference on **Cyp** can still be seen as an effort to spark scholarly interest in this repertoire, the 2001 conference on **Ch** was a platform for a confident exchange of well established older views and well founded new ideas: a re-assessment of the larger picture emanating from previous scholarship, rather than a plea for attention, foray into the unknown, or an act of self-justification.¹⁰⁶ A need for further re-assessment, re-definition (and perhaps even renaming) of the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon

¹⁰⁴ See Strohm, *The Rise*; Anna Maria Busse-Berger, *Mensuration and Proportion Signs: Origins and Evaluation* (Oxford, 1993); Lawrence Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research* (New York, 1995), and David Fallows, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs 1415-1480* (Oxford, 1999). For more direct relevance see Yolanda Plumley, *The Grammar* or Anne Stone, *Writing Rhythm in Late Medieval Italy: Notation and Style in the Manuscript Modena, Biblioteca Estense, a.M.5.24* (PhD. diss. for Harvard University, 1994).

¹⁰⁵ See Andrew Wathey, 'The Peace of 1360-1369 and Anglo-French Musical Relations', *EMH*, ix (1990), pp. 129-174; Terence Scully, 'French Songs in Aragon: The Place of Origin of the Chansonier Chantilly, Musée Condé 564', in Keith Busby and Erik Kooper (eds), *Courtly Literature – Culture and Context*, (Utrecht, 1990), pp. 509-521; Keith Polk, *German Instrumental Music of the Late Middle Ages: Players, Patrons and Performance Practice* (Cambridge, 1992); Ursula Günther, 'Composers at the Court of the Antipopes in Avignon: Research in the Vatican Archives', in Barbara Hagg, Frank Daelemens and André Vanrie (eds), *Musicology and Archival Research* (Brussels, 1994), pp. 328-337; Christian Berger, "Pour Douz Regard..." Ein neu entdecktes Handschriftenblatt mit französischen Chansons aus dem Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts, *AfM*, li (1994), pp. 51-77; Thomas Brothers, 'Sharps in "Medée fu": Questions of Style and Analysis', *SM*, xxiv (1995), pp. 3-25; *Chromatic Beauty in the Late Medieval Chanson: An Interpretation of Manuscript Accidentals* (Cambridge, 1997); Reinhard Strohm, 'Centre and periphery'; 'Song Composition in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries: Old and New Questions', *JOWG*, ix (1996/97), pp. 523-550; Anne Stone, 'Che cosa c'è di più sottile riguardo l'ars subtilior?', *RIM*, xxxi (1996), pp. 1-31; 'Glimpses of the Unwritten Tradition in Some *Ars Subtilior* Works', *MD*, I (1996), pp. 59-93; Yolanda Plumley, 'Citation and Allusion in the Late Ars Nova: The Case of *Esperance* and the *En attendant* Songs', *EMH*, xviii (1999), pp. 287-363; Christopher Page, *Music and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Studies on Texts and Performance*, (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997); Margaret Bent, 'Early Papal Motets' in Richard Sherr (ed.), *Papal Music and Papal Musicians in Late Medieval and Renaissance Rome*, (Oxford, 1998), pp. 5-43; John Nádas and Giuliano Di Bacco, 'The Papal Chapel and Italian Sources of Polyphony During the Great Schism', in Richard Sherr (ed.), *Papal Music and Musicians in Late Medieval and Renaissance Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 44-92. ; John Nádas, 'A Cautious Reading of Simone Prodenzani's Il Sollazzo e il Saporetto', *Recercare*, x (1998), pp. 23-47.

¹⁰⁶ For the **Cyp** conference see Ursula Günther and Ludwig Finscher (eds), *The Cypriot-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino J.II.9: Report of the International Musicological Congress, Paphos 20–25 March, 1992* (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: American Institute of Musicology, 1995) and p. 29 above. For the **Ch** conference, see Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone (eds), *A Late Medieval Songbook and its Context: New Perspectives on the Chantilly Codex (Bibliothèque du Château de Chantilly, Ms 564)* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009). An added illustrative point of the different character of these meetings can be seen by the connection between each of them and the publication of the facsimile of the source with which it dealt: while the 1992 meeting gave the initial spark to begin the work on publishing a facsimile edition, the 2001 conference was supposed to celebrate the publication of a facsimile edition worked on in advance.

emanates from the conference proceedings. This can be seen as part of a fashion in itself, as this period saw the publication of a number of introspective studies concerning the processes of modern scholarship and its relationship with performance.¹⁰⁷

As well as questioning the processes of modern scholarship, many more specific works ensued, reappraising the traditionally-held beliefs which older work brought about, this again mostly in self-contained, individualistic pushes.¹⁰⁸ As new discoveries still come about, pure positivistic and archival studies were still appearing,¹⁰⁹ augmented by traditionally-themed books and articles,¹¹⁰ performance-related discussions,¹¹¹ and interdisciplinary research.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ This started already with Page, 'The English *a capella*' and Greig, 'Sight-reading', and continuing with Upton, *The Chantilly Codex*; Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*; Annette Kreutziger-Herr, *Ein Traum vom Mittelalter: Die Wiederentdeckung Mittelalterlicher Musik in der Neuzeit* (Bohlaus, 2003), John Haines, *Eight Centuries of Troubadours and Trouvères: The Changing Identity of Medieval Music* (Cambridge, 2004); Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the 21st Century* (Oxford, 2007); Margaret Bent, "'Authentic" listening?', *EM*, xxv (November 1997), p. 567, and of course this very work. On this trend as a whole see Elizabeth Aubrey, book review of 'Eight Centuries of Troubadours and Trouvères: The Changing Identity of Medieval Music', *Notes*, lxii (2005), pp. 387-389, esp. p. 387.

¹⁰⁸ To the previous footnote one may add Jason Stoessel, *The Captive Scribe: The Context and Culture of Scribal and Notational Process in the Music of the Ars Subtilior* (PhD. diss. for the University of New England, 2002); Plumley & Stone, *Codex Chantilly*; Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*; 'Ars subtilior in Paris'; 'A Singer at the Fountain: Homage and Irony in Ciconia's 'Sus une fontayne'', *ML*, lxxxii (2001), pp. 361-390; Plumley 'An Episode'.

¹⁰⁹ See Mark Everist, 'A New Source for the Polyphony of the Ars Subtilior: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises 22069' in Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone (eds), *A Late Medieval Songbook and its Context: New Perspectives on the Chantilly Codex (Bibliothèque du Château de Chantilly, Ms 564)* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), pp. 283-301; Plumley, 'Musicians at Laon Cathedral'; Peter M. Lefferts, 'A riddle and a song: Playing with signs in a 14th-century ballade', *EMH*, xxvi (2007), pp. 121-179; and the ongoing saga of reassembling **Luc**, see John Nádas and Agostino Ziino, *The Lucca Codex*; 'Two Newly Discovered Leaves of the Lucca Codex', *SM*, xxxiv (2005), pp. 3-23, detailing discoveries in 1996 by Giorgio Tori and 1997 by Sergio Nelli.

¹¹⁰ See Sarah Fuller, 'Exploring Tonal Structure in French Polyphonic Song of the Fourteenth Century', in Cristle Collins Judd (ed.), *Tonal Structures in Early Music* (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 61-87; Busse Berger, *Mensuration and Proportion signs*; Jason Stoessel, 'Symbolic Innovation: The Notation of Jacob de Senleches', *AM*, lxxi (1999), pp. 136-164; 'A Fifteenth Century Response to a Musical Text: The Editor Scribe in Chantilly, Bibliothèque du Musée Condé, ms. 564 (Codex Chantilly)', in Michael Ewans, Rosalind Halton and John A Philips (eds), *Music Research: New Directions for a New Century - Proceedings of the 25th National Conference of the Musicological Society of Australia* (London: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2004), pp. 383-94; Robert Crawford Young, 'Antiphon of the Angels: *Angelorum psalat tripudium*', *Recercare*, xx (2008), pp. 5-22; Pedro Memelsdorff, 'Le grant desir' Verschlüsselte Chromatik bei Matteo da Perugia', in Hans-Martin Linde and Regula Rapp (eds), *Provokation und Tradition: Erfahrungen mit der alten Musik* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2000), pp. 55-83 and errata sheet; 'What's in a Sign? The ♮ and the copying process of a medieval manuscript: The Codex Modena, Biblioteca Estense, α.M.5.24 (olim lat. 568)', *SM*, xxx (2001), pp. 255-280, and 'Lizadra donna: Ciconia, Matteo da Perugia, and the Late Medieval *Ars Contratenor*', in Philippe Vendrix (ed.), *Johannes Ciconia, Musicien de la Transition* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 233-78; Elizabeth Eva Leach, 'Learning French by Singing in 14th-Century England', *EM*, xxxiii (May, 2005), pp. 253-270; Anne Stone, 'The Composer's Voice in the Late Fourteenth-Century Song: Four Case Studies', in Philippe Vendrix (ed.), *Ciconia musicien de la transition* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 169-94; Roland Jackson, 'Guillaume de Machaut and Dissonance in Fourteenth Century French Music', *MD*, liii (2003-2008), pp. 7-49; Nors S. Josephson, 'Many Roads Lead to Rome: Multifarious Stylistic Tendencies and their Musical Interrelationships within the "Ars Subtilior"', *MD*, liii (2003-2008), pp. 71-97; Oliver Huck, 'The Music of the Angels in Fourteenth- and Early Fifteenth-Century Music', *MD*, liii (2003-2008), pp. 99-119; Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone, 'Cordier's

This of course had performative implications. The twin pressures to follow either the authority of a scholar or the geniality of a group-leader created a sleek, aware and able kind of performer, a consummate professional. He or she takes pride in the technical ability to perform perfectly under whatever restraints and conditions. Donald Greig's eloquent and insightful articles are the best and most relevant gateway to this world.¹¹³

Greig goes through the 'dos and don'ts' of a performer's behaviour.¹¹⁴ Expression and phrasing should be part of professionalism, but as both Greig and Leech-Wilkinson felt the need to emphasise this point, one can deduce that many performances only reach the level of exactness.¹¹⁵ His writings centre on the non-musical influences in the creation of his scene and performance style. These include economic pressures, business models and promotion techniques, gender issues, musical education and its accessibility, music-reading habits, performance and concert-etiquette, modern attitudes towards individualism and collectivism, singing technique, psychological and developmental traits, and the link between technology and aesthetic ideals. Many of these influences are traced back to particularly English historical traditions, an orientation towards 'small business entrepreneurialism', or the rising popularity of minimalist aesthetics in the 1980s and 1990s. One cannot hope for a better demonstration of the at-best tenuous link between scholastic ideals and performative outcomes, even in situations where the link was supposed to be explicit.

Picture-Songs and the Relationship between the Song Repertoires of the Chantilly Codex and Oxford 213', in Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone (eds), *A Late Medieval Songbook and its Context: New Perspectives on the Chantilly Codex (Bibliothèque du Château de Chantilly, Ms 564)* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), pp. 303-28.

¹¹¹ See Greig, 'Ars Subtilior Repertory'; 'Sing to the Mike'; Leech-Wilkinson 'Articulating Ars Subtilior Song'; Anne Stone 'Self-reflexive Songs and their Readers in the Late Fourteenth-Century', *EM*, xxxi (2003), pp. 180-193.

¹¹² See Yolanda Plumley, 'Playing the Citation Game in the Late-Fourteenth Century', *EM*, xxxi (2003), pp. 20-39; 'Intertextuality in the Fourteenth-Century Chanson', *ML*, lxxxiv (August, 2003), pp.355-77; 'Crossing Borderlines: Points of Contact between the Late Fourteenth Century French Lyric and Chanson Repertoires', *AM*, lxxvi (2004), pp. 3-23; *The Art of Grafted Song, Citation and Allusion in the Age of Machaut* (forthcoming); Suzannah Clark and Elizabeth Eva Leach (eds), *Citation and Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Musical Culture: Learning from the Learned*, (Boydell Press, 2005); Anna Maria Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (University of California Press, 2005); Elizabeth Eva Leach, *Sung Birds: Music, Nature, and Poetry in the Later Middle Ages* (Cornell University Press, 2007), 'Grafting the Rose: Machaut, the Ars Subtilior, and the Cyprus Balades', in Karl Kügle and Lorenz Welker (eds), *Borderline Areas in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth-century Music* (Münster, 2009), pp. 195-219; 'Nature's Forge and Mechanical Production: Writing, Reading and Performing Song', in Mary Carruthers (ed.), *Rhetoric Beyond Words: Delight and Persuasion in the Arts of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 72-95.

¹¹³ See Donald Greig, 'Ars Subtilior'; 'Sing to the mike' and 'Sight-reading'. In all his discussions Greig remains specific to the English scene of which he is a part, but many of his points are just as relevant to freelance performers in other scenes.

¹¹⁴ Technical security (or its façade) is essential, relevant knowledge appreciated, as long as it does not hinder the execution of directions or raises too many questions. See Greig, 'Sing to the mike', pp. 5-6.

¹¹⁵ Greig, 'Ars Subtilior', p. 198; Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'Articulating Ars Subtilior Song', p. 16.

Many recent groups acknowledge both the incompleteness of historical evidence and the host of external influences active in its translation into performance. Thus, the counterpart to following orders became the personalisation and independence of the performers giving them. The confessed need for personal interpretation kept a distance between source-material, influence and outcome. No ideological affiliation, pretence of accuracy or historicity is required. Justification for ensembles' efforts ultimately arises from retrospective audience-appreciation or success due to market forces. The end of the booklet text (written by Michał Gondko, a co-director) accompanying La Morra's recording of songs from **Cyp** expresses this notion so:

Since hypotheses and performance-decisions can always be questioned, present-day performers of medieval music (indeed any performer of music predating the age of sound recording) would love to be given even the smallest opportunity to verify their performances against the background of historical reality. As this is impossible, and historical science cannot answer all the questions, it would seem best to subscribe to the ideals expressed by the anonymous author of *Pour haut et liement chanter* and is indeed the only way to attain "authenticity"¹¹⁶

This song describes the act of singing and the difference between 'singer' and 'musician'. It does not give much specific information, but claims that, "singing loudly and joyfully, with a clear, accurate and polished voice, never entitles a man to call himself a musician, whatever anyone may tell him",¹¹⁷ and goes on to praise the knowledge of harmony, sweetness of expression, softness, skill, a real feeling for and deep knowledge of the melody, syncopation, ornamentation, proportion, grace and doing all these things in moderation. Any kind of specific interpretation of the attitude expressed is therefore completely open to the performers.

The acceptance of such views can be seen in the reviews of this recording. Ivan Moody, detecting an apologetic undertone in the booklet text, comments: "I feel that with performances of this calibre there is little need for special pleading. The members of La Morra ... sound as though they have lived with this music for a long time".¹¹⁸ In other

¹¹⁶ La Morra, 'Flour de Beaulté', (*RAMÉE* RAM 0602, 2006).

¹¹⁷ The translation is by Ann and Paul Bridge and is taken from p. 21 of the CD booklet. As the incipit of the song suggests, a literal reading could substitute 'loud' with 'high'.

¹¹⁸ Ivan Moody, review: 'Music from the Middle Ages', *EM* xxxv (February, 2007), pp. 137-139, esp. p. 138.

words, personalisation of the music overrides any other arguments and gives complete justification to whatever choices were made to arrive at the resulting recording.

While creating programmes that ‘work’ is the prime directive, La Morra undertakes much ‘scholarly’ work.¹¹⁹ Similar attitudes, though, can easily justify the separation of music from its context.¹²⁰ More worryingly, ignorant or disinterested performers can hide their shortcomings as secondary to their virtuosity, exuberant personality and performance skills. This latter kind of attitude inevitably results in treating all styles of music alike, creating a kind of post-modernist yet anachronistic self-expression, all done in the name of historicism.

Conclusion

No historical or meta-historical survey can escape the process of ‘emplotment’.¹²¹ My aim here was not to give an exhaustive account of all research and performance pertaining to the *Ars subtilior* in modern times, but to describe some of the processes and accidental influences which contributed to its rather disjunctive appearance to the wandering eye. As such, it is unavoidably skewed. For the most part, it is futile to attach merit or reproach to these occurrences, as every character in the story works within the constraints of their own time, place and ability. However, some intentions could be considered more worthwhile than others, and as the surviving evidence changes some works can be considered to be no longer relevant. A clear and visible sense of goal will help categorise which works belong in which camp. Those who are interested in the business of science or in entertainment allow themselves to disregard work cherished by those interested in pure historical research. Some arguments can be forsaken if it is recognised that the quarrelling parties are using incompatible vocabularies or have different reasons for engagement. If solutions are genuinely looked for, debates should be redirected following clearer understandings of the participants’ background and once the terms of engagement have been agreed upon.

¹¹⁹ Working from the original or preparing new editions, textual analysis, and keeping apace with current research, recordings and notions pertaining to the music performed. This information is gleaned from years of being an ensemble member and many discussions with its leaders.

¹²⁰ See, for example, Xasax, ‘Saxophone – Ars Subtilior’ (*Hat Art “Now”* 107, 1997) where songs by Jacob de Senleches are performed by non-specialists on four Saxophones and presented in alternation with modern compositions.

¹²¹ See, Hayden White, ‘The Historical Text as Literary Artifact’, in Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki (eds), *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding* (Madison, Wisc., 1978), pp. 41-62.

This does not make the overall picture any simpler. Change and progress are not linear, as both printed and recorded media may have a longer lifetime and dissemination pattern than the persons from which they originated. People do not necessarily follow changing fashions, as the current recording project by ensemble Tetraktys suggests. This project aims eventually to record the entire Chantilly codex, aligning it with the complete-edition movement prevalent after the War, but does so in an interventionist manner akin to that exemplified by ensemble P.A.N and Mala Punica above.¹²² Still, unlike published media, people can also change their minds.¹²³

Furthermore, musicological research is much supported by work in other fields such as philology, history, philosophy, literary criticism, etc. Each one of these disciplines supports a similarly non-linear history. A large number of ensembles not mentioned above recorded and performed *Ars subtilior* repertoire, be it extensively, or very occasionally.¹²⁴ Each group represents a mix of different degrees of each of the attitudes presented above, as comparative reviews can attest.¹²⁵ Indeed, it is arguable whether a performance following a single attitude and completely ignoring the rest can exist. Ensembles mix and match performers as well as repertoires, with the *Ars subtilior* playing a minor part in their output, or even none at all.¹²⁶

What is clear is that both research and performance found the distinction between *Ars subtilior* and other styles worthwhile, even if the borders and reasons for doing so vary greatly. The attention it received pin-pointed a host of specific cultural and technical changes which support its separation from other musical materials, but a coherent and generally accepted mechanism for defining this style or contextualising it is still missing. This work does not pretend to collect and disentangle all these complications in one go. By attracting attention to this history, and following it up with surveys of both our knowledge and its

¹²² See pp. 30, 44 and 45-7 above respectively. Only the first CD of the series has yet to be released as Tetraktys, 'Codex Chantilly Vol I' (Etcetera Records KTC 1900 8711801102337, 2009). The second has already been recorded, but has not yet been released.

¹²³ See Apel's changing attitudes pp. 31-2 above, or Günther's change of heart footnote 249 below.

¹²⁴ For example, Gothic Voices, Ferrara Ensemble, and Alla Francesca deal regularly with this repertoire, while The New London Consort, Las Huelgas Ensemble, Capilla Flamenca, the Clemencic Consort, perform in only occasionally.

¹²⁵ Yolanda Plumley (review), 'A More Subtle Art?'. This review compares the degree to which recordings by Mala Punica, Ferrara Ensemble and Las Huelgas Ensemble follow the surviving materials which they claim to present – in other words their degree of "creativity".

¹²⁶ Performers change over time or according to the requirements of specific programmes. In many ensembles the only stable member is the ensemble leader. For mixing of repertoires see Gothic Voices, 'The Unknown Lover', (*Avie* AV 2089, 2006), which marries the complete works of Solage with simple, mostly monophonic works by Machaut. For different levels of interest in this music see footnote 71 above.

shortcomings, it aims to reassess that knowledge in as coherent as possible a fashion, which would then serve as a foundation for the meaningful interpretation of the music itself. This is but a step in the quest for finding a unique place for the *Ars subtilior* in our intellectual and performance culture. With the awareness of the modern history of treating this topic, we can better assess the interpretation of the historical evidence to be presented in the following chapters.

2. *Ars subtilior* manuscripts and distribution

The previous chapter focused on modern perceptions and evaluations of the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon. It presented a history of attitudes, highlighting the relationship between modern, subjective influences and the materials at hand. The examination of both scientific and practical manifestations of the preoccupation with *Ars subtilior* music demonstrated the variety of outcomes which arose from working with largely shared materials, but undertaken by different personalities with conflicting goals and within different fashions. Before even reaching the original materials themselves, one's opinion can already be coloured by a myriad of non-related ideals and context-driven presentations of this repertoire.

The coming chapters will examine the extent and limitation of our understanding of the *Ars subtilior* itself, and the way the music, its creation, performance and consumption fit into a larger cultural context. This chapter centres on surviving musical objects, while Chapter 3 will concentrate on the historic figures of composers and patrons that emerge from a wider range of sources. Both surveys allow for a contextualisation of the information that has been passed down to us in terms of the time, place, and impetus for this music's inception and collection, as well as the interplay between the *Ars subtilior* and society at large. Each survey will group pieces of evidence according to a common theme or a shared cultural context. This methodology will demonstrate that the *Ars subtilior* considered as a cultural force embodies a large degree of variation and flexibility, and does not conform to any narrow definition reached via a small set of specific instances. This assertion will be demonstrated as relevant to the geography, technical usage, linguistic context, and stylistic differentiation of this phenomenon.

In the past, the study of *Ars subtilior* style has tended (as with most such endeavours) to concentrate only on the large-scale, complete surviving sources. In past studies, a few sources have been signalled out as important or central, and the rest consigned to 'peripheral' status and considered less interesting. It is only natural that scholarship tends to preoccupy itself with the main repositories of any chosen style, because dealing with larger and more complete sources may offer a seemingly more coherent and richly contextual picture for the musical repertoire concerned. Forming a core repertoire established a standard by which

more fragmentary evidence could be understood. However, this approach has its own hidden snares: by following it, one must believe that the chances of survival of a source correlate to its original importance, and the narrowing of perspective this requires can create a false coherence in representing a style. It is easier to find common stylistic features when only a few sources are considered central. This, however, privileges features found in works contained in better surviving sources.

Ch and **ModA** have traditionally been taken to represent the core repertory of the *Ars subtilior*. Accordingly, these sources will form a starting point, but for my conceptualisation of a ‘formative group’ for this style, I will broaden the perspective to include **PR** and **Cyp**.

Before expanding on this stylistic ‘formative group’, I shall begin by exploring problems involved in choosing criteria for determining this style. Then I shall look in greater detail at different elements pertaining to the perceived *Ars subtilior* style, both in relation to the ‘formative group’ and to the picture arising from other sources. First of all, the validity of the stylistic parameters proposed by Günther in her 1963 article will be examined. These parameters will be augmented by investigation of other manuscript-related musical relationships, including Urtext and realisation, text and music, physical context, genre and register, and the appearance of music in other artistic and intellectual contexts such as theoretical treatises, wall-paintings, tapestries and others. I will end with an overview of the resulting picture that emerges when regarding the surviving materials in this manner, suggesting a reliance on a combination of a larger number of parameters rather than the mere appearance or otherwise of a select group.

A work analysing and contextualising the more fragmentary sources or those in which this repertoire occupies a secondary position has yet to be undertaken,¹²⁷ and I cannot hope for any completeness in the details of the survey here. These elements are mirrored in my grouping of sources to be discussed. As my aim here is to demonstrate the large number of sources and degree of variety available in them, I have chosen to categorise sources according to a single characteristic relevant to my purpose, and sacrifice the complexities found in the circumstances of each source when scrutinised more closely. The linking of

¹²⁷ For such work in relation to North-Italian fragments, see Cuthbert, *Trecento Fragments*.

sources here should therefore be seen as subjective and retrospective in character, not necessarily implying tangible, historically-demonstrable medieval ties between them.

Criteria for judging style

Cataloguing works of art or music according to style is inherently problematic. Creative activity has inbuilt non-homogeneous tendencies. Therefore, any attempt to define strict common criteria for a large variety of instances has to cut externally defined borderlines through the irregularities of the artefacts examined. Technical criteria – be they specific dates, sources, language, geographical affiliation or historical personae – are usually taken as guiding lights in such activities, but any such choice diminishes the importance of uniformity within its musical contents.¹²⁸

Any defined style has to have a core group of stereotypical works that embody its most important elements (in our case these are provided by our ‘formative group’). If such a group cannot be found, one has to question the need for a style-definition at all. Problems arise when a mixing of elements, or divergence from a norm, occur. These problems are enhanced when a retrospective definition of style is made because the relationship between it and specific works is assessed using a different set criteria than the one available at the time of their creation.

I interpret Günther’s choice of stylistic criteria – made as they were as part of a legitimisation process – as an attempt to establish the core group of works necessary for the musicological acceptance of the *Ars subtilior* as an independent style.¹²⁹ Viewed as such, her efforts were extremely successful. It also follows that they should not necessarily be taken as clear borderlines between this and other more or less contemporaneous styles. These criteria, then, while still very useful, cannot be seen as sufficient in attempting to evaluate the style’s murkier borders.

In coming to isolate criteria, further difficulties arise. One such problem is the question of uniqueness. Let us take musical citation as an example. Demonstrably, *Ars subtilior* composers frequently cited and alluded to each others’ work. Clear cut examples are the

¹²⁸ See, for example, Fallows, *A Catalogue*, preface and p.1, where it is explained that the time of a manuscript’s copying takes precedence over the time of a song’s composition or its stylistic fashion for inclusion in his catalogue.

¹²⁹ For the context of her definition see pp. 33-5 above.

Esperance and *En attendant* groups of songs,¹³⁰ or the cross-citation apparent between *Soit tart tempre* and *Pour vous revoir*, or between *Dame qui fust* and Machaut's *De fortune*.¹³¹ Still, this cannot be taken as a defining *Ars subtilior* characteristic as works using pre-existing materials can be found in large numbers much earlier.¹³²

Even Günther's original determinants for the core *Ars subtilior* style can be found in other contemporary repertoires. It is not uncommon for instance, to find syncopation in the Italian style, where consecutive proportions are a matter of course, and flagging to denote tertiary or binary division also creates the possibility for contrapuntal proportions.¹³³ The Italian system also included the *semibrevis maior*, which has no place in the pure French *Ars nova* notational style, but was picked up again by *Ars subtilior* composers. *Dragmae* are not an inherent part of the system, but are rather common, especially when French notation was used to write down Italian music.¹³⁴ Proportions, special note-shapes and syncopation can also be found in works by composers traditionally associated with immediately subsequent styles.¹³⁵ One has therefore to ask whether the mere existence of a defined criterion is enough as a stylistic determinant, or whether considerations of degrees and combinations of usage should come into play.

¹³⁰ See Plumley, 'Citation and Allusion'.

¹³¹ Each couple exchanges they refrain and first lines of text and music. *Soit tart* appears in **ModA**, **PR**, **Str**, **Pr** and **Vorau**. *Pour vous* only in **CaB**. *Dame qui fut* appears uniquely in **PR**, while *De fortune* crops up in **Ch**, **PR**, **Str**, **Trém** and seven Machaut manuscripts. For more on this habit see Ursula Günther, 'Zitate in französischen Liedsätzen der Ars Nova und Ars Subtilior', *MD*, xxvi (1972), pp. 53–68; Stone, 'A Singer at the Fountain'; Plumley, 'Playing the Citation Game'; 'An 'Episode'; 'Citation and Allusion', and 'Intertextuality'.

¹³² See Ardis Butterfield, 'Repetition and Variation in Thirteenth-Century Refrain', *JRMA*, cxvi (1991), pp. 1-23; and Yolanda Plumley, *The Art of Grafted Song*. The most condensed manifestation of this trend is still to be seen in Friedrich Ludwig, *Repertorium organorum recentioris et motetorum vetustissimi stili* (Halle, 1910).

¹³³ For but one example of syncopation, see Landinis' *Lasso di donna vana* (**Sq**, f. 132v, **FP**, f. 28v, **Pit** 93v-94). This song has a syncopated sequence lasting for five *breves* units ending both form parts. Consecutive proportions are mentioned already in Marchetto da Padova's *Pomerium* of 1319 (see Ralph Clifford Renner, *The "Pomerium" of Marchettus of Padua: A Translation and Critical Commentary*, (MA thesis for Washington University, St. Louis, 1980), pp. 202-54, and are routinely used in much of the Italian repertoire. A typical example for the use of syncopation, four different divisions (.p., .i., .o. and .q.), and contrapuntal proportion resulting from flagging can be seen in the three-part version of Bartolino da Padova's *Imperial sedendo* (**Luc** ff. XCv-XCII). Here and for the rest of this dissertation, a 'flag' refers to a curve added at the end of a note's stem which curves back towards it. A *semiminima* is therefore a flagged *minima*. 'Semibrevis maior' refers to a semibrevis with a stem pointing downwards, and 'dragma' to a semibrevis with stems in both directions.

¹³⁴ See the discussion of **Pit** on pp. 66 below for a manuscript where stylistic and notational systems do not necessarily match, and where Italian works are at times notated in a more complex manner than the French ones.

¹³⁵ See Guillaume Dufay's *Reveillez vous* (**Ox**, f. 126v) or Hugo de Lantini's *Je suy extant* (**Ox**, f. 57). On the possible relationship between these two works see David Fallows, *Dufay* (J. M. Dent, London, 1982), pp. 278-9. For further, even later examples, see David Fallows, 'The End of the Ars Subtilior?', *BJHM*, xx (1996), pp. 21-40.

Another complication is that of hierarchy – when criteria abound, it is inevitable for some to take precedence over others. The choice of language or the adoption of ‘Frenchness’ can be taken as criteria, and are an important element in the distribution of the style. Yet compositional technique places the Latin chansons in **Ch** and **ModA** firmly in the *Ars subtilior* tradition. The repertory of **Pit** blurs stylistic languages even between the established French and Italian traditions, since many of its more complex and technically extravagant songs are in Italian and some of those with French incipits are very simple.¹³⁶ We are forced to search for a hierarchy between single criteria and their constellations. It can, for example, be proposed that complex syncopation is higher up in the *Ars subtilior* hierarchical ladder than the verbal language of the setting.

Some criteria can even be misleading. If one considers geographic distribution as a straightforward signifier of the extent of this phenomenon, one is in danger of not taking into account the function of this music in different cultural contexts. Adaptations of this music may change its character, meaning and use, as could different relationships between a host culture and that of the repertoire’s origin, even when the music stays the same.¹³⁷

A further difficulty is one of intent: it is very alluring to define a search for complexity as a criterion, as such a concept would allow for different kinds of complexity to cohabitate. The problem here is that in order to translate such a concept from musicological convenience to a useful tool for the understanding of the past, one would have to assume that complexity was the prime concern of all composers of the time, and that less complicated works are therefore somehow less worthy, interesting or significant than the complex ones, rather than simply expressing different things or representing different traditions.

In choosing criteria for the following discussion (after defining a ‘formative group’), I chose to begin with Günther’s original criteria, and to examine the degree to which they are applicable in the larger group of sources. My remaining criteria have been selected to present other physical elements that can be gleaned from looking at the surviving musical manuscripts, and that could assist the search for suitable and useful stylistic definitions.

¹³⁶ On the use of Italian and French notational systems see pp. 66-7 below.

¹³⁷ See pp. 69-72 and case study 4, pp. 248-78 below.

A 'formative group' of *Ars subtilior* manuscripts

Finding a group of core sources is an essential step in defining the particularities of any style. In their search, modern scholars are forced to give prominence to both quantity and exclusivity. These concepts are designed to give a wide base of evidence with which to work, while avoiding as much as possible outside interference. However, it should always be kept in mind that neither of these parameters may have been important in the music's original context. A medieval reader may well have considered a group of *Ars subtilior* pieces in the same manner whether they were compiled separately or as part of a more varied collection. Quantity may well have indicated interest in a particular style, but was probably influenced by problems of availability as much as attitude. In choosing central sources we are also at the mercy of random survival patterns. If we are missing vital information, we may unknowingly assign misplaced importance to elements considered secondary in the middle ages. The reappearance (or existence) of an Eastern-European source containing German songs in *Ars subtilior* style may seem to us unlikely. Faced with such an object, we would have to reinterpret the role of language in this style, as well as its geographical relevance. Thus, the analysis of our partial knowledge as the complete set of original facts puts us in danger of being led away from the historical fact by the very application of logic and system. Still, since we can only work with surviving materials (and to an extent with those we know we have lost), we have to proceed with this approach, albeit carefully and with reservations. **Ch** and **ModA** undoubtedly best combine completeness and exclusivity as far as surviving *Ars subtilior* collections go, and are therefore a fitting starting-point in the search for definition.

Ch is a parchment manuscript containing 64 folios which include the numbering 13-72, arranged in five fascicles, and containing 112 different works, with one song copied twice. Its first missing fascicle was removed very close to the time of copying, and replaced (before the middle of the fifteenth century) by an index and two picture-rondeaux by Baude Cordier. Plumley and Stone have recently concluded that **Ch** was most likely copied in or near Florence between 1408 and 1418 in the cultural orbit of the Pisan Popes, using a number of exemplars, sometimes more than one for each piece.¹³⁸ This implies that the scribe had an element of control over his materials, and exercised choice when penning the music. It even seems that some works were rewritten following the availability of a new exemplar.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Plumley and Stone, *Codex Chantilly*, pp. 143-4 and 179-82.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 144-5, where *Lamech, Judith* (**Ch**, f. 45) is discussed.

Current thinking places **ModA** both temporally and geographically much closer to **Ch** than previously supposed. The earlier layer (gatherings II-IV) is thought to be produced around 1410, again in connection with the Pisan papacy, and the later layer (gatherings I and V, dedicated to the works of Matteo da Perugia) in the 1420s.¹⁴⁰ It is still considered possible that the same hand copied the entire manuscript. Like **Ch**, its original first gathering is now lost, having been removed before the addition of the second layer. It currently contains 104 compositions on 51 folios.

Both **Ch** and **ModA** display a preference for secular music in French and a clear interest in notational creativity. Both contain an unusually large number of compositorial ascriptions, as well as a large percentage of directly or indirectly dedicated works. They are linked by 13 concordances, this being the largest number of concordances with a single manuscript for both sources. The fact that both are missing a fascicle should remind us that we do not possess complete anthologies.

Currently, all specific dating proposals for **Ch** works (with the exception of the even earlier *De petit peu* by Machaut) are confined to the last third of the fourteenth century, while in **ModA** datable works straddle both sides of 1400.¹⁴¹ In both sources it is the minority of songs for which such dating is possible. They cannot therefore be taken as proof for the time of origin of the source. A song such as Gacian Reyneau's *Va t'en, mon cuer* (**Ch**, f. 56v) has no specific dating. It is possible that it originated before 1400, but both stylistic trends apparent in it and details of Reyneau's employment in Barcelona between 1390 and 1429 could easily lead to a later dating.¹⁴²

Texts in **ModA** demonstrate an interest in ecclesiastical and northern-Italian matters while still maintaining a link to northern French patrons and poets. Those in **Ch** show links with wider West-European circles, and especially with the higher French and Iberian aristocracy. **ModA** is also more varied than **Ch** in terms of genre and languages. Put

¹⁴⁰ Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 108-9. Music by Matteo is found only in three other fragments: **Parma**, **NYB** and **Bern**. For a theory challenging the unity of these two gatherings and their personal link to Matteo see Memelsdorff, 'What's in a Sign?', and its review in Stoessel, *The Captive Scribe*, pp. 321-40 (where extensive commentaries on **Ch** and **ModA** appear in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively).

¹⁴¹ For tables with the datable works in **Ch** see Stoessel, *The Captive Scribe*, pp. 43-6. A table with speculative dating for songs from **ModA** can be found in Stone, *Writing Rhythm*, pp.69-70.

¹⁴² See Higiní Anglès, 'Gacian Reyneau am Königshof zu Barcelona in der Zeit von 139 ... bis 1429', in K. A. Rosenthal (ed.), *Studien zur Musikgeschichte: Festschrift für Guido Adler zum 75. Geburtstag* (Vienna, 1930), pp. 64-70.

crudely, it seems that while the two compilers were working in similar contexts, the compiler of **Ch** was aiming for French-ness, while that of **ModA** only Francophilia: **Ch** gives the impression of a collection of interesting foreign music, while **ModA** adopts the foreign to fit a new cultural surrounding.

The relative homogeneity of style found in these sources, the similarities in their content, and the joint discrepancy between their content and the mainstream indigenous music of their time and place of origin, suggest **Ch** and **ModA** to be specialist collections. This stylistic selectivity and differentiation must have conveyed meaning in the eyes of the compilers. This in turn allows us to talk in terms of a more or less unified and acknowledged style.

Viewing **Ch** and **ModA** in such a way, one can be drawn to define the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon as a northern Italian expansion of French practices. The general delight in complexity (and notational creativity in particular) has then to be seen together with the ‘otherness’ of this style as its *raison d’être*. It presumably conveyed status and worth to the performer, listener and dedicatee all at once. Such a view meshes well with mainstream scholarship, but it is a gross simplification. Two other large repositories of *Ars subtilior* music survive and shed a different light on the impetus for using and promoting this style.

Cyp is a large collection of music from the Lusignan court of Cyprus. Its 159 parchment folios are divided up into six sections: newly composed chants for the offices of St. Hylarion and St Anne (ff. 1-28); seven Gloria-Credo pairs and three additional Gloria (ff. 29-57); 41 motets, eight of which have French texts (ff. 59-97); 102 Ballades (ff. 98-139v); three inserted leaves containing a Mass-cycle in four movement (ff. 139v-142); and 21 virelais and 43 rondeaux (mixed, ff. 143-158). The manuscript originated in the court of Janus II at Nicosia (1413-1420), and probably travelled to mainland Europe with his daughter Anne for her marriage to Louis of Savoy in 1434. It was copied by a number of hands, but following a single plan. There are no compositorial ascriptions, and all the works in it are unique. While the wider musical context also gives room to simple compositions, the extreme proportionality and syncopations found within it affirm its relevance to the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ See examples 4-6, 4-26, 4-28, 4-42, 4-64,

PR contains 220 works on 122 paper folios (with an additional four modern flyleaves attached at the rear). The repertory of this source is divided into three sections: the main part of the manuscript (sections I-II) is thought to have originated in the first decade of the fifteenth century in Padua or Venice (again, a connection with the Pisan Papacy is likely), the last section (III) was added circa 1430-1440.¹⁴⁴ Section I contains 102 Italian compositions from the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, with three inserted French songs. Section II contains 76 French songs, one Flemish ballade, one Italian ballata, and two keyboard intabulations from the same period. Section III contains 34 French and one Italian work from the Dufay period. Ascriptions are very rare, and entirely lacking in section II which is of relevance here. 22 out of the 79 French songs in this section have concordances in either or both **Ch** and **ModA**. On the whole, the remaining 57 pieces tend to be less extravagant than the concordances. Still, syncopation is rife, proportional behaviour occurs as a result of special note-shapes (even though their use is mostly ornamental), as do mensural clashes. There are instances of straight, retrograde and proportion canons in compositions, and a clear interest in poly-textual song is manifested by seven of the first twelve works in the French section having more than one texted voice.¹⁴⁵

These two manuscripts reflect a very different attitude to *Ars subtilior* music. **PR** presents the French and Italian styles separated, but side by side, promoting a conceptualisation of the French style as representing a different form of expression rather than presenting a badge of ‘otherness’. With **Cyp** the situation is completely reversed. It originated in a French court presiding over a non-French population, and can therefore be seen as an attempt to align itself with its parent culture, and avoid perceptions of it as different, remote or diluted. Neither source demonstrates an interest in notational complexity for its own sake. Both manuscripts contrast simpler and more complex pieces to a larger degree than do **Ch** or **ModA**. It is already clear that no ‘one-size-fits-all’ definition would suffice.

4-67, 4-70, 4-72, 4-78, 4-82 to 4-834 below.

¹⁴⁴ These dates and locations were the basis for an article exchange between Wilkins and Fischer. For its conclusion and the similarities between their positions see Fischer, ‘Reply to N. E. Wilkins’, p. 76.

¹⁴⁵ For proportional behaviour and special note-shapes see *Mercy ou mort*, f. 84; *Adea mon cuer*, f. 81v; for mensural clashes see *Sen vos por moy*, ff. 12v-13; *En discort son desir*, f. 70; examples for straight, retrograde and mensuration canonic compositions are *Dame sans per*, f. 68; *Il vient bien*, f. 63v, and *Passerose de biaute*, ff. 65v-66 respectively.

Before considering specific difficulties and stylistic parameters in more detail, a few words about the scale of the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon are in order. Three out of the four sources described above are extremely rich in concordances. If one accepts them as main repositories of style, then one has to acknowledge that this repertory has links with scores of other sources.¹⁴⁶ Of these linked sources, a number may have originally been large-scale codices dedicated to this repertoire,¹⁴⁷ and each of them has further concordances elsewhere. There is always the possibility of important sources having disappeared without trace. The independent tradition found in **Cyp** should remind us that other traditions may also have existed with no concordances with our chosen group.

Some of these songs must have been incredibly popular: P. de Molin's *De ce que foul pense* survives in twelve different musical manuscripts; the anonymous *Jour a jour la vie* and Machaut's *De petit peu* in ten (non-Machaut) sources each; *Or sus vous dormes trop* and Vaillant's *Par maintes foyes* in nine copies each; *En discourt sont Desir* and *Je languis* in eight each, and so on.¹⁴⁸ In comparison, such high numbers are unheard of in the Italian tradition, even though this repertoire benefits from a tradition of creating anthology manuscripts.¹⁴⁹

Chronology

Even in Günther's original definition, the affiliation of *Ars subtilior* style with the period of the Great Schism was presented as a practical guideline (which supports her association of the style with Avignon) rather than a clear border.¹⁵⁰ The Schism may have contributed to the social and cultural context within which this style could thrive, but its temporal boundaries cannot be seen as absolute cut-off points for preoccupation and interest in this

¹⁴⁶ **Ch** has concordances in 47 manuscripts, **ModA** with 40 and **PR** with 52. Excluding doublings, these three have concordances in 75 other sources.

¹⁴⁷ See p. 74 below.

¹⁴⁸ *De ce que foul pense* appears in **Ch, PR, Trém, FP, Str, Pit, CaB** (twice), **Ghent, Fa, McV** and **Mu**. It is also referred to in the anonymous *Tractatus de Musica* (**Penn36**), in a tapestry now the Musée des Arts in Paris, and its text is copied into **Pn6221***; *Jour a jour* in **PR, Str, Trém, Pit, Fa** (twice), **FP, WolkA, WolkB, MuEm** and **LoCot**; *De petit peu* in **Ch, ModA, Trém, FP, SL, Pit, CaB, Ghent, Nur25** and **Pr**; *Or sus vous dormes trop* in **PR, Str, Pit, Fa, Ghent, Lo29987, Iv, Copen17** and **PadC**; *Par maintes foyes* in **Ch, Str, Gr/Dart, Bcl/Leclercq, Luc, MuEm, WolkA, WolkB** and a newly identified Latin contrafactum in **Basel(Kir)** (I would like to thank Martin Kirnbauer for sharing his discovery with me prior to its publication); *En discourt* in **PR, Str, Fa, Ut, MuEm, Bux, Vien5094** and **Warsaw8054**; *Je languis* in **Pr, Str, Pit, FP, Pr, Ghent, Basel, Parma**. See also Strohm's notion of an international repertory in 'The Ars Nova Fragments of Ghent', pp. 118-9, and case study 4, pp. 248-78 below.

¹⁴⁹ See Cuthbert, *Trecento Fragments*, pp. 64-70.

¹⁵⁰ See Günther, 'Das Ende', pp. 116-117.

music. A quick examination of manuscripts which hold concordances with **Ch**, **ModA** and **PR** shows greater continuity as they are to be found in sources ranging from the 1360s to the 1430s, and presented side by side with both earlier and later works.¹⁵¹ The possible dating of Matteo da Perugia's *Pres du soloil* to 1426 can place even some of the 'formative group' of the repertoire beyond the Schism's temporal limits,¹⁵² and older compositions such as Machaut's *De petit peu* and *De toutes flours*, or Vaillant's *Dame doucement - Doulz amis* (to which the date 1369 is appended in the manuscript) were considered suitable for inclusion in **Ch** and **ModA** even without a modernising fourth voice.

Such potential expansion of the temporal limits of *Ars subtilior* relevance can easily accommodate generational and stylistic change within it. It may, therefore, call for the creation of subdivisions in our understanding of the style. These could centre on geographical affiliation, specific times or events which linked individuals to one another, or the different functions the music was created to fulfil.¹⁵³

Many manuscripts do not limit themselves to newly composed works: a source such as **Str** offered musical products spanning a century of composition. One should therefore question whether the appearance of a work in any given source is due to its up-to-date relevance at the time of the manuscript's creation, or was included as an antiquated curiosity. Distribution patterns and exemplar availability may well have blurred the place and date of origin of many works. It is likely that many scribes did not know where and when the pieces they copied originated. Acknowledging this, we may want to question the relevance of our ability to discern a song's age and provenance for a compiler creating a manuscript. Interpreting the selection offered by each source could then follow musical interest in the case of more specialised collections, or pure availability in less homogeneous ones. Either

¹⁵¹ For **Iv** (one concordance with **Ch** and one with **PR**) see Günther, 'Problems of dating', pp. 291-3; Karl Kügle, *The Manuscript Ivrea, Biblioteca Capitolare 115: Studies in the Transmission and Composition of Ars Nova Polyphony*, in *MS*, lxix (Ottawa: Institute of Medieval Music, 1997), pp. 46-7 and 75-9. For **Ox** (two concordances with **Ch**, one of which can also be found in **ModA**, and other links with the *Ars subtilior*) see Fallows, *Oxford*, pp. 19-20; Plumley and Stone, 'Cordier's Picture-Songs'.

¹⁵² See Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 101-7.

¹⁵³ Geographic divisions could, for example, separate between works written in France for French audiences and those written elsewhere for other audiences; important locations or points in time may include the musical meeting offered by the wedding of Jean de Berry and Jeanne de Boulogne in 1389, or the co-employment of Johannes Symonis dit Hasprois and Johannes Haucourt in the papal chapel at Avignon between 1393 and 1403, see pp. 96 and 86-7 respectively. Different cultural functions can separate between *Ars subtilior* as the dominant style at the time and place it is written, or its use to denote otherness, or between public, official and private use. For Apel's subdivision on stylistic grounds and the problems with this approach see Günther, 'Problems of Dating'.

the entire available repertoire was included (under certain guidelines), or the act of selection and copying denotes relevance, however distant the original context of a work.

Notation

Notational complications have always been of prime importance in discussions of this style.¹⁵⁴ One would expect, therefore, to find a notational emphasis in all, or at least most, of the sources containing it. While it was obviously important in the eyes of some composers and compilers,¹⁵⁵ even the place of this central element is not as clear-cut when considering a wider selection of manuscripts.

Already in the ‘formative group’ of the *Ars subtilior* one can find works in which the very lack of notational signification of their complexity is a central element of their presentation.¹⁵⁶ Most works do not inhabit one extreme or the other, using special note-shapes moderately if at all, and in an unambiguous manner. In these works, the notational use can be seen as pragmatic and unrelated to their expressive content. A functional attitude is embodied by the notational habits found in **Cyp**, where any non-standard proportional use is marked by a mensuration sign and explained in a canon instruction.¹⁵⁷

Some of the concordant sources demonstrate an altogether different trend. **Ghent**, **Ghent113**, the added French layers of **FP**,¹⁵⁸ or the newly re-discovered **Paris** fragment,¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ See Günther, ‘Das Ende’, pp. 116-7, and the remarks by Ludwig and Apel pp. 28-9 and 31-2 above.

¹⁵⁵ See, for example, Laurie Kohler, ‘Subtilitas in Musica’; Jason Stoessel, ‘Symbolic Innovation’; or Anne Stone, ‘Self-Reflexive Songs’.

¹⁵⁶ This is the case in most canonic compositions with relatively extreme examples being (attr.) Johannes Ciconia’s *Le ray au soleyl* (**Luc** f. LXXXIII); *Il vient bien* (**PR**, f.63v), and *Passerose de biaute pure et fine* (**Pit**, f. 26-25v). It is also relevant in the use of notation in written out songs such as Jo. Olivier’s *Si con cy gist* (**Ch** f. 31v); Coradus de Pistorio’s *Veri almi pastoris* (**ModA** f. 36v), and Bartholomeus de Bononia’s *Arte psallentes* (**ModA** f. 37v). See pp. 189-90 below.

¹⁵⁷ In this source, red coloration is regarded as a mensuration shift in which augmentation and diminution rules apply. Interpreting proportion changes marked by fractions, *semiminime* (black, binary ones or red ternary ones appear in 85 works) and indicators of *sesquitertia* (*dragmae*, regular or flagged, and O) is taken for granted. Special instructions appear to convey proportions of 2/1, 3/1, 4/1, 3/2, 5/2, 7/2, 2/3, 4/3, 5/3, 7/3, 8/3, 10/3, 3/4, 9/6 and 9/8, with up to eleven of these used in one piece (See figure 4-78 below).

¹⁵⁸ The second to the fifth layers of addition contain 27 songs, all but one are French and 18 are transmitted textless. The first of these layers was added soon after the completion of the main corpus of the manuscript (around 1400) and contains 13 of the most widely distributed works of the fourteenth century. The next layer, added in the first two decades of the 15th century, contains 10 works: two *unica* copied into the main body of the manuscript, and eight copied in the end of the source as a separate fascicle. This second group contains one *unica*, one work by Bartolino da Padova, and six songs concordant with **Ch** for all but two of which this is the only concordant source. The next layer consists of *Long temps* by Antonio da Cividale (added also to **Luc** after 1420). The final layer (copied between 1430 and 1450) consists of three textless works, one *unica* one by Dufay (also in **Ox** and **Bol2216**) and one by Cesaris (also in **Str**) to whom songs are ascribed also in **Ch**.

are all notated in the simplest, most traditional way possible, using the most straightforward means available. At times, even normal coloration is avoided, even when the music notated is complex and would be made more readable by its inclusion, or where more florid means are used in concordances.

Pit raises questions about what should be considered special, as well as about the division between notational systems. 14 of the 33 works with French incipits also appear in **Ch**, **ModA** or **PR**, providing a substantial link with the *Ars subtilior* repertory.¹⁶⁰ Still, the vast majority of the French works in this source do not present any special notational usage. The picture is rendered more complicated by the rest of the music in this source: only 34 of the 161 Italian songs on offer (as well as the *Benedicamus* of the five mass movements) are notated in the purely Italian system. The rest of the Italian repertoire, notated in the French style, makes use of *semiminime* (flagged in both directions); *dragmae*; void notation; leftwards-lower-flagged *dragmae*; rightwards-double-flagged *dragmae*; and different mensural combinations to mirror changes of division in the Italian system.¹⁶¹ None of these shapes are explained, but they are all easily understandable from their context.

Even the meanings of the basic notational tools do not seem to have been stable – **Ut** for example, swaps the interpretation of full and void coloration, assigning *sesquitercia* to the former, and *hemiolia* to the latter. Even within the ‘formative group’, so many techniques are used to show the same effect that it seems that at least for some composers the creation of a personal, individual notational style was a part of their craft.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ See Everist, ‘A Newly Discovered Source’ and pp. 237 below. I would like to thank Mark Everist deeply for allowing me to see his article and discuss this source prior to the publication of his discovery.

¹⁶⁰ All but four of the French songs are transmitted with only an incipit. Of the four texted songs, two are by composers heavily represented in this source by their Italian output (Francesco Landini and Paolo da Firenze).

¹⁶¹ *Semiminime* occur in 77 of the 127 works, and denote a binary or tertiary division of the *minima*. 15 works contain both kinds of *semiminime* adding a proportional element to that of the special note-shape. Interestingly, the direction of flagging is constant within each layer of the manuscript, but contradictory in comparison to the other. *Dragmae* are used instead of coloration. Void notation is used when coloration on the *brevis* level is required, but also to signify *sesquialtera* in a C mensural context, and once (ff. 79v-80) to signify *dupla*. A void *semibrevis* can also signify two out of a group of three *semiminime*. Leftwards-lower-flagged *dragmae* stand for dotted *minime*, and rightwards-double-flagged *dragmae* are used in the same way as a void *semibrevis* to denote two out of a group of three *semiminime*. When only O and C appear they are used in the normal fashion, but C can also stand for C, in which case O is used to signify the standard meaning of C. The four mass movements and the song which is inserted between them (ff. 131v-137v) use the traditional O and C signs to signify *tempus*, but with the rarer addition of two or three dots to signify *prolatio*.

¹⁶² I would like to thank Karin Paulsmeier, who encouraged me to think in this direction in conversations concerning a large group of composers. For the data on which this notion is based see Karin Paulsmeier,

The varying attitudes towards the use of notational complexities, coupled with the wholesale borrowings of notational elements between the Italian and French systems (when notating music of either style), seem to indicate a fluidity of notational approach.¹⁶³ It should remind us that though the translation of time-units and their division into visual signs was very important to some composers and compilers, it cannot be seen as a universal, all-encompassing prerogative of the *Ars subtilior* as a whole. The lack of it cannot bar a piece from being considered as part of this style.

Even in works where notation and visuality take centre-stage, the meaning and impetus for use of these techniques may not be directly musical. Dorit Tanay's research suggests that many visual innovations were the result of an intellectual attempt to express scientific concepts through music, and can therefore be seen as trend-followers rather than trend-setters.¹⁶⁴ Our growing understanding of the role of the visual in mnemonic techniques and memory-based culture suggests that encoding music with visual information may be seen as a practical *aide-memoire* akin to those used for the internalisation of texts.¹⁶⁵ The typically *Ars subtilior* transposition of visual elements from initials and marginalia into the music itself can be seen in this light, making a song's contents more memorable rather than its appearance in a specific, well-presented source. The same shift in the position of visuality can also mark an 'in-crowd' and so enhance the status of composers, performers and patrons involved with this music also when it is not performed. Visuality was of course used also expressively, but it seems that a purely musical view of this phenomenon may not be tenable.¹⁶⁶

Style

The category of style is very large, as standard definitions of style routinely include harmonic and melodic behaviour, compositional techniques (such as imitation and sequence), and so on. As these parameters of style will be considered in Chapter 4 below, I will limit

Notationskunde I, Die Notation des späten 12. bis 14. Jahrhunderts (forthcoming). For the specific case of Senleches see Jason Stoessel, 'Symbolic Innovation'.

¹⁶³ For a short description of the two systems and their interaction in the *Ars subtilior* (including the assertion that special note-shapes are essentially Italian and mensurations changes are essentially French in character), see Anne Stone, *Writing Rhythm*, pp 188-208. For more practical links as regarding proportional behaviour, see Paulsmeier, *Notationskunde*.

¹⁶⁴ See Tanay, *Music in the Age of Ockham; Notating Music, Marking Culture*; "Nos Faysoms Contre Nature...".

¹⁶⁵ For the application of such techniques for the memorisation of texts see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (second edition: Cambridge, 2008), p. 100 among many others. For memory in music see Busse-Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory*.

¹⁶⁶ See Uri Smilansky, 'A Labyrinth of Spaces: Page, Performance and Music in Late Medieval Culture', *HMS*, xxi (forthcoming) and pp. 185-90, 195-7, 225-6 and 288-9 below.

myself here to the parameters Günther used when coining the term *Ars subtilior*, namely cross-rhythms (i.e. proportions) and syncopation. Günther did not give exact guidelines to the nature, extent or complexity of proportion and syncopation necessary for affiliation with her new term. For both parameters, the question of degree leads on to that of uniqueness.

With syncopation, a single shift in *brevis* unit can be found in a number of *Ars nova* works. Expanding the *Ars subtilior* to include every piece which includes this technique would leave very little room for a mature *Ars nova*.¹⁶⁷ Machaut also used more extensive and complex syncopations (often ironed out in the Schrade edition), as do the works of his Italian contemporaries.¹⁶⁸ It seems that in order to separate *Ars subtilior* syncopation from the rest, one has either to require a minimum length, or the use of composite syncopation.

As with notational complexities, the lack of syncopation cannot exclude a piece from the *Ars subtilior* repertory, as some sources strip works of their syncopations.¹⁶⁹ More tellingly, some works in **Ch** which are regularly referred to as personifying the *Ars subtilior* make very sparse use of this technique, if at all.¹⁷⁰ Assigning a minimum length or degree of complexity will only increase the size of this group. Finally, phrases which sound to us syncopated do not necessarily use the medieval syncopation technique.¹⁷¹

Proportional usage seems to create a clearer separation between the *Ars subtilior* and earlier styles, but here too one should remember the use of large-scale consecutive proportions in earlier motet-tenors, and the use of both organisational and divisional proportions in the Italian system.¹⁷² Separation between *Ars subtilior* and later styles is even harder, as proportional signs and relationships were used throughout the fifteenth century and

¹⁶⁷ See pp. 174-9 and 290 below.

¹⁶⁸ See, for example, the triplum of *Rose liz printemps verdure* which ends with four *semibreves* displaced by a *minima* pause in a **C** context (while the other voices operate in **O**), For Italian examples see footnote 133 above.

¹⁶⁹ The version of *Je languis* in **Str** (f. 67v) breaks down into smaller rhythmical units all but one of the many syncopations in this song.

¹⁷⁰ See for instance the B section of *Fumeux fume* reproduced as example 4-23 below, or Matheus de Sancto Johanne's *Science n'a nul annemi* (f. 57).

¹⁷¹ See, for example, *Puis que je sui fumeux* (**Ch**, f. 34v) ex. 4-68 and ex. 4-70 and discussion of *traynour* p. 176 below.

¹⁷² For motet tenors see, for example, Philippe de Vitry's *Firmissime fidem – Adesto sancta trinitas – Alleluia Benedictus* in Anne Walters Robertson, 'Which Vitry? The Witness of the Trinity Motet from the *Roman de Fauvel*', in Dolores Pesce (ed.), *Hearing the Motet* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 52-81, esp. 53-7. For proportions in the Italian system see p. 57, esp. footnote 133 above. Footnote 168 above shows a polymensural example also in Machaut.

beyond, occasionally also in ways very similar to *Ars subtilior* usage. Sometimes, proportional use seems to be a continuation of *Ars subtilior* practices, but mostly it must be considered unrelated.¹⁷³

Urtext and realisation

Modern historical musicology has been much preoccupied with ideas of compositional authenticity and correctness. This, coupled with the Romantic emphasis on the creators' genius in Western culture, led to the concept of Urtext. Performers and audiences want to be presented with a standardised final product which they can rely upon and recognise from one performance to the next. Whether a single, 'best', closest-to-the-composer source is selected, or a conflation of all available sources is undertaken, the edition claims to present the best possible version of any given piece, mirroring the composers' intentions.¹⁷⁴

From Machaut's *Voir Dit* (whether it is read as autobiographical or not), we can surmise that some composers did attempt to control far-removed performances of their music, but it is hard to judge the degree of success of this involvement.¹⁷⁵ The more general relationship between written work and its realisation seems to have been very different. To begin with, the role of memory in performance (and transmission) was much more central, and from the poetic and corrective freedoms undertaken by compilers and copyists, it seems that they considered themselves a legitimate part of the creative process.¹⁷⁶ The famous proclamation that, "it should not be that theorists cannot notate things that performers execute" found in the *Tractatus figurarum*, also signifies performers' independence.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ See footnote 135 above, or for further removed usages, see the proportions found in the **Per1013** or the proportion and syncopation technique used by John Baldwin. This theme is the topic of Fallows, 'The End of'.

¹⁷⁴ Admittedly, medieval music is slightly less prone to this fashion due to the common occurrence of widely varying versions of the same work. See, for example, Hendrik Van der Werf and Gerald A. Bond, *The Extant Troubadour Melodies: Transcriptions and Essays for Performers and Scholars* (Rochester, New York 1984) where all surviving versions are presented side by side.

¹⁷⁵ See Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (ed.) and R. Barton Palmer (trans.), *Guillaume de Machaut, Le Livre dou Voir Dit (The Book of the True Poem)* (Garland Publishing, New York, 1998), Letter 10 (pp. 122-4) concerning the performance and instrumentation adequate for *Nes que on porroit*. This song is also discussed in Ardis Butterfield, 'The Art of Repetition: Machaut's Ballade 33, *Nes qu'on porroit*', *EM*, xxxi (2003), pp. 346-60.

¹⁷⁶ For the use of memory see Busse-Berger, *Medieval music and the Art of Memory*. For attitudes towards scribal involvement see St. Bonaventura's quadruple division of bookmakers in the preface of his *Sententiarum* at <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/bonaventura/opera/bon01014.html> where I. Quaracci, *Opera Omnia S. Bonaventura*, i (Rome, 1882), pp. 14-5 are faced with a literal English translation.

¹⁷⁷ See Schreier, *Tractatus Figurarum*, pp. 72-3. Texts which discuss performance practice are also instructive in this regard. One particularly relevant example is Matheus de Sancto Johanne's *Are post libamina – Nunc surgunt* (OH, ff. 111v-112), which chides singers who multiply their notes when performing in front of an important dignitary. See Andrew Hughes and Margaret Bent (eds), *The Old Hall Manuscript, CMM*, xlvi (American Institute of Musicology, 1969-1973), vol. i, pp. 419-23 and vol iii, pp. 43-4.

As already noted above (pp. 60, 62-3), the *Ars subtilior* repertoire is blessed with multiple concordances. Versions found in the different sources can vary greatly. Some sources show very little interest in texts. Different sources use different notational means for essentially the same music, and the number of voices and their identity may also change.¹⁷⁸ Smaller-scale changes in melodic and rhythmic behaviour are very common. These variations can sometimes (in the case of texting or notation-technique) indicate what was considered essential and what superfluous, at least in some specific contexts. At other times they may well be accidental and a result of the quality, availability and circulation of exemplars.

Two groups of concordances stand out as inherently different from the kind of variance described above, namely intabulations and adaptations. Both these groups can be seen as detached from the *Ars subtilior* tradition on the one hand, and as evidence of its widespread allure and distribution on the other. Virtuoso intabulations for works in **Ch**, **ModA** and **PR** can be found in **Fa**, **Bux** and **PR** itself. Their virtuosity and use of special note-shapes should not obscure the fact that musically they are simplifications of their originals.¹⁷⁹ The most important collections of adapted music are Oswald von Wolkenstein's oeuvre (**WolkA**, and **WolkB**) and **Pr**. Oswald, who through his official travels and contact with the Emperor was exposed to a wide cultural field including Benedict XIII's Avignon, mostly matched new texts to existing melodic materials, treating a melody by de Molins in the same way he reworked a tenor by Binchois. **Pr** contains reduced, standardised, simplified and textless versions of known songs in a non-presentational context which hints at a more functional kind of usage.¹⁸⁰ In both kinds of reworking the choice of pieces demonstrates their popularity and distribution, but as the final outcomes and their probable new function was so

¹⁷⁸ For attitudes to text see pp. 73-4, 136 and 191-4 below. For a comparison of the notation of concordances between **Ch** and **ModA** see Annette Bower, *Untersuchung der Notation von elf Kompositionen im Repertoire der "ars subtilior" ausgehend von den Konkordanzten der Manuskripte Modena, Biblioteca Estense, alpha.M.5.24 (olim lat. 568) (Mod) und Chantilly, Musée Condé 1047 (Ch)* (Diplomarbeit for the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Basel, 2001). The most common voice-discrepancies concern the addition or exclusion of a fourth voice (for example, *A l'arme, a l'arme* by Grimace appears with four parts in **Ch** but in three parts in **PR**. See also case study 4, pp. 248-78 below), but many other variants appear: all but the first song in **Pr** are transmitted with two voices only, even songs such as Machaut's *De petit peu* which has three voices in **Ch** and four in **ModA**. Franciscus' *De Narcissus* contains a different contratenor in **Ch** and in **Pit** and **PR**. Matteo da Perugia's new contratenor voices for existing compositions in **ModA** and **Parma** add a new voice to a two-part composition or replace an existing voice. Even the unique contratenors found in **MachE** can be included in this group. For changes in modal configurations see pp. 124-6 and 146-7 below.

¹⁷⁹ **Fa** supplies us with the closest examples in musical practice for the shapes described in the *Tractatus figurarum*, but it also simplifies the works included in it, and uniformly reduces them to two voices.

¹⁸⁰ The adherence to full-black French-style notation with written-out mensural indication (ρ mi, ρ ma, ip mi and ip ma added before the beginnings of the cantus lines) also indicates that the compiler tried keeping things as simple as possible. A similar kind of reduction can be found in **Melk**, but as that source offers only one song copied into the margin, it is harder to discern the contextual purpose of presenting it in this way.

far removed from the works' original context, they cannot be held to represent the same tradition.

One further form of variation can lead to the consideration of more rather than fewer materials as relevant to the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon, namely ornamentation. We have very few examples of extensive ornamentation, but those we do possess are rather startling.

ModA ff. 23v-25 contains a Credo by Zachara. This work survives in five other sources, but only in this version is the cantus ornamented in what can only be termed *Ars subtilior* style.¹⁸¹ **Str**, f. 24 contained an outstanding version of Molins *Amis tout dous vis* entitled "Molendinum de paris".¹⁸² The cantus of this piece is written twice, with different ornaments each time. The first run-through uses binary division, the second a ternary division. The tenor and contratenor parts are presumably to be added to either (or repeated for both) of these versions, creating the possibility of a constant mensural conflict. *Semiminime* and *flagged-dragmae* are used, as well as diminished notation.¹⁸³

It is tantalising to think that such habits may have been widespread. If any religious or secular work could receive such treatment (perhaps not even confined to the cantus part), it would potentially enable any *Ars nova* work to be transformed into what audibly fits into the *Ars subtilior* category. If we accept that a medieval listener would not think of ornamentation as changing the essence of a piece, this could explain the appearance of simpler or older works in the 'formative group' of manuscripts: they can always be made 'more subtle' if that is deemed appropriate.¹⁸⁴ It would make those pieces notated with *Ars subtilior* rhythms different in three ways from those which were not. These inclusions could have created a specific compositional intention (which might then not be followed in performance), bring to

¹⁸¹ See ex. 4-49 and 4-50 below. A full transcription can be found in Stone, 'Glimpses of an Unwritten Tradition' pp. 78-81. The five other concordances are **Bov**, **Gr/Dart**, **PadD**, **Warsaw378** and **Q15**.

¹⁸² Discussion of this source are always tentative, due to its unique survival of this source's content in a study and partial copy undertaken by Coussemaker in 1866. The manuscript itself was destroyed by fire in 1870. See Charles van den Borren, *Le manuscrit musical M. 222 C. 22 de la Bibliothèque de Strasbourg (XVe siècle) brûlé en 1870, et reconstitué d'après une copie partielle d'Edmond de Coussemaker* (Antwerp, 1924).

¹⁸³ As no text survives in Coussemaker's copy of this work, it is tempting to think of this version as instrumental in conception. This would make it even more interesting, as it will be the earliest instrumental version surviving to be written out in consecutive voices chanson-style rather than in score, therefore possibly indicating ensemble performance.

¹⁸⁴ See Stone, 'Glimpses of an Unwritten Tradition'. From personal experience I would argue that it is not difficult to train oneself to incorporate sesquialtera, sesquitercia or even sesquiquarta proportions when ornamenting simpler lines. Genuinely improvised examples can be heard in La Morra 'Flour de Beauté', where, if anything, ornamentation was kept under control for the sake of the recording.

a piece such a level of difficulty that would probably not be spontaneously improvised,¹⁸⁵ or been inserted for some other, non-technical purposes, be it structural, visual or expressive. There will still be scope for discussion of ‘structural’ rather than ‘superficial’ subtlety, but this difference is analytic, and in many cases makes no audible or notational difference.

2-1. Heinricus Hessman de Argentorato, *Stella pia*, Str, f. 73v, breves 22-5

2-2. Heinricus Hessman de Argentorato, *Stella pia*, Str, f. 73v, breves 34-7¹⁸⁶

A group of pieces from *Str* can act as an example here: an *Et in terra* (Heinricus Hesseman, ff. 30v-32), a *Sanctus/Agnus* (Henricus de Libro Castro, f. 37v), and a *Stella pia est Maria* (Heinricus Hessmann de Argentorato, f. 73v). These works all present simple lower voices with a more florid cantus which makes use of special note shapes to denote half-*minime* and *sesquitertia* proportion.¹⁸⁷ *Stella pia* in particular has an improvisatory quality to its cantus. One can well imagine a simpler underlying structure which is embellished with

¹⁸⁵ Jazz or the classical-Indian traditions demonstrate the high level of complexity attainable in both personal and ensemble-oriented improvisation, weakening this interpretation.

¹⁸⁶ In both these examples, the small staves show my simplification of the cantus melody. Here and in the following examples, the *breves* indicated follow the number of *brevis* units from the beginning of the tenor voice, also when combinations of mensurations are used.

¹⁸⁷ Note-shapes are not standardised, with flagged-*dragmae* often representing half-*minime* and flagged-*minime* representing *sesquitertia* proportion, contrary to the prevailing usage. It is hard to determine whether the inconsistencies and ambiguities in *Str* are due to the original scribe, his exemplars, Coussemaker's copying or all three. From the amount of corrections and mistakes in the surviving copy, it seems Coussemaker was not a particularly reliable copyist.

sometimes proportional ornaments (ex. 2-1 and 2-2). If this is so, neither the special note-shapes nor the rhythms they produce have much to do with inbuilt complexity.¹⁸⁸

Style, text and language

The link between *Ars subtilior* and Frenchness was always considered central to the style.¹⁸⁹ On closer inspection though, a substantial number of examples do not fit easily with this assertion. While most of the *Ars subtilior* repertoire comes with French texts, Latin features heavily already in secular compositions in the ‘formative group’ of manuscripts.¹⁹⁰ Even without the possibility of ornamentation, motets, liturgical and semi-liturgical Latin pieces in *Ars subtilior* style make up a substantial number, whether they are newly composed or contrafacta.¹⁹¹ The piece whose music and notation is most easily tagged *Ars subtilior* in **Str** is in Italian.¹⁹² Even in primarily French collections like **Ox** one can find works in Italian which include harmonic and rhythmic progression typical of this style.¹⁹³ As has been already mentioned, the use of French notation with special note-shapes or mensuration changes for Italian music was widespread.¹⁹⁴ Some sources contain some French-style songs in Germanic languages.¹⁹⁵ All this seems to indicate a growing independence between style, notation and language, at least as far as local occurrences are concerned if not as a general trend.

A further weakening of the tie between *Ars subtilior* music and the French language can be seen in texting patterns of the French works themselves. Even in **ModA**, the scribe of the

¹⁸⁸ Such habits can fit in well with improvisation of dance music. Instrumental performance of this piece has indeed all the characteristics of a *bassa dansa*.

¹⁸⁹ For the early modern affiliation see pp. 28-9 above. A medieval example of this notion can be seen in the works of composers who composed in both French and Italian such as Ciconia and Antonello da Caserta.

¹⁹⁰ Three in **Ch**, eight in **ModA**. I do not know of any secular piece in Latin notated in the Italian system. Even when Zachar da Teramo uses Latin or Latin-like texts, he uses the French notational system.

¹⁹¹ See, for example, the content of **Cyp** described on pp. 61 above or the discussion of religious genres in figurr 4-1 and pp. 128-30 below.

¹⁹² The cantus part of *De bon parole* by Nucella (**Str**, f. 86v) includes frequent standard and proportional mensuration changes (C, O and C are combined and *sesquialtera*, *sesquitertia* and *subsesquitertia* are used), as well as flagged *minime*, *dragmae*, double-flagged *dragmae* and void notation (including void *semibrevis maior* and void *dragmae*). The tenor and contratenor are not complex in their notation, but they join in with the cantus on some protracted and rather complicated syncopations, non-aligned *breves* units (even when they are the same length), and so on. A section of this song is transcribed as ex. 4-63. For **Pit** see p. 66 above. All the Italian anthologies (apart from **Rossi**) follow suit to some degree.

¹⁹³ See, for example, Prepositus Brixiensis’s, *I ochi d’una ançolleta* (f. 24v), two sections of this reproduced in ex. 4-36 and 4-40 below.

¹⁹⁴ See p. 66 above.

¹⁹⁵ With partial texting (sometimes incipits only), fragmentary sources and corrupt spellings, it is sometimes hard to distinguish between medieval German, Flemish and English. Sources with such materials include **PR**, **Str**, **Ghent**, **Lei** and **Ut**.

older layer seems to have been uninterested in indicating text underlay, and did not usually transmit residual stanzas.¹⁹⁶ Many sources do not transmit any text for the majority of their French works, and such transmission occurs more sporadically in many others. This can be regarded either as a problem in the circulation of the materials, or as a sign of at least an occasional tendency to favour music over text.¹⁹⁷ This is interesting, as the discarding of the French text detracts from the otherness of this music, and thus changes its possible relationship with its host culture. The separate interest created by text and music is apparent also in non-musical circulation of chanson texts. A number of such text-only collections offer concordances of *Ars subtilior* song.¹⁹⁸ Again, non-French interest in both French text and French-style music in this period seems widespread, but the specific linking of the two in practice was not a prerequisite.

Physical context

One can separate the sources with ties to *Ars subtilior* music into four categories: dedicated manuscripts; layered manuscripts; mixed manuscripts; and musical additions to primarily textual sources.

Complete, dedicated manuscripts such as those comprising the style's 'formative group' comprise the minority of sources surviving. Even the inclusion of the eleven Machaut manuscripts and two Wolkenstein collections, which have concordances with **Ch**, **ModA** and **PR**, do not change this picture.¹⁹⁹ Concordances also appear with manuscripts dedicated to Italian music, but their main repertoire is not relevant here. The relationship with collections of motets and Mass-movements is more ambiguous.²⁰⁰ The contents of some fragments suggests that we may be missing further dedicated *Ars subtilior* collections. Potential candidates include **Parma**, **Ut**, **Bol596**, **CaB**, **Paris**, **Bern**, **Ghent**, **Bud** and possibly **Autun**, and **BernA421**.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ See Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 42-43.

¹⁹⁷ Widespread textless transmissions can be found in **Pit**, **FP**, **Pr**, **Ghent**, **Bud**, and more sporadic textless copying in **Str**, **Ut**, **ModA**, **Iv**. The idea of textless circulation would be interesting in itself.

¹⁹⁸ **Amb***, **Desch***, **JP***, **Lon***, **MachM***, **Pn6221***, **Penn***, **Tu10***, **Visconti***, and **Wm***. See Plumley, 'Crossing Borderlines'.

¹⁹⁹ For Machaut see **MachA**, **MachB**, **MachC**, **MachE**, **MachF**, **MachG**, **MachK**, **Vg**, **Pe** and **Pm**; for Oswald, see **WolkA** and **WolkB**.

²⁰⁰ Relevant Italian collections are **Sq**, **SL**, **Lo29987**; motet collections are **Trém**, **Iv**, probably **Lei342a**; and collections of masses are **Apt**, **Q15**, **Gr/Dart**. For a discussion of genre and the role of sacred music in this style see pp. 116-8 and 128-30 below.

²⁰¹ The single surviving bifolio of **Parma** for example is foliated 233 and 242 hinting at the extent of the loss. It is of course possible that these manuscripts originally had substantial sections dedicated to other

It is common for manuscripts to be copied in a succession of different layers. Clear examples relevant to the *Ars subtilior* are **FP** and **Pit**, where relevant layers appear as a unit.²⁰² These sources (as well as many others) also display a much more integrated layering, with relevant works added in left-over spaces.²⁰³ **Ox** and **Str** have *Ars subtilior* repertoire as part of their older layer, to which much was added later.²⁰⁴

Manuscripts containing a mixture of styles are particularly interesting as they hint at a peaceful coexistence. With the exception of **PR**, where the separation is relatively strict, these sources tend to be a bit more eclectic in their content and ordering. These include **Bov**, **Luc**, **Breslau**, **Cam5943**, **PadA**, **PadB** and **PadC**. In these sources one can find a seemingly unordered mix of Mass movements, motets, Italian-style composition and *Ars subtilior* works.²⁰⁵

The last group of manuscripts are those in which musical insertions are added to primarily textual-manuscripts. Insertions may be of immediate relevance to the text that surrounds them, as in the cases of **Berk** and **Ox842** where songs are added to music-theory treatises. Many other cases involve seemingly random insertions of a small number of works, either in the margins or on a single leaf.²⁰⁶ These are not necessarily unplanned afterthoughts, as the famous harp-shaped version of *La harpe de melodie* in **Chic** (f. 10) can attest.²⁰⁷ As further examples of surprising insertions of musical representation, one can also append to this group musical appearances in non-textual circumstances. These would include the fresco depiction of southern-French or Aragonese Mass music in the church of Kernascléden in Brittany,²⁰⁸

repertoires. They are mentioned here as their remains consist wholly of late 14th century French-style chansons. To this list one can add manuscripts where we know (more or less) what we lost such as **Str** and **Trém**, even though their contents were mixed.

²⁰² **FP**, ff. 101v-109; **Pit**, ff. 120v-127. **PR** can also be included here, it having an even stricter separation of layers. The layers of **FP** are detailed in footnote 158 above.

²⁰³ See also **Trém**, **MuEm**, **SL**, **Iv**, **Ghent133**, **Nur9**, the first section of **Ut**, or to a lesser extent **Lo29987**.

²⁰⁴ **Str** is particularly interesting as the music contained in it spans from around 1310 to 1450. The 'earlier layer' is taken here as those works written in full-black notation, even though such a division will put a work by Dufay (f. 108) in the earlier layer, and one by Cesaris (f. 115) in the later.

²⁰⁵ The last five surviving pieces in the Oxford part of **PadA** are an anonymous, unique, textless, possibly fragmentary *Sones ces nachares apertment* followed by a unique *Sanctus* by Barbitonsoris, *Donna s'i't'ò falito* by Landini, *Ma fin est mon commencement* by Machaut, and *Sus une fontaine* by Ciconia.

²⁰⁶ See, for example, **Vorau**, **Melk**, or **LPR**.

²⁰⁷ See Tilman Seebass, 'The Visualisation of Music Through Pictorial Imagery and Notation in Late Mediaeval France', in Stanley Boorman (ed.), *Studies in the Performance of Late Medieval Music* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 19-34, esp. pp. 27-30.

²⁰⁸ See Ursula Günther, 'Les anges musiciens et la messe de Kernascléden', in C.N.R.S. Paris (ed.), *Les sources en musicologie* (1980), pp. 109-136 and 'Unusual Phenomena in the Transmission of late Fourteenth-Century Polyphonic Music', *MD*, xxxviii (1984), pp. 87-109, esp. pp. 107-109.

the tapestry referring to *De ce que foul pense* in the Musée des Arts in Paris, and the (now lost) bejewelled embroidery of *Madame je suis plus joyeux* on Charles d'Orlean's sleeve.²⁰⁹

Genre, setting and register

In sources where systematic organisation is apparent, genre is often used as a tool in the ordering of pieces. This is most clearly shown in **Cyp**,²¹⁰ but is also evident in **Ch** where the songs are clearly separated from the motets.

The distribution of forms in the rest of the 'formative group' of sources has a similar bias towards secular music, primarily for the ballade.²¹¹ This is borne out also in secular insertions in motet collections. The disruption of the planned generic unity of these sources shows that the full use of available space was more important than organisational generic considerations.²¹² The generic unity of collections of liturgical repertoire (**Apt** for example) is due to practical reasons, and does not therefore demonstrate cultural preferences. The fragmentary state of most other sources makes exact counting impossible.

Even at the time of coining the term *Ars subtilior*, Günther noticed that the division between sacred and secular is not only generic but also stylistic.²¹³ Keeping in mind the degree of mixing of genres described above, the possibility of ornamentation, and biographical evidence of *Ars subtilior* composers, I believe the two groups are harder to separate than they first appear.²¹⁴ It is clear that the function of secular and of liturgical

²⁰⁹ See Seebass, 'The Visualisation of Music', p. 27 and Linne R. Mooney and Mary-Jo Arn, 'Charles d'Orleans, Fortunes Stabilnes: Introduction', in Linne R. Mooney and Mary-Jo Arn (eds), *The Kingis Quair and Other Prison Poems* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2005), also available at <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/fsintro.htm#f5>, footnote 7. The 1414 payment for the attire (276 pounds, seven shillings, six pence *tournois*) included the purchase of 960 pearls, 568 of which were used for the music of the song with four pearls used for each note (142 notes in all).

²¹⁰ See p. 61 above.

²¹¹ **Ch** offers 71 ballades, 17 rondeaux, 13 motets and 12 virelais; **ModA** offers 33 ballades, 12 virelais, nine rondeaux, four ballatas, two madrigals, two canonic works, two motets, three Mass movements, one caccia, and one hymn in fascicles II-IV, and eight Mass movements, eight rondeaux, seven virelais, three ballades, three contratenors (two for ballatas, one for a rondeaux), three motets, two ballatas, and one unidentified fragment in fascicles I/V; **PR** has two ballades and one virelai inserted into the Italian section, and 41 ballades, 28 virelais, eight rondeaux, two intabulations and one ballata in the French. See figure 4-1 below.

²¹² Concordances identify the forms of 27 out of the 35 songs copied into **Trém**. Of these, 20 are ballades, six rondeaux and one virelai. The slightly earlier **Iv** (probably from the early 1360s) is an exception here: from the 16 complete secular additions to this source (two enigmatic textless additions on ff. 54v and 65 which make use of special note-shapes and consequently *sesquitertia* proportion are not counted here), six are rondeaux, five virelais, and five are canonic compositions. No ballades appear.

²¹³ See Günther, 'Das Ende', p. 116.

²¹⁴ For ornamentation see p. 71-2 above; for composers' biographic links to the church see Chapter 3 below, esp. pp. 86-90.

works was very different – as were the mindset of both performers and listeners – but the overriding cultural contexts would stay intimately linked. In many cases it seems that composers saw it more appropriate to explore structural, contrapuntal and contrastive forms of complexity in religious compositions, leaving technical and personal expression to their secular work, but even here exceptions abound. Matteo da Perugia had no qualms about composing Mass settings in the style of his chansons,²¹⁵ and five songs in **Ch** use isorhythm, a technique closely associated with the motet repertoire since the early *Ars nova*. The by-then centuries-old tradition of combining secular and sacred texts in motets, and Zachara da Teramo’s habit of reworking materials from his songs into his religious compositions and vice-versa seem to indicate at least the possibility of an intimate link, and of stylistic equivalence between the two groups.

Similar sub-tendencies concerning melodic and structural complexity can also be discerned within the secular forms. On the whole, the ballade form seemed to have been chosen for writing more complex music, but this is in no way universal. Of the other two French forms, virelais tend to display greater proportional complexity, while all isorhythmic songs use the rondeau form.²¹⁶ The fact that we can only discern tendencies may suggest that the choice of genre, and the genre’s link with complexity, was ruled only by expectations. If it was so, these expectations could then be confounded in order to attract specific attention and create more complex meanings.²¹⁷

One can see a similar pattern when examining the distribution of the number of voices of a piece in relation to its genre.²¹⁸ In **Cyp**, all but one ballade are written in three parts. Four virelais and eight rondeaux are written in two voices, one rondeau has four parts.²¹⁹ The two-part works tend to be simpler, but again, not universally. *Amours me dit qu’il me fera joir* (f. 150) includes *semiminime*, *dragmae*, and flagged-*dragmae* (resulting in *sesquitertia* proportion), as well as some syncopation. *Qui n’a le cuer rainpli de vraie joie* (f. 152v) is

²¹⁵ See p. 129 below.

²¹⁶ For the distribution of proportions in relation to genre in **Cyp** see figure 4-78 below. The table shows that the piece with the largest number of proportions in this source is the virelai *Je prens d’amour noriture* (f. 154). Virelais are also used more often for naturalistic songs. For the formal reasons for using the rondeau for isorhythmic composition, see p. 120 below.

²¹⁷ This idea is central to my interpretation of this style. For its general application see pp. 286-95 below.

²¹⁸ To avoid the ‘urtext trap’ discussed on p. 69 above, the number of voices will be discussed only within single-source units.

²¹⁹ The exceptional ballade is *Si doucement me fait Amours – Nulz vrais amans ne se doit repentir* (ff. 127-127v) which has four voices. The four part rondeau is the last work in the manuscript. All four voices are canonic, and use a range just under two octaves.

interesting in that both voices are texted and share the same range (not uniquely in this source). The voices indulge in frequent imitation, and varied use of *ficta*, culminating in a very protracted diminished third in the B section.²²⁰ Of the 81 relevant songs in **PR** nine are presented in two parts, and twelve in four.²²¹ **Ch** makes a clearer organisational use of the number of voices: the fourth surviving fascicle was reserved for four-part compositions.²²² The fifth fascicle opens with nine four-part motets, followed by a group of four three-part motets. The distribution of two-part songs, though, does not seem to follow a logical order.²²³ Here, two-part composition does not convey simplicity. On the contrary: Vaillant's *Pour ce que je ne say gairez* (f. 26) uses complex syncopations, large-scale isorhythm in both voices using an extremely complicated *talea*, and extended, easily avoidable dissonances. Hasprois/Noyon's *Puis que je sui fumeux* (f. 34v) likewise uses protracted syncopations, as well as many and varied proportions. Rodericus's *Angelorum psalat* (f. 48v) is arguably the most complicated composition to have come down to us.²²⁴ In none of these works was a third voice apparently anticipated, and indeed, the two surviving voices are written in such a way as to make it difficult to fit a third voice in. Even in a source like **Pit**, where some of the French compositions are clearly reductions,²²⁵ notational and musical simplicity does not correlate with the number of voices.

On average, *Ars subtilior* works seem to be longer and more expansive than works of surrounding styles.²²⁶ Here too, size does not necessarily correlate with notational or musical complexity. Cordier's *Tour par compas* (**Ch**, f. 12) is notated in a very convoluted way (even when stretched out on a normal staff rather than its circle), but is very brief. So is his *Amans ames secretement* (**Ox**, f. 123) which holds the highest ratio between number of notes

²²⁰ See ex. 4-39 below.

²²¹ A further three are notated in two parts but include a hidden canonic voice. The four-part songs appear closer to the beginning of this part of the manuscript, while the two-part compositions were copied more towards its end.

²²² The separation is not completely consequent – one four-part song (*Laus detur multipharia* by Petrus Farbi, f. 16v) appears in the first three gatherings, and among the 23 songs in the fourth fascicles, seven are three-part. Interestingly, *De ce que foul pense* (P. des Molins, f. 53v) and *Par maintes foys* (Johannes Vaillant, f. 60-59v) which appear in three-parts here appear in four parts elsewhere: **PR** and **CaB** (twice, and with different triplums) for the former, and **Bcl/Leclercq** for the latter. It is also interesting that the **Bcl/Leclercq** triplum strengthens the proportional *sesquitertia* effect. **Ch** is obviously concerned with complex music, but it does not necessarily give the most complicated version of each piece in it. See case study 4 pp. 248-78 below.

²²³ *Pour ce que je ne say gairez* (Johannes Vaillant, f. 26); *Puis que je sui fumeux* (Hasprois/Noyon, f. 34v); *Angelorum Psalat* (S. Uciredor s, f. 48v).

²²⁴ For *Pour ce que je* see ex. 4-8, 4-37 and 4-75; for *Puis que he sui* see ex. 4-68, and for *Angelorum psalat* see case study 1, pp. 206-26 below.

²²⁵ Out of the 33 French compositions added to this source 10 are in two parts, the rest in three. The four texted works are all in three parts.

²²⁶ On long pieces in Θ for example, see Everist, 'A New Source'.

and proportion signs in all three voices.²²⁷ At the other extreme, the new piece discovered in **Paris** is extremely protracted while displaying no particular notational or proportional complexity.²²⁸

Rather than resulting in a random picture, this evidence suggests a system of tendencies and deviations. The freedom suggested above for the choice of form and complexity level seems to be extended also to other large-scale organisational tools such as the number of voices and the length of the settings. If such a model is accepted, each choice becomes an additional expressive tool in the hands of the composer. This attitude can of course be extended to other organisational and technical criteria. The use of canonic voices, for example, was a popular device in *Ars subtilior* music, but the range of complexity in pieces that use it is again very large.²²⁹ No surviving collection presents a single register of music. To a lesser degree than in **Cyp** – or for that matter most other secular sources – even **Ch** and **ModA** present works with varying degrees of complexity.²³⁰ As more overtly practical and contextually stable, liturgical and para-liturgical collections tend more in the unified direction.

Between theory, art and practice

A notorious hostility existed between *Musicus* and *Cantor* in the middle ages.²³¹ Even when treatises deal with practicalities, many are either copies of older works or concern themselves only with the liturgical sphere. However, a number of works concern themselves with *Ars subtilior* related themes while seemingly drawing their inspiration from

²²⁷ Ten proportion signs appear 23 times in a piece with 153 notes (including 15 pauses), resulting in an average of 6.65 notes per proportional change. This song was described as an ‘*Ars subtilior* essay’ in Strohm, *The Rise*, p. 141, and is discussed and transcribed in Plumley and Stone ‘Cordier’s Picture-songs’, and mentioned also in Stone, ‘Self-reflexive Songs’, p. 194. See also ex. 4-69 and pp. 164, 186-7 below.

²²⁸ See case study 3, pp. 237-48 below.

²²⁹ Cordier’s *tout par compas* is notated in a circle, includes multiple proportional changes and frequent syncopations. *Passerose de biaute* was already mentioned as a mensuration canon in footnote 145 above. For Ciconia’s proportion canon *Le ray au soleyl* (**Luc** f. LXXXIII) see p. 190 below. From **Ch** one can also add the musically (but not notationally) canonic refrain of Senleches’ *Je me merveil - J’ay pluseurs fois* or his *La harpe de mellodie*. The **Iv** canonic songs as well as Matteo’s *Andray soulet* (**ModA**, f. 40v) are simpler in character. One can imagine that the 2 canonic works in **Pit** and the seven in **Str** were attractive primarily for their canonic nature, even if in other respects they are no more or less complicated than those works surrounding them.

²³⁰ For examples of simpler songs in **Ch** see case study 4, pp. 248-78, or the different levels of complexity in Solage’s output discussed on pp. 104-5 and 202 below. That this can be discerned even in relatively small fragments is shown in Rob C. Wegman, ‘New Light on Secular Polyphony at the court of Holland in the Early Fifteenth Century: The Amsterdam Fragments’, *JRMA*, cxvii (1992), pp. 181-207, esp. p. 190 in relation to **Ams64**, **Lei**, and **Ut**. For the mixing in the Paduan fragments see footnote 205 above.

²³¹ See Christopher Page, ‘Musicus and cantor’, in Tess Knighton and David Fallows (eds), *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music* (University of California Press, California, 1992), pp. 74-78.

performance. Aspects of **Berk** and the *Tractatus figurarum* have already been mentioned.²³² **Berk** is also interesting for its comments on non-standard notational usage, the acceptance of *sesquitertia* as part of normal practice (both in theoretical descriptions, and in unnecessary inclusions in musical examples), and the expansion of tonal range to match the extreme usage in practice.²³³ Generating extreme accidentals was not new in itself, what is special here (perhaps with the exception of Boen's *Ars musicae*, and **Ox842**) is the practical context, and the availability of songs which make use of them.²³⁴ The *Tractatus figurarum* is chiefly noteworthy for its *Ars subtilior* related notational and rhythmical preoccupation, and for its historic association with Philipoctus da Caserta, even if the association is probably fanciful, and the system described in it is not used in the surviving vocal repertoire.²³⁵ It is also interesting for differentiating between kinds of syncopation.²³⁶ The smaller *Tractatulus de figures* has similar features, and some Parisian, Hebrew, music-student notes are interesting for their link with Vaillant and Guido's music.²³⁷ While some attitudes expressed in these writings may be helpful, none of these sources deal directly with performance or help us in interpreting specific pieces.²³⁸ They can only serve to demonstrate the variety of ideas, options and possibilities supporting the performing side of the phenomenon, and demonstrate again its wider geographical and temporal distribution.

I have mentioned the musical-ornamental artefacts relevant to the *Ars subtilior* during the discussion of the physical context and popularity of this music.²³⁹ The more common route

²³² See pp. 75 and 69 above respectively.

²³³ See Ellsworth, *The Berkeley Manuscript*, pp. 50-67 and 122-129, also available at http://www.chmtl.indiana.edu/tml/14th/BERMAN_TEXT.html.

²³⁴ For a survey of earlier and related expansions of the tonal field see Lefferts, 'A Riddle', pp. 126-139. For the *Ars musicae* see **Boen**, ff. 73v-89v and Frobenius, *Johannes Boens* and Stone, 'The *Ars Subtilior* in Paris', p. 377. For examples of such pieces see ex. 4-35 and 4-65 below.

²³⁵ See Schreur, *The Tractatus Figurarum*, pp. xi, 9 and 66. The closest notational usage is in **Fa**, but for ornamental purposes, rather than the original proportional one. The *Tractatus de diversis figuris* is also attributed to Philipoctus, as well as to Egidius de Murino. For text translation and discussion see Charles William Warren, *Tractatus Diversarum Figurarum, A Translation and Commentary* (PhD. diss. for The Ohio State University, 1962), available also at http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Warren%20Charles%20William.pdf?acc_num=osu1187641520.

²³⁶ See Schreur, *The Tractatus Figurarum*, pp. 20-24, and p. 175 below.

²³⁷ For the *Tractatulus de figuris et temporibus* in **Seville**, ff. 93-94v, see F. Alberto Gallo, *Mensurabilis musicae tractatuli, Antiquae musicae italicae scriptores* (Bologna: Università degli Studi de Bologna, Istituto di Studi Musicali e Teatrali - Sez. Musicologia, 1966), pp. 79-85, also available at http://www.chmtl.indiana.edu/tml/14th/ANOFIT_TEXT.html. For the Hebrew treatise in **FM70** see Israel Adler, *Hebrew Writings Concerning Music in Manuscripts and Printed Books from Geonic Times up to 1800*, *RISM*, B IX 2 (Munich and Duisburg, 1975), pp. 55-77, and Stone, 'The *Ars Subtilior* in Paris', p. 385-8, 398-400.

²³⁸ For this problem see pp. 88-90 and 97-101 below.

²³⁹ See pp. 75-6 above.

for displaying the pervasiveness of musical activity in daily life is through artistic depiction and literary descriptions. Perhaps with the exception of the *De ce que foul pense* tapestry, depictions are never specific enough to enable direct affiliation with the *Ars subtilior*.²⁴⁰ Outside influences on and symbolic attitudes to wall-painting or book-production can make it hard to draw specific information even from contextualised depictions such as the singers in the margin of **Ch**, f. 37. Structural necessity and poetic licence similarly problematise the rare examples of specific literary references, and even free prose writing does not usually give us all the information we need.²⁴¹ Once more, the sense of a widely distributed phenomenon arises, but with the proviso of much unquantifiable evidence.

Conclusion

Taking into consideration the large number of *Ars subtilior* sources, the varied surroundings in which this music is found, the different ways in which it is treated and the functions it could fulfil, a number of observations can be made. First and foremost, I hope to have demonstrated the complexity of defining exclusive parameters for this style. Günther's chosen parameters are useful as general guidelines, and successfully performed the task for which they were conceived, but they are not sufficient when looking in detail at the extraordinary musical output which has come down to us. I believe that only a consideration of *Ars subtilior* as part of a larger cultural, non-technical context can meaningfully separate this music from surrounding styles. Such consideration can allow for a more flexible time-frame for this phenomenon, as local cultural forces react differently to changing pan-European pressures, and can accommodate more variety in the musical tools on offer, and the way and degree to which they were used.

The source-materials examined in this chapter seem to indicate that elements at least of the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon were popular and widely distributed, and that they were

²⁴⁰ Even in this case it is not clear what kind of version of the song was in the minds of the commissioners of this work. See Fallows, 'Specific Information', pp. 109 and 132 (footnote 52).

²⁴¹ The foremost example of a direct but problematic literary reference is Solazzo performance (on an Organetto) of Senleches' *La harpe de melodie* in Prudenanzi's *Il Saporetto*. See Santorre Debenedetti (ed.), 'Il Sollazzo e il Saporetto con altre rime di Simone Prudenanzi', *GSLI*, xv (1913), pp. 106-7. The relevant verses also reproduced and discussed in Agostino Ziino, *The Codex T. III. 2, Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Introductory Study and Facsimile* (LIM, 1994), pp. 107-8. A good example of inconclusive prose description is Froissart's report of six clerks singing "chançons, rondiaux et virelaiz" to entertain Gaston Fébus. We cannot tell which or how, or even what kind. Gaston Fébus had *Ars subtilior* works dedicated to him, but there is no reason to believe that they were the only pieces he listened to. See Armel H. Diverres (ed.), *Jean Froissart, Voyage en Béarn* (Manchester, 1953), p. 68, cited in Fallows, 'Ensembles', p. 137 and Nigel E. Wilkins, *Music in the age of Chaucer* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 25, as well as the discussion of dedicatory works on pp. 96-7 below.

incorporated into a wide array of other cultural contexts ranging from the highly intellectual to the frivolously decorative, and presented side by side with a wealth of other musical and artistic phenomena. Mixing and co-existence inevitably leads to a blurring of borders. The surprising lack of preoccupation with text and language in many of the sources suggests that the style gradually became less tied to its inherent Frenchness. While a degree of ‘otherness’ is often maintained (textless transmission can even be regarded as such a differentiating sign), it seems that in many cases ‘otherness’ was not considered the *raison d’être* for either composition or inclusion in manuscripts. Furthermore, the adaptations, arrangements and ornamentation of *Ars subtilior* music (let alone compositional choice of mixing systems, notations, styles and genres) could simplify it, or alternatively music from other styles could be made to conform to *Ars subtilior* expectations, thus bringing music of different styles and contexts closer together.

It was also shown that for many of the choices available for both composers and compilers, no strict set of rules can be applied. When ordering in sources is apparent (many sources seem to have been copied at random; this is especially noticeable in later additions which usually do not follow the ordering decisions of the earlier layers), it is usually done according to formal characteristics such as number of voices or genre rather than according to alphabetical order, style or complexity. The matching of style and complexity with structural elements such as number of voices or form follows some guidelines, but is by no means universal. Even in the case of notational technique, elements of complexity, personalisation, or standardisation were open to local preferences, and not necessarily linked to the difficulty and complexity of the music. A picture arises of a varied and vibrant culture, in which the expression of creativity comes in nearly as many forms as it has examples, and which resists the setting down of aesthetic ‘rights and wrongs’ manifested by an overriding set of rules.

All this can lead to a more radical re-conceptualisation of the style. First, it can be regarded as being as international as the style which bears that title. Secondly, the whole *Ars subtilior* phenomenon can be seen as a musical-cultural register within both local and pan-European culture. This would allow for an easy co-habitation between *Ars subtilior* and other repertoires within one source or one composer’s output, whether the surrounding materials are simpler or in a different style altogether. Thirdly, the meaning of compositional choice and therefore expressive language of the style can be formulated as reactions,

fulfilment or abortion of a series of expectations, be they structural, formal, visual or, as will be demonstrated later, audible. Before delving further into these ideas with regard to the music itself, one should first assess them in light of the interrelationships between *Ars subtilior* music and society.

3. Composers and society

The large number of compositional ascriptions in **Ch** and **ModA** have already been noted in Chapter 2. The naming of composers in music manuscripts seems to be a general (if not universal) trend towards the end of the fourteenth century, and is mirrored also in manuscripts containing music in the purely Italian style.²⁴² One can infer from this trend a changing attitude towards the status of composers and performers, as well as to the relationship between a work and its creator. It also makes it possible for us to form a wider view of the career-paths available to musicians and to identify patterns of patronage. Such examinations serve to anchor the music more directly to the world around it. Much research has been undertaken in pursuit of biographical evidence of late fourteenth-century and early fifteenth-century composers, their patrons and centres of activity.²⁴³ In light of the wealth of information available, I will not attempt a comprehensive summary of current knowledge concerning all composers in this chapter. I will concentrate instead on specific cases which can be used to illustrate some of the problems we face when considering *Ars subtilior*-related musical-production and patronage.

Many limiting factors influence our understanding of musical activities in this period. Some factors pertain to the very survival of relevant medieval materials. Some concern the juxtaposition of conflicting information, and the reliability, strengths and weaknesses of every order of evidence. Yet other factors arise from the modern analysis of surviving materials and relate to problems of non-homogeneity and interpretative intent.

This chapter is structured around an expansion of these three areas of concern, providing examples for factors pertaining to each of them from both central and peripheral hubs of *Ars*

²⁴² Before the end of the century the only direct compositorial ascriptions surviving are as part of personal collections which place poetry before music (Troubadour, Trouvère, Adam de la Halle, Machaut). Others are deduced via ascriptions in text-sources (Vitry, Perotin, Leonin), or use of notational technique (Petrus de Cruce). On the other hand, whole layers in sources like **Rossi**, **Pit** or **FP** are completely lacking in ascriptions. See also Ludwig Finscher, 'Die "Entstehung des Komponisten": Zum Problem Komponisten-Individualität und Individualstil in der Musik des 14. Jahrhunderts', *IRASM*, vi (1975), pp. 135-142.

²⁴³ This is not to say that there is not more work to be done. For more on the imbalances in modern research see pp. 103-112 below. For the centrality of these issues see their place in Günther's work, for example 'Die Musiker des Herzogs von Berry' (1963); 'Zur Biographie einiger Komponisten' (1964); 'Eine Ballade auf Mathieu de Foix' (1965); and 'Composers at the Court of the Antipopes in Avignon' (1994). For other works of related scholarship see Chapter 1 above.

subtilior activity. By presenting both extremes side by side I hope to avoid what Tomasello termed “the Great Court theory of music History”, at the same time accommodating a large variety of instances without implying uniformity or completeness of this survey.²⁴⁴ The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with a sense of the (at least partial) assimilation of the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon in those who came into contact with it. At the same time it encourages a certain wariness of definitive assertions in modern scholarship, as unavoidably they have to rely on rather problematic factual foundations. As I have chosen to present an overall picture rather than an exhaustive list, the centres and personages described below will be referred to in the context of just one issue, even though many of them could in principle represent a number of the problems examined.

The names discussed below are taken from those sources deemed most relevant in the previous chapter. Most ascriptions appear in **Ch** or **ModA**. For brevity’s sake, only one source identification will accompany each name and that only if it is not present in these two central manuscripts.

i. The surviving materials

Incompleteness

The most obvious problem arising from the information that has come down to us is the erratic nature of the survival of records. This problem has already been mentioned in the context of musical sources,²⁴⁵ and is just as relevant for the discussion of payrolls, inventories, correspondence or any other text-based documents. To demonstrate how all-pervading this problem is, one can inspect a well researched and richly documented centre considered by many to be a central hub of *Ars subtilior* activity, namely, the papal court of Avignon.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ See Andrew Tomasello, ‘A Footnote on Aragonese Mass Manuscripts and the Decline of the Great Court Theory of Music History’, *MD*, il (1995), pp. 95-119, esp. 95-100.

²⁴⁵ See pp. 59 and 74 above.

²⁴⁶ Through biographical evidence and dedicatory materials, attempts were made to link both **Ch** and **ModA** to Avignon, only to be discounted in the most up-to-date studies. For **Ch** see Günther, ‘Zur Biographie’; Pirrotta, ‘Il codice Estense’; Wright, *Music at the court of Burgundy*, pp.132-3, and the overview and reevaluation in Plumley and Stone, *The Codex Chantilly*, pp. 112-3, 179-82. For **ModA** see Suzanne Clercx, ‘Johannes Ciconia et la chronologie des mss. italiens, Mod 568 et Lucca (Mn)’ in *Les colloques de Wégimont II – 1955: L’ars nova: Recueil d’études sur la musique du XIVe siècle* (Paris, 1959), pp. 110-30, esp. 111-4 (Günther and Pirrotta thought only some of the repertoire originated there, but not the source itself), and summary and reevaluation in Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 62-66, 108-9.

In the highly politicised atmosphere of the late fourteenth century, the Avignonese curia – in common with the other curial and Episcopal courts – rivalled secular courts in lavish ostentation.²⁴⁷ Indeed, profane demonstrations of wealth, authority and political strength were commonly used as tools in the attempts to legitimize rivalling popes during the Schism. Through the centrality of daily prayer and the maintenance of private chapels, the providers of musical services had a strong standing within religious establishments. The system of *familiares* and the tradition of recruiting papal singers from the private chapels of the cardinals and archbishops, made it possible for popes to choose singers carefully and maintain high standards.²⁴⁸

The papacy in Avignon was a well established centre of artistic and musical patronage throughout the fourteenth century. Vitry and Muris are well documented there, and four surviving motets are dedicated to pre-schismatic popes. As far as relevant composers go, the only pre-schismatic link of an *Ars subtilior* composer with Avignon is a tentative identification of Guido as Guido de Lange.²⁴⁹

The Early schismatic Avignonese papacy was well supported and well organised. It inherited much of the pre-schismatic papal infrastructure, and enjoyed the relative safety offered by its French supporters.²⁵⁰ The ease with which Clement VII could demonstrate his cultural strength can be seen in the list of his singers. It contained Matheus de Sancto Johanne, Johannes de Alte Curie (Altacuria, Haucourt), Johannes Simonis de Haspre (Hasprois) and Johannes de Bosco (**Q15**), with tentative identifications placing also Goscalch, Magister Franciscus and Johannes de Janua in his employment.²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ See Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, pp. 40-1, 45, with comments on each Avignonese Pope on pp. 1-45.

²⁴⁸ See Giuliano Di Bacco and John Nádas, 'Verso uno 'stile internazionale' della musica nelle cappelle papali e cardinalizie durante il Grande Scisma (1378-1417): il caso di Johannes Ciconia da Liege', in *Collectanea I. Drei Studien von Giuliano Di Bacco, John Nádas, Noel O'Regan, und Adalbert Roth*, Capellae Apostolicae Sistinaeque Collectanea Acta Monumenta III. (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1994), pp. 7-74.

²⁴⁹ For the city of Avignon see Yves Renouard (trans. Denis Bethell), *The Avignon Papacy, 1305-1403* (Archon Books, Hamden, Connecticut, 1970) and Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, pp. 30-8; for Vitry and Muris there see *ibid.* pp. 14-5; Dedicated motets are discussed in Bent, 'Early Papal Motets', pp. 8-19, 41, and for the identification of Vaillant see Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, p. 227. It is no longer accepted that Vaillant should be identified with the papal singer Valhant / Johannes Valentis who died in 1361. For a rare admittance of an opinion-change see Günther, 'Problems of dating', p. 296.

²⁵⁰ See Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, pp. 39-42; George Holmes, *Europe: Hierarchy and Revolt 1320-1450*, (Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 2000 second edition), pp 132-4.

²⁵¹ On Petrus de Godescout see Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, pp. 65, 92. For the identification of Franciscus in Avignon see Andrew Tomasello, 'Notes biographiques sur quelques musiciens?', in Michel Huglo and Marcel Peres (eds), *Aspects de la musique liturgique au Moyen Age* (Créaphis, 1991), pp. 261-280, esp. pp.

Benedict XIII inherited political as well as musical strength, keeping the services of Alte Curie and Hasprois. He also employed Senleches as harpist while still Cardinal of Aragon. A tentative identification of Taillandier as Petrus Taillenderoti shows him as a law student in Avignon in 1393. Benedict's subsequent isolation and the demise of the Avignonese papacy are musically evident. The only tentative association that can be made towards the end of the schism is for S Uciredor as one of the many Roderici active in the curia at a time when only parts of the Iberian Peninsula remained loyal to Benedict's cause.²⁵² Musical dedications serve to link also Philipoctus da Caserta and Egidius de Francia to Avignon,²⁵³ and **Apt** has long been considered as having an intimate link with this Papal court. Even those scholars who do not acknowledge **Apt** as a source used by the papal chapel itself accept the notion that the repertoire it contains circulated in the city, and to a degree originated within it.²⁵⁴

In the midst of this wealth of information, bad luck has it that both account books and curial records of supplication letters between the summer of 1398 and the spring of 1403 are lost.²⁵⁵ Tomasello points out that this period has potentially great musical significance, as the turmoil in which the papacy found itself during these years may well have caused at least some of the employed musicians, even those who returned to Benedict's service after his escape from Avignon, to seek employment elsewhere. The existence of such lacunae even in the best documented courts, in all composers' biographies, and in nearly all archives, is significant. It raises the possibility that every known composer (along with the repertoire circulating in his previous locations of employment, of which we also cannot be sure) may

264-5. On conflicting identification of Johannes de Janua and his possible links to Avignon, see Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 80-1.

²⁵² For the later career of Alte Curie see Plumley, 'Musicians at Laon'; for Hasprois see Plumley and Stone, *Codex Chantilly*, pp. 136-7 (Sancto Johanne was dead by 1391); for Senleches see Higiní Anglès, *História de la música medieval en Navarra* (Pamplona, 1970), p. 225; for Petrus Taillenderoti see Marcel Fournier, *Statuts et Privilèges des universités françaises depuis leur fondation jusqu'en 1789*, volume 2 (Paris, 1891), p. 339, and for the musical implication of Benedict's hardships see Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, pp. 70-2. For more on the identification of Rodericus see p. 207 below.

²⁵³ See Giuliano Di Bacco, 'The Myth of Philipoctus de Caserta?', in Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone (eds), *A Late Medieval Songbook and its Context: New Perspectives on the Chantilly Codex (Bibliothèque du Château de Chantilly, Ms 564)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 329-64; Bent, 'Early Papal Motets', p. 43 and the discussion of the "Avignon Repertory" in Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 90-101.

²⁵⁴ For a detailed study of the construction and origin of **Apt** see Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, pp. 127-50. This is another ascription-rich source, naming Loys, Baralipton, Orles, Susay (=Suzoy), Jacobus Murrin, Defronciaco, Depansis, Sertis (=Sortes), Pellisson, Taillander, Chipre, Tapissier, Perrinet, Fleurie, and Guymont. It also contains work ascribed elsewhere to Cordier, Vitry, Prunet (=Perneth), Peliso and Johannes Graneti as well as other, still anonymous compositions.

²⁵⁵ Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, pp. 68-69.

well have spent substantial periods in locations unknown to us,²⁵⁶ and that patrons subsidised many more musicians than our records suggest.

Relevance and usefulness

It is very rare for the documentary evidence that did survive to refer explicitly to the kind of music making discussed here. When it is possible to deduce the kind of musical activities composers were paid for, most cases seem to have had very little to do with the *Ars subtilior*. This can well be demonstrated by the musical activities of the competing Roman curia.

From its very beginnings, the Roman Papacy was less secure and stable than its Avignonese counterpart; militarily, economically and politically. This, coupled with Urban VI's more ascetic tastes, was mirrored in a less lavish chapel compared with that of Avignon.²⁵⁷ Indeed, the foremost musical figures that spent time in Rome or worked in the curia (Johannes Ciconia and Antonio dit Zachara da Teramo respectively) were not engaged in direct musical services by the Pope. Notable figures among those who did give musical services in the papal chapel include Ugolino de Orvieto, Nucella (**Str**), Nicolaus de Frangens (**Aosta**), and perhaps Egardus.²⁵⁸

Dedicated works are also fewer, and do not create links with other composers.²⁵⁹ As for connected sources, Di Bacco and Nádas supply two lists of sources: one with those “that may be associated with contacts made by foreign and native musicians in Rome during the early

²⁵⁶ For a reevaluation of the activities of even a well known, documented and researched musician, see the discussion of Ciconia's time in Rome in Di Bacco and Nádas, ‘The Papal Chapels’, esp. pp. 50-6.

²⁵⁷ It should also be noted that our knowledge of the Roman chapel is much more fragmentary than that of Avignon. See Di Bacco and Nádas, ‘The Papal Chapels’, pp. 46-50 where the prominence of Italian singers in this chapel is also discussed in light of the need to form a new curial administration with personnel from loyal territories.

²⁵⁸ We know Ugolino only as a theorist, but his capacity as an active musician suggests he might have dabbled with composition as well. See Di Bacco and Nádas, ‘The Papal Chapels’, pp. 49-50; Nucella is most likely identified as Nicolaus Ricii de Nucella Campi. See Di Bacco and Nádas, ‘The Papal Chapels’, p. 49; the first motet in **Apt**, dedicated to John XXIII, names Nicolao as its composer. The identification of the composer as de Frange is not secure, with other candidates being Nicolaus Zacharie (Guillaume de Van, ‘A Recently Discovered Source of Early Fifteenth-Century Music: The Aosta Manuscript’, *MD*, ii (1948), pp. 5-74, esp. pp. 12-4), and Nicolaus Grenon (Marian Willner Cobin, *The Aosta Manuscript: A Central Source of Early-fifteenth-century Sacred Polyphony* (PhD. diss. for New York University, 1978), pp. 263-79). See also Bent, ‘Early Papal Motets’, pp. 29-30; Egardus is not documented in Rome, but see Reinhard Strohm, ‘Magister Egardus and Other Italo-Flemish contacts’, in Giulio Cattin (ed.), *L’Ars Nova italiana del Trecento VI: Atti del congresso internazionale “L’europa e la musica del Trecento.” (Certaldo 19-22 luglio 1984)* (Certaldo, 1992), pp. 41-68.

²⁵⁹ See Bent ‘Early Papal Motets’, pp. 22-3, and Di Bacco and Nádas, ‘The Papal Chapels’, p. 59. The interpretation of the text of *Angelorum psalat* given below (p. 208-10) may link Rodericus to either Roman or Avignonese curia.

decades of the Great Schism”, the other of sources “whose contents may be associated with the repertory of the papal chapels during their travels 1407-1414”.²⁶⁰ The sources of the first list contain only a small number of *Ars subtilior* insertions (in **GR I/Dart, Cortona 1/2**). The second list includes also **Str, SL** and **Bov**.

In Rome, as in any other ecclesiastical or secular court, the role of the chapel was the everyday performance of the Mass and Services. While we can expect the inclusion of polyphony on special occasions, chaplains were primarily performing monophonic chant.²⁶¹ Identifying a composer as a member of a chapel does not necessarily offer much information as to the depth of his patron’s relationship with the said composer’s specific style of polyphonic secular composition. As secular music was often not part of their duty, we cannot even be sure that secular works by chaplains were intended to be heard by the chapel owner, or had anything to do with their ‘day-job’. In the Roman Curia, Zachara was only recorded as a papal *scriptor*. This makes it likely that his music was known in the environs of the Roman curia, but he was not chosen for that job for his musical skills, and we cannot immediately presume that he mixed the two different aspects of his career.²⁶²

Throughout our period, most payment records pertaining to musicians use only general professional categorisations such as chaplains, jongleurs, minstrels, or trumpeters. These records do offer us a sense of the scale of musical professionalism at a given time and place. Still, even when personal identifications occur, they are not enough to make stylistic claims on their output. The many cases where musicians are referred to as a collective without

²⁶⁰ Di Bacco and Nádas, ‘The Papal Chapels’, p. 59.

²⁶¹ A notable exception here is Jean de Berry’s chapel at the Sainte-Chapelle in Bourges, where polyphony was performed regularly from 1405. See Paula Higgins, ‘Music and Musicians at the Sainte-Chapelle of the Bourges Palace, 1405-1515’, in Angelo Pompilio, Donatella Restani, Lorenzo Bianconi and F. Alberto Gallo (eds), *Atti del XIV congresso della Società Internazionale di Musicologia, Bologna, 27 agosto – 1 settembre 1987, Ferrara – Parma, 30 agosto 1987* iii (Free Papers) (Turin, 1990), pp. 689-701, esp. p. 691.

²⁶² See Nádas, John Louis, ‘Further notes on Magister Antonius dictus Zacharias de Teramo’, *SM*, xv (1986), pp. 167-82 and xvi (1987), pp. 175-76. From his contractual obligation to teach music and produce an antiphony for the Ospedale di Santo Spirito in Sassia, Rome (1390), we know he was famous for both his musical and scriptorial ability. See Anna Esposito, ‘Maestro Zaccara da Teramo “scriptore et miniatore” di un antifonario per l’Ospedale di Santo Spirito in Sassia a Roma’, *Recercare* iv (1992), pp. 167-78, esp. pp. 175-7. This work was not necessarily known in the curia. He was hired for musical services only later, by the Pisan pope. We may of course, be missing vital information here. The most famous example of this kind is the career of Machaut, who held a number of secretarial and ecclesiastic positions, none of them directly connected with music. On the gap between musical and administrative information see Plumley, ‘Musicians at Laon’, where a wealth of information about known musicians is uncovered, but none of it pertaining directly to musical activities.

individual naming should remind us that the names we have may well be only a minority of actual practitioners.

Even well documented careers do not necessarily correlate with specific stylistic knowledge. Jean Rogier de Watignies had a long and illustrious career, giving musical services to “a Spanish duke, three French dukes, at least one cardinal, and a pope” over the period 1378-1415.²⁶³ He was associated with the most important musical centres of the time, where many composers were active.²⁶⁴ This can lead one to speculate that even if the lack of surviving ascriptions to him does indeed represent a disinterest in composition, he was probably close enough to his *Ars subtilior*-minded colleagues to take part in the performance, and perhaps distribution, of relevant materials.²⁶⁵ Such activities would potentially allow us to speculate that he was an active member in the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon. A different reading of the surviving information could support speculation also in other directions, such as Watignies’ importance in the distribution of the more modern style,²⁶⁶ or that he specialised in the more functional aspects of musical service, and kept away from professionally unnecessary complications.

It is very hard to find occasions when a useful constellation of musicians performed in a context which fits this music. Even the few descriptions of performances we have do not supply this information.²⁶⁷ This can strengthen the notion of the *Ars subtilior* being but one register of musical production, which co-existed with many others, and was performed – at least at times – by persons brought together for that purpose from seemingly unrelated official capacities.²⁶⁸

Disparity between musical and non-musical evidence

The gap between the surviving musical and non-musical evidence is even greater than the problem of finding relevant performance spaces. Let us take the French court of Cyprus as

²⁶³ Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, p. 247.

²⁶⁴ For his colleagues in Avignon see Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, pp. 66-69. For contemporary benefice holders in Laon cathedral see Plumley, ‘Musicians at Laon’, pp 23-6.

²⁶⁵ Attempts were made to suggest him as the elusive Rodericus. See Young, ‘Antiphon’, p. 14-5. On the activities of the secular courts which employed Watignies see pp. 94-6 (Aragon and Berry) and 102 (Burgundy) below.

²⁶⁶ In his travel Watignies worked beside composers now thought of as bridging the *Ars subtilior* with the later, simpler style such as Grenon, Charite, Fontaine, Cesaris and others. See Plumley, ‘Musicians at Laon’, pp. 24-5.

²⁶⁷ See footnote 241 above.

²⁶⁸ For a social contextualisation of such a system see pp. 300-1 below.

an example. The music in **Cyp** attests that *Ars subtilior* was part of the musical currency of the Lusignan kingdom, but it is the only such specific link. The lack of ascriptions in this source makes it impossible to conclusively pair this output with any individuals active there at the time, or differentiate between registers of musical activities within this court.²⁶⁹

Further problems such as incorrect ascriptions, the unlikelihood that the surviving music is representative of original output (we know it is not complete), and the complications offered by oral tradition, improvisation and adaptation, emphasise how partial our impression is, and how tenuous our conclusions must remain where we find matches between ascriptions and non-musical documentation.²⁷⁰

The question of ownership and usage of music manuscripts will be discussed in more detail further on, but the sometimes random and surprising elements of distribution and participation are also relevant. The references found in **Ch** all link its music with professional musicianship and the higher echelons of the aristocracy of France and the Iberian Peninsula. Still, there is no questioning the fact that **Ch** was in the possession of the Florentine Alberti and Spinelli families in the fifteenth century, and that the most likely use of collections of French songs in their cultural milieu was after-dinner entertainment by the daughters of the family.²⁷¹ As the content of **Ch** is uniquely unsuitable for such use, it is perhaps more likely that its appeal to both families was as a cultural trophy. Nevertheless, as hard as it would be to imagine non-professional readers interpreting the many notational subtleties in this source, the rather improbable idea of amateur, non-aristocratic performance of *Ars subtilior* song in mid-fifteenth century Florence arises. This prompts us to re-examine (among other things) the relationship between composers' and original performers' activities, and the wider dissemination and resonance of the cultural force to which their endeavours belonged. Tracing biography and patronage is rarely enough to assess the influence and distribution of single proponents of musical culture.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ For the role of Velut (**Ox**) and Hanelle see Andrée Giselle Simard, *The Manuscript Torino J.II.9: A Late Medieval Perspective on Musical Life and Culture at the Court of the Lusignan Kings at Nicosia*, (MA diss. for the University of Akron, 2005, available at http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Simard%20Andree%20Giselle.pdf?acc_num=akron1135006861), pp. 64-75, where other influences are also considered. In any event, the use of the music away from the presentation copy remains unclear.

²⁷⁰ See, for example, footnote 47 above and p. 99 below on the gap between our knowledge of Machaut's musical output and the pattern of ascriptions to him outside his collected-works manuscripts.

²⁷¹ See Plumley and Stone, *Codex Chantilly*, pp. 173-9, esp. 177.

²⁷² For another famous incident see footnote 342 below.

ii. Order of evidence

Constructing a biography involves a reliance on a wide range of different kinds of information. Evidence can be of varying degrees of reliability, exactness, relevance and general helpfulness. Each different kind of evidence-source has its strengths and weaknesses. A few of these types of evidence will be considered here, highlighting the pitfalls of over-reliance on any single one of them.

Composer names

About a third of discernable composers' names can be interpreted as incorporating a place-name. These appear as direct references as with Antonellus da Caserta, in a corrupt or disguised form as with Defronciaco, or as a vague reference requiring interpretation as some suggested is the case with Solage.²⁷³ Information concerning the origins and probable place of education and training can be extremely useful both in reconstructing personal biographies and tracing stylistic patterns. Still, one must keep in mind the possibility that a name is inherited, referring to an ancestral affiliation which may, to all intents and purposes, be obsolete. Some children were sent away even for the early part of their education, and their subsequent career could take them further away from, rather than back to their birthplace.²⁷⁴

Most of the place-names connected with composers stem from two distinct geographical areas: either from the northern half of Italy, or from the Low Countries and northern and eastern France.²⁷⁵ Many more composers can be traced back to these two areas,²⁷⁶ but there is no reason to suppose that the selection we possess is representative of the names or places of origin of the overall community of composers. The addition of place-names can simply be

²⁷³ For some possibilities, see Plumley, 'An 'Episode', pp. 128-9.

²⁷⁴ For an analysis of diocese of origin and subsequent benefices of papal singers in Avignon see Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, pp. 206-20; For a warning against direct geographical affiliation according to name see Sandra L. Hindman (review), 'Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Works by Charity Cannon Willard', *Speculum*, lxii (1987), pp. 222-225, esp. 223. Even if strong Italian affiliation could be demonstrated, 'de Pizan' refers to her fathers' origin and not her own, having been born in Venice; Johannes Rogerii de Watignies was from the diocese of Cambrai, and not of Tournai as the place-name would suggest. See Tomasello, 'Notes biographiques', p. 272. For patterns in medieval education and childhood see Shulamit Shahar, *ילדות בימי הביניים* (Medieval Childhood) (Tel Aviv, 1990), p. 298.

²⁷⁵ Italian names include Andera da Firenze, Antonellus da Caserta, Antonio da Cividale (**Luc**), Antonius Zachara da Teramo, Bartholomeus da Bononia, Corradus de Pistoria, Johannes Janua, Matteo da Perugia, and Philippoctus da Caserta. Northern names include Bernard de Cluny (**Str**), Clericus de Landes (**Ut**), Egidius de Pusieux, Guillaume de Machaut, Hymbert de Salinis, Jehan Lebeuf d'Abbeville en Pontieu (**Chartres**), Johannes de Altecurie (or Haucourt), Johannes Franchois de Gemblanco (**Q15**), Jean de Noyers (**Ox**), Nicolaus Frangens de Leodio (**Aosta**), Iacob Senleches and Jaquet de Noyon. Going a bit further east one can include also Henricus de Libro Castro (**Str**) in this group.

²⁷⁶ See the results of Tomasello's analysis referred to in footnote 274 above.

an identification tool (for example, to distinguish between the many ‘Johannes’, or categorise people in international centres such as the papal curiae), or be a product of local traditions. We should keep in mind the intentions of the compilers of manuscripts from which we draw these names as well as their access to reliable information. It is even possible to view full ascriptions as signs of foreignness, be it in comparison to compositions for which the composer was evident, or as the demarcation of a minority.

Patronage

Direct patronage offers a definite link between the two figures involved. As the kind of people who were able to provide patronage tended to be better documented, this is an important source of information concerning the time, location and context of musical endeavour.

It has already been mentioned that many employment agreements were centred on activities which are not relevant to the *Ars subtilior* context (p. 89 above). A further element with obvious consequences for the importance of this link (and thus for the cross-fertilisation between the musician and a specific court culture) is that of the longevity of the relationship.

The kings of Navarre had a direct link with Machaut, and in later years also paid Jacob de Senleches and Jaquet de Noyon for their services. Tentative identifications are found also for Perrinet and Pykini.²⁷⁷ Such a collection of musicians would have placed Navarre as a musical centre of the first degree, if not for the fact that some of these tentative identifications must be discounted, and that Senleches and Noyon stopped there on their travels rather than enjoying long standing patronage. The presence of these two musicians in Navarre on the same day in April 1383 is a very interesting crossing of paths, and may allude to an interest in the kind of music we know they produced. Still, it surely cannot be compared to long service somewhere else in assessing the importance of the different centres to the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon as a whole. The fact that Noyon was there on a political errand from the

²⁷⁷ The link with Machaut is explored in Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 33-8; for payments to Senleches and Noyon see Plumley, ‘An ‘Episode’, p. 119. For Perrinet see Anglès, *História de la música medieval en Navarra*, p. 225; one of three candidates is named as the composer in Gómez, *La música en la Casa Real catalano-aragonesa durante los años 1336-1432* (Barcelona, 1979), pp. 109-111, and for the Navarre affiliation of Pykini see Günther, ‘Zur Biographie’, p. 12, an identification since surpassed in Remco Sleiderink, ‘Pykini’s parrot: Music at the court of Brabant’, in Barbara Haggh, Frank Daelemans and Andre Vanrie (eds), *Musicology and Archival Research / Musicologie et recherches en archives / Musicologie en archiefonderzoek* (Brussels, 1994), pp. 358-391. See also p. 109 below.

Visconti court rather than as an active musician diminishes the centrality (or even likelihood) of a musical exchange on this occasion.²⁷⁸

The interest and commitment of the court of Johan I of Aragon and Yolande de Bar to French culture seems both extreme and genuine in its artistic appreciation. Machaut was well known and liked there, and Johan's interest in recruiting musicians and purchasing manuscripts in Avignon demonstrates that this was an interest in a living culture rather than in the relics of greatness.²⁷⁹ Jaquet de Noyon worked for Aragon, Trebor dedicated works to him and has been tentatively identified there, as were Rayneau, Lambuleti (**MdS**), Perrinet (**Str**), Sortes and Senleches. Aragon also started organising some of his minstrels in groups of four (*cobla*), but the documentations did not as yet shed light on whether these groups were created to perform polyphony or were dedicated to other forms of light entertainment.²⁸⁰ Long-standing patronage did not translate to geographic stability or cultural isolation of the musicians enjoying it. Johan of Aragon, like many other aristocrats, regularly sent his musicians to the minstrel schools in the Low Countries.²⁸¹ The official purpose of these trips was to learn new music from the international gathering of performers, and to buy new instruments and manuscripts once they had arrived at the final destination. These trips to the north though, took minstrels through many other centres of musical activity where cross-fertilisation may well have taken place.²⁸² Musicians could remain in the employ of one patron while serving another – for example, in 1376 Johan of Aragon borrowed two harpists from Jean de Berry, the gesture being reciprocated in 1392 when Berry borrowed some of

²⁷⁸ For the Visconti see pp. 101-3, 105, 107-8 and 297 below.

²⁷⁹ Machaut's posthumous legacy in Spain is described in Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 59-61; for the procurement letter see Gómez, *La música en la Casa Real*, p. 198. See also Maricarmen Gómez, 'French Songs in Aragon de Terence Scully révisé', in Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone (eds), *A Late Medieval Songbook and its Context: New Perspectives on the Chantilly Codex (Bibliothèque du Château de Chantilly, Ms 564)* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), pp. 245-61.

²⁸⁰ See Gómez, *La música en la Casa Real*, pp. 33-5 (on *coblas*), 40-1 (three identifications for Senleches, all contested), 94-8 (Rayneau, sortes), 99-101 (Trebor), and 106-7 (Lambuleti, Perrinet). For Noyon, see Plumley, 'An 'Episode'', pp. 118-22, where his illustrious career (resembling that of Watignies in its scope) and extensive travels are described, also in an attempt to explain the co-operation between him and Hasprois on *Puisque je sui fumeux* (**Ch**, f. 34v). Without the slim evidence of the unusual double ascription of this work, Noyon would have suffered the same uncertain fate as far as affiliation to the *Ars subtilior* is concerned. Plumley's survey exemplifies a number of the problems detailed here and shows the links between musical and political activities at the time, both in the activities of individual musicians and in relationships between courts.

²⁸¹ See Maricarmen Gómez, 'Minstrel Schools in the late Middle Ages', *EM*, xvii (May, 1990), pp. 213-216.

²⁸² See Plumley, 'An 'Episode'', pp. 121-2 for a hypothesis concerning Noyon's adoption of Parisian texts while en route to the minstrel schools.

Johan's minstrels.²⁸³ Watignies, already mentioned for his extensive career (p. 90 above), seemed at certain times to have enjoyed double employment, referring to himself as simultaneously singer to the Pope and Duke of Burgundy in a number of documents of 1395.²⁸⁴

Medieval courts were highly itinerant entities. The inclusion of musicians in these travels meant that a single musician's personal sphere of influence may easily have been larger than the main site of his employer's court, and that cities whose primary court was not considered particularly active may have temporarily turned into major centres of musical exchange when other musical retinues with access to manuscripts travelled through them.²⁸⁵

Although Charles V can be linked in one way or another to Philippe Royllart, Machaut, Johannes Cuvelier and Hasprois,²⁸⁶ there is a lack of evidence for longstanding and regular royal patronage of the *Ars subtilior*. Perhaps surprisingly, given its general cultural importance, musicologists tended not to include Paris in the list of important centres for the development of this style. Nevertheless, Stone has recently suggested it as a location of origin for many characteristics of *Ars subtilior* style, enumerating Billard (**Ox**), Cesaris, Cuvelier, Goscalch and Vaillant as documented in Paris, and Cordier, Guido, Hasprois, Noyon, Haucourt, Solage and Velut as "suspected of being in Paris or its environs". Stone also notes that as both Philip the Bold and Jean de Berry maintained a virtually constant presence in the capital, it too should be regarded as an important point of musical contact and exchange.²⁸⁷ Other composers linked to the capital are Fleurie, Carmen (**Q15**), Tapissier, Grenon, Suzoy and Galiot.²⁸⁸ Especially in a city such as Paris, musicians could operate

²⁸³ For a more detailed account of such exchanges between the French princes and Aragon see Plumely, 'An Episode' p. 127. The document referring to these specific exchanges can be found in Gómez, *La música en la Casa Real*, p. 181, doc. 165 and pp. 188–9, doc. 194 respectively. The communications with Louis I of Anjou are also explored there (pp. 119-121), as well as the surviving evidence concerning Anjou's musical patronage (pp.116-117). Louis employed Jaquet de Noyon and Matheus de Sancto Johanne, and had a song dedicated to him by Philipoctus da Caserta.

²⁸⁴ See Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, pp. 246-7.

²⁸⁵ For the greater usefulness of a social/political map over a geographical one in considering this repertoire, see Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 95-6.

²⁸⁶ Royllart through dedication; on Machaut's relationship with Charles V see Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 42-46; Cuvelier through non-musical employment, see Günther, 'Zwei Balladen', p. 37, and for the retrospective affiliation of Hasprois with Charles, see Günther, 'Zur Biographie', p. 187.

²⁸⁷ See Stone, 'The Ars Subtilior in Paris', esp. pp. 401-4 and p. 395 respectively.

²⁸⁸ For Fleurie see Hanna Stäblein-Harder, *Fourteenth-Century Mass Music in France*, in *MSD*, vii (1962), pp. 69-70; for Carmen and Tapisier see Wright, *Music at the Court of Burgundy*, p. 127-34; for Grenon, *Ibid.* p. 96-8; for Suzoy see Reaney, 'The Manuscript Chantilly', p. 77-8. Galiot is linked to Paris through the use of his music in Vaillant's school. See Stone, 'The Ars Subtilior in Paris', p. 388.

independently of patronage, being appended to the university, or maintaining their own music schools instead. Its political centrality would certainly have offered opportunities for other musicians to visit it as part of their official duties – be they in the retinue of a travelling court, on political or diplomatic missions, or en route to the minstrel schools – even if no concrete proof of these movements has yet been unearthed.

An extreme example was the wholesale transferral of the royal court of Jean II to London during his captivity. The move included P. de Molins, and would have offered a contact point with J. Alani, presumed to have been under the employment of Edward III, and Matheus de Sancto Johanne, who in 1368 was in the service of Queen Philippa.²⁸⁹

Dedicatory works

Many links between composer and patron have been made on the evidence of pieces dedicated to specific persons or events. This kind of evidence takes centre stage with composers such as Solage and Trebor for whom it is not yet possible to demonstrate definite identification or find any other biographical evidence.

Jean de Berry employed Poullet (**Ox**), Legrant (**Ox**), Cesaris, Grenon, Charite and de Bosco in Bourges, and maintained links with Machaut, Altacuria, Vaillant, and Cuvelier.²⁹⁰ His second wedding with Jeanne de Boulogne in 1389 is considered the impetus for a network of songs, including works by Solage, Egidius Augustinus, Trebor, Franciscus and anonymous compositions, making it an important point of contact between composers.²⁹¹ The wedding also brought Berry into close contact with Gaston Fébus of Foix (who was the legal guardian of his new bride). Fébus' extensive musical links have led some musicologists to believe that **Ch** originated in his or his successor's court.²⁹²

²⁸⁹ See Wathey, 'The Peace', pp. 156-7 (de Molins), 146, 151, 167-8 (Alani), and 144-151 (Sancto Johanne).

²⁹⁰ Higgins, 'Music and Musicians', pp. 689-94. Berry's links with Machaut and ownership of **MachE** are discussed in Margaret Bent, 'The Machaut Manuscripts Vg, B and E', *MD*, xxxvii (1983), pp. 53-82, esp. p. 61. He also employed Fontaine and other musicians associated with other styles. The separation between *Ars subtilior* and *International* style are not always clear cut. See, for example, the reworking of Fontaine and Grenon's work by Matteo da Perugia and the discussion of works which add *Ars subtilior* voices to later-sounding compositions on pp. 136-40 below.

²⁹¹ This occasion is extensively dealt with in Plumley, 'An 'Episode'', pp. 130-160.

²⁹² See overview in Plumley and Stone, *Codex Chantilly*, pp. 112-3, especially the views of Gombosi, Reaney, and Green. Anonymous songs and motets, as well as works by Grimace, Franciscus, Cuvelier and Trebor are dedicated to Gaston Fébus, Trebor also dedicated one song to his heir Mathieu. See also Yolanda Plumley and Uri Smilansky, 'Béarn', in David Wallace, *Regeneration: A Literary History of Europe, 1348-1418* (Oxford University Press, Forthcoming). For hints concerning performance at Fébus' court see footnote 241.

Still, one has to consider the possibility that dedicatory and commemorative works do not necessarily imply a physical presence or personal link. A dedicated song can be sent as a musical gift,²⁹³ a political calling card, or a propaganda tool. A work extolling one of the rival popes, for instance, may be more useful for diplomatic negotiations with secular authorities which have not yet declared obedience or are willing to swap allegiance than within a loyal curia. A song commemorating an event can therefore be written in preparation for it, during the event itself, or at any time after it took place. Retrospective composition is most clearly seen in laments such as Senleches' *Fuions de ci* on the death of Queen Eleanor of Castile and F. Andrieu's *Armes amours – O flour* on the death of Machaut, or Blasius' *Ore pandulfum* describing the Malatesta pilgrimage of 1399 to the Holy Land. Their role as dedicatory songs would not be diminished had they been written at an allied (rather than immediate) court, by a composer who had no personal link with the works' subject, and subsequently performed elsewhere. There is no reason to assume that each and every dedicated work was ever heard by the person (or at the event) to which it refers.

References, citations and ascription – poetry, literature, music

Textual links or literary references and descriptions are also widely used to link people to each other, to occurrences or to places. When it is possible to disconnect such references from artistic constraint and conventions or from any political or personal agenda, they can be taken at face value. Cuvelier's disparaging comments on the musical habits of the royal house of Portugal (where Hasprois and Salinis were at times documented),²⁹⁴ or Cordier's statement, appended to his *Tout par compass* (**Ch**, f. 12), that he was from Reims could perhaps be seen as such cases. Other, more literary references can be more problematic. Many instances of medieval name-dropping can be seen as conveyors of *auctoritas* or as adhering to convention where factual exactness is secondary. Martin le Franc's assertion that Cesaris, Carmen and Tapissier amazed Paris with their music certainly attests to their fame and to an exposure of their music within some Parisian circles. It does not in itself indicate that one or all of them spent substantial periods of time there, or even that le Franc's knowledge of their work is personal or direct. The attribution in some later copies of the

²⁹³ Musical gifts were not uncommon. The Savoy-Lusignan wedding of 1434 involved not only the presentation of **Cyp** as part of Anne's dowry, but also the performance of a pair of blind fiddle players sent as a gift by the absent Duchess of Burgundy. For the possible use of songs by Senleches as musical gifts see Strohm, "La harpe de mélodie", pp. 308 and 311-2.

²⁹⁴ See Maricarmen Gómez, 'Les musiciens du roi de Portugal: une mention de Jacquemart le Cuvelier', *RM*, lxxiii (1987), pp. 99-106, and Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 87-8.

Tractatus figurarum to Philipoctus da Caserta and of the **Berk** Treatise to Goscalch can be seen in the same light.²⁹⁵ They are as likely (if not more) to be a stamp of approval or an attempt to show authority as they are a result of a better informed scribe adding to his original text. The example of Prudenzi's *Il Saporetto* (see footnote 241 above) is also relevant here, as it cannot be determined how and why he chose to mention the works he did, and whether this choice was influenced by non-factual constraints such as rhyme-scheme, length or any other technical or aesthetic preference.

The act of borrowing and reworking existing musical or textual materials necessarily imposes some kind of technical and aesthetic relationship between the old and the new work. As it seems that the concept of quotation involved assimilation into, rather than friction with the new work, the citing composer has either to adapt his new songs to his chosen pre-given material, or find suitable quotation material which fits his song's structural, harmonic and thematic backdrop.²⁹⁶ This should warn us against the idea that the materials we find quoted in new compositions are necessarily representative of the entirety of materials available to the composer when he decided to engage with this technique. Borrowing may demonstrate more than a familiarity by the composer of the new work with the older composition. In a culture which did not revolve around the composer it is likely that quotations were intended to be recognised by the target audience, and therefore represent the musical currency also of non-specialists. While a group of related compositions may indicate a common origin,²⁹⁷ quotations do not necessarily imply a personal meeting between the two composers: it is highly unlikely that Matteo da Perugia ever met Machaut, a fact that did not stop him in engaging with some extensive citations of the old master's songs. This technique is therefore potentially one-sided, and in more borderline cases, or when one song is anonymous, it can be hard to determine the direction of the citation.

²⁹⁵ See Schreur, *The Tractatus Figurarum*, pp. 3-9 and Ellsworth, *The Berkeley Manuscript*, pp. 13-5, and Di Bacco, 'The myth'.

²⁹⁶ A quoted line of text has to be incorporated into the rhyme-scheme. Most musical quotations are incorporated within songs which use the same mode and mensuration as the original, and many also use unifying melodic and rhythmic ideas to link old and new sections. A good example of such a song is *Dame qui fut* (**PR**, f. 56v), mentioned as an example of cross-citation p. 57 above, which seamlessly interacts with Machaut's *De Fortune*, even using the ending of Machaut's first line as the *clos* cadence of the A section, creating a musical rhyme between *clos* cadence and refrain. Another piece which uses the same technique with Machaut's *Se je me pleing* (*Ma dame m'a congie*, **Ch**, f. 14v) also takes on mensuration and motifs from the older work, but fails to incorporate the quoted material into the normal repetitive structure or a unified modal context. Interestingly, when Matteo da Perugia quoted Machaut's *De Fortune* (*Se je me plaing*, **ModA**, f. 42v-3), he made sure the modality and mensuration of his new work fitted the quoted material, but made no attempt to conceal the borrowing by adjusting his melodic, harmonic or rhythmic style to the old song.

²⁹⁷ See Plumley, 'Citation and Allusion' for the *En attendant* group of songs.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, ascriptions are invaluable to scholars attempting to contextualise music in society. Sadly, the amount of anonymous music coupled with cases of conflicting or incorrect ascriptions mark even this fundamental evidence as potentially unreliable.

This is most evident in areas which can be regarded as peripheral to the *Ars subtilior*. It was already pointed out that German-speaking courts and musicians seemed to have incorporated *Ars subtilior* materials into a different tradition.²⁹⁸ Still, on the borders with the French speaking world one can find more active participation in *Ars subtilior* related activities, such as the work of Laufenburg/Libero Castro (**Str**) and Hessmann (**Str**) in the Upper Rhineland, and of Johannes Barbla (**Erfurt**) in Aachen.²⁹⁹ Some of the consistent patterns of false ascription in **Str** clearly suggest a gap between fame and knowledge. It seems that the scribe recognised Machaut as a name of a famous musical *auctoritas*, and proceeded to attribute all of the most popular songs of the period to him.³⁰⁰ This lack of real knowledge of Machaut's output manifests itself in the lack of ascription for any of Machaut's songs in this source.³⁰¹

In most cases, though, one can suppose that ascription patterns are a direct result of personal knowledge in the case of local production, or the quality and availability of exemplars of further removed music.³⁰² Unascribed music probably attests a lack of knowledge rather than an intentional decision on the part of the scribe to hold back information. The reworking and additions of ascriptions in **Ch** can be read as signs of the availability of new exemplars or later input by a more knowledgeable hand.³⁰³

²⁹⁸ This still demonstrates a degree of exposure and interest, See pp. 70 and 192-3.

²⁹⁹ German musicians are documented throughout Europe, again implying that the cultural distinction did not necessarily correlate with national and lingual ones.

³⁰⁰ *Che qui vol pener (De ce que foul pense)* by P. de Molins (f. 36v); *Jour an jor la vie (Jour a jour la vie)* anon. (f. 48); *Par mainter foys (Par maintes foys)* by Johannes Vaillant (ff. 65v-66). Popularity here manifested by an exceptionally large number of concordances, see p. 63 above and case study 4, pp. 248-78 below.

³⁰¹ *De Fortune* (f. 66v); *Se vous n'estes* (f. 73); *De toute flours* (f. 95v). For more on the ascription pattern of Machaut's work outside his collected-works manuscripts see footnote 47.

³⁰² For hints at personal involvement or knowledge see the ascription of works by Matteo da Perugia in **ModA** and **Parma**, or to Paolo Tenorista in **Pit**. For Matteo see Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 52-60, and for Paolo, see Reaney, 'The Manuscript Paris', pp. 34-5. An interesting case in this regard may be the ascription pattern in **PR**, where the early Italian layer contains only four ascribed songs, and that to otherwise little known or completely obscure composers, the early French sections no ascription, and the later layer has ascriptions for only eight works.

³⁰³ See Plumley and Stone, *Codex Chantilly*, pp. 143-52

Personal and administrative documentation

Having no artistic pretention or public, non-legalistic appeal, documents such as payrolls, letters and court proceedings are more trustworthy from a factual point of view. Sadly, as explained above in the context of the professional demands from chaplains (p. 89), they do not tend to refer to specific music-making. Apart from direct employment, other important sources of information include the supplications for benefices, acquisition of private property, private and official correspondence, and other one-off payments or brushes with the legal authority.

The statistical importance of patterns of requesting and obtaining benefices is comparable to that of birth-place. Particularly when retirement was considered, it is not difficult to imagine that musicians would have searched for benefices in familiar places, perhaps in their homelands. A well studied case of such a concentration of benefices held by musicians is that of Laon cathedral.³⁰⁴ In her study, Plumley identifies no fewer than 18 musicians holding a benefice there during the period of the Schism, including Watignies and six other identified composers. These were leading musicians of the day, many of them serving extended periods in the most prestigious courts, including those of the Papal curia, Burgundy, Berry and Aragon.³⁰⁵

Some important correspondences were already mentioned in the context of the Aragonese court (p. 94 above). The dedication of time and effort by the highest aristocracy to their musical personnel demonstrates the status and importance of their activities. As these correspondences tend to be dated and archived, they provide us with clear details of specific links between the persons involved or discussed. Still, such letter-exchanges tend to treat specific occurrences without exploring their background or context (which would have been clear to the original correspondents). Many times they give partial information, or refer to future plans, some of which perhaps never materialised. It is exceedingly rare to find in them any hints concerning specific stylistic phenomena.

³⁰⁴ See, Plumley, 'Musicians at Laon'.

³⁰⁵ The six composers are Fleury, Haucourt, Grenon, Benoit (**Ox**), Charite and Hulin (**Apt**). The fact that many of them were local to the area strengthens the potential importance of north-west France and the Low Countries as a central component in the dissemination of and education in styles preceding the so-called *International* style. The importance of this area is also highlighted by Tomasello, both in terms of the origins of the papal singers of Avignon, and the distribution of their benefices. See Tomasello, *Music and Ritual*, pp. 206-15.

Single, one-off payments are useful in tracing musicians' travels, as well as demonstrating the musical sphere of influence of specific courts. An example of the extent of such travels can be seen by the relatively frequent payments to the musicians of Giangaleazzo Visconti made by the Grand Master of the Teutonic knights, and attests to their appearance before the German Emperor.³⁰⁶ None of these payments refer to musicians by name or hint at the kind of music performed (interestingly, the instrument played is sometimes specified) making the relevance of these occasions to the *Ars subtilior* uncertain. As far as we can tell, it is just as likely to have been Jaquet de Noyon showing off his subtle compositions, as it was a *balli* expert offering dance accompaniment in the purely Italian style.

The history and use of musical manuscripts

The history of manuscript sources is mostly independent of the persons responsible for their content. Composers may not have been aware of collections in which they are represented. Once such a collection was created, its durability, mobility and status-giving qualities gave it the potential to have a larger sphere of influence for a longer period than did the activities of some composers during their lifespan. While Machaut's writing made him a famous personality in his lifetime, it is his books which allowed his work to be appreciated in Aragon in the 1380s.³⁰⁷ While there is no known evidence to suggest that Senleches travelled to Italy, the inclusion of his works in **Ch**, **ModA**, **PR**, **Chic** and **PadB** allowed his work to live on and be influential in the north Italian cultural orbit.

As for locations for the copying of manuscripts, the importance of Florence should be extended to include the possible compilation of **Ch** as well as the copying of **FP**, **SL** and **Pit**. The Veneto is also important in this context as **Ox**, **Q15**, **PR** and possibly **Bov** originated there.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ On the leading role the Viscontis played in the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon, see the following discussion, as well as pp. 94, 105 and 107-8. For the musical activities in the Teutonic headquarters of Malbork/Marienburg see Paweł Gancarczyk, 'The Musical Culture of the Teutonic Order in Prussia in the Late Middle Ages: Music in the Marienburger Tresslerbuch (1399-1409)', (forthcoming). For Giangaleazzo's imperial ambitions see Eric Russell Chamberlin, *The Count of Virtue. Giangaleazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan* (New York, 1965).

³⁰⁷ For the Aragonese context see p. 94-5 above.

³⁰⁸ For **Ch** See p. 59 above; for other Florentine sources see John Nádas, 'Song Collections in Late Medieval Florence', in Angelo Pompilio, Donatella Restani, Lorenzo Bianconi and F. Alberto Gallo (eds), *Atti del XIV congresso della Società Internazionale di Musicologia, Bologna, 27 agosto – 1 settembre 1987, Ferrara – Parma, 30 agosto 1987*, i (Round Tables) (Torino, 1990), pp. 126-35. Many other important Trecento sources were compiled there, and the city also hosted the activities of Andrea da Firenze, Antonio da Cividale, Corrado da Pistoia and possibly Johannes de Janua; for sources from the Veneto see Fallows, *Oxford, Bodleian*

We have knowledge of the early history of only a few of our central manuscripts. Some tantalising possibilities concerning **Ch** have already been mentioned, as well as the formal entrance of **Cyp** into western European circulation.³⁰⁹ The Burgundian and Visconti libraries were also important, with the identification of **Trém** in the former, and the inclusion of many musical and textual sources pertaining to the *Ars subtilior* in the latter. Machaut manuscripts seemed to be available in a number of leading French courts including the royal library and those of the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy. It is harder to determine the actual use of such sources, the degree of access working musicians had to them, or the speed with which their contents became obsolete.³¹⁰

The Burgundian dukes were famed for their musical patronage. At one time or another, they employed Cordier, Tapissier, Chassa, Climen (**Str**), Altacuria, Grenon, Benoit, Cesaris, Carmen and Perrinet, with other known composers (Egardus, Royllart, Hugo Boy Monachus (**Lei**) and Gemblanco) demonstrating links to their sphere of influence.³¹¹ Inventories of their library, taken in 1404, 1405 and 1420 give a picture of the music readily available for use there.³¹² The 1420 inventory includes a reference to the continuous use of **Trém** (or a source much like it) for feast days, implying the relevance of older music also in up-to-date, composer-rich centres. Sadly, it is impossible to say whether only the main religious corpus was re-used, or whether the secular insertions were also still deemed to be of interest some half a century after their composition.

Should we therefore consider every chaplain in Burgundy as familiar with or a practical participant in *Ars subtilior* performance, or every one of Berry's musicians as familiar with Machaut's oeuvre? Should we expect that as famous musicians in attendance at the 1434 Savoy-Lusignan wedding, Dufay and Binchois would have had access to **Cyp** on its arrival in Europe?

Library, p. 4, or for more specific Paduan sources see Cuthbert, *Trecento Fragments*, pp. 92-4. On **Boy**, see Ziino, *The Codex T. III. 2*, esp. p. 110-1.

³⁰⁹ See pp. 61 and 112.

³¹⁰ For **Trém** in Burgundy see Wright, *Music at the court of Burgundy*, pp. 147-58, and Bent, 'A Note on the Dating', p. 218; for the wide-ranging activities of the Viscontis see Nádas and Ziino, *The Lucca Codex*, pp. 34-49; on the Machaut manuscripts of the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy see footnote 290 above and Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, p. 48 or Wright, *Music at the court of Burgundy*, pp. 140, 142 and 146-7 respectively.

³¹¹ Some of these identifications are rather tentative, including Cordier as Fresnel and Chassa as Hulin. See Wright, *Music at the Court of Burgundy*, pp. 132-4 and 60 respectively.

³¹² Wright, *Music at the Court of Burgundy*, pp. 140-7.

Apart from on official occasions, it is difficult to determine whether ordinary musicians would have had access to their patrons' manuscripts. Most musicians may not have had the freedom, will or even notational knowledge to explore their patron's manuscripts above and beyond the practical demands of their duties. After all, some of these collections were sumptuous and expensive presentation copies, not designed for the use of household employees. The business of collecting and producing diverse and exotic cultural phenomena was not necessarily concerned with current, popular styles. The Visconti library inventory of 1426 for instance, contained 87 French and five Occitan manuscripts. While some of these were modern collections of new texts, others were new versions of old romances or indeed very old books.³¹³ The persistent interest in and collection of Troubadour and Trouvère manuscripts throughout the fourteenth century is a good example of the possible gap between local and current cultural production and the interest of bookmakers and collectors.³¹⁴

iii. Interpretation

Much of Chapter 1 was dedicated to the interaction between modern society and scholarship. It highlighted the different ways in which materials are interpreted by different people in varying contexts, and the resulting gap between the original evidence and our filtered understanding of it. In this section I will examine inherent interpretational difficulties which are not the result of a unique context, but are unavoidable in historically-oriented research. In the examples of each difficulty a specific context will then be used to demonstrate its workings in practice.

Intensity of analysis

The degree to which specific courts, objects, places or persons attracted scholarly attention cannot be expected to accurately parallel their medieval centrality and importance. On the most basic of levels, scholarship tends to work with whatever survives, then with what we know is lost, and only as a final resort with what we are not sure ever existed. As detailed above (pp. 85-91), our records suffer from many lacunae, and there are incompatibilities

³¹³ See Keith Busby, *Codex and Context, Reading Old French Narrative in Manuscript* (Rodopi B.V.; Amsterdam, New York, 2002), vol. 1, pp. 776-82, esp. 778-9 for the Visconti acquisition of an early fourteenth century book at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

³¹⁴ See F. Alberto Gallo, *Music in the Castle, Troubadours, Books, and Orators in Italian Courts of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (University of Chicago press, 1995), p. 54 for Giangaleazzo's additions of Provençal poetry to the Visconti library, and Chapter 1 for a more general survey of the dissemination of the troubadour poetry and music in Italy, or Haines, *Eight Centuries*, pp. 21-3 for lists of musical collections of troubadour and trouvère repertoires, most of which was collected retrospectively, and many times far removed from this music's original sphere of influence.

between the information we are looking for and that which medieval writers found necessary or useful to document. These two factors create a situation in which we cannot establish a coherent and complete contour of medieval activity and importance, let alone follow it in our attempt to reconstruct a past musical culture.

Patterns in research also follow present-day accessibility of the surviving materials. The degree of accessibility to sources, availability of editions, including the creation of printed or online databases, all influence the intensity with which different topics are engaged. This is as relevant today with the development of digital resources as it was during the first years of medieval musicology with the order and location of the resurfacing of the medieval manuscripts themselves.³¹⁵ A related phenomenon is student-teacher relationships, which can, under certain circumstances and in certain educational systems, lead to the perpetuation and entrenchment of certain attitudes and directions of study, as Leech-Wilkinson has recently suggested in the case of 1950s Germany.³¹⁶

Popular as well as scientific interest tends to concentrate on identifiable, central personalities or occasions, and pay less attention to the anonymous and marginal. This tends to lead to an eagerness to attribute anonymous works to named composers and geographic or temporal meeting points. An example is *Le mont Aon* (**Ch**, f. 22v), which displays sequential and harmonic elements also found in parts of the oeuvre of Solage (most notably *Fumeux fume*, **Ch**, f. 59). This has led to a musicological consensus that this anonymous work should be seen as part of Solage's oeuvre. Plumley's assertion that this work is part of the group of compositions related to the Berry wedding of 1389, to which Solage contributed other songs, seemed to strengthen this notion, even though it is known that a number of other composers (and the famous anonymous) also contributed works to that occasion.³¹⁷ However, Solage wrote music of very different characters, ranging from the very simple (*Tres gentil cuer*, **Ch** f. 50v), to the notationally extravagant (*S'aincy estoit*, **Ch** f. 36). It is just as likely that the

³¹⁵ See pp. 28-32 and 47-8 above for the different intensity of work on **Ch** and **Cyp**, and the impetus for their facsimile editions, as well as for the renewed interest in this music following the publication of notation books or editions. For ongoing selective or partial web-databases www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/MMDB, www.diamm.ac.uk or the new text database *Je chante ung chant: An Archive of Medieval French Lyrics* (see <http://jechanteungchant.org.uk>)

³¹⁶ See Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, p. 185.

³¹⁷ See Plumley, 'An 'Episode'', pp. 130-60, the affiliation of this song with Solage is repeated on p. 155. This composers' oeuvre and style is considered more fully in Gilles Dulong, 'En relisant Solage', in Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone (eds), *A Late Medieval Songbook and its Context: New Perspectives on the Chantilly Codex* (Bibliothèque du Château de Chantilly, Ms 564) (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), pp. 45-61.

compiler of **Ch** included an anonymous piece which included stylistic traits he appreciated, as it is that he copied additional works by Solage without ascribing them. If we imagine *Le mont Aon* as being by some other composer, who had contact with Solage during Berry's 1389 wedding, there is nothing to prevent us from considering the similarities detected to be a reaction of one composer to the other. Indeed, this should be expected as textual and musical homage and borrowing characterises the entire group of songs written for this occasion, including the ascribed ones. As virtually nothing is known about Solage or the composer of *Le mont Aon*, it is impossible to determine which came first. If we see the ascriptions of the works of Solage as a sign of his involvement in the subsequent circulation of this group of songs (or at least as a testimony that whomever did circulate them had an awareness of Solage's output), it seems unlikely that he would not have taken credit also for *Le mont Aon* if he was indeed its composer. Thus, the appearance and perhaps circulation of the un-ascribed *Le mont Aon* together with the wedding songs ascribed to Solage may serve to weaken the attribution of this song to him.

Another important meeting point, to which many ideas, contacts and sources are as a matter of course connected, is the Council of Pisa, and by extension the Pisan papacy. Stone considers the Council as the direct spur for a group of Latin songs in **ModA** by Bartolomeo da Bononia, Corrado da Pistoia, and Zachara da Teramo, as well as a celebratory motet by Salinis. The likelihood that its environs were the most likely place for the compilation of **ModA**, **Ch** and **PR** is suggested above.³¹⁸ Even from the relatively meagre surviving documentation relating to the earlier musical patronage given by Pietro Filargo (the first Pisan Pope, who took the name of Alexander V), his strong links with Matteo da Perugia as well as Himbertus de Salinis are clear, and a shared context with Johannes de Janua and Blasuis is implied.³¹⁹ His ties with the University of Paris as well as the Visconti court make him an important connecting figure, versed in a number of pan-European traditions. Both Ciconia and Zachara dedicated works to him.

The cross-road conditions surrounding the Pisan council are evident, making it an ideal place for intellectual and cultural meetings and exchanges, both of ideas and materials. This

³¹⁸ See Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 69-75 and 87-8, as well as pp. 59-62 above.

³¹⁹ See Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 60-90, especially p. 83 where she suggests that all the group of unique Italian compositions were written, "ca. 1400-1410 in Lombardy and in the ambitus of the Pisan Pope". On the careers of Matteo da Perugia and Filargo see Stone, *Writing Rhythm*, pp. 44-51.

makes it look like the most likely candidate when trying to find a location for many specific histories and developments. When looking at each case in isolation this offers no problem, but when stepping back and looking at the style as a whole, the suspicion arises that a historical imbalance may occur, especially when each identification is based on partial and fragmentary evidence. It may happen that a single event, person or location will always seem to be the best candidate. This can even be due to a lack of specific knowledge. Our knowledge of the Pisan council suggests much scope for musical activity, but is too vague to allow us to discount any specific affiliation. It is hard to believe that with the plethora of political, cultural and personal links demonstrable at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries, a single event is responsible for such a large proportion of cultural exchange.

It so transpires that at present, the musical activities at the courts of Burgundy and Aragon have been extensively researched, while those in the courts of the many cardinals of the period are relatively untouched.³²⁰ The literary *fumeur* society, to which two songs in **Ch** are dedicated, has attracted much attention while the musical activity of *L'arbre sec*, attested to by another song in the same source, did not.³²¹ Papal archives have been examined with a fine-toothed comb, while additional leaves of **Luc** keep turning up in the library of Lucca, archives like the one in Cividale have not been given much musicological consideration, and private collections remain inaccessible. A small number of central figures, places and occasions are assigned singular importance as 'best candidates', thus simplifying (and by extension marginalising) this cultural force as a whole.

Intentionality

As both modern scholarship and medieval production inhabit a context, it is all but impossible to avoid at least a degree of non-musical ideological or cultural influence on their products, be it conscious and manipulative or unconscious and benign.

³²⁰ One example for a composer working only in such courts and not moving on to patronage from higher members of religious or secular society can be found in Jean Jordan de Fleury who settled as a canon at Laon cathedral (1385 to his death in 1409) after serving cardinal Jean de Turre in 1374, the bishop of Langres in 1378 and cardinal Hugues de St-Martial in 1385. See Plumley, 'Musicians at Laon', p. 24.

³²¹ The *Fumeur* songs are Hasprois/Noyon *Puis que je sui fumeux* (**Ch**, f. 34v), and Solage's *Fumeur fume* (**Ch**, f. 59). *L'arbre sec* is evoked in Sozoy's *A l'arbre sec* (**Ch**, f. 52v). For work relating to the *Fumeur* see Patricia Unruh, 'Fumeur' *Poetry and Music of the Chantilly Codex: A Study of its Meaning and Background* (PhD. diss. for The University of British Columbia, 1983) or Lefferts, 'Subtilitas in the Tonal Language'.

As explained above (pp. 24-9), medieval musicology has from its very origins been divided along linguistic and political boundaries, with modern political events influencing the attitudes and assignment of worth to the cultural past. Such manipulation and de-legitimizing of entire periods and repertoires has receded from more recent scholarship, but institutional structures, funding possibilities, and simple interest in the immediate and the local, still make language and geography influential in scholarly undertakings.³²² The artifice of such division is further highlighted by the lack of correspondence between medieval political and linguistic boundaries and those of today.

Parallel fields of study are also influential in directing musicological scholarship – the deeply ingrained perception of the Dukes of Burgundy and Berry as instrumental in shaping the new fashions in the visual arts associated with fifteenth century culture, was paralleled in music history through an emphasis on their nurturing of musical talent representing the newer *International* style rather than their consumption of the older *Ars subtilior* repertoire.³²³

The different reasons for collecting and producing *Ars subtilior* music can be seen as different kinds of medieval intentionality. The Visconti courts of Milan and Pavia are other locations proposed for the origin of **ModA** and **Ch**, and the nurturing of the entire *Ars subtilior* style.³²⁴ The imperial ambitions of Giangaleazzo Visconti were certainly mirrored in the feverish cultural activity in his court, and it is clear that some of this activity related to the *Ars subtilior*. Philipoctus da Caserta, Ciconia, Antonello and Solage dedicated works to various members of the Visconti family, and Jaquet de Noyon was directly employed by Giangaleazzo. The famous historiated Pavian version of *La harpe de melodie* (**Chic**, f. 10) suggests at least that some works by Senleches circulated there. **Lon***, a Visconti collection of lyrics (apparently originally set to music) also includes texts of songs by Matteo da Perugia and Johannes de Janua found in **ModA**.³²⁵ A further text manuscript (**Amb***)

³²² Courses taught in English-speaking universities for example, tend to put less emphasis on incorporating scholarship in other languages than do their counterparts in Germany.

³²³ See Higgins, 'Music and Musicians' p. 689 on the the gap between the appreciation of the artistic and musical legacy of Jean de Berry.

³²⁴ See Strohm, *The Rise*, pp. 59-60; 'Filippotto da Caserta, ovvero in francesi in Lombardia', in Fabrizio della Seta and Franco Piperno (eds), *In cantu et in sermone: A Nino Pirrotta nel suo 80° compleanno* (Florence, 1989), 65-74; 'Diplomatic Relationships between the Chantilly Codex and Cividale Fragments?', in Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone (eds), *A Late Medieval Songbook and its Context: New Perspectives on the Chantilly Codex (Bibliothèque du Château de Chantilly, Ms 564)* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), pp. 229-43.; Bent, 'Early Papal Motets', p. 20, 27-8, and Nadas and Ziino, *The Lucca Codex*, pp. 34-49 who affiliate also **Luc** to the Visconti.

³²⁵ See Plumley, 'Crossing Borderlines', pp. 13-5, where Solage's links to this source are also examined.

suggests familiarity with works by Zachara da Teramo.³²⁶ The Visconti also offered patronage to Pietro Filargo and the Malatesta, suggesting contact with further composers, as well as the potential availability of musical materials. Filargo's musical links have already been discussed above.³²⁷ The Malatesta employed one Nicholas, suggested by some to be identified as Nucella, and had dedicatory songs written for them by Blasius and Bartolomeo da Bologna.³²⁸ The Visconti also supported much indigenous cultural and musical production, and collected varied curiosities including antiquated music and literature.³²⁹

The Visconti eagerness for multiculturalism may well have been genuine, but it does seem to suggest a link with their more general international pretensions which were manifested in their pursuit of familial and feudal allegiances. Showing mastery of both local and foreign musical styles could thus be seen as part of a political agenda involving the assertion of legitimacy to their subjects combined with the demand for recognition as worthy by their prospective allies. This can be contrasted with both the Aragonese attitude, which seemed to have been participative, genuine, constant, and unrelated to the political and cultural implications of favouring one taste over another, and the attitude of the Cypriot Lusignans, who made use of French music in the face of local culture as part of a 'colonial' effort.³³⁰

The problem of identification

Problems with the materials and their interpretation unite in the frequent difficulty experienced in coupling composers' names with historical figures. Here again the problems are compound. An entire group of composers' names were at some point considered to be pseudonyms. These include Cordier, Borlet, Trebor, Grimace, S Uciredor, and Solage, certain of which are more plausible than others. If these are pseudonyms, the chances of identification in non-musical documents are diminished, since these pseudonyms may not

³²⁶ See David Fallows (review), 'The Lucca Codex (Codex Mancini)', *EM*, xix (1991), pp. 119-123, esp. p. 121, and Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 74-75 (Zachara) and 81 (Matteo and Janua), where a privately owned **Visconti*** source from around 1390, which replicates **Lon*** but shows even stronger ties to the Visconti, is also mentioned.

³²⁷ See p. 105 above. Filargo's links with the Visconti were strongest during his period as Bishop of Milan.

³²⁸ For Blasius' dedicated song to the Malatesta and their links with the Visconti see Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 75-8. On Bartholomeus see Gilbert Reaney, 'The Italian Contribution to the Manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon Misc. 213', in F. Alberto Gallo (ed.), *L' Ars Nova Italiana del Trecento III: Secondo Convegno Internazionale 17-22 luglio 1969 sotto il patrocinio della Società Internazionale di Musicologia* (Certaldo, 1970), pp. 443-64, esp. 453-4.

³²⁹ See p. 103 above.

³³⁰ See pp. 94 and 100 for Aragon, and 61 and 299-300 for Cyprus.

have been used as regular nicknames (as was the case with Zachara), or deemed unsuitable for use in official or legal context.

Another common difficulty encountered is inconsistency in the spelling and form of names, which is complicated further when these are translated into different languages. Thus, while Hasprois' forenames are common and easy to recognise in translation (Johannes Symonis – Jehan Simon), his surname appears also as de Haspre, de Haspra, de Aspre, Asproys and Haprose. As has already been mentioned (footnote 47), even direct translation of common names like Haucourt to Altacuria can (in combination with other factors) throw modern scholars off the scent and cause mis-ascriptions.³³¹

It is also not uncommon to be able to affiliate a composer's name from a musical source with more than one historical figure. Alternatively, even when only one identification is found, many times it remains tentative or inconclusive. Valhant, Goscalch, Franchiscus, Prunet/Perneth/Perrinet, Sertis/Sortes, Cordier, Chassa, J de Climen, Johannes de Janua, Taillander, Nucella, Pykini, Alani, Trebor, Rodericus, Fleury, Benoit and Zeltenpferd (**Str**) were all attached to more than one historical figure at one time or another.³³² Pykini is now believed to have worked for Wenceslas I of Luxembourg and Brabant, while holding a canonry in Brussels. Other attempts at identification affiliated him with Cardinal Guy de Boulogne, Jean II of France and Charles II of Navarre.³³³ That such wide-ranging variety exists for a large group of composers should remind us of the fragile character of the overall picture we are able to construct.

Some surviving names, such as Chipre and Defronciaco, only imply geographic affiliations but otherwise remain elusive. Blasius, Depansis, Garinus, Guymont, Cornelius (**Str**), Graneti, Jehan Lebeuf d'Abberville & Pontieu, Meruco, Loys, Marcus (**FP**), Orles, Petrus Fabri, Sale, Tanel (**Bol596**) and Tristani (**Bol596**) remain for the time being completely obscure. A number of ascriptions, many appearing in **Apt**, may not refer to a composer's name at all. Some, like Bombarde and Chassa, may refer to the character of the piece, while others, like Baralipton, may turn out to be unexplained pneumonic devices.

³³¹ For different names and their meaning, see Tomasello, 'Notes biographiques'.

³³² For such a difficulty even within a narrow context see Plumley, 'Musicians at Laon', footnote 10 (p. 22), where it is mentioned that Jean de Berry employed simultaneously two men named Charite.

³³³ See p. 93 above.

Some have even been suggested to be a technical separation-device between consecutive settings of identical texts (Sortes, Depansis).³³⁴

In attempting to assess the suitability of possible identifications, many modern constructs have to be used. Some, like Apel's stylistic timeline based on his belief in the cyclical conception of historical development, can have their credibility and relevance challenged if the tools used in their reasoning are considered no longer applicable.³³⁵

Here again we encounter the problem of anonymity. Anonymous works were all composed by someone somewhere. It is safe to assume that while some are by composers already known to us, others are not. Looked at from the opposite perspective, it is also reasonable to suppose that the surviving music is not necessarily a representative sample of most composers' output, and that cases of erroneous ascriptions have slipped under our radar as no means of their corroboration exists. Those works by Machaut which appear outside his own manuscripts are instructive here. If we had to base our evaluation of Machaut's music only on these appearances, we would only have five surviving ascriptions to him, three of which are wrong.³³⁶ We can also postulate that at least some of the many identified musicians for whom no concrete evidence as to their practical activities survive, also contributed to this style as performers, composers or distributors.

Chronology

Considering the different problems with our knowledge and its interpretation, it is hard to establish definite timeframes for the *Ars subtilior* style, let alone a linear developmental theory to contain it. One may even ask whether the concept of unconscious developmentalism is at all relevant in such a self-aware cultural context. We may decide to think instead of changing, revitalising, repeating fashions and preferences, reacting to time, place and context.³³⁷

³³⁴ See Tomasello, 'Notes biographiques' pp. 269-272.

³³⁵ See pp. 31-3 above and Upton's critique of Apel's ideas in *The Chantilly Codex*, pp. 134-58.

³³⁶ The two correct ones in **Ch**, the wrong ones in **Str**. See footnote 47 and p. 99 above.

³³⁷ On the happy coexistence of new, local songs with old, foreign ones in **ModA** see Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, p. 96-7.

A few researchers offered lists of datable works.³³⁸ This helps in giving an historical picture, but is problematic for a number of reasons. Apart from the vagrancy of survival, one should consider that only a certain kind of work (mostly dedicated ones) tends to be datable, and are not therefore representative in either general production or copying-patterns. It is possible to compare two occasions for which we believe we have connected works (for example the Berry-Boulogne wedding and the council of Pisa), examining the difference in character between them in order to define a process of change. While being alluring, this technique has the potential danger of massaging occurrences into temporal and stylistic linearity, disregarding the specific political, personal and geographical influences surrounding each event. There is no reason to believe that works written in the orbit of an extraordinary event and fed by the meeting and exchange of materials between leading cultural practitioners are in any way representative of their surrounding, everyday culture. It will therefore be hard to deduce from them any general cultural shifts.

We can trace meaningful sections of the careers of only a minority of relevant composers. Even within these tentative contours, we have no way of dating non-dedicated compositions. While the combination of all these partial segments of information can give an overall impression, with *Ars subtilior* related activities stretching over a period of at least five or six decades, this picture remains rather hazy. A consideration of its inner-workings requires more knowledge and further research, even in order to base a general trend on more solid ground.³³⁹

This story can be complicated even further. Throughout the Middle-Ages, there exists a discrepancy between the time and context of the composition and of the copying of music.³⁴⁰ The appearance of *Ars subtilior* works in later collections demonstrates that they were considered relevant even without their immediate context. Compilers must have thought

³³⁸ To those mentioned already in footnote 141 above should be added Günther, 'Datierbare Balladen' I & II; Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 112-31; Plumley and Stone, *Codex Chantilly*, pp. 184-200.

³³⁹ For the possibility of stretching the limits of the *Ars subtilior* in both directions see pp. 63-5 above. Among the specific dates which support this claim are the 1369 completion date of Vaillant's *Dame doucement – Douz amis* given in **Ch** (f. 26v), and the reading of Matteo's *Pres du soloil* (**ModA**, f. 16) as referring to 1426 at the earliest in Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 102-6. If one includes related theoretical writings (**Boen** for example), one can push the boundaries even further. See also pp. 198 below. A useful discussion of difficulties with dating music appears in Günther, 'Problems of Dating'. A demonstration of the permeability of our timelines, which change with the advances in scholarship, can be found in Bent, 'A Note on the Dating'.

³⁴⁰ See for instance the production of Trouvère and Troubadour manuscripts and the content of the Visconti library in the late fourteenth century (p. 103 above), or the range of music collected in sources such as **PR**, **Ox** or **Str** (pp. 62-5, and 75 above).

them worthwhile for inclusion even when detached from the fashion that formed them, and this is if we imagine compilers being at all aware of the gap.³⁴¹ Textual alterations in concordances within the traditional life-span of this style demonstrate that interest in this music transgressed even the most venomous of political divides.³⁴² The character of the early layer of **Ox**, and mix of music in **Str**, makes it clear that this music had at least some relevance deep into the 1430s if not later.

A further element in this phasing effect is the use of sources once they are compiled. **Cyp** must have had some intrinsic value (apart from its sheer size and beauty) to merit its inclusion in a dowry in 1434. Evidence concerning the subsequent use of some Machaut manuscripts, **Trém** and **Ch**, has already been discussed above.³⁴³ Every other source must have had its own history of use, however inaccessible this story is to us today. While some surely lost their relevance rather quickly and became relics of past fashion, others must have enjoyed a longer and more regular practical use.

Conclusion

When combining all the different problems pertaining to the surviving information and the way it is treated, one can easily come to believe that our understanding of the place of the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon within the society that created it is indeed very meagre, and will always stay partial. We have concrete evidence of so many things we know we have lost that it is difficult to believe that there are no other pieces of information we do not even know existed. The phenomenon as a whole must have resonated further than we can detect.

This brings into even sharper relief the fact that the body of evidence we do possess is large and varied. The surveys given above demonstrate again how widespread the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon must have been, even without detailing every link identified between musician and place or patron which has come to light. We know very little about the copy-exemplars and their availability. Still, the variety of patrons and their travels, coupled with the independent travels of musicians and their changing affiliations, weave intricate circulation-patterns for the relevant musical materials. Important courts, churches, events and

³⁴¹ See p. 64-5 above.

³⁴² The refrain of Philipoctus da Caserta's *Par les bons Gedeons* in **Ch** (f. 45v) and **ModA** (f. 31) reads 'Par la souverayne pape qui s'appelle Clement', while **Bov** (f. 5v) rewrites it as 'souverayn antipape qui s'appelle Clement', making the piece more palatable when crossing the schismatic divide.

³⁴³ See footnotes 290 and 310, pp. 102 and 91 above respectively.

personalities seem to act as meeting points for cultural exchange, and as spurs for new production. Their number and variety make it impossible to see the *Ars subtilior* as restricted to a small geographical area or even to a single echelon of society. It is clear that the high secular and ecclesiastical aristocracy created the conditions and led the way in fostering cutting-edge musical production, as they did in most other cultural activities or musical styles. Still, we have encountered interest in it by the professional intelligentsia (in the university and the *fumeur* society), and by the bourgeois (*l'arbre sec* and the ownership of **Ch**). Minor aristocracy and less extravagant devotional use should also not be ruled out, especially when remembering the adaptations this music was subjected to. It seems that the *Ars subtilior* reached far and wide into society in one form or another.

In all the evidence discussed in this and the previous chapter, the evidence of actual performances of specific pieces was negligible in comparison with the amount of music surviving and the evidence of musicianship during this period.³⁴⁴ This is true even for times and locations where we could pinpoint a number of composers working together for long periods. It is true that most of our sources simply were not interested in the kind of specific information we are looking for, but the problem may well go deeper than that. We would have expected at the very least to find more evidence of payments to groups of musicians working in combinations that fit the requirements of this music. For the time being I leave this question open, as the only way I find around it is incorporated into my re-conceptualisation of the entire definition of *Ars subtilior* presented in Chapter 6. In the meantime, I would like to turn to the music itself, and see if its features and their use can help us understand and contextualise the physical evidence we possess.

³⁴⁴ For one case which comes close, see footnote 241 above.

4. Features of *Ars Subtilior* style

The preceding chapters concentrated on the surviving physical objects relevant to the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon and the ways in which modern scholarship and performance interpreted them. This presented a varied history of a widely distributed and flexible cultural force, both in terms of its medieval manifestations and its modern re-interpretations. This chapter will explore aspects of the inner workings of the music itself, concentrating on the different choices available to composers working within this style. Since we know that some composers wrote in more than one style,³⁴⁵ it is clear therefore that at least in some circumstances there existed a conscious differentiation between the stylistic building-blocks of different styles. Understanding the choices composers faced can enable us to determine the characteristics of a musical language, which in turn might provide a suitable context for interpreting individual works.

The chapter is divided according to large-scale stylistic features, each in turn sub-divided to examine more specific usages. These features include genre and register; mode, setting (of voice parts as well as text), and pitch-structures; melody and counterpoint; rhythm and notation; visuality; text and language. After the different features are presented, a number of issues arise. First, possible stylistic timelines and their relevance to a medieval compiler will be considered. Following that, the role of the margin of error, and its influence on our concept of what is and is not possible in this style will be discussed. Finally, the overall picture arising from the different stylistic uses and techniques is presented, with suggestions as to its implications in practice. I suggest some techniques had a direct practical and structural use, enabling the creation of longer musical sentences and extended forms. Nevertheless, I propose the synthesis of these practicalities with expressivity. This is achieved through a model for attracting attention and assigning expressive importance to the deviation from local or structural expectations. This mechanism is followed up in the next chapter, where its usefulness and validity is examined by looking at individual case studies.

³⁴⁵ The clearest cases are Johannes Ciconia, Antonello da Caserta, Johannes de Altacuria and Zachara da Teramo, but many others (such as Cesaris and even Landini) could also be added to the list.

For every style-element, a general summary of the technical manifestation of its features will be followed by examples of different degrees of its usages, their context and consequences. As in other places in this work, I resist the temptation to give a comprehensive list of works and sources examined. Instead, more general indications of how widely used these techniques were will be given, and the general variety of instances and locations will be mirrored by the choice of examples presented. Problematically but unavoidably, the search for the borders of this style gives special emphasis to the more extreme occurrences.³⁴⁶ Still, the goal of this chapter is to examine the trends and tendencies of this style. As a result, the loss of numerical exactness in the distribution of each technique does not diminish the validity of the argument. While presenting the different degree to which each feature can be used would be a valuable tool in honing my ideas further, my inability to do so within the space allowed for this dissertation is immaterial for the construction of my argument.

This is not to say that I believe a graded approach to the analysis of technical and aesthetic parameters in *Ars subtilior* style is not in order. On the contrary, on a number of occasions I question the use of cataloguing works purely on the existence (or otherwise) of a certain characteristic in them.³⁴⁷ Furthermore, the stylistic features discussed in this chapter have a wider range than those typically associated with the *Ars subtilior*. This is because my examination is undertaken in order to examine the workings of this style as a whole, and not only to mark out the clearest elements that differentiate it from other styles. Generic, harmonic and melodic characteristics cannot therefore be left out. This approach led me to widen what we may think of as the *Ars subtilior* stylistic language. I therefore describe important but less extravagant stylistic elements which have been largely ignored in treating this style, such as sequencing and external syncopation.³⁴⁸ Other, already defined characteristics had to be reconceptualised, such as tonal structures, the use of canon instructions, or visuality. Even widely researched features such as internal syncopation and proportional rhythms had to be considered as technical tools within a stylistic norm, rather than self-defining extremes. Finally, the attempt to understand these appearances as a coherent language led me to propose that it is the combination of and relationships between these features which assigns expressive meaning in this style, rather than their individual use.

³⁴⁶ For more on the friction between the marginalised and the extreme see pp. 278-81 below.

³⁴⁷ See, for example, pp. 56-8 above.

³⁴⁸ For my differentiation between internal and external syncopation see pp. 175-9 below.

a. Genre and register

These features concern large-scale musical structuring. They also examine the interplay between musical structure and the place this music inhabits within its overall host culture.

i. Genre

As far as structural organisation is concerned, *Ars subtilior* composition adheres closely to the French *Formes fixes*.³⁴⁹ As mentioned above (pp. 61 and 78), genre was sometimes used as an organisational tool. This allows us to think that such formal choices carried with them certain expectations. To determine popularity of usage, it makes sense to turn to large, varied and independent units such as the ‘formative group’ of manuscripts examined in Chapter 2. Figure 4-1 presents the distribution of forms in these four collections. It demonstrates a clear preference to the ballade, even in **Cyp**, where the religious section is given pride of place.

4-1. Generic distribution in the *Ars subtilior* ‘formative group’ of manuscripts

	Ballades	Rondeaux	Virelais	Motets	Mass sections	Other	Total
Ch	70 ^a (62.5%)	17 (15.18%)	12 ^b (10.71%)	13 (11.61%)	-	-	112
ModA	36 (34.62%)	18 ^c (17.31%)	19 (18.27%)	5 ^d (4.81%)	11 (10.58%)	15 ^e (14.42%)	104
PR^f	43 (51.81%)	8 (9.64%)	29 (34.94%)	-	-	3 ^g (3.61%)	83
Cyp^h	102 (44.74%)	43 ⁱ (18.86%)	21 (9.21%)	41 (17.98%)	21 (9.21%)	-	228
Total I^j	251 (48.63%)	86 (16.32%)	81 (15.37%)	59 (11.2%)	32 (6.07%)	18 (3.42%)	527
Total II^k	228 (46.44%)	85 (17.31%)	74 (15.07%)	58 (11.81%)	32 (6.52%)	14 (2.85%)	491

- a. Not counting the double copying of *Tres gentil cuer amoureux*.
- b. Counting also *La harpe de melodie*.
- c. Counting both *Se vous n'estes* and the new contratenor composed for it.
- d. Including Egardus' Caccia-like work *Furnis reliquisti quare – Equum est salutare*.
- e. Nine of which are purely Italian compositions, one an inidentifiable fragment.
- f. Counting only the early French section and the three relevant works inserted into its Italian part.
- g. One Italian song by Landini and two instrumental intabulations.
- h. Not counting the Chant section.
- i. Including the 4vv, fully canonic *Tousiours servir ie veuil la douce flour* which is clearly texted and marked out as a Rondeau, with mid and final cadences for all voices.
- j. All copied pieces.
- k. Excluding concordant doublings.

³⁴⁹ A much lesser degree of formal choice exists in the religious sphere, making the discussion of stylistic form-usage in this context practically irrelevant. Generally speaking, stylistic development in the religious sphere, while being full participants in many *Ars subtilior* practices, tended to emphasise continuity rather than difference. The early appearance of isorhythm, or the persistence of large-scale proportional structuring are but two examples of the difficulty of using religious compositions in separating one style from the other. The discussions following therefore, concentrate mostly on secular composition.

Some exceptions do occur. They include other liturgical or semi-liturgical compositions (the hymn *Puer natus in bethleem* in **ModA**, the works by Hessmann in **Str**), straight canonic compositions (two in **ModA**, one in **Luc**), and French-style contratenors for Italian compositions (two in **ModA**).

Many of these identifications are clear structurally (following *ouvert* and *clos* patterns or text-underlay patterns when applicable), but only nominal in application. Partial texting, or the absence of text altogether, makes the identification of a song such as *O bonne douce Franse* (**Ch** f. 29, one line of text appears under the cantus), as a rondeau, unhelpful for performance. Unless some form of instrumental arrangement or text-improvisation is considered, a singer will only be able to sing it once through with the text provided.

One could of course define other characteristics of genre or sub-genre. The polytextual chanson can be one such sub-group genre,³⁵⁰ or the category can be widened to include all songs with more than one texted voice.³⁵¹ One can identify a rise in the popularity of riddle-songs, encompassing the extraction of additional voices from the written material,³⁵² as well as textual riddles (for example *Sumite karissimi*, **ModA**, ff. 11v-12) or notational ones (such as *Si con cy gist*, **Ch**, f. 31v). This group can also include vague textual references to people or places, but in this case, it could at times be hard to determine whether such references were conceived of as riddles, or just seem enigmatic to us due to the loss of relevant information and context.³⁵³ Other sub-genres (with a degree of overlap) could be self-reflexive songs, visual songs, or naturalistic-imitative works.³⁵⁴ These sub-genres do at times carry formal preferences. When canonic works (be they straight or retrograde) have a fixed form, they tend to be rondeaux. This is a natural choice as there is an inbuilt cyclical element to this

³⁵⁰ Four Ballades, three Rondeaux, one Virelai in **Ch**; three Ballades, five Virelais in **PR**; one Rondeau in **ModA**; one Ballade in **Cyp**, all in all eighteen occurrences out of 424 relevant songs in the 'formative group' of sources (counting concordances as separate occurrences).

³⁵¹ Adding to the above a further Rondeau and three Virelais in **Ch**; two canonic works and a Rondeau (not including Italian songs) in **ModA**; two Virelais in **PR**; four Rondeaux in **Cyp**, new total amounting to 31 occurrences.

³⁵² Two works in **Ch**; five in **ModA**; three in **PR**; one in **Cyp**; probably seven in **Str**; five in **Iv**; two in **Pit**; one in **Luc**; one in **PadA**, sum of 27 works.

³⁵³ Knowing which side of the Schism *Angelorum psalat* originated would simplify our task of interpreting its text (see p. 208-10 below). For a modern (but not medieval) riddle solved, see Plumley, 'An 'Episode' p. 150-1 where the standard-colours mentioned in Trebor's *Quant joyne cuer* are considered.

³⁵⁴ For self-reflexive songs see Stone 'Self-Reflexive Songs' or Virginia Newes 'Writing, Reading and Memorizing: The Transmission and Resolution of Retrograde Canons from the 14th and Early 15th Centuries', *EM*, xviii (May, 1990), pp. 218-234. Visual songs are examined pp. 185-90 below. Naturalistic songs include some of the most popular and widely distributed songs of the time, including *Par maintes foys* and *Or sus vous dormes*. For *Par maintes foys* see pp. 252-62 below. For attitudes to art and nature see Leach, *Sung Birds*.

form. More practically, its avoidance of *ouvert* and *clos* endings for either A or B section is conducive for canonic composition.³⁵⁵ Less obvious is the (less universal) preference for the Virelai in the composition of naturalistic pieces. This may have to do with the original lighter character of the form, or with the incredibly wide distribution of some relatively early examples such as *Par maintes foyes* and *Or sus vous dormes*, both of which use this form.

ii. Register

Every living musical culture requires a multitude of co-existing registers. The search for composers' activities undertaken in Chapter 3 has already mentioned medieval society's requirements for signal music, dance music, light entertainment and daily devotional music. Here as in every other musical culture, registers appear even within so-called Art-music. A consumer of troubadour songs could alternate between a *Pastourelle* by Marcabru and a *Planh* by Bretran de Born. A nineteenth century lover of Italian opera could indulge him/herself with an evening of high drama at the opera house, or with simplified transcriptions designed as parlour music. In the context of *Ars subtilior* music, such awareness is doubly important. If we see it as a leading aesthetic in the production of French music over a period of a number of decades, it is reasonable to expect it to be able to fit into a number of the musical registers demanded by the society in which it originated. This could suggest that we can be justified in postulating different layers of functionality and complexity within the *Ars subtilior*. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine works in this style used for some of the more functional musical purposes such as dance accompaniment, or military signalling. The entire *Ars subtilior* can therefore be seen as but one register (or a cluster of registers) within a larger host culture.

A change in registral identity can be detected when the music changes context. For most of this period, the musical sources do not offer us a parallel French intermediary style to bridge the gap between art-music and unwritten, purely functional musical habits. If we consider the *Ars subtilior* to be a result of underlying cultural forces, it is reasonable therefore to expect that in 1380s or 1390s France it would demonstrate at least some flexibility, and incorporate works from more registers of the musical spectrum. This would result in works which are based on *Ars subtilior* aesthetic and stylistic principles, but avoid exploiting them

³⁵⁵ As counterexamples, see *En la maison Dedalus* (Berk, p. 62), which has a canonic tenor and contratenor but is a ballade, or *La harpe de melodie* (Chic, f. 10), which incorporates a canonic second cantus but is a Virelai.

to their extremes.³⁵⁶ This flexibility creates fewer well-defined borderlines between it and other contemporaneous musical production, and blurs the separation between it and the preceding or following musical fashions. When looking at the popularity of *Ars subtilior* music within an Italian context, one would expect the thriving indigenous musical output which operated alongside it to fulfil most of society's needs, and therefore limit the foreign style's registral relevance. The specificity of use implied by this state of affairs would naturally create better defined borders for this phenomenon, as the need for adjustment into different cultural registers is removed, and it would constantly be faced with competing cultural currents.³⁵⁷

The assignation of register is complex and has also to do with use and audience-attitude as well as compositional components. The simple designation of audible complexity as a registral barrier is hampered not only by the importance of notation in this style, but also by the probable improvisation and ornamentation techniques used at the time.³⁵⁸ Over-reliance on setting characteristics such as length or number of voices as differentiating elements is also problematic, as the general tendency in *Ars subtilior* towards longer settings is by no means universal. Some genres (especially religious settings) have stricter, practical constraints on their length.³⁵⁹ While an interest in four-part or even five-part composition has been demonstrated on a number of occasions, it does not coincide neatly enough with other musical characteristics to be of use as a strict determinant.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁶ See pp. 104 and 193-4 where the different levels of complexity and technical extravagance in Solage's output are described as an outcome of such cultural needs. Different *Ars subtilior* mainstreams are examined in case studies 2, 3 and 4 and summarised on pp. 280-81 below.

³⁵⁷ The study of globalisation has proposed varying processes for the integration of foreign and local cultures, as well as their processes. A clear description of these ideas can be found in Peter Ludwig Berger, 'Four Faces of Global Culture', *TNI*, il (Fall, 1997), pp. 23-9, reprinted in Patrick O'Meara, Howard D. Mehlinger and Matthew Krain (eds), *Globalization and the Challenges of a New Century: A Reader* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 419-27, available also at <http://bss.sfsu.edu/fischer/IR%20305/Readings/four.htm>. A succinct account of these ideas and application to Taiwanese society is available at Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, 'Coexistence and Synthesis, Cultural Globalisation and Localisation in Contemporary Taiwan', Peter Ludwig Berger and Samuel Phillips Huntington (eds), *Many Globalizations, Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 48-67. These processes and interactions become relevant to the *Ars subtilior* if French culture is thought of as the globalising force of the time. They allow for the simultaneous replacement of Italian traditions (such as Italian notation), and synthesis and coexistence of the two in a single cultural context.

³⁵⁸ See pp. 71-2 above for ornamentation and pp. 185-90 below for a discussion of visuality.

³⁵⁹ When setting a Credo, on the one hand there is no leeway in shortening the amount of text to be included, and on the other, the context of the mass (especially if the setting is not intended for one of the great holidays) limits the maximal length which would still be practical.

³⁶⁰ See pp. 77-8, 127-30 and case study 4 pp. 248-78 below. For exceptional five-part compositions see pp. 128 and 265.

Form is not necessarily a registral identifier, but tendencies within one style to prefer one form over the other can inform us of the association connected with each. As the main vehicle for *Ars subtilior* music, the Ballade tends to be used for the largest and most extravagant works, making it the first choice of high-register composition. However, this is not universal, as the simple, straightforward *Dame sans per* (**ModA**, ff. 28v-29) demonstrates. As a general trend, Rondeaux and Virelais tend to be simpler in character. It is possible to think of the use of the form as having less exceptional and more everyday connotations, setting up an expectation for inclusion in a less self-important cultural register. A single page in **Cyp** (f. 151) contains four such Rondeaux. As with Ballades, this is by no means universal. The preference for the Rondeau form for canonic chansons has already been mentioned above (p. 117-8). The formal avoidance of *ouvert* and *clos* endings also resulted in all isorhythmic chansons using this form.³⁶¹ **Cyp** juxtaposes very simple examples with complex Virelais such as *Je prens d'amour noriture* (f. 154) which employs 9/8, 4/3, 3/2, 9/6, 4/1, 5/3, 5/2, 7/2, 3/4, 7/3, 10/3 and 2/3 proportions,³⁶² or a Rondeau like *Tant est douce la morsure* (f. 146) in which the cantus works its way through all four mensurations while the tenor and contratenor remain constant. Many other instances do not fit the mold. Six works by Senleches survive, three Ballades and three Virelais. Senleches follows the trend by choosing the Ballade form for his lament on the death of Queen Eleanor of Castile, as well as for his poly-textual complaint about the state of musicianship, and the Virelai form for his descriptive and nature-imitating compositions.³⁶³ On closer inspection, though, he uses similar musical and technical elements in all his works, and indeed chooses a Virelai for his fully canonic composition, *La harpe de melodie*.

Nevertheless, the relative tendency of ballades towards gravitas and other secular genres to optimism or playfulness remains. It hints at the expectations attached to the choice of form, and explains most composers' choices in matching form and content in their compositions. Apart from the establishment of an understandable norm, these expectations can help us mark out pieces as special by the choice of a surprising form or the use of a form

³⁶¹ Five isorhythmic songs appear in **Ch**, one of them copied also in **ModA** and one more appears in **Pit**. On the complexities of the Rondeaux in **Ch**, see Virginia Newes, 'Deception, Reversal, and Paradox: The Rondeaux of the Chantilly Codex in Context', in Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone (eds), *A Late Medieval Songbook and its Context: New Perspectives on the Chantilly Codex (Bibliothèque du Château de Chantilly, Ms 564)* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), pp. 15-43.

³⁶² See figure 4-78 below for the distribution of proportional rhythms in **Cyp**.

³⁶³ See *Fuions de ci; Je me merveil – J'ay pluseurs; La harpe de melodie* and *En ce gracieux tamps* respectively.

in an unexpected way. For example, it is possible to read *Angelorum psalat* as a work aiming to convey authority in a non-ecclesiastic context. This reading can explain the use of a secular genre instead of the motet, and make sense of the insistence on the musical ballade form even though it clashes with the song's text structure.³⁶⁴

b. Mode, Setting and Pitch-Structures

Questions pertaining to the systemic constructs behind medieval composition have created some acrimonious debates, and the *Ars subtilior* repertoire has not escaped controversy.³⁶⁵

i. Pitch-Structures and Tonal Systems

In their statistical analysis, Lefferts and Plumley demonstrated that medieval composition in general and *Ars subtilior* in particular tended to hone in on specific kinds of tonal centres and use repeating patterns of surrounding pitch-structures.³⁶⁶ Their findings are valid and valuable, but tend to avoid interpreting the aesthetic and practical concepts which led to the formation of the tendencies in the tonal structures they defined.³⁶⁷ Already in defining the behaviour of his 'tonal types', Lefferts demonstrated the importance of this structural system by attracting attention towards *Ars subtilior* pieces which manipulate it in a self-aware manner.³⁶⁸ I would like to add to their efforts here by offering a conceptualisation of the notion of pitch-structures based on medieval terminology and ideas, which can give rise to and act as a background to the patterns they identified in the music. This is important as I believe that in order to attach meaning to the manipulation of the system, we first have to understand the way in which it was conceived at the time.

The tonal type system defines the relationship between *finalis*, range, medial cadence and key signature. In it, two pairs of 'major' and 'minor' pitch structures with *finalis* sonorities a step apart are defined (called *alpha* and *beta*), to which an additional, independent, 'minor' tone constellation is appended (named *gamma*). Each type appears in a different location according to the key signature: two flats place the *alpha* pair on B-flat and C, the *beta* pair a

³⁶⁴ See case study 1, pp. 206-26 below.

³⁶⁵ See footnote 51 above, or Sarah Fuller, 'Modal Discourse and Fourteenth-Century French Song; A 'Medieval' Perspective Recovered?', *EMH*, xvii (1998), pp. 61-108.

³⁶⁶ See Lefferts, 'Signature-Systems' and Plumley, *The Grammar*.

³⁶⁷ See pp. 40-43 above for the outside pressures which may have influenced the language in which these findings were expressed, and their emphasis on sound statistical evidence-gathering as a point of departure.

³⁶⁸ See Lefferts, 'Signature-systems', p. 144-5.

fifth away on F and G, and the *gamma* type on D. The same relationships are maintained with one flat in the signature, with the *alpha* pair on F and G, the *beta* pair on C and D and the *gamma* on A. This is repeated also for a natural signature and one with a single sharp. The *finales* are range-specific (measured according to the cantus), and two medial cadences are described for each type, one above and one below the *finalis*, the relationship remaining stable in the different key signatures. The behaviour of other voices around these sonorities does not necessarily affect their classification.

While awareness of these patterns is useful in understanding the choice available to composers and the border between normative and exceptional use, I believe their reformulation as aesthetic principles adds to their importance. The locations of most medial cadences for instance, fall on the two sonorities which naturally support plagal cadences in any tonal type or key signature.³⁶⁹ This tendency can be presented as an independent aesthetic preference, betraying a degree of standardisation in which authentic cadences are strong and plagal cadences are weak, regardless of the tonal system used. This simple guideline leads directly to the relationship between medial and final cadences which the ‘tonal type’ system predicts. Its simplicity and practicality is most likely to have been formative for mainstream medieval practitioners and not only specialists.³⁷⁰

The identification of *finalis* locations in relationship to pitch constellations can also be rethought from a medieval perspective, using the concept of combining hexachord-constellations to form an underlying note-field structure. Different note-field structures naturally mark out some pitches as more central and others as very weak. In a combination of only natural and hard hexachords for instance, G is a very strong *finalis* location (catalogued as *beta* tonal type in Lefferts and Plumley’s system). This can be portrayed as the result of purely practical considerations, as not only can one construct on top of it all the perfect intervals (C, D, g), and repeat the exercise for each of the new notes (adding F, A, c, d, g’), but the same process can be applied to the most popular location for tenor *ouvert cadences*, namely, a tone above the *finalis* (A generating D, E, a, g, b, d, e, a’). Such “harmonic” possibilities are vital in polyphonic composition. Attempting to use B as a central sonority on the other hand, falls on the first hurdle as it requires a degree of correction

³⁶⁹ See Lefferts, ‘Signature-systems’, p. 135 and Plumley, *The Grammar*, p. 12.

³⁷⁰ For a case where medieval terminology is used, but without a system or method arising (and therefore with no interpretative relevance), see Josephson, ‘Many Roads Lead to Rome’.

even for the fifth necessary for final sonorities. The use of hexachords for the construction of a note-field seems natural as it was such a strong concept in medieval musical thinking, so much so that even referring to an inflection as a *mi* or a *fa* sign would create immediate associations with it.

Lefferts and Plumley do discuss the range of each type as a combination of overlapping hexachords, but consider key signatures as wholesale transposition of the Gamut.³⁷¹ In my opinion, this approach has two drawbacks. First, the choice of signature according to it becomes mostly if not purely practical.³⁷² Second, the transposition of the entire system makes explaining works which move from one signature to the other more cumbersome.

My less rigid conceptual adaptation is useful in finding a reason for the use of different key signatures which maintain the same relationships. Rather than seeing key signatures as a transposition of the entire system, the appearance of accidentals in a key signature (or indeed anywhere in a piece) can be understood as a specific hexachord superseding the ‘default setting’ of a combination of natural and hard hexachords. The new constellation weakens some locations on the Guidonian ‘Hand’ and strengthens others, giving the composer a new palette of possibilities. This concept can be thought of as the practical manifestation of the *coniuncta* theory which preoccupied contemporary theorists. It does not limit the possible location of added accidentals, and gives both a theoretical and practical framework to the octave-specific nature of inflections in medieval notation and practice.

As well as accommodating better the frequent changes found in many pieces of the time, this approach creates a mechanism with which tonal structures could be expressively manipulated. A composer can choose to buck the trend by using a non-standard combination, a stretched or problematic combination, or an ambiguous combination in which two voices inhabit the same space but operate in different hexachords.³⁷³

A special combination appears in *Notes pour moi* (**ModA**, f. 13v), where both tenor and contratenor have F-sharp marked in their signature while the cantus has none, presenting a

³⁷¹ See, for example, Plumley, *The Grammar*, p. 9-10. They go as far as to suggest the new *recta* and *ficta* notes available in each transposition.

³⁷² On the possibility that the use of different signatures was a result of the technical constraints of the performing group for which a work was intended, see the discussion of Trebor’s setting p. 134-5 below.

³⁷³ See pp. 243-4 below for the combination of all these possibilities in a single work (*Je suis cellui*).

stark contrast to the normal combination in which the lower voices have one flat more than the upper voice. The fact that probably every F in the cantus should be amended to F-sharp in performance does not change the uniqueness of the structural choice. All the voices of this piece are notated (for no technical or practical reason) in a d-clef, again marking the piece out as special. An example of a stretched combination can be seen in *Ma dame m'a congie* (**Ch**, f. 14v), where contratenor and tenor have two flats while the cantus has none. An ambiguous combination is shown in the **Ch** version of *De Narcissus* (f. 19v), in which the tenor has one flat and the contratenor two, even though they have the same clef and use the same range.

A final variant could be key signatures which are inherently incomplete, like in *Angelorum psalat* (**Ch**, f. 48v), where both voices have a signature of A-flat and E-flat (omitting the B-flat) throughout, or the more common usage of notating only an E-flat beside an F-clef. Alternatively, the strange signature used in *Angelorum psalat* could be seen as a practical result of this system, as it would be meaningless to indicate two hexachords a tone apart where a tone assigned as *fa* has no *mi* half a tone below it.³⁷⁴ Again, this conceptualisation does not invalidate the 'tonal type' system, but widens its use in a more interpretative direction.

What seems, in any specific instance, a conscious choice, can of course be a result of unintentional corruption or some vagrancy of transmission. Franciscus' *De Narcissus* was copied into seven sources.³⁷⁵ The contratenor in **Ch** is different from all other discernable sources. While presenting the same three voices, the **PR** version has no signature for the cantus, and both other voices begin with one flat which disappears for the refrain, and the **Pit** version has a stable flat for the cantus, no signature for the tenor, and two flats throughout for the contratenor.

A hexachordal note-field system is not in itself prescriptive when it comes to *ficta* additions. Some combinations would make *ficta* additions more likely as even structural sonorities may need to be altered in order to create perfections.³⁷⁶ Still, *ficta* inflections can operate just as well as local 'pointers' of direction, as creators of tension and discord, or as

³⁷⁴ For more on this song see case study 1, pp. 206-26 below.

³⁷⁵ These are **Ch**, **PR**, **Pit**, **Trém**, **SL**, **Bud** and **Autun**.

³⁷⁶ See, for example, *Notes pour moi* discussed p. 123-4 above and ex. 4-2 below.

structural systemic shifts within a piece.³⁷⁷ The need for such insertions within a problematic system is clear in the **Pit** version of *De Narcissus* (ex. 4-2). The first three extended sonorities in this example would create a diminished fifth in a structural cadence, a diminished octave and an augmented octave respectively if performed as written. In proposing a solution to this passage one has to consider the likelihood of each of the voices changing their note, the degree of harmonic and melodic chromaticism wanted, and the importance of exact imitation between the voices. The simplest solution would be to ignore the contratenor key signature and for it to use B and E naturals.

4-2. *Magister Franciscus, De Narcissus, Pit, f. 33v-34, breves 58-66*

Tension-building, local, direction pointers can be seen in a work such as *O lieta stella* (**FP**, f. 17, ex. 4-3), which uses a number of protracted, inflected sonorities without changing the tonal centre and modal framework of the song. The appearances of C-sharp and F-sharp in an F piece are not in themselves surprising, as they can be used in an authentic cadence towards a normal *ouvert* sonority. That a different interpretation was intended here can perhaps be seen in the length of the inflections, their appearance so close to the ending of each of this works' form parts (perhaps as their announcers), and their lack of resolution.³⁷⁸

4-3. *O Lieta stella, FP, f. 17, last seven breves*

³⁷⁷ The insertion of local, directional inflections are clear in the extreme such as ex. 4-23, 4-35 and 4-65 below. The use of unnecessary inflections to create dissonance is a main theme in case study 2, pp. 226-37 below, and systemic shifts are examined in more detail in case study 3, pp. 237-48 below.

³⁷⁸ For other works which contain similar inflections before their final cadence see Josephson, 'Many Roads Lead to Rome', pp. 80-1.

Regular systemic shifts appear in Machaut's *De petit peu*, a song very popular in *Ars subtilior*-related sources.³⁷⁹ In it, each form part starts uninflected and with no signature, but half-way through the cantus E-flat (and in some sources B-flat) is introduced, with the other voices following suit when necessary. A degree of variety exists between sources: the scribe of **Pr** (f. 260-260v) was very sparse with accidentals and ignores most of this structural significance, while that of **Ch** (f. 18v) went so far as to write it out as a signature-change from no flats to two flats. The song is centred on C throughout, but the change in hexachord constellation creates a shift from G as the main counter-sonority in the un-inflected sections to a strong pull towards D in the inflected ones.

Plumley notes this as a characteristic of some C based, *alpha*-minor type songs (two flats signature).³⁸⁰ That a structure with two flats, a minor third above the *finalis* and a whole tone under it was chosen for such structural play seems to me only natural. The structure itself contains an element of duality as double leading tone cadences towards their main sonority can uncontroversially incorporate also B and E naturals, making this game alluring. Furthermore, the normal appearance of structures with combinations of no, one or two flats make this tonal duality more sustainable. A similar piece notated only with sharps would certainly have stood out more, but would also encourage the reader to see the inflections as local rather than systemic. The same group of works can therefore be described as expanded two-flat works with a C *finalis*, or as demonstrating an unstable and conflicting note-field. While the former is more specific, the latter legitimises to a larger extent the structural shift and the partial and ambiguous combinations which the music goes through on the way from one system to the other. Each definition has contexts in which it has better use.

The potential for chromatic richness described in tonal structures with a lowered third and seventh, may indeed be a reason for their popularity.³⁸¹ While not exhausting the enharmonic possibilities of the Pythagorean system, this nevertheless offers the most flexible starting point for chromatic exploration. Example 4-4 below does not have B-flat in the signature,

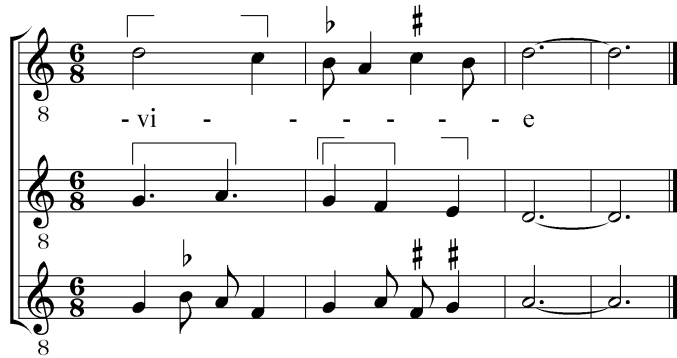
³⁷⁹ It is copied in **Ch**, **ModA**, **FP**, **SL**, **Pit**, twice in **CaB**, **Ghent**, **Trém**, **Pr**, and **Nur25**, as well as **Vg**, **MachA**, **MachB**, **MachC**, **MachE**, and **MachG**, making it the most copied songs of the period. For transcriptions of both the **Ch** and **ModA** versions and a discussion of it as a part of a group of other popular songs see case study 4, pp. 248-78, esp. pp. 262-8 and ex. 5-12 and 5-13 below.

³⁸⁰ See Plumley, *The Grammar*, p. 19. Other *Ars subtilior* songs which include shifts towards flatter modal areas include Egidius's *Franchois franchois* (**ModA**, f. 11) and Solage's *S'aincy estoit* (**Ch**, f. 36). See also *Je suis cellui*, case study 3 pp. 237-248 below.

³⁸¹ These include *alpha*-minor and *beta*-minor works in the Plumley-Lefferts system, which comprise of 37% of Machaut's output, but 59% of the works in **Ch**. See Plumley, *The Grammar*, p. 20.

and their insertion as *ficta* is not strictly necessary. It is brought here to demonstrate how easy it is even for relatively simple works to exploit a nearly complete chromatic scale, the only undivided tone being the first step above the *finalis*.

4-4. *Qui ses fais tres bienne comprent*, Cyp, f. 99v, ending.



Here too it seems that *Ars subtilior* composers used, adapted and expanded upon earlier conventions as a central creative impetus. A large number of pieces use a variety of techniques to exceed structural and modal conventions in one way or another. This can lead us to think of the manipulation of the note-field or tonal type structure as an expressive tool rather than a sub-conscious accident. Thus, the structural and modal duality of *De petit peu* may explain its popularity in sources of the post-Machaut generation.

ii. Voice and text setting

Structural elements pertaining to setting techniques include the number and type of voices, their ranges and hierarchy, techniques of text-setting, the number of texted voices, and attitudes towards the reworking of existing materials.

By far the most common combination of voices (as in earlier and later French styles) is a texted cantus part, augmented by lower tenor and contratenor voices sharing the same range. Variants in the song repertoire involve a change in the number of voices, in texting pattern, in voice combination, or in two or three of these elements.³⁸² Two-part composition is not uncommon or special – ten out of the 33 French works in **Pit**, thirteen of the rondeaux and virelais in **Cyp**, and all the compositions copied in **Pr** have only two voices. The organisational importance of the seventeen four-part songs in **Ch** has already been pointed out above (p. 78). Twelve more four-part songs are found in **PR**, two in **Cyp**, and one in **ModA**. Eight three-part works with more than one texted voice (be it the same text or a

³⁸² A combination of all these elements can be found in canonic compositions. See pp. 79, 117-8 and 136.

different one) are found in **Ch**, five in **ModA**, seven in **PR**, and one in **Cyp**. Five songs in **PR** incorporate a triplum instead of a contratenor.

Religious forms show a different pattern of variation. Motets of this period are still all structured over a pre-given melody (predominantly chant), and remain polytextual, creating a requirement of at least three voices. The standard motet setting was for four parts, but three-part motets, or three-part versions of four-part works were still rather popular. On the early side, **Iv** has three such *Solus tenor* versions, **ModA** has a *Solus tenor* version for one motet and one Mass movement, in both cases presented side by side with the full version. In **Ch**, the motet group prominently starts with eight four-part works (with an additional four-part motet given only in its *Solus tenor* version) followed by four three-part works. In **Cyp**, where a degree of standardisation is evident throughout, the preference for four-part motets is even clearer, with only four three-part motets interspersed amongst 37 four-part ones. The five-part version of *Appollonis eclipsatur* in **Str** (fewer-voiced versions found in **Trém**, **SL**, **Iv**, **BarcC**, **BarcA**, **Vien5094**, **PadC**, **Lei2515**, **LPR** and **Tarr2**) and Matheus de Sancto Johanne's *Are post libamina – Nunc Surgunt* (**OH**) are, according to our current knowledge, singular exception.³⁸³

Interestingly, Mass composition can follow either the chanson or the motet model. The possibility to 'go both ways' (as well as full texting) arises from the primarily sung, single text context. The experimentation with adapting both the motet and chanson compositional models may be due to the relatively late rise in popularity of composing polyphonic *Ordinarium* settings, this occurring at a time when both these models were already well established. The 34 Mass-movements in **Apt**, for example, present a varied picture with twelve appearing fully texted, seven with one untexted voice and 15 with two untexted voices.³⁸⁴ As far as voice numbers go, the majority of works are in three voices, with one fully-texted Credo having four voices and one fully-texted Gloria and three further semi-texted works sporting only two. Similarly, of the 17 Mass-movements in the main corpus of **Cyp**, two four-part Gloria-Credo pairs are fully texted, three three-part pairs have only one texted voice, and all other (paired or not, three- or four-part) have two texted voices. This dualism manifests itself not only in the number of voices and their texting patterns, but also

³⁸³ For the possibility of a fifth voice for Machaut *De petit peu* see p. 265 below.

³⁸⁴ Counting is complicated by some erratic texting habits in the Kyrie section, and by the eight troped pieces.

in the use of other notational and stylistic techniques.³⁸⁵ Thus, Matteo da Perugia set a Gloria in a traditional four-part isorhythmic motet style, with two texted upper voices moving in traditional *Ars nova* rhythms and the textless slow-moving lower voices repeated in diminution (**ModA**, ff. 3v-4). This may have been matched with a Credo in the style of a three-part chanson with one florid texted voice which uses melodic gestures typical of his secular compositions, augmented by involved, quick-moving and textless tenor and contratenor, and including three different mensurations, special note-shapes (resulting in *sesquitertia* proportion), and protracted syncopations (**ModA**, ff. 7v-9). The two styles of composition do not have to be kept completely apart. This is evident in another Matteo three-part Gloria (**ModA**, ff. 49v-50, ex. 4-5) where the tenor is a slow-moving chant setting which repeats in diminution. One texted voice behaves in a traditional motet-type way using only *Ars nova* rhythms and combinations, while the second, higher texted voice, presents special note-shapes, proportions, syncopations and generally the kind of melodic movement prevalent in Matteo's chansons.³⁸⁶

4-5. Matteo da Perugia, *Et in terra*, ModA, ff. 49v-50, breves 50-54

Hymns show a similar lack of uniformity in their voice setting and texting patterns, perhaps for the same reasons as polyphonic Mass settings. They are also less common, making it harder to discern patterns. One instance of this variety can be seen in, **Apt**, f. 14v. This side includes two anonymous hymns: *Christe Redemptor Omnium*, which is a straightforward, fully texted, homophonic three part work, and *Conditor alme siderum* which has a very simple homophonic and texted cantus and tenor, augmented by a much more active and faster-moving untexted contratenor. The single hymn in **ModA** in comparison (*Puer natus in bethleem*, f. 19) uses the same text pattern as *Conditor alme siderum* but

³⁸⁵ In Stäblein-Harder, *Fourteenth-century Mass Music* (and parallel transcription in *CMM*, xxix), the discussion is constructed around the different techniques of Mass composition.

³⁸⁶ It is of course impossible to determine whether this is a conscious compositional choice or whether we have here another case of written down *Ars subtilior* ornamentation.

creates a typically chanson-like relationship between the voices, where the untexted contratenor typically winds its way around the tenor, bridging cadences, while the cantus is much freer and uses some special note-shapes resulting in proportional rhythms.

The number of voices does not necessarily relate to the complexity of the work. Four-part songs tend to be simpler in terms of notation, rhythm and structure than many three-part compositions, and while many two-part compositions are simple in style, the riddle chanson in **Ox842** and the three two-part works in **Ch** are all extreme and extraordinary in one way or another. The characteristics of the two-part compositions in **Ch** were already referred to above, and *Ut pateat evidenter* (**Ox842**, ff. 45v-46) adds to them a preoccupation with unnotated shifts into all four mensurations as well as probably the most extreme *ficta* in the repertoire.³⁸⁷

Nevertheless, the organisation of **Ch** suggests that the very inclusion of a fourth voice made a piece special in the scribe's eyes. However, it is hard to assess whether a simple four-part song would be held in higher or lower esteem than a complicated three-part composition. Genres also suggest an inbuilt tendency towards different forms of complexity. While a degree of cross-over clearly existed, the Motet template naturally led to an emphasis on large-scale, structural complications such as isorhythm and poly-textuality. The lack of canonised, pre-given material in secular genres meant that they lent themselves more easily to concentration on the cantus line, making them more suitable for more virtuosic proportional, rhythmic and melodic expansions. Such a-priori differences make a registral comparison difficult, but they hint that elements such as number of voices or large-scale structural organisation were considered important enough to rival (under certain circumstances) the stylistic elements favoured by modern scholarship of the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon.

Since most of our surviving sources are not French, ascertaining text underlay accurately can be particularly difficult at times. For example, it seems that even though the texts of the inner fascicles of **ModA** were copied after the music, the scribe was not particularly interested in aligning it exactly.³⁸⁸ Many Italian sources do not supply any text for much of their French repertoire.³⁸⁹ Underlay was sufficiently important to the **PR** scribe though, as

³⁸⁷ For the **Ch** songs see p. 78 above. *Ut pateat evidenter* is transcribed as ex. 4-35 below.

³⁸⁸ See Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 41-2, and Earp, 'Texting in 15th-Century', pp. 195-8.

³⁸⁹ See pp. 73-4 above.

many works have realignment lines, showing the exact placement of syllables in locations where the vertical alignment is misleading. Still, we have to work with what we have, and as long as interpretative sense can be made of the alignment of text and music in the manuscript, it can be read as intentional. Even when exactness is impossible, elements such as the location of melismas and distribution of text can still be discerned. The French text-setting tradition is structurally freer than the Italian. Some songs still maintain the traditional melismas on the first and last words of text-lines (ex. 4-6), but it is also very common for word-spacing to move towards a more equal distribution (ex. 4-7). Other songs turn the positions around, and include such long melismas as to make it nearly impossible to maintain a textual link between the two parts of a line of text (ex. 4-8 and 4-23).

4-6. *Raison se plaint*, Cyp, f. 98v, cantus, first line of text

The musical score for 'Raison se plaint' consists of three staves of music in 6/8 time. The lyrics are: Rai - - - - - son se plaint et pleu-re a - - - - - me - - - - - re - mant. The first staff has a long melisma on 'Rai'. The second staff has a melisma on 'a'. The third staff has a melisma on 'me'.

4-7. *En un gardin*, Ut, ff. 21v-22, cantus, first line of text

The musical score for 'En un gardin' consists of three staves of music in 6/8 time. The lyrics are: En un gar- - - - - din nob - le et de tres hault pris. The first staff has a melisma on 'gar'. The second staff has a melisma on 'din'. The third staff has a melisma on 'pris'.

4-8. Johannes Vaillant, *Pour ce que je*, Ch, f. 26, cantus, A section

Pour ce que je
ne say gai- - - rez

4-9. Bartholomeus de Bononia, *Que pena maior*, ModA, ff. 37-36v, cantus, B section

2. Im - - - - pro - - - - ba mor - - -
3. Jam lin - - - - gua fa - - -
- det fa - ti-scen - - te so - - - -
- lax in - re - ti - - ta bo - - - -
- - - - no Me ci - - tha-re - - - dum Mu-sa re-so-nan-tem
- - - - no Hec ce - - cha plo - - - rant mun-do flo-ri-dan-tem

The freedom to move from one extreme to the other created a variety of text-highlighting possibilities: a word or phrase can be given prominence by the bunching of syllables together, making it more comprehensible. Alternatively, a melisma may be inserted in an unexpected location, thus drawing attention to it.³⁹⁰ The placing of text according to the constellation of strong and weak locations within the *brevis* unit can also be more easily exploited. All these elements can be seen in ex. 4-9 above.

While the overall texting patterns follow the traditional scheme, the contrast between the swift declamation in the first-person statement of the third musical line and its melismatic surrounding is striking. This line of text is further marked by the use of special note-shapes and a proportion. “Me” is the only stressed syllable in that phrase to come on either a rhythmic or melodic strongpoint, emphasising the ego of the speaker and his separation from the crowd. The effectiveness of text location can also be seen at the beginning of the section, where every syllable of “Improba” comes on a strong melodic and rhythmic location. The ear expects this ordering to continue, and therefore much attention is given to the next syllable “mor[-det]” when it surprises the ear in an unexpected location and arrives without a particular sense of melodic leading or preparation.

4-10. Matteo da Perugia, *Puis que la mort*, ModA, f. 7-6v, beginning of B part

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Cantus (treble clef), Tenor (bass clef), and Bass (bass clef). The Cantus part begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature. The lyrics are: "Car par - - ti - e est la Bel - - le". The Tenor part begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. The Bass part begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. The score shows the beginning of the B part, with the Cantus part starting on a high note and the Tenor and Bass parts starting on lower notes.

The discrepancy between textual and musical or rhythmical stressing is by no means new to the *Ars subtilior*; it is found in every rhythmical style of composition. It does take on a new meaning in this context, as this technique can be seen as a textual equivalent to rhythmic

³⁹⁰ For a similar technique by which Machaut bunched together important syllables on single-note declamation see Nicoletta Gossen, *Musik in Texten, Texte in Musik: der poetische Text als Herausforderung an die Interpreten der Musik des Mittelalters* (Amadeus, 2006), pp 181-3. Gossen also notes the tendency to highlight important text by voice-crossing between cantus and tenor (p. 185). Both techniques are echoed in Senleches’s *Fuions de ci* (Ch, f. 17), the former at the beginning of the B section, the latter at the beginning of the refrain.

syncopation, to be used in tandem with its musical counterpart as above, or to ‘soften’ more regular rhythmical phrases (ex. 4-10).³⁹¹

Emphasising certain words or phrases was taken to the extreme with the use of long rhythmical values and homophonic settings, many times with a *corona* or congruence signs either above each sonority or above the central ones. The highlighted phrase is usually (but not universally) the name or motto of the dedicatee of the work (ex. 4-11 and 4-21 respectively), with ‘Jesu Christe’ or ‘Amen’ highlighted in religious works.³⁹²

4-11. F. Andrieu (Deschamps text), *Armes amour - O flour*, Ch, f. 52, refrain beginning

There can be no doubt what the ballade is about, even if the scribe did not seem to recognise the individual in question.

It is hard to determine the degree to which the use of ranges within settings is due to practical or aesthetic reasons. Lefferts signals out *Fumeux fume* (Ch, f. 59) and *Angelorum Psalat* (Ch, f. 48v) as the highest and lowest extremes both in terms of their range and finalis location.³⁹³ It is clear that both pieces are unique and tend towards the extreme in other ways (the first in the use of ficta, the second in that of note-shapes and proportions), which may lead one to believe that the choice of range is part of the expressive content. On the other hand, the tendency of Trebor to use low settings (five out of his six surviving songs use F-

³⁹¹ A similar renewed emphasis on this technique can be detected in Petrus de Cruce’s style, where it was used to complement flexible short note-values by blurring the otherwise very strict larger rhythmical organisation.

³⁹² A counter example is *Toute clerte* (Ch, f. 13), where the congruence signs mark out ‘me mis’ just before the important word ‘reverse’, perhaps as another manifestation of the *mundus inversus* character of the text.

³⁹³ See Leffert, ‘Signature-systems’, p. 124. Other linking elements between these two pieces are noted by Josephson, ‘Many Roads Lead to Rome’, p. 94.

clefs for tenor and contratenor, sometimes coming close to challenging Solage for the ‘lowest-setting’ title) may suggest personal preferences, or more prosaically, the availability of performers at his disposal.³⁹⁴

4-12. *Qui n'a le cuer*, Cyp, f. 152v, beginning

Musical score for 'Qui n'a le cuer' in 6/8 time. The score consists of two systems. The first system has two staves: the upper staff is for the tenor and the lower for the contratenor. The lyrics are: 'Qui n'a le cuer rain -' for the tenor and 'Qui n'a le cuer rain - -' for the contratenor. The second system also has two staves with lyrics: '- pli de vrai- - e joi- - e' for the tenor and '- pli de vrai-e joi - e' for the contratenor. The music features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature of 6/8.

4-13. *Dame vailans - Amis de tant - Certement*, PR, f. 53v, beginning

Musical score for 'Dame vailans - Amis de tant - Certement' in 2/4 time. The score consists of two systems. The first system has three staves: the upper staff is for the tenor, the middle for the contratenor, and the lower for the bass. The lyrics are: 'Da - me vai - - lans de' for the tenor, 'A - - - - mis de tant que vous a -' for the contratenor, and 'Cer-te- - ment puet on bien af - - -' for the bass. The second system also has three staves with lyrics: 'prijs et de vo - loir' for the tenor, 'ves de - - sir' for the contratenor, and 'fir - - - - mer' for the bass. The music features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature of 2/4.

³⁹⁴ See Plumley, ‘An ‘Episode’, p. 157.

Departures from the standard division of pairs of high and low voices set a fifth apart (with the second high voice omitted for three-part settings) are especially common in canonic compositions and multi-texted or poly-texted works. In purely canonic compositions and when only the top parts repeat canonically this is a technical necessity.³⁹⁵ In irregularly texted works (ex. 4-12 and 4-13), the blurring of the hierarchical organisation of the parts and the temptation to use imitation may go towards explaining the allure of same-range or irregular voice-constellations.

The reuse of older material also affects the length and scoring of new settings. In this context I refer only to the reworking of entire pre-existing songs, and not to local quotations, even though they too affect compositional elements such as the choice of mensuration and tonal structure. The setting of older text in new styles (such as Antonello da Caserta's setting of Machaut's *Beaute parfaite*, **ModA**, f. 13) is not new or unique to the *Ars subtilior*.³⁹⁶ The novelty in *Ars subtilior* re-settings lies in their attitude towards older music. Whether a new contratenor is added to an old polyphonic composition or a monophonic song is taken as the basis of a new composition, the new voices do not try to imitate the style and aesthetics of the old work, but force a new aesthetic upon them.³⁹⁷ This creates a degree of self-aware cross-stylistic tension between the new and the old, or the *Ars subtilior* and other contemporaneous styles. Thus the new contratenors appearing in **MachE** can be seen to represent the new stylistic preferences of the closing decades of the fourteenth century, rather than as reworkings within Machaut's original style.³⁹⁸ While the unique fourth voice for Vaillant's *Par maintes foy* in **Bcl/Leclercq** (see pp. 256-62 below) only serves to intensify the existing imitation and cross-rhythms in the piece, Matteo da Perugia's extra contratenor voices at

³⁹⁵ When it is only the lower voices which participate in the canonic progression, the traditional combination is usually maintained, see *Passerose de biaute* (**PR**, f. 65v-66, **Pit**, ff. 26-25v) or *En la maison Dedalus*. As an exception, *Le ray au soleyl* (**Luc** LXXXIII, attributed to Ciconia) is purely canonic but in two different octaves, with two higher voices and a single low one.

³⁹⁶ It is not easy to find examples as it is often difficult to trace the origins of the texts used (or even to find out whether they are original or not). Still, one can point towards the canonic setting of *Quan ye voy le dut tens venire* as part of the first layer of **FP** (f. 90v) which uses Italian style and notation to set a trouvère text by Renaut de Trie. See Theodore Karp, 'The Textual Origin of a Piece of Trecento Polyphony', *JAMS*, xx (Autumn, 1967), pp. 469-473. For a famous later example, see Dufay's (and other) setting of Petrarch's *Vergene bella* (**Ox**, f. 133v-134).

³⁹⁷ See Pedro Memelsdorff, 'Lizadra donna'.

³⁹⁸ See also Bent, 'The Machaut Manuscripts', pp. 70-3, where it is suggested that the compiler of **MachE** was not responsible for the added voices, and that they may even be attributable to Machaut himself.

times insert his own stylistic traits into the host-composition.³⁹⁹ Interestingly, Matteo does not only look to the past for inspiration, but gives the same stylistic treatment to works by composers more usually associated with the new *International* style, or the parallel Italian *Trecento* compositions.⁴⁰⁰ A similar trend-defying strategy can also be seen in two works in **Ch**, even though the re-working route is less well documented.⁴⁰¹ *Un orible plein – Adieu vos comant* (**Ch**, f. 13v) seems to be constructed over a pre-existing song placed in the tenor (ex. 4-14). That this is the case is suggested by a number of elements: The melody has a strong modal character typical of simple monophonic songs. It also has its own structure, with each melodic line repeated twice in a single hearing of both A and B sections (the A section even has *ouvert* and *clos* endings for the repetitions). Finally, like in *He tres doulz roussignol – Roussignoulet du bois* and *Je voy le bon tens venir*, the tenor is written using *semibreves* for all notes apart from the last note of each sentence, and is underlayed syllabically throughout.

4-14. *Un orible plein - Adieu vos comant*, **Ch**, f. 13v, beginning of tenor

8 A-dieu vos co - mant bau - dour jo - lie - - te et bon u - sa - ge

The cantus melody which was added on top of this melody incorporates some syncopation, but is relatively simple (ex. 4-15). Its sentences mirror those of the tenor exactly, even though the rhyme scheme of the A section text is not identical.⁴⁰² Looked at in isolation, the structural duo looks like an unassuming little song, which could even be included in the *International* style and would not be out of place in the newer layers of **Ox**.

In most *Ars subtilior* works it is the cantus which is the most active, and includes the most extravagant technical complications. While the contratenor participates in such activities, its normal role is to bridge over rests in the cantus or react to it in some other way. In this song

³⁹⁹ Perhaps the clearest case is with Machaut's *Se vous n'estes* and the new contratenor for it copied in **ModA** f. 5v (its final cadence appears as ex. 4-19 below). For aesthetic and technical characteristics of Matteo's contratenors see Memelsdorff, 'Lizadra Donna', p. 254.

⁴⁰⁰ Works of the newer style to which he added a new contratenor include Grenon's *Ie ne requier*, **ModA**, f. 45v, or Fontaine's *Pour vous tenir*, **Parma**, f. 1v (orig 233v). The treatment of Fontaine's song is interesting as the song was simplified (second texted voice dropped) before the new contratenor was added. *Trecento* songs receiving this treatment include Bartolino da Padova's *El non me zova* (**ModA**, 3v-4), and *Tu me solevi donna* (**ModA**, f. 44v).

⁴⁰¹ Other songs seem to be based on pre-given tenors, including Borlet's *He tres doulz roussignol – Roussignoulet du bois* (**Ch**, f. 54v, **PR**, f. 53) and *Je voy le bon tens venir* (**PR**, f. 67).

⁴⁰² The cantus uses an 'abba' pattern, while the tenor has an 'abab' rhyme structure.

however, the contratenor's behaviour is clearly set apart from the other two voices, constantly going against their orderly sentence structure, and uses many *sesquitertia* passages to destabilise the rhythmic unity of the song (ex. 4-16).

4-15. *Un orible plein - Adieu vos comant*, Ch, f. 13v, beginning of cantus and tenor

Un o-rible plein de aue de vray com-fort plus a-vec
A-dieu vos co - mant bau - dour jo-lie -
moy quant je me ma-ri - ay
- te et bon u - sa - ge

4-16. *Un orible plein - Adieu vos comant*, Ch, f. 13v, beginning

Un o-rible plein de aue de vray com-fort plus a - vec
A - dieu vos co - mant bau - dour jo - lie -
moy quant je me ma-ri - ay
- te et bon u - sa - ge

Other elements also suggest that this voice is a late addition. It is very erratic, showing a degree of melodic leading only when the other two are particularly immobile (fifth and sixth

brevis units). It adds a considerable amount of harmonic friction (second and fourth *brevis* units here and ex. 4-38 below). And finally, its reaction to the non-standard cadential formulae is somewhat forced: both cadences appearing in the excerpt above work in a two-part context, but are surprising in a three-part one. The first cadence uses non step-wise motion in the tenor which rules out the traditional step-wise progression of the contratenor towards the fifth. In the second cadence, the tenor progresses towards the fifth under the cantus (rather than an octave), leaving the contratenor with fewer possibilities.

O bonne douce Franse (Ch, f. 29, ex. 4-17) has an even simpler structural duo, this time without incorporating pre-given materials. In this case, the added contratenor, which transforms the duo into an *Ars subtilior* piece, is marked out by a visual clue. While the cantus and tenor are written in the standard full-black notation with sprinklings of full-red groups, the contratenor is written in red-hollow throughout, marking it out on the page and creating constant *sesquitertia* proportion. The same rhythm could easily have been notated with a single \circ sign in the beginning of the voice.⁴⁰³

4-17. *O bonne douce Franse*, Ch, f. 29, breves 8 - 18

The image shows a musical score for 'O bonne douce Franse' in 6/8 time. It consists of two systems of three staves each. The top staff is the cantus (treble clef), the middle is the tenor (treble clef), and the bottom is the contratenor (treble clef). The contratenor part is written in red-hollow notation. The lyrics are: 'se, he! doulx pa - is ont maint tou-te bau - dor. quan [me] sou-vient de tan-tes grant dou-cour li cuer me part de dul e de tris - - - tess- - - - ses'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Both examples are interesting for the way in which stylistic development seems to be ‘flowing backwards’ from the modern, simple style back into the arms of ‘old-fashioned’

⁴⁰³ For more on the visual side of this piece see p. 187-7 below, which include also a facsimile of it as figure 4-85.

complexity. As with Plumley and Stone's identification of an *Ars subtilior* 'lite' movement,⁴⁰⁴ this realisation raises further questions about the relationship and interaction between the two styles. My opinion is that the aesthetics governing both styles must have had many points of contact as fashion shifted from one to the other. It is after all inconceivable to think of each style as operating in a void with no relation to earlier musical production, other contemporaneous attitudes, or newly forming preferences. Again, my attempt to formulate a language for *Ars subtilior* style and a mechanism for its formation and disintegration is in part designed to ease the identification and interpretation of such cross-overs.⁴⁰⁵

As a final element of scoring, I would like to stress a structural trait which has in recent years been sidelined by musicological concentration on sonorities and their effects.⁴⁰⁶ This is the hierarchy of voice-parts in medieval polyphonic composition. Perhaps as part of the attempt to create a musicological mental shift, Fuller's formulation of medieval harmonic behaviour was centred completely on chords and sonorities, and the exclusion of other structural elements.⁴⁰⁷ In order to make her system air-tight, it had to demonstrate a clear-cut separation from the preceding attitudes to medieval music composition and consumption as linear. As with my reading of Günther's definition of the *Ars subtilior*, the need to interact with the musicological mainstream may have hindered the portrayal of medieval subtlety.

That sonority was invaluable in the planning, composition and understanding of music does not rule out a conceptual voice hierarchy. The number of appearances of a cadential progression in which the cantus and tenor progress in parallel fourths and the contratenor lands on the fundament of the sonority is negligible. When music is quoted, it is the

⁴⁰⁴ See Plumley and Stone, 'Cordier's Picture-Songs'.

⁴⁰⁵ For the interaction between the *Ars subtilior* and other earlier, contemporaneous and newer musical forces see also case study 4, pp. 248-278 below.

⁴⁰⁶ This trend was also linked to consort-oriented performance habits boosted by the *a cappella* fashion. For some of this argument (which I find completely spurious), see Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention*, pp. 118-9.

⁴⁰⁷ See Fuller, 'On Sonorities', pp. 40-5 or Sarah Fuller, 'Tendencies and Resolution: The Direct Progression in "Ars Nova" Music', *JMT*, xxxvi (Autumn, 1992), pp. 231-2. Her assertion that the chordal supremacy is shown by the behaviour of *Solus tenor* voices is not sustainable, as looking at the first such voice in **ModA** (*Et in terra*, ff. 3v-4) attests. The tendency of such voices to incorporate most of the lowest sounding notes is purely practical: in order to justify the copying of the new voice it has to be sufficiently different from the work's original tenor. The problem is identifying which contratenor notes could be taken over without creating structural dissonances with the upper voices. The only locations where one can be sure to avoid this possibility is where the contratenor moves below the tenor, as the contratenor has to be consonant with all other voices in these locations anyway. This tendency can therefore be seen as technical, practical or even mechanical one, rather than a choice driven by considerations of sonority.

contratenor which is first to be excluded. When voices are exchanged, it is never the cantus or tenor which is re-written. Most cases of insertions of extreme dissonance occur in the contratenor, and away from the structural duo.⁴⁰⁸ Even when tenor and contratenor exchange notes while keeping a single sonority, this is done in such a way as to maintain a consonant interval between cantus and tenor.

The constant exchange of the lowest note of the sonority between the tenor and contratenor of Suzoy's *Pictagoras* (ex. 4-18) can be taken as an example. In her analysis, Plumley concluded that the lower two voices were conceived as a unit, and are concerned with sonority not melodic leading.⁴⁰⁹ While not going so far herself, this might suggest interchangeability. On closer inspection though, the cantus-tenor duo remains consonant also when the tenor note is in the middle of the sonority. The contratenor never sounds a fifth below the tenor in a perfect sonority. The two lower voices may well have been conceived of as a pair, but I see no reason to think of them as transgressing the hierarchical norm.

Structural fourths appear only between contratenor and one of the other voices, and very rarely between the structural duo. A change of sonority created by a low contratenor note can therefore be seen as commentary on the structural duo or as a destabilising effect. A manifestation of the different possibilities can be seen in the unusual choice of ending given by Matteo da Perugia's new contratenor for Machaut *Se vous n'estes* (**ModA**, f. 5v, ex. 4-19). The choice can be seen as an interpretative freedom with which the contratenorista may choose to undermine, enrich or follow the structural duo, and mark its ending either by leaps or by chromaticism. The contratenor does not simply take over the role of the tenor in normal progressions and cancel the required consonance between the other voices. Its behaviour should therefore be interpreted differently. The few exceptions that can be found to any of these guidelines can be seen as part of the expressive structure of the work that contains them.

⁴⁰⁸ See, for example, *Un orible plein de aue – Adieu vos comant* discussed in pp. 137-9 above and ex. 4-38 below, or *Amour m'a le cuer mis* in case study 2, pp. 226-37 below. Counter-examples can be seen in the two-part compositions, where a dissonance has to appear between the structural voices (ex. 4-39), as well as works like Prepositus Brixienensis's *I ochi d'una ançolleta*, shown in ex. 4-40 below.

⁴⁰⁹ See Plumley, *The Grammar*, pp. 259-61. She does mark cadential progressions as locations where melodic leading takes over and traditional roles are reasserted.

4-18. Suzoy, *Pictagoras Jabol et Orpheus*, Ch, f. 30v, beginning

The musical score consists of three systems, each with three staves (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor/Bass). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are: "Pic se - - - ta - - - go - - - ras le Ju - - - bol - - - scri - - - ptu - - - et Or - phe - - us fu - - - ve - - - re molt pour - - -". Red arrows indicate melodic leaps between notes in the vocal lines. Red circles highlight specific notes in the bass line, including the final notes of the piece.

4-19. Guillaume de Machaut (cantus and tenor), *Se vous n'estes*, ModA, f. 34 & Matteo da Perugia (contratenor), *Se vous n'estes*, ModA, f. 5v, ending

The musical score consists of three staves (Cantus, Tenor, and Contratenor). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are: "ri - ant". Red arrows indicate melodic leaps between notes in the Cantus and Tenor lines. Red circles highlight specific notes in the Contratenor line, including the final notes of the piece.

iii. Modal behaviour

There is no doubt that modes played a central part in the conceptualisation of music throughout the middle ages, and that their everyday relevance was constantly evident through the singing of chant and recitation of psalms.⁴¹⁰ This is not to say that the practicalities of the church system could be directly transplanted onto polyphony.⁴¹¹ With the changing styles of polyphonic composition, the monophonically conceived medieval modality endured wave after wave of assault. It surely remained as an underlying system at the back of composers' minds, but many parameters of polyphonic composition made it secondary in everyday use. Considerations of sonority destabilised both the modal pitch-configuration and their hierarchical structures. The addition of tension-enhancing or interval-correcting accidentals brought in pitches foreign to the original mode, and the placement of perfections above and below a given pitch imbued it with polyphonic importance, no matter how weak its position was in the mode.⁴¹² This also suggests that the number of voices can affect harmonic usage – under-fifth cadences are more common in two-part works. I would suggest that this is because such a progression does not leave a satisfactory cadential progression for a contratenor, and was therefore avoided in three-part composition. In order to create a sounding three-part equivalent, it is the contratenor which has to sound the lower fifth, and the cantus and tenor maintain the normal octave relationship.⁴¹³ The use of under-fifth cadences in later two-part song and in works where the contratenor may be subsequent addition hints that it being less prevalent should not necessarily mean it was considered inherently old-fashioned, but simply less practical in certain voice-combinations.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹⁰ For the prevalence of *Ars subtilior* composers who spent most of their days singing monophony see p. 89 above. On the early construction of the monophonic system see Christopher Schmidt, *Harmonia Modorum, Eine gregorianische Melodielehre* (Amadeus, 2004). As both modality and modal-typing involve the interpretation of the relationship between privileged and unprivileged pitches, and between those and other stylistic characteristics, I chose to differentiate them by regarding modality as those influences emanating from monophonic church usage, and tonal-types or pitch-structures as the end results of the interaction between these influences and the demands and possibilities of polyphonic, less-functional composition.

⁴¹¹ One such (in my eyes, misguided) attempt can be found in Christian Berger, *Hexachord, Mensur und Textstruktur: Studien zum Französischen Lied des 14. Jahrhunderts*, in *Beihefte zum AfM*, xxxv (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1992), which was countered in Fuller, 'Modal Discourse'.

⁴¹² A clear example is the under-fifth cadence, especially in modes where the fourth degree is not particularly strong.

⁴¹³ See ex. 4-19 above for the case of Matteo da Perugia's new contratenor for a Machaut song. A similar case is *Un Orible – Adieu vos comant* also discussed above as possibly a later contratenor (ex. 4-16 and 4-38). This technique was also used in songs apparently conceived in three parts such as *J'ay grant desespoir* (PR, f. 65v), where the final cadence shows this structure.

⁴¹⁴ Lefferts uses this cadential characteristic as a main argument for dating *Ut pateat evidenter* (ex. 4-35 below) to the "middle-period Machaut" era, which would result in it being an extremely early example of prevalent mensural change and exceptional melodic and harmonic language. I would favour the latter two

Leading accidentals can be used just as effectively to destabilise standard modal progressions as clarifying ambiguous ones (ex. 4-20). Swift and surprising shifts from one leading sonority to another, or from a leading sonority to an unexpected perfection, can create a sense of disjunction and disorientation rather than modal richness.

4-20. Antonello da Caserta, *Amour m'a le cuer mis*, ModA, f. 32v-33, beginning of B section

The image shows a musical score for a vocal piece with lute accompaniment. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains the first two lines of music, and the second system contains the next two lines. The lyrics are: "En tel es-tat ma vi- - - e est te b - nue pour ce nest". Red circles are drawn around specific notes in the vocal line and corresponding notes in the lute line. Red arrows point from these circles to specific accidentals (sharps and flats) in the lute line, highlighting the leading accidentals used in the piece.

Modal centres here are on D (beginning of section), C (third *brevis*, destabilised by the lower fifth in the contratenor, resulting in an F sonority), A (fifth and sixth *breves*, another lower fifth on the fifth *brevis*, further weakened by the leap arrival in the tenor) and E (tenth *brevis*). None of these centres are particularly surprising in a D-dorian work, but their swift succession creates a sense of restlessness. The strongest effect is created in the first modal shift with the abrupt shift from a double-inflected leading sonority to D (end of second *brevis*) to a surprising C/F sonority.⁴¹⁵

elements and place the song a good few decades later, explaining the “antiquated” progression as unsurprising in a piece conceived in two voices. See Lefferts, ‘A riddle and a Song’, p. 124.

⁴¹⁵ For more on this song, and the place these effects have within its overall structure, see case study 2, pp. 226-37 below.

Congruence signs tend to further accentuate their importance by inserting an added layer of chromaticism (ex. 4-11 and 4-21). This creates melodic or harmonic discord which transgresses the modal feeling. The next excerpt is taken from an F-Lydian piece.⁴¹⁶

4-21. Jo. Cuvelier, *Se galaas*, Ch, f. 38, refrain beginning

Many works weaken the modal feeling by avoiding the perfection on the *ouvert*, choosing instead to stop on a leading sonority. This effect is further enhanced when the leading sonority chosen does not lead directly to either the final modal centre or the next sounding sonority (beginning of the song, ex. 4-22). This audible disjuncture can be an effective tool even when the location of the medial cadence is not in itself unusual. It can be detected in the songs from which both the previous examples were taken, even though the positions of the cantus' *ouvert* notes are compatible with the songs' overall tonal types.

4-22. Central sonorities in *Amour m'a le cuer mis* and *Se Galaas*

Amour m'a le cuer mis			Se Galaas		
Beginning	Ouvert	Clos	Beginning	Ouvert	Clos

In extreme cases (ex. 4-23, 4-35 and 4-65), inflections can be so prevalent that any coherent sense of mode is at least momentarily obliterated.

⁴¹⁶ For other examples see Josephson, 'Many Roads Lead to Rome', pp. 85-7.

4-23. Solage, *Fumeux fume*, Ch, f. 59, B section

fu - - meu-se

spe-cu - la - ci - - on

Even a less literal transcription than the above will be extraordinary and completely disorientating in terms of mode. While certainly being the most extreme, this is not the only piece where such chromatic sequencing or a general plethora of accidentals takes place.⁴¹⁷

Melodic inflections can of course also change the modal character greatly. Until recently, Suzoy's *Pictagoras Jabol et Orpheus* was known only from concordances in **Ch** and **Bov**. Both these versions agreed on a C-natural in the fourth *brevis* unit (see ex. 4-24), making the song's first phrase sound as a progression from a strong F sonority, via an important but unstable intermediary C to a final B-flat. Recently, a new concordance was discovered in

⁴¹⁷ Another famous example is *Le mont Aon* (**Ch**, f. 22v; **FP**, f. 103v-104, see ex. 4-65 below), but see also the erratic ficta additions to Cesaris's *Bonte bialte* (**FP**, 14v), which destabilises what would otherwise be a very straightforward composition. For a lesser known extreme example, see *Ut pateant evidenter* (ex. 4-35 below).

Paris, which includes a surprising C-sharp inflection in this location.⁴¹⁸ This inflection immediately usurps the importance of the C sonority and points towards D as an important centre, which was previously nearly non-existent. This even colours the following Fs, previously a central goal-point, as an unstable location in a D orbit. The inflection also causes harmonic tension as it clashes with a C in the Tenor, making it an even more unlikely addition without the evidence of the new source. Neither choice of structural sonorities would be surprising in a B-flat piece. The two versions are shown here only to demonstrate how a single inflection (which would probably not be added as *ficta*) can change the local modal configuration.

4-24. Suzoy, *Pictagoras Jabol et Orpheus*, Ch, f. 30v & Paris, f. 153 first text-line of cantus

The image shows a musical score with three systems. The first system compares two versions: 'CH' and 'Paris'. Both are in 6/8 time. The CH version has a C-sharp inflection circled in red, while the Paris version has a C natural. The second system shows two vocal lines with lyrics: '- ta - - go - - ras Ja - - - - bol' and '- - - - - ta-go - ras Jo -'. The third system shows two vocal lines with lyrics: 'et Or-phe - - us' and '- bal et Or-phe - us'.

As will be suggested with a number of techniques, local expectations within a single piece are most easily created at its beginning.⁴¹⁹ From the modal point of view, this can be achieved by creating a surprise or sending mixed signals as to the song's pitch-constellation (ex. 4-25).⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁸ See Everist, 'A New Source'. The difference in inflection is not discussed in his article.

⁴¹⁹ See pp. 156, 178, 272-3, 276 and 291 below. A specific assertion of this in relation to modal behaviour can be found in Plumley, *The Grammar*, pp. 147-63.

⁴²⁰ Other sections of Bortholomeus da Bonoia's *Que pena maior* can be seen also in ex. 4-9, 4-45 and 4-87.

4-25. Bartholomeus da Bononia, *Que pena maior*, ModA, f. 37, first two breves of cantus

1. 5. Que
4. Di - - - - -

The notated B-flat and G-sharp suggest both plagal and authentic cadence possibilities towards A and create uncertainty in the modal direction of the song. The strange melodic progressions created by many of these surprising accidentals lead us directly to the next topic.

c. Melody and counterpoint

As with previous elements, expansion seems to be the prevailing concept in *Ars subtilior* composition also in regards to melody and counterpoint. It takes the form of elongation, transgression, elaboration or complication of *Ars nova* behaviour. Ambiguity and confounding expectations seemed to be a prime source of delight at a time when *Ars nova* concepts of melody, harmony and rhythm were established enough to form a template of expectations upon which deviation attracts attention and enables creative expression.

Both linear and vertical languages are clear continuations of French *Ars nova* style. Melodic formulations, such as leading by stepwise motion while breaking up lines with leaps, as well as the rhythmic structures of the four basic mensurations, are maintained. The harmonic concept of the resolution of imperfect to perfect within an elaborated skeletal structure remains in force.

Rhythmic elements are discussed separately below (pp. 160-85). I will concentrate here only on some *Ars subtilior* techniques which transgress the melodic and harmonic *Ars nova* usage.

i. Melody

Melodic expansion can work on a variety of different levels. Elongation is the most obvious. On the whole, *Ars subtilior* lines are longer than those of preceding or subsequent styles. Melodies which are not rhythmically or proportionally complicated tend to compensate with directional or modal ambiguity. This can easily be seen by comparing examples 4-15 and 4-17 above, where the cantus-tenor duo seems to fit the modern style, with examples 4-6 to 4-9, which are undoubtedly *Ars subtilior* in character. Melodies which

use prominent syncopations (ex. 4-26 and 4-27) or proportions (ex. 4-27 and 4-28) can afford to use more a conventional modal framework. Many times they present clear modal goals which are arrived at through easily discernable successions of directional sonorities. It seems that while different *Ars subtilior* features were frequently combined, it was deemed sufficient to use one prominent feature at a time in order to support elongated lines and forms⁴²¹.

4-26. *Amour en un beau vergier*, Cyp, f. 108v, beginning of cantus

A - - - - - mour

4-27. *Zachara da Teramo*, *Sumite karissimi*, ModA, f. 11v-12, beginning of cantus

Su - - - - - mi - te ka - - - - ri - - - - - si - - - - mi

4-28. *Sur toute flour*, Cyp, f. 137, first text-line of cantus⁴²²

Sur tou-te flour la ro - - - - se-est co-lou - ri - -
- e

The use of difficult intervallic progressions and their combinations is not unique to the *Ars subtilior*,⁴²³ but like other elements it was taken to the extreme in this period. While cantus lines have their fair share of such intervals (see examples 4-20, 4-23, 4-25, 4-35, 4-44, 4-45 etc.), it is often the disjunctive style of the contratenor which offers the most difficult progressions (ex. 4-29, 4-30 and 4-31). This is perhaps due to the contratenors' lower place on the hierarchical ladder. This may allow composers to compromise on voice-leading, or if

⁴²¹ For a structural exchange of single prominent effects see case study 2, pp. 226-37 below.

⁴²² The change of time-signature is not in the original, but was made in order to represent more clearly what should be a *sesquioctava* (9:8 proportion) on the *minima* level (quaver in the transcription) within a context of *tempus imperfectum prolatio maior*.

⁴²³ See Brothers, *Chromatic Beauty*, where chapters are dedicated also to the trouvère repertoire, Machaut, and Dufay.

taking a positive view of such progressions, allow them to insert unusual progressions unsuitable for the structural duo.⁴²⁴

4-29. *Puis quatrement*, PR, f. 75, *breves 10-14 of contratenor*

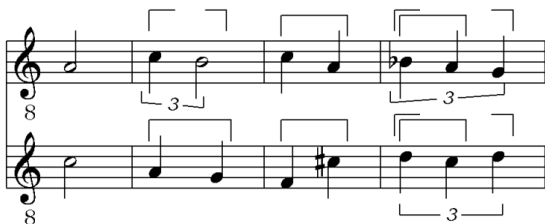


The piece from which the extract above was taken is not particularly exuberant melodically or rhythmically. The harmonic context dictates B and E-naturals in first and third *brevis*-units respectively. It is very common for a leap towards a leading tone in a cadencial progression (whether fulfilled or not) to create augmented intervals. Matteo da Perugia's contratenors are full of such progressions. The commonly resulting intervals are the major seventh and augmented fourth, but augmented fifths occur as well.

4-30. Matteo da Perugia, *Puis que la mort*, ModA, f. 7-6v, *breves 14-15 of tenor and contratenor*



4-31. Matteo da Perugia, *Plus onques dame*, ModA, f. 9, *beginning of B section of tenor and contratenor*



Melodic diminished fourths are characteristic of Matteo's cantus lines, but as can be seen from examples 4-9 and 4-23, this is by no means unique. Some pieces take such intervals as their central melodic motif. In *Tre gente, pure fleur de lis* (Cyp, f. 137v) for example, each strophe presents seven C-sharp→F leaps in the cantus, two of them marking the *clos* ending and the beginning of the musical rhyme in the refrain (see ex. 4-44). A number of other filled-in diminished intervals, conflicting *ficta* and other forms of harmonic and melodic destabilisers make it clear that this is an important feature of the song.

⁴²⁴ I would be very wary of taking voice-behaviour as a proof of either instrumental or vocal performance. From the technical point of view, both are clearly possible. Even when looking at styles in which a separation between music for vocal ensembles and instrumental ensembles is relatively clear (music around 1500 for example), there is enough stylistic cross-over to think of those differences as aesthetic rather than technical.

4-32. *Puis que ame*, Cyp, f. 107, beginning

Musical score for 'Puis que ame' in 6/8 time. The score consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line with the lyrics 'Puis que~a - - me'. The middle and bottom staves are accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

4-33. *En tout tres amoureux*, Cyp, f. 156v, beginning

Musical score for 'En tout tres amoureux' in 6/8 time. The score consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line with the lyrics 'En'. The middle and bottom staves are accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

A group of pieces from **Cyp** (ex. 4-32 and 4-33) uses an augmented scale as their first melodic movement (sometimes creating considerable harmonic friction), showing the centrality of this effect.

In addition to those mentioned up to now in this section, many other pieces present unusual and surprising uses of inflection to such an extent that it seems they use this technique mainly in order to stand out and attract attention (ex. 4-34, 4-35 and 4-36).

4-34. *Petrus Fabri, Laus detur multipharia*, Ch, f. 16v, beginning

Musical score for 'Laus detur multipharia' in 6/8 time. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is the vocal line with the lyrics 'Laus de-tur mul-ti-pha-ri - a de - o'. The middle and bottom staves are accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Red arrows and a red oval highlight specific notes in the vocal line and the second staff, indicating inflection points.

4-35. *Ut pateat evidenter*, Ox842, f. 45v-46

Ut pa-te - - at e - - vi-den - - ter mo - no - - cor - - di qu-ot et

qui - - - - bus ple-ri li - - cet ne - - sci-en - - ter di -

- vi - - sis a com - mu - - ni - - bus

cor - - - - dis ca - nant de - - - cen - - - ti - - bus

ut cal - cu - li fert ra - - ti - - - o

tri - - - - bu - lor de - - mon - - - stra - - ci - - - o

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a Latin text. It consists of six systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a lute line (bass clef). The time signature is 8/8. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: 'Ut pateat evidenter monochordique et quibus plenius demonstratur divissimul communitibus discordantibus ut calculi fert ratio tribulor demonstratio'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

4-36. Prepositus Brixiensis, *I ochi d'una ançolleta*, Ox, f. 24v, beginning of B section

8 2. Ho - chi mey bel - - Il ho - ne - sti e pel - le - - gri - - ni, pel,
 3. pre - ga - te la mia do - na che s'in - - chi - - ny, che,

ii. Harmony

As mentioned above, the basic concept of harmonic progression was carried through into the *Ars subtilior* from the French *Ars nova*. However, the tendency towards different speeds of movement in the different voices ruled out a heavy reliance on parallel movement as in the more or less contemporary English *sighting* and *fauxbourdon* techniques, or the kind of harmonic models described later by Guilielmus Monachus.⁴²⁵ This freedom from standardised models created a sense of independence from the underlying consonant structure. Examples 4-37 to 4-46 and 4-50 to 4-54 all include inserted avoidable dissonances.

4-37. Johannes Vaillant, *Pour ce que je*, Ch, f. 26, breves 21-22

8 ne say

Many pieces use written-in inflections to create discord within an underlying consonant counterpoint.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁵ On the origins of *fauxbourdon* see Ann Besser Scott, 'The Beginnings of Fauxbourdon: A New Interpretation', *JAMS*, xxiv (Auntum, 1971), pp. 345-363. For Monachus see Eulmee Park, *De Preceptis Artis Musicae of Guilielmus Monachus: A New Edition, Translation, and Commentary* (PhD. diss. for Ohio State University, 1993).

⁴²⁶ An interesting exception is Cesaris' *Bonte bialte* (FP, f. 14v), where the harmonic tension created by the many unusual inflections does not raise the level of dissonance. For an expansion and contextualisation of this technique see Antonello da Caserta's *Amour m'a le cuer mis* in case study 2 pp. 226-237 below.

4-38. *Un orible plein - Adieu vos comant*, Ch, f. 13v, beginning of B section

4-39. *Qui na le cuer*, Cyp, f. 152v, beginning of B section

4-40. *Prepositus Brixiensis, I ochi d'una ançolleta*, Ox, f. 24v, breves 13-18

On the whole, cadential progressions seemed to have gone through a degree of standardisation. Still, the strength of cadences was subject to the same manipulation techniques described by Fuller in relation to Machaut.⁴²⁷ Further subtlety was created by inserting unexpected or surprising harmonic and melodic behaviour in the build-up towards the expected leading-tone cadence structure. This resulted in either heightened dissonance or unfulfilled harmonic syntax, or of course both.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁷ See Fuller, 'On Sonorities', pp. 54-60 and 'Tendencies and Resolutions'.

⁴²⁸ More normal forms of dissonance, mostly resulting from stepwise progression towards cadences, are described in Jackson, 'Guillaume de Machaut and Dissonance', pp. 18-48, with special relevance to the *Ars subtilior* on pp. 42, 45 and 48. This is a rather selective collection of specific instances of dissonance, presented in rather anachronistic terms (pp. 40-1 for example, includes a comparison between Machaut's and Palestrina's

4-41. *Amour me dit*, Cyp, f. 150, beginning

Musical score for 'Amour me dit' (Cyp, f. 150, beginning). The score is in 6/8 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. Red circles highlight specific notes: a group of notes in the vocal line, a note in the piano accompaniment, and several notes in the vocal line and piano accompaniment.

4-42. *Sur toute fleur*, Cyp, f. 137, final cadence

Musical score for 'Sur toute fleur' (Cyp, f. 137, final cadence). The score is in 6/8 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. Red circles highlight specific notes: a group of notes in the vocal line and a note in the piano accompaniment.

4-43. *Jo. Olivier, Si con cy gist*, Ch, f. 31v, clos ending

Musical score for 'Jo. Olivier, Si con cy gist' (Ch, f. 31v, clos ending). The score is in 6/8 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. Red circles highlight specific notes: a group of notes in the vocal line and a note in the piano accompaniment.

4-44. *Ters gente pure et nete fleur de lis*, Cyp, f. 137v, clos cadence⁴²⁹

Musical score for 'Ters gente pure et nete fleur de lis' (Cyp, f. 137v, clos cadence⁴²⁹). The score is in 6/8 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. Red circles highlight specific notes: a group of notes in the vocal line and a note in the piano accompaniment.

handling of dissonance), and does not attempt any stylistic contextualisation or understanding of how dissonance interacts with other stylistic features.

⁴²⁹ A recording of both examples from *Cyp* using the indicated *ficta* can be found by ensemble La Morra, 'Flour de beaulté' tracks 4 and 10.

The expectation of an underlying consonant structure can also be thwarted using displacement. This is very common in syncopated passages (ex. 4-45, 4-46 and 4-47).

4-45. Bartholomeus da Bononia, *Que pena maior*, ModA, f. 37-36v, breves 8-9 of B section

A musical score for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef. A red oval highlights a syncopated passage in the top staff, where the melody is displaced relative to the accompaniment.

4-46. Marcus, FP, f. 16v, ending

A musical score for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 2/4 time signature. The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef. Multiple red ovals highlight syncopated passages across the staves, showing complex rhythmic displacement.

4-47. *Quant Jason*, Ut, f. 19v-20, beginning of refrain

A musical score for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef. A red oval highlights a syncopated passage in the top staff, with the word "Com" written below the first staff.

The manipulation of expectations can of course work both ways. *Amour m'a le cuer mis*, which has until now been used to demonstrate harmonic peculiarity, dissonance, and striking use of inflections, begins in a particularly consonant fashion, avoiding nearly all dissonances, even in most passing-note and syncopated passages (see also pp. 232-36 below). Other songs (ex. 4-48) mark themselves out as special by maintaining a very low level of dissonance throughout, even when syncopation does occur.

4-48. Antonio da Cividale, *Long tamps*, FP, f. 38

The musical score is presented in five systems, each containing three staves. The top staff uses a treble clef, while the middle and bottom staves use bass clefs. An '8va' marking is present between the middle and bottom staves in each system. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The notation includes various note values (eighth and sixteenth notes), rests, and accidentals (sharps and naturals). The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

As with highly syncopated passages, proportional complications can also allow for an easing in harmonic and contrapuntal strictness. Comparing the un-ornamented (ex. 4-49) and the ornamented (ex. 4-50) versions of Zacara's Credo for example, shows that melodic gesture in the cantus often take precedence over the maintenance of consonance.

4-49. *Zachara da Teramo, Patrem omnipotentem, Q15, f. 88v-90, breves 41-44*

de - - - um de de - o

de - um de de - o

de - - um de de - o

4-50. *Zachara da Teramo, Patrem omnipotentem, ModA, f. 23v-25, breves 41-44*

de - - - - - um de de - - - o

de - um de de - o

de - um de de - o

A similar pattern can also be discerned in compositions which use proportions without showing any relation to ornamentation (ex. 4-51).

4-51. *Je ne puis avoir plaisir, ModA, f. 20v, breves 33-38*

Je ne puis avoir plaisir

Rather than viewing this phenomenon as a lack of skill, or attempting to identify an underlying hierarchy of compositional elements, I would suggest that harmonic tension from

imperfect to perfect and rhythmic friction resulting from syncopation or proportion are direction-creating tools at the composer's disposal. Intensively using one technique at any given point makes other techniques redundant for the duration of its appearance. We should then approach harmonic thinking as one of many compositional tools rather than an underlying codified set of rules to be adhered to (as was accepted from the renaissance onwards). In a musical culture where an underlying, sometimes barely discernable consonant structure is enough to fulfil the theoretical demands of counterpoint; where rules are overridden to attract local attention; and where easily avoidable dissonance seemed to have been savoured rather than begrudgingly accepted, these different tools may well co-exist. Nonetheless, an effective use of one can legitimatise paying less attention to another.

Stark dissonances also appear due to structural decisions. Many canonic compositions present a higher degree of dissonance (ex. 4-52), perhaps demonstrating again that the attention given to imitation allowed a relaxation of adherence to directional harmony.⁴³⁰

4-52. Jacob de Senleches, *La harpe de melodie*, Chic, f. 10, breves 6-9

At times, of course, the recourse to dissonance was due to a general reference to the text, in order to highlight specific words, or even without any technical or textual justification whatsoever. In the following example, Guido's famous self-referential complaint about his contemporaries' notational technique can be read as being mirrored in the counterpoint.⁴³¹

⁴³⁰ This can be seen also in Machaut's *Sanz cuer m'en vois – Amis dolens maz – Dame par vous*. A quick look at the echoes in Monteverdi's *Vespers* of 1610 show this is by no means a singularly Medieval phenomenon.

⁴³¹ On this song's text see Günther, See Günther, 'Das Ende', p. 107; Stone, *Writing Rhythm*, pp. 169-184; 'The Composer's Voice', pp. 176-9; Stoessel, *The Captive Scirbe*, pp. 204-6 and 'Symbolic innovation', pp. 138-9, and Tanay, "'Nos faysoms contre Nature...'", pp. 29-30; 'Between the Fig Tree and the Laurel: *Or voit tout en aventure* Revisited', in Yolanda Plumley and Anne Stone (eds), *A Late Medieval Songbook and its Context: New Perspectives on the Chantilly Codex (Bibliothèque du Château de Chantilly, Ms 564)* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), pp. 161- 78. Jackson, 'Guillaume de Machaut and Dissonance', pp. 13-8 offers earlier examples of sometimes very similar progressions devoid of textual justification.

4-53. Guido, *Or voit tout*, Ch, f. 25v, breves 21-22

The image shows a three-staff musical score for Guido's 'Or voit tout'. The top staff is the vocal line, the middle is the contratenor line, and the bottom is the lute line. A red oval highlights a dissonance between the vocal and contratenor parts. The vocal line has a note on a higher staff (likely a soprano clef) and the contratenor line has a note on a lower staff (likely an alto clef). The dissonance occurs on the word '- si'.

Dissonance, like extreme point of range and voice-crossing, can be used to attract attention to certain locations within a text, marking them out as important (ex. 4-54, but also the word ‘mort’ in ex. 4-11 above and the change of mood marked by the dissonance in ex. 4-40).⁴³²

4-54. *Medee fu*, Ch, f. 24v refrain beginning

The image shows a three-staff musical score for 'Medee fu'. The top staff is the vocal line, the middle is the contratenor line, and the bottom is the lute line. A red oval highlights a dissonance between the vocal and contratenor parts. The vocal line has a note on a higher staff (likely a soprano clef) and the contratenor line has a note on a lower staff (likely an alto clef). The dissonance occurs on the word 'da'.

While discussing Matteo da Perugia’s reworking of songs through the insertion of new contratenor voices, Memelsdorff identified “a typical use of isolated, or even unique, dissonances at the climax of the songs they accompany”.⁴³³

d. Rhythm and notation

Both musicologists and performers consistently found rhythm and notation the most appealing features of *Ars subtilior* style.⁴³⁴ This is not surprising, as these elements are perhaps the clearest and most apparent characteristics which separate this from other styles. Both elements are of course governed by larger aesthetic and intellectual trends, but as they are such central themes, these elements will again be discussed separately.

⁴³² Jackson, ‘Guillaume de Machaut and Dissonance’, pp. 27-8 makes the claim that combinations of major-thirds and minor-sixths over the tenor were used by Machaut and Matteo da Perugia to single out important words. Sadly, the details with which he supports this claim are rather problematic.

⁴³³ Memelsdorff, ‘Lizadra Donna’, p. 252.

⁴³⁴ For this theme throughout the preoccupation with *Ars subtilior* music see Chapter 1, esp. pp. 28-51 above.

i. Note-shapes and coloration

As I have already demonstrated above, notational usage in *Ars subtilior*-related sources can vary greatly and tends to be inconsistent.⁴³⁵ Instead of following historical and technical traces of usage, I opt here to characterise the different approaches behind it. In general, it is possible to separate *Ars subtilior* notational usage into two parallel approaches: the practical and the creative.

The first approach puts audible music at its core. Scribes, composers and theorists reacted to the needs and demands of their host culture and, with what struck them as the most useful means, attempted to codify signs for both existing and newly-explored aural phenomena. Such attempts can be intellectualised and systematic (as is the case with theorists), or intuitive and to a degree counterproductive (as in **Paris** where complicated constellations of perfection-rules are required to compensate for the decision not to use standard coloration). In both cases the new notational techniques are the result of constantly changing musical requirements and the lack of standardised vocabulary. This accounts for some complicated notational usage, since the use of one notational tool snowballs into increasingly complicated means of notating other musical effects.

I would suggest that *Sans vous ne puis* (**ModA**, f. 15v) was one such case: red coloration was used for the first digression from the overall O mensuration, resulting in a not uncommon ‘inverse coloration’ or transformation to C. This made it impossible to use the same technique to notate a succession of imperfect *breves* later on in the piece. Available solutions to this situation were the use of an additional colour (or hollowing), a new note-shape, a recognised shape used in a non-standard way or, as is the case here, a change in mensuration to C.⁴³⁶ This (and the subsequent mensuration changes back to O) occurs five times in the

⁴³⁵ See pp. 65-7. For a relatively wide-ranging example see Stoessel, ‘Symbolic innovation’, pp. 149-151 where tables showing notational usage in theory treatises, **Ch** and **ModA** are given. This was based on a fuller account of notational grammar in the *Ars subtilior* in Stoessel, *The Captive Scribe*, Chapters 4 and 5. He considers the manipulation of note-shapes and coloration as an internal mode of notation, with proportional signs representing external signification. For piece-specific examples see Bauer, *Untersuchung der Notation*. **Cyp** is the exception to the inconsistency rule, showing relatively strict notational guidelines maintained throughout: only the normative kind of coloration is found; use of signs to indicate mensurations are consistent; simple proportion (up to *sesquitercia* signalled by C) shown by most common or self-explanatory signs (fractions); more complicated proportions always accompanied by a canon instruction; and the only note-forms from without the traditional French system are *semiminime* and *dragmae*, both used consistently and in their most common meanings.

⁴³⁶ The most likely candidate shape to be given a new meaning – the *semibrevis maior* – was probably ruled out by the earlier appearance of *dragmae*.

cantus and eleven times in the contratenor making the work look more complicated than it is.⁴³⁷ Similar considerations may explain the use of *dragmae* instead of normal coloration in the **Ch** version of Philipoctus da Caserta's *De ma dolour* (f. 32),⁴³⁸ or the use of three different techniques to signify *sesquitertia* proportion used simultaneously in all three voices of Antonello da Caserta's *Amour m'a le cuer mis* (**ModA**, f. 32v-33, ex. 4-55).⁴³⁹

4-55. Antonello da Caserta, *Amour m'a le cuer mis*, *sesquitertia* signification (*breves* 43-7)

The diagram shows three staves of music. The top staff, labeled 'Cantus', has a time signature of 8/6 and contains a sequence of diamond-shaped notes. The middle staff, labeled 'Tenor', contains black square notes with horizontal lines above them; the first two notes have black lines, and the last two have red lines. The bottom staff, labeled 'Contratenor', contains black square notes with horizontal lines below them; the first two notes have black lines, and the last two have red lines. Vertical dashed lines separate the notation into four measures.

As canon instructions rarely refer to note-shapes,⁴⁴⁰ non-standard use has to show a clear context or follow discernable patterns from an accepted form-vocabulary in order to be understood. Thus, an addition of a tail or a flag above the note will tend to shorten its value while comparable additions below it will create a lengthening.⁴⁴¹ Unexplained coloration (including normal usage) tends to represent *sesqui-* or *subsesqui-* type proportions (normally 3/2, 2/3, or 4/3).⁴⁴² Half coloration (and indeed half notes, as in Matteo's *trover ne puis* or *Et in terra* **ModA**, ff. 46 and 49v-50 respectively) represent half values and their combination. In very different ways, the output of both Senleches (being more systematic) and Matteo da Perugia (rather more intuitive) is full of such signs, as both composers seem to create their own visual vocabulary to match their musical requirements. Here, as in most other cases, the

⁴³⁷ The problem of successive imperfect *breves* forced a similar solution even on the organised and systematic scribes of **Cyp**, as this source treats coloration of more than single notes as a mensuration change from O or C into O, where imperfection and augmentation rules apply.

⁴³⁸ The first use of red was to mark out *semiminime*. Interestingly, the scribe lapsed into normal use in the beginning of the B section, but returned to the *dragma* in the repetition of the A section *clos* cadence in the refrain (following a second appearance of the red *semiminime*).

⁴³⁹ Here again the original culprit seems to be the use of inverse red coloration in O, but this time compounded by the need to find another sign for *sesquialtera* in an O context. Erasures in the manuscript testify to the scribe's attempts to cope with the situation that he was in. This phrase is treated again on pp. 182-3, 227-8 and 235 below.

⁴⁴⁰ See pp. 170-1 below.

⁴⁴¹ Such a concept is already in evidence in the differentiation of kinds of *semibreves* in early *Ars nova* and is very useful in practice. Still, some interpretations of double-flagged *dragma*, or of the ideas presented in the *Tractatus figurarum* buck this trend. See Stoessel 'Symbolic Innovation'.

⁴⁴² Different coloration types in **Ch** and **ModA** are presented in Stoessel, *The Captive Scribe*, table 4.1 (p. 195).

meaning of these signs quickly becomes apparent when looking at groupings and context. This is even true when one-off signs appear without discernable comparatives.⁴⁴³

Bartholomeus de Bononia's *Que pena maior* (**ModA**, f. 37-36v), has red coloration in a C context creating a shift to C, leaving black hollow *semibreves maiores* to signify *sesquialtera*. This work includes some very special note-shapes. Half-black half-hollow under-flagged *dragmae* signify dotted *minime* as they are always augmented by a *semiminima* directly afterwards, or after a short syncopation. A black hollow lower-tailed *brevis* comes in the context of a longer black hollow sequence. Black hollow *breves* were already used to signify imperfect *breves* in O. This unit though is in itself perfect and divided into three black hollow *semibreves maiores*. The combination of both shape-ideas can only mean a value somewhere in between those represented by the two recognisable shapes. Once this is realised, the equation of a void-black square-headed *semibrevis maior* (or tailed *brevis*) as two such *semibreves maiores* (or an imperfedted void-black *brevis*) becomes the natural and logical reading of this shape, even though an attempt to interpret it without its specific context can be problematic and lead to a variety of other outcomes.

This ability to 'figure out' the notation seems to have been a part of the musical currency of the time, and was perhaps used to show the authoritative ability of the composer in creating personal notational devices, and to differentiate between readers of different abilities.⁴⁴⁴ This fits well with the examples in *Que pena maior*, as the skill of the misunderstood musician of the text is enhanced by the special notational use, and readers are accepted into his circle only after demonstrating that they can perform the work and figure out the notation. The song further highlights such attitudes towards special note-shapes, as its canon instruction explains only the two proportion-indicating numerals, leaving the interpretation of the myriad special note-shapes to the reader.

The second, creative approach to notation does not differentiate between written and sounding realisations of the music. Both media interact with the idea formed in the composer's head, and may therefore add expressive layers to reading, performing and

⁴⁴³ For some processes in the creation of special note-shape and their interpretation see Stoessel, *The Captive Scribe*, pp. 207-13.

⁴⁴⁴ For an expansion of these ideas see pp. 288-9 below.

listening to the work.⁴⁴⁵ This usage is by definition self-conscious, intentional, and assigns a larger degree of importance to the act of notation than the other, pragmatic attitude. The relationships between text, sound and notation are varied. Songs can include references between music and text which do not affect the technicalities of notation: Zachara da Teramos' *Sumite karissimi* (**ModA**, f. 11v-12) is a difficult piece to execute, as the text-puzzle makes plain, but it is notated as simply and clearly as the complex rhythms allow, without any added complications. Other pieces present interplay between text and notation which is hard to decipher acoustically.⁴⁴⁶ Yet other works present notated and audible complexities which are not mirrored by the text to which they are set.⁴⁴⁷ Certain pieces can be said to play on all three aspects, such as *Se j'ay perdu* (**Ox**, f. 114), while many works concentrate on just one aspect.⁴⁴⁸

To some degree, the notationally creative attitude is present in all self-referential and intentionally visual works. It can also be discerned in works which employ unnecessary notational complications, especially those which cannot be heard in performance. Such a song is Baude Cordier's *Amans ames secretement* (**Ox**, f. 123, ex. 4-69 below), a diminutive rondeau, none of whose three voices fill an entire line in the manuscript, and which was already mentioned for its extensive use of a large number of proportion signs.⁴⁴⁹ Most of these changes are unidentifiable in performance, and the piece could easily have been notated without any mensuration change using only normal coloration and a small number of *semiminime* and *dragmae*.⁴⁵⁰ Other examples are the use of C in combination with *dragmae* and *semibreves maiores* for all the many passages which audibly operate in C in *Je ne puis*

⁴⁴⁵ For evidence concerning musical manipulation in performance see pp. 71-73 above. For more on the visual element in this style, its social significance, and its place in a memory-based culture see pp. 185-91, 195-7, 284 and 286 below.

⁴⁴⁶ The grouping of *semiminime* in Guido's *Or voit tout* (**Ch**, f. 25v) would have been audibly clear also without the composers' use of three different signs to signify them. See also pp. 186-7 below. While the musical outcome of Olivier's *Si con cy gist* sound complex, this difficulty is not the central puzzle which text and notation present (**Ch**, f. 31v). See also pp. 181 and 190 below.

⁴⁴⁷ The text of *Amour m'a le cuer mis* – mentioned for its notational and audible effects on pp. 144-5, 156, and 182-3 – is stereotypical. See case study 2 pp. 226-37, esp. figure 5-5 which presents it together with a translation.

⁴⁴⁸ For *Se j'ay perdu* see Stone, 'Self-Reflexive Songs' pp. 184-93. Settings of texts with acrostics do not necessarily parallel textual with musical complexity. Works such as *Passerose de biaute pure et fine* (**PR**, f. 65v-66, **Pit**, f. 25v-26) where the contratenor is generated by reading the tenor in a different mensuration show a degree of notational and visual complexity, but its text is as unassuming as the resulting musical setting. **Cyp** includes many instances where difficult musical outcomes are clearly and simply notated and set standard courtly narratives.

⁴⁴⁹ See p. 78-9 above.

⁴⁵⁰ This song was described as an 'Ars subtilior essay' in Strohm, *The Rise*, p. 141, is discussed and transcribed in Plumley and Stone 'Cordier's Picture-songs', and mentioned also in Stone, 'Self-reflexive Songs', p. 194.

avoir plaisir (demonstrable also in example 4-51 above), the indication of *tempus* using C and O and *prolatio* using red and black in the **Ch** version of *Inclite flos orti* (f. 41, standard signification appears in **ModA**, f. 15), or the mostly unnecessary use of coloration to mark out groupings which are anyway written out in C in an O context in *Se je cuidoie* (**Ch**, f. 27v).⁴⁵¹ It is clear that creativity is not confined to the most complex works. While some of these variants undoubtedly occurred following problems of communication, availability of exemplars and quality of copying,⁴⁵² it is also possible to view the myriad ways in which even the simplest musical effects were notated to indicate notational creativity as markers of individuality. A composer could then put his stamp on his music by formulating a personal notational system, or give extra weight to a specific piece by complicating its systemic conceptualisation in a way not dissimilar to choosing a non-standard (and perhaps inaudible in performance) key-signature.⁴⁵³

This extraordinary notational usage can only gain meaning when silhouetted against a more stable background. Pieces composed with this attitude in mind tend therefore to be unique, finding individualistic solutions for a chosen departure from a perceived norm. This necessary relationship between the extraordinary and the ordinary, if combined with the idea that musicians were expected to be able to interpret the music in front of them (as suggested on p. 163 above), can lead to a different realisation. Instead of distancing the two attitudes to notation examined here, we can place them on a single continuum, or a ‘scale of interpretability’. Unambiguous works will stand on one end, non-standard but clear notational usage will be placed in the middle, and self-referential and intentionally difficult works put at the other extreme. Performing or composing works from different loci on this continuum can then be read as further indications of status and ability for composer, performer and audience, giving a social and practical context to technical decisions made in

⁴⁵¹ See also Günther, ‘Die Anwendung’, p. 5 (*Je ne puis avoir plaisir*); ‘Datierbare Balladen’ II, pp. 156-61 (*Inclite flos orti*), and ‘Der Gebrauch’, pp. 292-4 (*Je ne puis avoir plaisir* and *Se je cuidoie*).

⁴⁵² See pp. 59, 69-70 and 99 above.

⁴⁵³ That some of these exceptional usages were intentional and probably conceived by the composer can be seen in those instances where concordances use the same constellation of signs. While there is always the possibility that one exemplar was used for all sources, the use of fraction in Goscalch’s *En nul estat* in both **Ch** and **PR**, as well as the stable use and interpretation of the signs in Hasprois’ *Ma douce amour* in **Ch**, **ModA** and **Ox** or *Medee fu* in **Ch**, **FP**, and **Ox** may suggest intention rather than happenstance. For key-signatures see pp. 123-4 above, as well as case studies 1 and 3 esp. pp. 207, 223 and 239-44 below. For the notational identity of Senleches, see Stoessel ‘Symbolic innovation’, and for a compendia of notational possibilities for each musical outcome see Paulsmeier, *Notationskunde* to whom I am grateful for this conceptual suggestion.

the process of composition or performance of such works.⁴⁵⁴ Works on the self-referential end would suggest upwardly-mobile pretensions on behalf of composers, performers, patrons and audiences, be that in an amateur, professional, bourgeois or aristocratic context. Mid-range compositions demonstrate an ease with the complexities of the style, not attempting to prove themselves, but make practical use of the notational language. *Ars subtilior* works which contain no notational complexities in them at all may be said to disguise their character, or simply concentrate on other stylistic features. The different locations on this scale can therefore delineate use or immediate context, rather than suggest different audiences.

ii. Mensuration, proportion and canon instructions

As the previous examples suggest, there is a large degree of overlap between the conception and use of note-shapes and coloration on the one hand, and proportion-signs and canon instructions on the other. This overlap is particularly prevalent in the simpler kind of usage of all these elements (signifying *sesquitertia* for instance), and it is at times difficult to decide why one tool was chosen over another.

Some works – such as *Amans ames* – make constant changes in both *brevis* unit and its division, creating a changing sense of ‘beat’ and a disparity of ‘beats’ between the voices. Others use a constant *brevis* unit, but regularly transgress it, creating groupings which sound as if they belong to a different mensuration to that written (ex. 4-56 and 4-57).

4-56. *Musicorum inter collegia*, Str, f. 94v, tenor, *brevis* 11-20



4-57. *Musicorum inter collegia*, Str, f. 94v, tenor, *brevis* 11 onwards, re-barred



One may contend that if the performer does indeed maintain a strict beat according to the written mensuration, the musical result would be rather different in the two versions. It is currently impossible to judge which attitude prevailed in practice. The *Tractatus Figurarum*

⁴⁵⁴ For other discussion of status-giving characteristics of this style see pp. 61, 67, 84, 100-1, 164-5, 187, 191, 194-9, 277, 288-9 and 297-301.

definition of *sincopa* and *traynour* seems to indicate at least a theoretical preoccupation with this question.⁴⁵⁵ Still, as the notational guidelines this treatise prescribes are not often followed in practice, it is hard to assess how relevant the preoccupation was to performance. It is perhaps more likely that neither a strict adherence to the overall mensuration pattern nor constant ‘re-barring’ according to melodic context was ever an acknowledged standard approach.

A particularly interesting case is *Je ne puis avoir plaisir* (**ModA**, f. 20v; **Ch**, f. 24; **PF**, f. 104v-105) mentioned above.⁴⁵⁶ None of the versions use a standard combination of proportional signification and note-shapes even though the musical result could be relatively simply notated. While the **Ch** and **FP** versions use a problematic duplication of tools (both use \circ combined with *dragmae*, with **C** appearing only when it is musically required), the **ModA** version continuously uses **C** combined with special note-shapes to signify \mathbb{C} divisions. Different concordances can either demonstrate scribal preferences or the availability of exemplars in their choice between special note-shapes and proportional shift. Here, too, contextual trends are hard to discern.

Some technical elements do make one choice more likely than another. Using mensuration-changes to notate a sequence of imperfect *breves* in \mathbb{C} or \circ has already been mentioned above (p. 161-2). When more than one option is available, the general tendency is for longer sections to be notated with a mensuration change and shorter ones with note-shapes. Such a trend may indicate a conception of mensuration-change as more theoretical, intellectual or difficult while note-shapes as more pragmatic, maybe even intuitive, if a bit harder on the eye and less comfortable to notate. The choice then becomes a balance between scribal and interpretational convenience and usefulness. This, of course, does not apply to works which centre on special use of one or other technique, or even the tension between them. This seems to be the case in a work such as *Angelorum Psalat* (**Ch**, f. 48v,

⁴⁵⁵ See pp. 175 below. For a modern discussion of the interpretation of the difference between barring and mensuration see Karl Kohn, ‘The Renotation of Polyphonic Music’, *TMQ*, lxxvii (January, 1981), pp. 29-49; Graeme M. Boone, ‘Marking Mensural Time’, *MTS*, xxii (Spring, 2000), pp. 1-43, and David Maw, ‘“Trespasser mesure”: Meter in Machaut’s Polyphonic Songs’, *TJM*, xxi (Winter, 2004), pp. 46-126, both sides of the argument being rather extreme and problematic. As a performing musician I would opt for a more nuanced view, by which mensuration does not strictly correlate to stressing-patterns as do modern bars, but the overall counting according to different mensurations inevitably suggest stronger and weaker locations following the coupling or otherwise of melodic, rhythmic, harmonic and mensural points of arrival. Medieval awareness to such notions can be found in Boen’s *Musica* 68-9.

⁴⁵⁶ See p. 164-5 above, a section of this piece appears also as ex. 4-51. **Str**, f. 113 contained a piece entitled *Je ne puis*, but the incipit catalogue suggests this was not a concordance of the song discussed here.

case study 1, pp. 206-226 below), where the cantus uses the most varied array of note-shapes in the repertoire and the tenor presents the reader with a large number of ambiguous proportional indications.

Three further elements prohibit the use of mensuration-changes: irregular groupings, frequent changes of grouping length, and compound syncopations between different proportional elements. Senleches was a master of the first two techniques, and they are widely used also in **Cyp**.⁴⁵⁷ Examples 4-56 to 4-59 and 4-63 below are taken from **Str**, if only to demonstrate that these phenomena are not confined to central sources and composers.

4-58. *Musicorum inter collegia*, **Str**, f. 94v, cantus, *breves* 68-77



4-59. *Musicorum inter collegia*, **Str**, f. 94v, cantus, *breves* 68 onwards, re-barred



4-60. *Zachara da Teramo*, *Sumite karissimi*, **ModA**, f. 11v-12, cantus, *breves* 11-14



4-61. *Zachara da Teramo*, *Sumite karissimi*, **ModA**, f. 11v-12, cantus, *breves* 11 onwards, re-barred



The use of red-hollow, full-red and full-black in the original notation of *Sumite karissimi* maintains the simplified single-note values while keeping the overall **C** context, and without the need for the unusual and constant mensural changes. Mensuration changes can create more structural syncopation as voices sport different mensurations (ex. 4-62, 4-63 and 4-69) or share *brevis* length, but have different starting-points (ex. 4-63, 4-68).⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁷ See ex. 4-64 and 4-72 below.

⁴⁵⁸ Technically speaking, neither of these techniques are syncopations in the medieval sense of the term as the groupings within each voice follow their own standard mensural organisation.

4-62. Matheus de Sancto Johanne, *Inclite flos orti*, Ch, f. 41, beginning of B section

sal-ve - que; jo - cun - da- re nec ad ter- - ram ve - lit de - cli - na - - re

* Missing section taken from ModA, f. 15

4-63. Nucella, *De bon parole*, Str, f. 86v, breves 7-23

bon Pa - - - ro - - - - - le tal
pron - - to se
fa che del ser-vir

* G semibrevis instead of minima in manuscript

The interpretation of mensuration signs is relatively stable, with non-standard use occurring mainly when signs refer only to one mensural aspect (either *tempus* or *prolatio*).⁴⁵⁹ Generally, irregular usage of normal signs and the appearance of new signs or numerals are

⁴⁵⁹ See, for example, the discussion of *Inclite flos orti* pp. 164-5 and ex. 4-62 above.

explained in a canon instruction.⁴⁶⁰ Again, the use of canon instructions in **Cyp** is the most consequent and regular, but the attitude can be demonstrated by the inclusion of a canon instruction explaining the relatively obvious numerals in *Que pena maior*, while not explaining the very unusual note-shapes present. This habit can be rationalised by the lack of convention or precedent within the *Ars nova* system with which composers and scribes could work and expect their readers to understand. The **Berk** theorist makes this clear when in remarking that canon instructions are used when it is not possible to read the music using “art” only.⁴⁶¹

There is a marked increase in the use of canon instructions in *Ars subtilior* compositions. This can be understood as a combination of practicality and aesthetics. The practical aspect has just been explored as the conveyance of meaning for non-standardised signs (mostly mensural indications) or deviation from the normal meaning of accepted signs (also note-shapes and colour).⁴⁶² The more aesthetic and visual use of canon instructions is less concerned with the meanings of signs, and more with structural elements such as the extraction of hidden voices or the proportional repetitions of voices. Canon instructions are almost universally in Latin.⁴⁶³ **Ch** includes 19 canon instructions, **ModA** 14, **Cyp** 7 and even in its incomplete state, **Str** offers 11.

On some very rare occasions, the canon instruction is merely cautionary. This happens in Hasprois/Noyon’s *Puis que je sui fumeux* (**Ch**, f. 34v) where, rather problematically, we are

⁴⁶⁰ For example, a canon instruction explains that *Ay mare* (**Paris**, f. 153v & 155) uses O for *sesquialtera* and O for *duplasesquiquarta* (9:4 proportion). On the other hand, none of the *Ars subtilior* insertions into **FP** have a canon instruction, even when it is necessary as in the case of *Medea* (ff. 107v-108).

⁴⁶¹ See Elsworth, *The Berkeley Manuscript*, pp. 170-2.

⁴⁶² For instance the use of coloration and hollowing in Philipoctus da Casterta’s *Par les bons Gedeons*, **Ch**, f. 45v, **ModA**, f. 31, **Bov**, f. 5v or the canon instruction in the **Ch** and **Paris** concordances of *Pictagoras Jabol et Orpheus* (missing in **Bov**) referring to normal full black or hollow notation respectively. The *Pictagoras* canon instruction is unique as it appears at the appropriate location within the musical text rather than being given separately. It signifies a local occurrence, which has to be repeated (without indication) for the musical reiteration in the refrain.

⁴⁶³ The only exceptions I am aware of appear in works where the canon instructions have poetic pretensions or are part of a visual statement. The last work in **Cyp** (*Tousjours servir*, f. 158v) is appended by a French quatrain containing instruction for the realisation of the four-part canonic rondeau. Cordier’s *Tout par compass* is accompanied by a series of rondeaux, including one concerning the canonic reading of the piece. The **Chic** version of Senleches’s *La harpe de melodie* incorporates the canon instruction into the depiction of a harp by having it written on a scroll wrapped around the supporting column of the instrument (the canon instruction is also in French in the **Ch** version of this song, weakening this argument). All these canon instructions refer to canonic voices rather than interpretation of signs marking them out as a sub-group (the **Chic** version of Senleches’s song is exceptional here as it refers also to the song’s notation). Similar indications can also be found in some song texts such as Matteo da Perugia’s *Andray soulet* (**ModA**, f. 40v) or *Il vient bien* (**PR**, f. 63v), Machaut’s *Ma fin est mon commencement* (**PaDa**, Oxford part, f. 56) and *O dolce compagno* (**Ox**, f. 135).

told that the *modus* is perfect, or in the **Str** version of *Appollinis ecclipsatur* (f. 64v-65), where another perfect *modus* is indicated. *Angelorum psalat*'s uniquely enigmatic and unhelpful 'Retro morde[n]s ut ffera pessima' (biting behind like an evil beast), may well allude to the deceptiveness of the song's notation or the myriad inversions it contains. Alternatively, its vagueness, the lack of the word 'canon' before the phrase, the fact that the entire text is in Latin and the phrase appears as the penultimate line of the cantus text, may suggest it is not meant as a canon instruction at all. It can therefore be understood as either an instance of mistaken copying, as a textual comment, or even a general, non-specific or notationally indicative comment.⁴⁶⁴

iii. Sequences

Use of both rhythmic and melodic sequences is rather widespread in the *Ars subtilior* repertoire. It was already present in some previous styles, but the proliferation of the technique suggests it as a stylistic characteristic of *Ars subtilior*.⁴⁶⁵

Some *Ars subtilior* usage remains relatively simple and straightforward (ex. 4-66). Even in simple examples, it is common to find pseudo-isorhythmic techniques in sequences, such as where the length of the repeating phrase does not fit the overriding rhythmic units (ex. 4-56 to 4-61, 4-66 and 4-64). At other times, sequences repeat not only melodic gesture, but also intervallic relationships (ex. 4-23, 4-65 and 5-8).

Hirshberg even attempted to interpret different rhythmic formulae as indicators of time and place of composition, but our limited historical knowledge makes this attempt more useful in demonstrating the widespread appeal of certain techniques rather than their chronology.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁴ For more on the biblical connotations of this phrase and on the piece as a whole see case study 1, pp. 206-27, esp. footnote 540 and p. 210 below.

⁴⁶⁵ Early *Trecento* features some large-scale polyphonic sequencing, usually of very simple progressions. For a typical example see *Lavandose le mane* (Rossi, f. 1v). *Ars antiqua* and Machaut style pieces feature sequences more seldom, and over shorter distances. For sequences in an *Ars subtilior* context see ex. 4-6 to 4-10, 4-23, 4-26, 4-35, 4-41, 4-43, 4-44, 4-48, 4-51, 4-54, 4-56 to 4-61, 4-63 to

4-67, 4-70 to 4-72, 4-74, 4-75, 4-77, 4-79 and 4-80. Sequences feature in all the case studies presented in Chapter 5 (from all the songs presented there, sequences are least prominent in Machaut's *De petit peu* included in case study 4).

⁴⁶⁶ For one such motif, associated by Hirschberg with 1380s Foix and Aragon, see Hirshberg, *The Music*, pp. 281 and 296. For the problems with our knowledge which make such assertions problematic see chapter 3 pp. 84-113. These courts are discussed pp. 81, 94-6, 100-1, and 106 above.

4-64. *Pymalion qui moult subtilz*, Cyp, f. 113, beginning

Musical score for the beginning of 'Pymalion qui moult subtilz'. The score is in 6/8 time and features a vocal line and two instrumental lines. The vocal line begins with the word 'Py' and continues with 'ma - li - on qui'. Three phrases of the vocal line are circled in red: 'Py', 'ma - li - on', and 'qui'. The instrumental lines provide accompaniment for the vocal line.

4-65. *Le mont Aon*, Ch, f. 22v, breves 50-61

Musical score for 'Le mont Aon', breves 50-61. The score is in 6/8 time and features a vocal line and two instrumental lines. The vocal line begins with the words 'son se - io[u]r quar d'el - les' and continues with 'vient sens, bien et toute ho-nour dont cuer'. Three phrases of the vocal line are circled in red: 'vient', 'sens, bien et toute', and 'ho-nour dont cuer'. The instrumental lines provide accompaniment for the vocal line.

4-66. Suzoy, *Et in terra*, Apt, f. 25v-26, ending

The image displays a musical score for the ending of 'Et in terra' by Suzoy, folios 25v-26. The score is organized into three systems, each consisting of three staves. The first two systems are circled in red, highlighting a specific musical sequence. The third system includes the lyrics 'men' written under the vocal line. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals (sharps), and phrasing slurs.

The sequence, just like proportion and syncopation, was a useful tool both in terms of attracting local attention, and in the creation of expectations. The repetition disorients the listener, who does not know how long it will last. This creates tension towards the sequence's inevitable resolution, propelling the music forward. The change resulting from a sequence's end attracts attention to the new material or the text to which it is set. Use of sequences can therefore be regarded as being on a par with other directional compositional tools, less extravagant but not necessarily less effective than proportion or syncopation. Its relative modesty in comparison with other *Ars subtilior* techniques may account for the relatively meagre attention it received in modern scholarship.

iv. Syncopation

While syncopation is traditionally seen as a defining characteristic of the style, many works of unquestionable *Ars subtilior* credentials avoid this technique, or use it very sparingly.⁴⁶⁷ Alongside straightforward, simpler pieces (ex. 4-66), disinterest in syncopation can be found also in works where harmonic deviation (ex. 4-23, 4-35) or proportional combinations (ex.

4-67) take the fore, or in works where un-syncopated combinations of mensurations or proportions are used to create rhythmic tension (ex. 4-62, 4-68, 4-69 and 4-70). Again, a purely technical approach to the definition of this style seems lacking.

4-67. *Celle en qui*, Cyp, f. 131, breves 27-35

⁴⁶⁷ See pp. 57 and 68 above for a discussion of the extent and uniqueness of the use of this technique. The discussion of syncopation here follows the conceptualisation of the technique by Johannes de Muris as the displacement of recognisable rhythmic units in the middle of another broken-up unit (see, for example, Willi Apel, 'The French Secular Music of the Late Fourteenth Century', *AM*, xviii-xix (1946-7), pp. 17-29, esp. P. 22). Muris' insistence on perfections in the definition is not viable for the *Ars subtilior* context, but the concept remained attractive, as can be seen by its inclusion in the Berkeley treatise (see Ellsworth, *Teh Berkeley Treatise*, p. 176-9. This though, should not be confused with imperfection *a parte ante* as can be seen in the top part of ex. 4-70.

4-68. Johannes Hasprois / Jaquet de Noyon, *Puis que je suis fumeux*, Ch, f. 34v, breves 20-26

fu-me-roy - - - - e de fu-mer

4-69. Baude Cordier, *Amans ames*, Ox, f. 123, beginning

A - - - - mans

4-70. *Coume le serf – Lunne plaine*, Cyp, f. 92v-93, breves 54-59

qui droi - - - te - ment a la mer

- ge et mon droit port puis qui le grant mal que je

The *Tractatus figurarum* distinguishes *sincopa* and *traynour* as different kinds of syncopation.⁴⁶⁸ *Sincopa* involves the displacement of identical *brevis* units. Ex. 4-68 can therefore be seen as a written out version of this technique. The definition of *traynour* is perhaps less clear-cut, but it seems to indicate the combination of mensurations of different lengths with *minima* equivalence. Ex. 4-70 shows this pattern. Both techniques are used one after the other in ex. 4-63. The term-distinction is useful in discerning medieval thought-patterns. Still, the *Tractatus*' author's insistence on the *brevis* as the syncopated unit, and the inability to separate the two techniques in practice, makes their practical application minimal.

⁴⁶⁸ See Schreur, *The Tractatus Figurarum*, pp. 20-4.

They are also incapable to describe all forms of syncopation arising from mensuration-combinations found in practice.

Taking the surviving music as my starting point, I would like to define two, non-mutually-exclusive, kinds of syncopation: internal and external. By internal syncopation I refer to a single voice's transgression of the borders of its basic rhythmical units following the medieval definition, resulting in rhythmic tension between it and other voices. External syncopation does not require tension between the voices; instead, it involves joint movement which contradicts the overall general mensural hierarchy. This can be achieved in combination with internal syncopation (when similar syncopations appear in all voices), or independently, by placing stress on weak points within the *brevis* unit.⁴⁶⁹

Internal syncopation creates more friction between the voices, not only because of the rhythmical disparity, but also as the phasing effect allows for the introduction of dissonance. This can be used to create a sense of difficulty (ex. 4-71), or alternatively a floating but still directional effect (ex. 4-72).

4-71. Philipoctus da Casetra, *De ma dolour*, Ch, f. 32, beginning

⁴⁶⁹ I leave open the question whether medieval composers would have conceived of this last possibility as syncopation or not. Arguments can be presented on both sides, and perhaps a new term would eventually be of use for this phenomenon.

4-72. *Amour en un beau vergier*, Cyp, f. 10v, beginning

The image shows the beginning of a musical piece in 9/8 time. It consists of three staves: a vocal line and two instrumental lines (likely lute). The vocal line starts with the word 'A-' followed by a long dash, and then 'mour'. The instrumental lines provide a harmonic accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 9/8.

As with previous tools (and frequently in combination with them), both rhythmical and harmonic disparity avoid consonant resting points and create forward propulsion, enabling directional orientation throughout the long melodic lines.

External syncopation is more of a disorientation tool, creating structural or large-scale need for resolution rather than localised propulsion. Still, as listeners are pushed out of their comfort zone, attention is directed to the local occurrence. Example 4-73 shows relatively straightforward external syncopation, with a cadential progression stressing a weak point within the mensural organisation.

4-73. *Guido, Or voit tout*, Ch, f. 25v, beginning

The image shows the beginning of a musical piece in 6/8 time. It consists of three staves: a vocal line and two instrumental lines. The vocal line starts with the word 'Or' followed by 'voit'. A red circle highlights a note in the vocal line that is syncopated, occurring on a weak part of the measure. The instrumental lines provide a harmonic accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 6/8.

External syncopation can also offer a more subtle, non-cadential option, using disparate movement to obscure the underlying units, or non-cadential, simultaneous movement landing on weak locations and blurring new natural groupings (ex. 4-74, 4-75). As with complex internal syncopation and irregular rhythmic groupings, Senleches is the master of this technique.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁷⁰ Both techniques can also be seen in ex. 4-64, with a cadential progression in the penultimate *brevis* unit and more subtle combination in its second *brevis* unit.

4-74. Jacob de Senleches, *Je me merveil - Jay plusieurs fois*, Ch, f. 44v, breves 19-24

Musical score for example 4-74, showing vocal and instrumental parts. The score is in 6/8 time and features three staves. The vocal line (top staff) has lyrics: "- me se vult mel- - - ler de con-tre -". The instrumental line (middle staff) has lyrics: "play - - - sir de fay - - -". A red circle highlights a syncopated passage in the vocal line, where the melody is shifted against the underlying 6/8 meter.

4-75. Johannes Vaillant, *Pour ce que je*, Ch, f. 26, breves 35-39

Musical score for example 4-75, showing vocal and instrumental parts. The score is in 6/8 time and features two staves. A red oval highlights a syncopated passage in the vocal line, and two red circles highlight syncopated passages in the instrumental line, illustrating the blurring of rhythmic borders.

Examples 4-76 and 4-77 present a sub-group of external syncopation, in which imitative motifs are used to blur rhythmic borders. This is especially effective at the beginning of songs, when the underlying rhythmic structure is not yet clear.

4-76. *Onques Jacob*, Ch, f. 27, beginning

Musical score for example 4-76, showing vocal and instrumental parts. The score is in 3/4 time and features three staves. The vocal line (top staff) has lyrics: "On - Ne". Two red circles highlight syncopated passages in the instrumental line, illustrating the blurring of rhythmic borders.

4-77. *Toute clerte m'est obscure*, Ch, f. 13, beginning

The image shows a musical score for three staves in 3/4 time. The top staff is the vocal line with lyrics: 'Tou - - - - - te cle - - - - - te' and 'Je n'ay d'es - - - - - ba -'. The middle and bottom staves are instrumental accompaniment. Red circles highlight specific notes in all three staves: the first circle is on a quarter note in the vocal staff, the second is on a quarter note in the vocal staff, the third is on a quarter note in the vocal staff, the fourth is on a quarter note in the middle staff, the fifth is on a quarter note in the middle staff, the sixth is on a quarter note in the middle staff, the seventh is on a quarter note in the bottom staff, the eighth is on a quarter note in the bottom staff, and the ninth is on a quarter note in the bottom staff.

Some of the examples above are rather extreme, and involve a combination of usages, but even in its simpler manifestations, the web of syncopation possibilities amounts to an additional, less extravagant but very effective tool in a composer's arsenal.

Internal syncopations are regularly referred to, external ones are routinely underrated. This is in part due to the editorial practice of re-barring the music following strong cadential arrivals.⁴⁷¹ This can undermine the tension between cadences and the underlying rhythmical orientation of the piece, preventing the extent of this usage from being evident, and diminishing the uniqueness of written-in mensuration changes.⁴⁷² Since external syncopation usually involves participation of more than once voice, it is rarely apparent when looking at the original manuscript, making it less visual and therefore less attractive also to manuscript-readers.

v. Proportional rhythm

Both the attitude to and the use of proportional rhythms are similar to those concerning syncopated passages. They are also far from universally present, and when they appear their use is often minimal. Indeed, while use of proportion formed the basis for many compositions, one may well ask whether modern interpretation reads more into some usages than medieval attitudes require. As has been discussed above (p. 57), the Italian notational system accommodated both binary and ternary division of the *minima*, as well as division-changes which result in a consecutive *sesquitertia* relationship. These are still special occurrences, both in Italian and French contexts, but they can be considered part of the

⁴⁷¹ This is done throughout Greene's edition of the **Ch** in *PMFC*, xviii & xix and Günther's edition of the motets of **Ch** and **ModA** in *CMM*, xxxix.

⁴⁷² For more on editorial practices see p. 199-200, or the comparison between Greene's and Young's editions of *Angelorum psalat* on pp. 213-222 below.

‘audible currency’ of the time. One can find both theoretical and musical support for this claim: the Berkeley theorist’s use of and ideas concerning *sesquitertia* have already been mentioned (p. 80); only special signs for this proportion are ever explained,⁴⁷³ and even when looking at a non-Italian context, proportional distribution seems to support this pattern.

Figure 4-78 presents the distribution (including genre), combination and popularity of proportional rhythms in **Cyp**, regardless of the techniques used for their notation.⁴⁷⁴ In it, one can detect a number of patterns. Of the 50 works showing proportional rhythms in this source, 37 (74%) use *sesquitertia* while only 29 (58%) use *sesquialtera* or its multiplication. Of the 37 pieces using *sesquialtera*, 33 contain it as their most difficult proportion (66% of the whole, 89.19% of this group). In the *sesquialtera* group, only eight songs (27.59% of the group, 16% of the whole) do not include more complicated proportions. All but one of the works containing proportions include *sesquialtera* (or its multiplication) or *sesquitertia*. 28 (56%) songs use only one proportion, twelve (24%) use two different ones, four (8%) use three proportions, three (6%) use four different proportions, one (2%) song uses six, one (2%) ten, and one (2%) twelve proportions.

4-78. Proportional rhythms in **Cyp** (mensural and note-shapes)

No. of works	2/1	3/1	4/1	3/2	5/2	7/2	2/3	4/3	5/3	7/3	8/3	10/3	3/4	9/6	9/8
1 (B)		x													
4 (Cr, San, 2R)				x											
2 (2B)							x								
18 (Gl, Cr, 9B, 4R, 3V)								x							
3 (1B, 1V, 1R)														x	
1 (K)	x			x											
1 (B)				x			x								

⁴⁷³ The only case I am aware of where an explanation is provided for the sign \odot as an indicator of *sesquitertia* is Antonello’s *Tres noble dame* (**ModA**, f. 28v), where it applies to the *semibrevis* rather than to the usual *minima* level. Its notation using coloration is never explained.

⁴⁷⁴ The dupla effect of *semiminime* is treated as standard behaviour and not counted.

8 (5B, 2R, 1V)				X				X							
1 (B)				X										X	
1 (B)								X						X	
4 (2B, 2R)				X				X						X	
1 (B)	X	X		X				X							
1 (R)				X			X	X						X	
1 (B)			X	X				X						X	
1 (B)	X			X	X			X		X	X				
1 (B)				X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
1 (V)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X

While *sesquialtera* and *sesquitertia* are used in virtually all genres, the more complicated proportions are used only in the secular compositions. The distribution of genres in the ten songs with more than three proportional rhythms follows an expected pattern: six are ballades, three rondeaux and one virelai.⁴⁷⁵ While the three rondeaux use the simpler combinations, the single virelai in this group bucks the trend and offers the largest number of proportions in the entire manuscript.

The most striking elements in these statistics are the small number of works which use proportional change as a linchpin, and the disproportionate popularity of *sesquialtera*. I would suggest that the popularity of this proportion is due to its borderline position between the normal and the exceptional: it creates a strong audible effect while falling within the expected technical level of musicianship. One can therefore imagine three rather than two groups of pieces, when regarding proportional usage: those which ignore it completely, those that use it as a *raison d'être*, and those works which use it more moderately, as but one of many accepted compositional techniques.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁵ See discussion of genres pp. 116-8 above.

⁴⁷⁶ This more graded view can of course be applied to most other tools discussed in this chapter. For a parallel tripartite view of the different attitudes towards the style as a whole, see the discussion of the various mainstreams detectable in relation to the *Ars subtilior* pp. 278-80 and 293 below.

Conceptual use of proportional movement is most clearly evident in those pieces which make numerous changes between many and varied proportions, as do the last three works included in the table above.⁴⁷⁷ It can also be observed in many of the visual works like *Si con cy gist*, *Amans ames* or *O bonne douce Franse*, which will be discussed later in this chapter. In most of them the audible effect might be smaller than the visual or theoretical one.⁴⁷⁸

When used as a localised tool, proportional movement operates in a similar fashion to syncopation, inasmuch as it creates propulsion through rhythmic friction, induces a sense of disorientation, attracts attention to local phenomena and their resolution, and enables a higher degree of harmonic tension. Using proportions is a more exuberant show of complexity and difficulty, but as such (unless both elements are combined, as in example 4-83) can be seen as a potentially less subtle way of creating the required effect.

4-79. Antonello da Caserta, *Amour m'a le cuer mis*, ModA, f. 32v-33, breves 41-51

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Amour m'a le cuer mis' by Antonello da Caserta. It is divided into two systems, each containing three staves. The first system features a vocal line with the lyrics 'n'est il pas del tout a'. A red vertical line is positioned at measure 6, with an arrow pointing to the right, indicating a proportional movement. The second system continues the music, with a red vertical line at measure 0 and arrows pointing to the left, suggesting a return to a previous proportion. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

⁴⁷⁷ These songs are *Puis que ame* (f. 107), *Sur toute fleur* (f. 137), and *Je prens damour* (f. 154) respectively.

⁴⁷⁸ The visual impact of these works and the tension between it and the overall audible effect of such songs is discussed on pp. 185-90 below.

4-80. Philipoctus da Cserta, *De ma douleur*, ModA, f. 26v, breves 13-18 and 40-45

con - - - fort car en tous cas m'est for - tu ne con - - -

quant ne la voy la par - - fav - - - te fi - - -

4-81. Zachara da Teramo, *Sumite karissimi*, ModA, f. 11v-12, *ouvert* and *clos* endings

1. 2. #

tres - - - tres

1. 2. #

1. 2. #

3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Other usages of proportional passages are more structural. This can be seen in passages where all voices change simultaneously (especially if the change is into a newly-introduced proportion, see ex. 4-79 and analysis p. 235 below), creating a tension between sections rather than voices. Structural locations such as beginnings of musical repetitions in the refrain (ex. 4-80) or *ouvert* and *clos* cadences (ex. 4-81) can also be heralded by a proportion. These structural decisions do not of course detract from the musical effects described above when translated into performance, but serve to add a deeper underlying meaning to their use,

far removed from earlier notions of proportions as random, experimental, frivolous or meaningless.⁴⁷⁹

Some complicated proportions were once considered too difficult for modern performance,⁴⁸⁰ but it is possible to find musical hints that lead directly to performance. The three works in **Cyp** highlighted for their complicated and compound proportions above,⁴⁸¹ are all designed to accommodate the performer. Proportional passages lasting only a *semibrevis* are easier to perform as they are contained in a single ‘beat’ and therefore fit in with the progress of the other voices (ex. 4-84 includes two such brief proportions). They can be described as more ornamental than structural. Every complex proportion or series of proportions lasting longer than a *semibrevis* ends either with a clear cadential progression, a pause, or both (ex. 4-82 and 4-83). Any one of these three options assists the performer in aligning him/herself with the other voices, and in making the necessary adjustments in the likely probability that strict mathematical relationships are not adhered to. This allows the song to maintain a temporal integrity and move onwards naturally.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ For a survey of attitudes towards *Ars subtilior* style see Chapter 1 above.

⁴⁸⁰ See Apel, ‘Mathematics and music’ pp. 163-4, referring to *Sur toute fleur*. He did think they were performed in their original medieval context though.

⁴⁸¹ See footnote 477 above.

⁴⁸² *Sur toute fleur* and *Puis que ame* appear in the La Morra’s ‘Flour de beaulté’ recording tracks 4 and 9 respectively. Both the compositional technique and its practical use by the performers are evident.

4-82. *Je prens amour*, Cyp, f. 154, beginning of B section

Musical score for 'Je prens amour' in 6/8 time. The score consists of three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the B section with the lyrics 'Si le se - - - ray'. A large red oval highlights a complex sixteenth-note passage in the upper voice, with fingering numbers 5 and 5 above it. The second system continues with the lyrics 'car a - ti - - - se sans fain - - -'. Red annotations include a vertical box around the first measure, a large oval around a sixteenth-note passage with fingering 7 and 3, and another large oval around a similar passage with fingering 7 and 10. Vertical boxes also highlight the first and last measures of the system.

4-83. *Sur toute fleur*, Cyp, f. 137, breves 6-11

Musical score for 'Sur toute fleur' in 6/8 time. The score consists of three systems. The first system shows the lyrics 'ri - - - e'. A large red oval highlights a complex sixteenth-note passage in the upper voice with fingering 9. The second system continues with the lyrics 'ri - - - e'. A red oval highlights a sixteenth-note passage with fingering 5. A vertical red box highlights the first measure of the system.

4-84. *Puis que ame*, Cyp, f. 107, breves 62-67

Musical score for 'Puis que ame' in 6/8 time. The score consists of three systems. The first system shows the lyrics 'la - - - ser - - - vant'. A red oval highlights a sixteenth-note passage with fingering 7. The second system continues with the lyrics 'la - - - ser - - - vant'. A red oval highlights a sixteenth-note passage with fingering 8. A vertical red box highlights the first measure of the system.

e. Visuality

Even though there is evidence to suggest that some of the use of varied note-shapes and coloration-techniques were practical scribal needs rather than creative trend-setting,⁴⁸³ it is not hard to present visuality as an important element in the composition and copying of many *Ars subtilior* compositions. This is most clear in self-referential songs and historiated compositions.⁴⁸⁴

Visual considerations in the compiling of music are by no means new to the *Ars subtilior*. Anything from practicality to decoration, to complex and expressive manipulation of the page layout can also be found also in earlier styles. A practical use of visual cues can be seen in the alternating colours given to initials of residual strophes in most collections of monophonic songs. The opulent decoration in **Mo** assisted in reconstructing the compilation of this source, and was analysed as part of its expressive content.⁴⁸⁵ Perhaps the height of intertextual and interdisciplinary play in medieval book production is the famous **Pa146** version of the *Roman de Fauvel*.⁴⁸⁶ In all these instances though, the musical notation itself is not affected by the visual additions, and remains faithful to the demands and practicalities of the generic fashions of the time and the economics and aesthetics of book production.

I would summarise the main aesthetic consideration in copying music as a full use of the space allocated, even when this allocation left much of the page empty. On top of this general concern, practical considerations can explain changes in layout. The stylistic move from homophonic composition (such as Conductuus, or Aquitanian polyphony) to polytextual motets pushed for a transition from the earlier score format to single-voice layouts. The greater flexibility in planning, the clearer voice-unity in reading, and the gradually established ranges for different voices may explain the gradual shift throughout the *Ars nova* from presenting voices side by side on the page to consecutive copying from the top down following voice-range. The changed layout also served to strengthen the mnemonic

⁴⁸³ See introduction to the *Tractatus figurarum*, discussed on pp. 69 above and 301-2 below.

⁴⁸⁴ For the visual impact of self-referential songs see Stone, 'Self-reflexive Songs'.

⁴⁸⁵ The illumination of this collection of thirteenth century motets is discussed as part of its creation in Mary Elizabeth Wolinski, 'The Compilation of the Montpellier Codex', *EMH*, xi (1992), pp. 263-301. Edward H. Roesner, 'Subtilitas and Delectatio: Ne m'a pas oublié', in Eglal Doss-Quinby, Roberta L. Krueger and E. Jane Burns (eds), *Cultural Performances in Medieval France: Essays in Honor of Nancy Freeman Regalado* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), pp. 25-44 analyses a specific relationship between music and illumination.

⁴⁸⁶ See Margaret Bent and Andrew Wathay (eds), *Fauvel Studies: Allegory, Chronicle, Music, and Image in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS français 146* (Clarendon Press, 1998).

usefulness of the written page.⁴⁸⁷ The central point which differentiates the *Ars subtilior* from all these considerations and uses is the integration of the visual elements into the music itself, from signs and note-shapes to the work's layout.⁴⁸⁸ In an *Ars subtilior* context, one finds for the first time a substantial group of compositions where either page layout or notational technique is manipulated to form an additional expressive tool.

The layout of historiated compositions created at this time is the most striking and self-evident example of *Ars subtilior* interest in matching visual, textual and musical expression.⁴⁸⁹ The choice of a circle, a circular labyrinth, a heart or the shape of a harp is linked directly to the text of the works. These songs' visual characteristics are enhanced by the special position of each within their host sources. A less extravagant use of layout involves the text rather than the music, as can be seen in Machaut's *Ma fin est mon commencement* where all sources present the text copied upside-down, favouring a visual comment about the structure of the song over any practical consideration such as underlay or voice texting.⁴⁹⁰

A larger group of pieces uses visual and notational elements within the standard song layout of the time. Self-conscious examples include Guido's *Or voit tout* (**Ch**, f. 25v) where the very note-shapes that the text complains about appear in the composition itself, or Cordier's *Amans ames* (**Ox**, f. 123), which portrays the secret described in the text by hiding the relatively straightforward song behind constant mensuration changes.⁴⁹¹ In the motet *Dardant desir – Se fus damer – Nigra est sed Formosa* (**Ch**, f. 72v) coloration is used as a pun on the tenor's text, while in Senleches' *Je me merveil – J'ay pluseurs fois* (**Ch**, f. 44v) different mensurations in the canonic refrain are used resulting in identically sounding but differently notated voices, further emphasising the copying and falsifying activities complained about in the text and attracting attention to it.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁷ See pp. 188-9 below.

⁴⁸⁸ For more on this process see Smilansky, 'A Labyrinth'.

⁴⁸⁹ These are Senleches', *Le harpe de melodie* (**Chic**), Cordiers' *Belle bonne sage* and *Tout par compas* (**Ch**), and the anonymous *En la maison Dedalus* (**Berk**).

⁴⁹⁰ Surviving copies appear in **MachA** (f. 479v), **MachB** (f. 309), **MachE** (f. 136), **MachG** (f. 153), and **PadA** (Oxford part, f. 56). As it is a crab-canon, copying the text upside-down is meaningless in practice.

⁴⁹¹ On scholarly preoccupation with *Or voit tout* see footnote 431 above. Sections of this song appeared as ex. 4-534-73. Scholarship concerning *Amans ames* was mentioned in footnote 227 above, and its beginning appears as ex. 4-69. This song was usually referred to for its technical construction with only passing references to the music-text relationship.

⁴⁹² For the motet, see Alice V. Clarck, *Concordare cum Materia: The Tenor in the Fourteenth-century Motet* (PhD. diss. for Princeton University, 1996), pp. 117-8. For a facsimile and fuller discussion of *Je me*

More complex and subtle cross-references between notation, musical outcome and visual impact can be seen in works where special notational elements are used unnecessarily. The *sesquitertia* contratenor of *O bonne douce Franse* (Ch, f. 29, figure 4-85) mentioned above can be seen as an interpretative comment on the text, demonstrating the virtue of France by using the particularly *Ars subtilior* (i.e. French) technique of proportion.⁴⁹³ The use of the most extravagant and visually striking method of notating this voice attracts attention to the piece as a whole, and especially to this aspect of it, making clear the composer's interpretation of what the work is about. Similarly, references to a secretive underlying dualism, special ability or competitiveness can be read into pieces which use different interpretations of the same notational tool in different voices.⁴⁹⁴ Alternatively, it is possible to argue that Senleches' individualistic notational style may also be due to an attempt to make a visual statement by which his works can be identified. If this attempt is considered successful, it offered medieval cognoscenti a way of associating a number of high-register compositions (as well as notational authority) with Senleches, thus raising his personal status.

merveil – J'ay pluseurs see figure 4-86 and pp. 195-7 below. A translation and further analysis can be found in Stone, 'The Composer's Voice', pp. 179-87 and Leach, 'Natur's Forge'. For a wider use of visual elements to mark-out specific texts see also pp. 225-6 below.

⁴⁹³ See p. 139 and ex. 4-17 above.

⁴⁹⁴ **ModA** presents three works where coloration has opposite meaning in the cantus than in the other two voices: Matteo's *Puis que la mort* (f. 6v-7), Coradus de Pistorio's *Veri almi pastoris* (f. 36v), and Bartholomeus de Bononia's *Arte psallentes* (f.37v-38).

220m

Bonie douce franse floz te li el se be coube

pais ont maine coure haudoz qn somuene de ta tes grane doucour liener me

part te dul e wtus rest se s

Enor s

Ditta s Enor s

The importance of visual cues and visualisation techniques as practical memorisation aids in a memory-based culture has been clearly demonstrated by Carruthers. While dealing

mainly with texts, she details the mnemonic importance of layout and spatial organisation on the page, as well as the use of ornamentation and miniature.⁴⁹⁵ These elements were undoubtedly just as important in musical collections, and give extra meaning to the ornamentation and formatting of such sources. The shift from score- to part-copying, for example, can also be seen also as a mnemonic aid and not solely aesthetic or stylistic, as it clearly divides the page into sections and each voice is contained within just one area. The *Ars subtilior* technique of translating visual additions from the book into the music itself can be seen on the one hand as a further refinement of these techniques, and on the other as a bid for the independence of these pieces from the constraints of the sources into which they will eventually be compiled.⁴⁹⁶

Like the use of syncopation and proportion, uses of visually-oriented techniques, while not being universal, are wide-ranging. Visuality does not necessarily have to involve the addition of cues on the page. A discrepancy between written and heard can be achieved also by supplying less visual information than necessary, be that notationally or by the inclusion of hidden voices. The fashion for repeating motet tenors in diminution can be traced back at least to Philippe de Vitry, but the preference for notating the tenor melody only once and adding a canon instruction rather than recopying it in the new rhythmic level changes the visual character of such pieces.⁴⁹⁷ Self-referential pieces, canonic compositions and puzzle songs belong more comfortably in this group, and while some of the more straightforward canonic techniques are not new in themselves, their enigmatic presentation hints at a changing attitude towards them.⁴⁹⁸

The character of the visual aspect of most self-referential and puzzle works is opposed to that of the works mentioned above: normally, these songs look much simpler and less conspicuous than when realised in practice. *Il vient bien* (**PR**, f. 63v) and *O dolce compagno* (**Ox**, f. 135) have exactly the same structure as *Ma fin est mon commencement* but, without

⁴⁹⁵ See Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* for a wide range of concepts and techniques used in the Middle Ages: pp. 117-22 examine the importance of page-formatting in the memorisation process and Chapter 7 (pp. 274-337) explores the ways in which visual mnemonic elements were incorporated into medieval books.

⁴⁹⁶ For more on the practical and social consequences of this trend see pp. 288-9 below.

⁴⁹⁷ Signifying exact repetition by adding a number or using dashes occurred already in the *Ars antiqua* motet repertoire.

⁴⁹⁸ For discussion of such pieces see Stone, 'Self-Reflexive Songs' and Newes, 'Writing, Reading and Memorizing'. A comparison can also be made between *Quod jactatur* attributed to Ciconia (**ModA**, f. 20v) where even the inclusion of a canon instruction and a self-referring text do not make the solution obvious, and the **Iv** canonic songs, which are all clear-cut and straightforward even when no canon instruction appears.

the visual cue, look at first glance like simple two-part songs.⁴⁹⁹ The most extreme cases are probably *Le ray au soleyl* (attributed to Ciconia, **Luc**, f. LXXXIII), and Olivier's *Si con cy gist* (**Ch**, f. 31v). *Le ray au soleyl* contrasts a sounding threefold proportion canon (which includes a constantly-sounding *sesquitertia* relationship) with a simple-looking single voice in the manuscript. *Si con cy gist* notates all three voices and looks like one of the simpler songs in the collection. Its execution in performance though, includes un-notated changes in mensuration as well as *dupla* and *quadrupla* proportions. The changes in this song are vaguely hinted at in the text of the song, but the hints refer only to the first set of changes to be applied to the cantus and to their repetition in retrograde order in the contratenor. Only melodic hints betray the need to repeat the process in the cantus' refrain, and no hints are given to the placement of any of the changes in the contratenor (which has to repeat the process as well). It seems clear that not showing is the main point of this work, even though this does not come out in performance. *Ut pateat evidenter* does not look simple, but as the main structural element of mensuration change is not notated (but hinted at in the text), one can include it in this group.

As was suggested for special note-shape usage, a similar 'scale of interpretability' can also be imagined for both over- and under-visibility. While over-visibility attracts attention and challenges the reader to find solutions to it, under-visibility emphasises the ability of the composer not only to conceive of the musical results, but to imagine their visual impact.⁵⁰⁰ Both techniques also demand a good scribe for their copying (and perhaps the addition of visual elements in some of the historiated compositions), highly able performers who can make sense of the information, and an appreciative and involved audience, patron or manuscript owner who can follow and enjoy such subtleties. This implies a separation from the common, everyday and mediocre. Visibility can therefore be seen as an important tool in creating an exclusive community of musicians, artisans and consumers, each of which benefit from the affiliation with the other. This 'in-crowd' can have different approaches to its activities: using over-visual techniques projects its exclusivity outwards, while under-visibility is more secretive and inward-looking, reaffirming elitist membership.

⁴⁹⁹ For the tension between the visual effect and the performance of *Il vient bien*, see Günther, 'Fourteenth-century Music with Texts Revealing Performance Practice', pp. 253-61.

⁵⁰⁰ If one follows the model of mental composition where voices are finalised if not conceived of consecutively, the ability to compose a proportion or mensuration canon becomes much more impressive than in a more modern process which involves writing from the outset.

f. Text and language

It is generally acknowledged that the *Ars subtilior* is essentially a Francophile phenomenon. Yet, since we have already encountered the wide distribution of the style, textless distribution, and the use of a number of other languages, this is open to question.⁵⁰¹ It has already been suggested (pp. 112-3 and 118-9 above) that as an entire cultural movement, the *Ars subtilior* had its origins in a high register of mainstream French courtly and intellectual life, underpinning the link between musical style and the French language. Late-medieval religious, cultural and intellectual life incorporated parallel use of vernacular and Latin, making it only natural to have a substantial Latin contribution to *Ars subtilior* repertory coexisting with the French majority.⁵⁰² If anything, it seems that the exceptional use of Latin in secular compositions was deemed more suitable to *Ars subtilior* style than to the Italian *Trecento* or new *international* styles.⁵⁰³ As most secular Latin compositions seem to hail from a papal context, this may be due to the cultural influence of the Babylonian Captivity, or to the relative political and economic fortunes of the competing schismatic papal courts.⁵⁰⁴ The choice of *Ars subtilior* style for Blasius' commemorative *Ore Pandulfum modulari dulci* can be seen as an attempt to set it apart as special in an Italian context. Its use of Latin therefore may have been due to the language's authoritative status, as a nod towards the religious and pious character of the pilgrimage it celebrates, or, perhaps more prosaically, because Latin may have been easier to understand than French to its original audience. In songs such as Ciconia's *Quod jactatur*, or the anonymous *Ut pateat evidenter* (ex. 4-35 above), the use of Latin may have been an attempt to match an elevated, learned language to their intellectualised, esoteric musical language.

The introduction of other languages can only be seen in parallel with the cultural and political contexts described in Chapter 3. In the Italian realm, there are mixed messages concerning the coupling of style and language. While Landini's single attempt at setting a French text also includes some stylistic adjustment, **FP** contains a setting of an old French text as a *caccia*, typically Italian in form, style and notation.⁵⁰⁵ Still, interpreting the

⁵⁰¹ See pp. 58, 69-70 and 73-4 above, but also the following pages and pp. 248-9 below.

⁵⁰² Most theory of course remained in Latin. See **FM70** discussed p. 80 above for an exception.

⁵⁰³ On Zachara da Teramo's use of Latin in relation to style and notation, see footnote 190 above.

⁵⁰⁴ See pp. 86-9 and 208-10.

⁵⁰⁵ Landini's work is *Adiu adiu douse dame jolie*, found in **Pit**, f. 62, **Lo29987**, f. 29 and **Sq**, f. 164v. The relevant piece in **FP** is *Quan ye voy le dut tens venire* (f. 90v), which uses a poem by Renaut de Trie written a century earlier. See footnote 396 above.

proliferation of *Ars subtilior* style in Italy as part of a larger political legitimisation programme that involved adoption, collection and imitation, can help explain the retention of the French language as a differentiating tag between one style and another. As just one example, Antonio da Cividale's *Vous soyés tres bien venus* (**Luc**, f. LXXIV) contains only a few syncopations (mostly external) and no proportions or special note shapes. At first glance its language is its clearest marker of difference. On closer inspection though, it manifests itself as a self-referential, under-visualised, puzzle song which requires repetitive straight and retrograde reading of both tenor and contratenor.⁵⁰⁶ These characteristics align it with the foreign *Ars subtilior* rather than with the majority of the music collected in this source, which are Italian in style.⁵⁰⁷ The differentiating use of French by an Italian in this composition becomes meaningful in the context of this manuscript. As a second stage, this kind of adoption and gradual assimilation, involving local production as well as imports, eventually made redundant the need for foreign justification, and with it the universality of French usage. The Iberian and Cypriot context centred more on cultural or individual imports, generating fewer cultural dualities and therefore less pressure to incorporate the local language.

The situation with the Germanic languages is again different, as appearances of *Ars subtilior*-related repertoire occur within a distinctly different and very text-based culture. Most eastern concordances break the link between this music and the French language, also changing the music's function in the process. The works appearing in **WolkA** and **WolkB** are completely reinterpreted and re-texted. Other songs are re-worked into more functional formats, and integrated into the religious sphere (**MuEm**, **BaKir**) or a functional domestic setting (**Pr**). A third group keeps its musical integrity but is transmitted textless (**Bud**).⁵⁰⁸ The few examples of music in the French style, or incorporating *Ars subtilior* characteristics but with Germanic text and origin all hail from the border between the Imperial and French spheres of influence. The works of Hesmänn preserved in **Str** contain special note-shapes and proportional behaviour, but maintain the Germanic tradition by opting for the more neutral Latin.⁵⁰⁹ In light of these trends, one can interpret the composition of French-style music using Dutch or German texts (**PR**, **Ut**, **Ghent**) as a bid for political and cultural

⁵⁰⁶ See Nádas and Ziino, *The Lucca Codex*, pp. 45 (discussion) and 111-3 (transcription).

⁵⁰⁷ This is not diminished by the fact that most of Antonio's surviving output is French-texted.

⁵⁰⁸ For all three attitudes see also pp. 70 and 73-4 above and 248-9, 278 and 298 below.

⁵⁰⁹ See pp. 71-3 above and ex. 2-1 and 2-2 there.

independence by the border-countries of the Empire, and a cultural affiliation with the French-speaking lands to the east.

Ars subtilior texts mark a degree of variance from both preceding and subsequent song lyrics.⁵¹⁰ The courtly love theme still prevails in much of the repertoire, but to it are added a considerable number of dedicatory and commemorative texts, as well as self-referential or puzzle texts of the sort discussed above as defining an ‘in-crowd’.⁵¹¹ These deviations from the thematic norm fit well the notion of the origin of *Ars subtilior* composition as linked with high-register cultural products appropriate for the public sphere. Whether texts refer to a public occasion, a society or group, or even an individual, it does not necessarily follow that their practical use was one-off public performance. It only serves to mark out both text and music as special, even when used to commemorate an event, or for private, unrelated entertainment. This may also convey an added importance to works with more standard texts: they can be seen as high-register products for use at times which do not require a dedicatory text. The elevated musical style is often matched by elevated language. Trebor’s *En seumeillant*, for example, uses the literary device of a prophetic dream-vision to frame his poem.⁵¹² Allusions to biblical characters as well as to those of myth and romance become very common, and are used both in dedicatory and courtly text.⁵¹³

The available flexibility, as well as the allure of textual subtlety, can easily be demonstrated in the works of Solage. He set a dedicatory text for Duke Jean de Berry (*Saincy estoit*, **Ch**, f. 36), a text for a private, non-aristocratic society (*Fumeux fume*, **Ch**, f. 59, which with its many repetitions and alliterations shows a marked interest in textual

⁵¹⁰ Liturgical texts are of course much more stable.

⁵¹¹ Stone goes as far as to say that, “The tendency to refer specifically to its own notation or graphic presentation, over and above its creation or performance, is in fact one of the principal attributes that marks a song as belonging to the stylistic category of *Ars Subtilior*”. See Stone, ‘Self-Reflexive Songs’ p. 183. One can also find a few complaints about the state of music in the purely Italian domain, most notably in pieces such as Landini’s *Musica son*, Jacopo da Bologna’s two *Osseletto selvagio* settings, or Lorenzo da Firenze’s *Doglom a voi*.

⁵¹² On this device see Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1992), esp. Chapter 6 (Dreams and Fiction).

⁵¹³ For dedicatory songs see, for example, Trebor’s *Se Alixandre et Hector* and *Se July Cesar Rolant et roy Artus*, Johannes Cuvelier’s *Se Galaas et le puissant Artus*, Magister Fransiscus’ *Phiton Phiton*, Philipoctus da Caserta’s *Par le grant senz d’Adriane* and *Par les bon Gedeon* and many others. Similar use within courtly texts can be found (among others) in Cuvelier’s *Se Geneine Tristan Yssout Helainne* and *Lorques Arthus Alixandre e Paris*, or Solage’s *Calextone qui fut dame* (this song incorporates a dedication in an acrostic, but the text is courtly). This happens also in texts which do not fit either category, such as Suzoy’s *Pictagoras* or Vaillant’s undedicated lament *Onques Jacob*. While such allusions occurred many times during the *Ars nova* and before, one might count the intensity in which this characteristic appears in Machaut’s rather late *Quant Theseus Hercules et Iason - Ne quier veoir* (and the song’s inclusion in **Ch**) as part of the same cultural trend.

effects), a text discussing clothing preferences seemingly unrelated to much else (*Pluseurs gens voy*, **Ch**, f. 58, **FP**, f. 106v-107),⁵¹⁴ and many courtly texts, some moralising (*Le Basile*, **Ch**, f. 49v), others about the tormented lover (*Helas je voy*, **Ch**, f. 57v), and yet others sweet and laudatory (*Tres gentil cuer amoureux*, **Ch**, f. 50v, a rare example of a musical setting of an *Ars subtilior* virelai surviving in its full, three-strophed form). *Corps femenin* (**Ch**, f. 23v) and *Calectone* (**Ch**, f. 50) can also be counted as dedicatory as they incorporate acrostics, a device which cannot be seen on the manuscript page or directly heard in performance. The secretive, puzzle-like character of this technique may explain its first appearance and popularity in vernacular, polyphonic *Ars subtilior* musical settings.⁵¹⁵ Another form of textual subtlety which Solage did not partake in can be found in some puzzle-songs, where the text itself is responsible for hinting at their resolutions (for example Zachara's *Sumite karissimi*, Olivier's *Si con cy gist* and *Ut pateat evidenter*).⁵¹⁶

Conclusion

Far from being a narrow fashion pegged on a small number of technical characteristics, the picture that emerges from the survey above is of a style which explores every opportunity to exploit the system from which it originated. In a few contexts (pp. 112-3, 118-9 and 191 above), its features seemed to suggest a high-register cultural practice, useful both in the public and official sphere, and in the private and appreciative context. The style seems to differentiate the use of its various compositional tools both quantitatively and qualitatively. The degree to which each tool is used in any particular piece influences its character, content and status above and beyond the localised audible effect and compositional usefulness of its use. Each piece, of course, includes many of these compositional tools, creating a multi-dimensional constellation which gives it an individual overall meaning.

⁵¹⁴ Plumley, 'Crossing Borderlines', pp. 13-4 suggests this song is linked with a poem which appears in the Visconti collection **Lon***.

⁵¹⁵ A particularly interesting instance is that of *Tres gente pure nete* (**Cyp**, f. 137v) which incorporates a Latin Marian acrostic within what would otherwise be read as a standard courtly text, thus secretly changing the work's meaning. Acrostics are found in earlier settings of Latin text. A famous example is Vitry's motet *O canenda – Rex quem metrorum – Rex regum* which spells ROBERTUS in the acrostic of its motetus. Machaut set numerological word-games to music (*Cinc une treze wit* and *Dix et sept cinq*), but refrained from composing music to his anagrams and acrostics. This is perhaps due to the visual element of both techniques, which is lost in using the musical layout, and do not come through in performance. For an example of acrostics in Machaut poetry see James I. Wimsatt, *The Marguerite Poetry of Guillaume de Machaut*, in *SRL*, lxxxvii (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), pp. 40-2. For anagrams in Machaut see Lawrence de Looze, "'Mon nom trouveras'": A New Look at the Anagrams of Guillaume de Machaut – the Enigmas, Responses and Solutions', *RR*, lxxix (1988), pp. 537-57.

⁵¹⁶ On different relationships between text and music see p. 163-5 above. For more on these songs see pp. 117, 164 and 168; footnote 79, pp. 181, 190, 194 and 279; and ex. 4-35, pp. 130, 190-1, 194 and 279 respectively.

As a brief example, one may see how some of Senleches' formal, technical and structural choices in *Je me merveil – Jay plusieurs fois* come together to provide an interpretative

framework for the song, even without analysing its transcription for specific motivic or harmonic behaviour.⁵¹⁷ The song's texts complain about low standards of musicianship, and composers' unacknowledged copying of the materials of others.⁵¹⁸ One can interpret some of Senleches' choices as a design to place him as a reliable outsider commenting on an unsatisfactory yet common practice of 'unlawful' borrowing. Others choices might add interpretative layers to the work, perhaps subverting the text's literal meaning. The unusual large-scale choice of transgressing the normal setting tradition by using two cantus voices in a three-part ballade separates this work from its surroundings.⁵¹⁹ While the choice of the ballade form was perhaps made in order to give weight to his complaint, the use of two texted voices is closer to the form of a motet, imbuing the work with some of the historical importance, complexity and authority associated with that genre. In addition, the tortured tone of the text is highlighted by the sense of unease resulting from the chosen polymensural structure. Notational choices establish the composer's credentials and authority, as the use of two kinds of coloration and varied types of half-coloured notes show both notational control and individual creativity. At the same time the different forms of coloration portray the *mundus inversus* tone of the text: void notation is used to represent the expected effect of red coloration, and red coloration inverts its interpretation into perfecting (or extending) *minime*, *semibreves* and *breves*, thus being more extreme than simple inversion. The sense of transgression is strengthened by the notation of the tenor's refrain. At the beginning of the refrain the tenor shifts from C to C. Rhythmically and musically though, it progresses in O for the rest of the song. The counted *breves* units are therefore too short to contain the rhythmical and musical line which single-mindedly transgresses them. Visual attention is given to the refrain in all voices, as they all have a mensural change at this point, which forces a change of coloration combination from red to hollow and vice versa in each of them. The visual importance of the refrain is strengthened further by the notation of the two cantus parts (which progress canonically in this form-part) in different mensurations and therefore using different notational means. This adds the concept of falsification to the audible

⁵¹⁷ Aspects of this song were already discussed pp. 177 and 187 above. Figure 4-86 above offers a facsimile of it. It is also discussed in Stone, 'The Composer's Voice', pp. 179-87, primarily in terms of the relationship between composer, performer and audience, and in Leach, 'Nature's Forge', where the relationship with memory and performance takes centre stage. Both provide translations of the text which are not included here. An overview of Senleches' life and other works can be found in Strohm, "'La harpe de mélodie'".

⁵¹⁸ Leach's interpretation of the texts interprets 'forging' as the act of creation (relevant also to the act of performing), which has no negative connotations. See Leach, 'Nature's Forge', pp. 79-82.

⁵¹⁹ This is by no means unique, but is still special. **Ch** includes also Grimace's *Se Zephirus – Se Jupiter*, Guido's *Robin muse – Je ne say fere* and Vaillant's *Dame doucement – Doulz amis*. Poly-textual songs are in any case exceptional, but from the variety of combinations available, the most common are of four voices, with two lower untexted voices, or with all voices texted.

imitation theme.⁵²⁰ The visual effects attract attention not only to specific locations within the song, but to the piece as a whole within its host source, again making it stand out. In addition to the canonic refrain, other audible effects include the joint refrain text, which makes the text much more audible; the complex internal and external syncopation which further destabilise the music (mirroring the wonder and hopelessness of the speaker), and the musical borrowing on the word ‘contrefaire’.⁵²¹ The citation here works on a number of levels: it is illustrative, especially as the song quoted is itself involved in a web of citations; it attracts the ear, and therefore highlights the word to which it is set, and finally it underpins both Senleches’ and his audience’s cultural proficiency by allowing them to demonstrate their knowledge. This, in a roundabout way, allows them to set themselves apart from the unknowledgeable and untalented people about whom the texts complain, turning the piece into a status-giving device. That the piece complains about the use of this very technique can suggest the kind of self-effacing irony often displayed in Machaut’s characterisation of his first-person-speaker.⁵²²

More interestingly perhaps, it may turn the meaning of this text on its head, transforming it into a criticism not of those who use this technique, but of those who cannot use it well. By extension, audiences and patrons which were indirectly blamed for putting up with this state of affairs in the literal reading are now criticised only if they are not culturally proficient enough to recognise the game played. This reading would result in different listeners interpreting this song in opposite directions according to whether they noticed the quote or not, and their degree of involvement or awareness of *Ars subtilior* compositional practices. While having enough appeal also for those who missed out on this central pun, one can say that *Je me merveil – J’ay pluseurs fois* creates an elite within an elite, at least intellectually and culturally if not socially.

⁵²⁰ See p. 187 above. Since Leach reads the ‘forging’ mentioned in the text as making rather than falsifying, her interpretation gives a different meaning to this visual game. Rather than seeing it as another ironic layer of the text, she explains the difference as Senleches’s demonstration of his skill and ability to apply reason, interpret and rework his materials. The ability to understand and make something new out of the given materials then becomes the central status-implicating effect of the song. See Leach, ‘Nature’s Forge’, pp. 82-4. Whichever reading is adopted, it can be understood that this technique gives authority and implies a separation of those involved in the creation and consumption of this song from the lesser worthy masses.

⁵²¹ See Plumley, ‘Citation and Allusion’, pp. 321-5. The citation has the same effect whether a modern, negative connotation is given to this word, or Leach’s view that it should be translated merely as ‘following the contour’ of an original is adopted. See Leach, ‘Nature’s Forge’, pp. 79-82.

⁵²² For Machaut’s technique in this respect see Kevin Brownlee, *Poetic Identity in Guillaume de Machaut* (Madison, 1984), or Catherine Attwood, *Dynamic Dichotomy: The Poetic “I” in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-century French Lyric Poetry* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), esp. Chapter 2, pp. 71-109 (‘The “I” and the Other: The Poetic “I” in the Works of Guillaume de Machaut’).

Not all of the techniques described in this chapter seem to have been as popular in every location, point of time, or composer's output, but it is hard to present convincing time-frames or geographic affiliation for the use of each one. The manipulation of some style-elements (such as genre, setting, melody and visuality) seems to interest composers throughout the time-period and places relevant to the *Ars subtilior*, while the centrality of language for the style changed considerably in different contexts.⁵²³ On the evidence of the 'formative group' of manuscripts, one may postulate that in the original French context of the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon, deviation from the norm remained closer to the traditional expectations of the system, incorporating mensuration clashes and proportions already recognisable from the Italian tradition, and using special note-shapes only for a special reason, be it technical or expressive. The slightly later Italian context can then be said to have brought with it a tendency towards more florid proportional usage, a wider range of durational and rhythmic values, and a keener interest in special note-shapes, without actually complicating the style any further.⁵²⁴ In Cyprus one can claim that an interest developed in wholly independent and more complex proportional relationships, as well as in the regular use of harmonic tension and clashes of *ficta*. None of these assertions can encompass even all those pieces which we can safely associate with one or other of these geo-temporal categories, and in light of the myriad problems expressed in the previous chapters concerning the surviving evidence, such assertions become not only haphazard but nearly irrelevant. The random survival pattern of both music and other evidence which affiliates it to a specific time and place, the longevity of written materials and their use,⁵²⁵ and the wide circulation of materials and personnel during this period are enough to frustrate most such statements.

The functional shift that allowed the *Ars subtilior* ballade to challenge the hegemony of the motet for the composition of works for official occasions was already mentioned above. As these ballades were designed to raise the status of the occasion for which they were composed, it is only natural that they tended to emphasise scale, together with technical and audible uniqueness. These status-giving qualities could then be extended to reflect on the audiences, commissioners, inventors and executors of this music. These practical tendencies filtered through from the highest social and musical register into musical style as a whole

⁵²³ See also the discussion of these topics in Chapter 2, esp. pp. 57, 65-70, 73-4 and 76-9.

⁵²⁴ One can see this as a first step in the direction of *Ars subtilior* 'lite' as described in Plumley and Stone, 'Cordier's Picture-Songs'. For chronological contextualisations see pp. 63-5 and 295-8.

⁵²⁵ One can easily imagine medieval cultural practitioners not knowing how old a song is or where it originated even while actively copying or distributing it.

(following the normal route of cultural change), creating an interest in expanding the surrounding stylistic conventions, and heading towards the extreme and the unusual. This is by no means the music's sole purpose, but an underlying evolutionary current. The different technical tools which attracted scholarship to this style can therefore be seen not as random experimentations, or merely the writing down of the virtuosic ornamentation by performers, but also as practical means of supporting expanded forms, propelling the music forward, setting a scene and highlighting specific textual or structural elements. The musical language that is then formed is relativistic in approach: importance, worth, expression and localised attention are derived via the extent, degree, direction and combination of deviations from any discernable norm, be it rhythmical, notational, contrapuntal, textual, or relating to voice-setting or range. Using traditional or newly-formed expectations is the key to such a language, as without them there is nothing to deviate from. The basic expectations arise from *Ars nova* practices (underlying structure, harmonic and melodic behaviour), on top of which local expectations can be created using sequences and syncopated or proportional passages.

The variety of musical outcomes can range from the conservative to the extreme. We cannot consider the formulation of borderlines and their meanings before considering the margin of error in our sources, editions and understanding of this style. Large-scale questions relating to this margin of error revolve around the effects of single pieces on our understanding of the *Ars subtilior* as a whole, and involve the need for constant re-evaluation of emerging materials and the acceptance of the partiality of our knowledge. These issues are dealt with at the end of the next chapter. Problems relating to notation and musical interpretation are no less influential in discerning the specifics of the *Ars subtilior* musical language. They can range from simple errors by medieval or modern practitioners, to the changing preferences which affect the making of unavoidable decisions in copying manuscripts or the making of editions. Even without dwelling on mistakes made by modern editors, their choices are essential to the way larger repertoires are thought of and digested.⁵²⁶ It has already been mentioned how Greene and Günther's choice to re-bar works according to

⁵²⁶ For the workings of this claim, see the influence on scholarship of the first substantial editions of this repertoire (to which the publication of notation books can be added), pp. 29-34 above, or Upton's discussion of Apel's work in *The Chantilly Codex*, pp. 134-58. Editions are perhaps even more influential when considering the different approaches to non-rhythmically-notated monophony, where editions can vary greatly according to whether a rhythmical interpretation is adopted or not.

musical rather than rhythmic units made external syncopation less discernable.⁵²⁷ Other cases concern contrapuntal corrections of ‘wrong’ harmonies or *ficta*. Less controversially, no editor can avoid the need to interpret the placing and duration of *ficta* signs. Both legitimate editorial decisions and enthusiastic over-correction can homogenise the music according to the ideas and aesthetics of those undertaking the work, especially when they are applied over large swathes of repertoire by an individual or closely knit group. This can distort our perception of the prevalence of certain musical aspects, especially if these are more important to us than they were to the editors.⁵²⁸ This distortion does not render editions worthless. It is expanded upon here in order to highlight the fact that different editions are not only more appropriate in different contexts, but represent the ideals and fashions in operation at the time of their creation. Researchers and performers have different needs when it comes to musical editions. It is very hard for one edition to cater for both groups. Within musicology editions are invaluable, as they allow for harmonic considerations to come to the fore and save much time and hard work in obtaining any kind of stylistic overview. They also make accessible sources which are hard to reach and difficult to read. Their inevitable weakness is in not being able to show all the available information, making the over-reliance on a single edition dangerous.⁵²⁹

On the other hand, it is not only editors who make mistakes. There are ample examples of scribes leaving pieces in various degrees of disarray, with whole sections unwittingly transposed, or different voices lasting different lengths.⁵³⁰ Most sources contain some scribal corrections.⁵³¹ Finding missing or extra notes or signs here and there is even more common. Especially if the possibility of performance is kept in mind, one should also allow for a

⁵²⁷ See pp. 178-9 above. They are by no means alone in this habit. For a different approach, by which the editor attempts to show as faithfully as possible the contents of the manuscript, perhaps to the detriment of the ease of reading, see Stoessel, *The Captive Scribe*, Appendix A.

⁵²⁸ A clear case of personality or fashion-driven preferences influencing scholarship can be seen in Cousemaker’s choices in copying works from **Str.** While musicologists can only feel grateful that such a task was undertaken, many would now use different criteria for choosing which pieces to copy and which to skip, and adapt their copying technique to fit better the works in question or represent their context in the manuscript. For a discussion of other technical and aesthetic differences between editions see Günther, ‘Fourteenth-century Music with Texts Revealing Performance Practice’.

⁵²⁹ It is difficult, for example, to create editions of polyphonic works which show all concordances of a song simultaneously as do Van der Werf and Bond in *The Extant Troubadour Melodies*.

⁵³⁰ In **Ch**, for example, a strict transcription of Francisus’ *Phiton, phiton* (f. 20v) results in the B part consisting of a different number of (equal) *breves* in each voice; *O bonne douce Franse* discussed pp. 139 and 187-8 above has also a written out repetition of the A section for tenor and contratenor but not cantus (see figure. 4-85), and a stretch of over 14 *breves* is missing from the contratenor of Matheus de Sancto Johanne’s *Inclite flos orit* (see p. 165 and ex. 4-62 above). These are by no means the only problems in this source.

⁵³¹ For the corrections in *Amour m’a le cuer mis* see pp. 227-8 below.

margin of error in the reading of the original sources. This also includes the array of possible solutions on offer when performers encountered a scribal error.

As we have to allow for extreme occurrences to appear as part of our understanding of the style, I would propose that the test of the validity of a correction should be the inability to reach an interpretative justification for the uncorrected version. For me this even holds when concordances are available with “better” versions. Such interpretation-based concepts can lead to coherent and performable results, while maintaining enough flexibility to react to future changes in our understanding of the style and the way it works.⁵³² Once an error is identified, and unless structural clues such as repetition or sequential progression are available, I would opt for the solution which requires the least degree of notational intervention with the original. Adding or removing a stem or a dot is preferable to changing a complete shape.

If we combine the outcome of this survey with those of previous chapters, it seems the *Ars subtilior* enjoyed a pan-European appeal, while interacting with and adjusting to fit specific cultural and political needs, as well as compositional and performative requirements. Encompassing court, church and townhouse, it coexisted with other, simpler or just different forms of cultural expression. Rather than single-mindedly striving towards extremity and difficulty, every one of its characteristics can be said to operate on a scale of complexity and subtlety, ranging from the normative to the unique. In short, *Ars subtilior* was a living, influential, mainstream cultural force which has to be acknowledged in order to understand both musical and cultural history. It now remains to be asked how we can use all of this information to conceive of a stylistic language. Can we form a hierarchy of tools and usages according to which we should assign relative importance? Should we attempt instead to attach specific expressive qualities to each tool and then analyse to what extent it is used in each piece? Are we to be even more extreme, and see all these tools as practical, technical solutions in an expanding musical language, assigning them meaning only when skillfully combined by the hands of a capable composer?

As with every living and un-codified culture, I would imagine the truth to reside somewhere in between all three approaches. As an example, from the evidence of the use of

⁵³² See p. 203-4 below for my personal experience of performing progressions which seem impossible on paper.

canon instructions and the retrospective efforts of theorists it seems that the use of external signifiers for mensuration and proportional change stems from a more scientific approach to music, while the interpretation of special note-shapes is more of a reaction to practice.⁵³³ One can therefore interpret this as a sign that proportional notation was somehow more subtle than the use of special note-shapes. Such an interpretation would be strengthened by the use of Latin for canon instructions, and the general lack of explanation for special note-shapes. One can then go further and assign different expressive interpretations to each usage based on the previous realisation, and assign more of an intellectual respectability to the use of the former and a more performance-oriented, individualistic attitude to the latter (or an attempt to gain ‘the best of all worlds’ when both are used as in *Angelorum psalat*, see pp. 206-26 below).

If such an idea is accepted, one can read into the uncharacteristically convoluted proportional notation of *Saincy estoit*, in comparison to the rest of Solage’s surviving output, an attempt to convey an additional sense of institutional importance to his most overtly official and political dedicatory work. In the other direction, the use of unique and unexplained note-shapes in *Que pena maior* may be a hint from Bartholomeus da Bononia that he is not only a misunderstood *musicus* (as the flowery Latin text and proportional signs accompanied by a canon instruction suggest), but also a virtuosic *cantor*, proficient in all the practical manifestations of music-making. Both of these examples confer an air of mastery on the composers through their use and combination of the tools at their disposals. They avoid attaching specific meanings to the choice of one proportion or note-shape over another. All three approaches alluded to by the questions above gain interpretative relevance without ruling each other out.

The same process of specification from the abstract demonstrated by the use of proportions and note-shapes in the works of Solage and Bartholomeus da Bononia can be undertaken for any comparison or combination of musical elements. One can compare external syncopation with proportional use, assigning momentary disorientation to the former and a prolonged disjunctive reaction to the latter. The two leading, directional techniques of proportion and internal syncopation could be judged as differing in technique if not in

⁵³³ See pp. 161-71 above. For an exposition of the cultural context of the separation between internal and external modes of signification (note-shapes versus mensuration signs), see Stoessel, *The Captive Scribe*, pp. 184-194. This theme is echoed throughout much of his following two chapters.

purpose; proportions creating propulsion through disorientation while internal syncopation leads on more clearly and directly. Different inaudible techniques could be compared in order to assess layers of secrecy as to their relationship with visuality, their subject matter, or their audience. The list is endless, and even the relationships detailed here are only my suggestions, and could also be interpreted differently. Once these effects and meanings are established, each work can be interpreted, silhouetted against a web of relationships, choices and combinations. This approach allows a view of *Ars subtilior* as expressive and structured, dismissing the remnant of older conceptualisations of it as technical experimentation by way of a system rather than of taste.⁵³⁴

4-87. Bartholomeus da Bononia, *Que pena maior*, ModA, f. 37-36v, beginning

As a postlude, I would like to add a more personal impression, resulting from my experience as a performer and discussions with other performers and audiences. After a piece is learned, digested and understood, most performers will agree that it is not the proportions or the syncopations which mark it out as distinctly *Ars subtilior*. These elements become part of the logical progression of the melodic lines. The audience, not knowing how difficult they are or how long it took to put them together, nearly always accepts them as such. What marks this music as special in performance situation is more often than not its harmonic language and sense of freedom. Its flexibility, creativity and delight in the surprising, coupled with the meaningful, retrospectively logical dissonance. Thus, the most

⁵³⁴ The problem of relying on taste can be illustrated by an anecdote from Upton, *The Chantilly Codex*, p. 132. While critiquing a 1913 publication by Johannes Wolf, she mentions his description of *Un Orrible plain – A Dieu vos commant* (see pp. 137-9 above) as uninteresting and uninspiring. She challenges this judgement as “hardly fair”, claiming that, “the cantus line presents nicely syncopated counterpoint to the straightforwardly plain . . . tenor. . . . The contratenor part . . . is indeed angular, but could (if transcribed more correctly) sound quite jazzy when combined with the very stable two-part counterpoint of cantus and tenor”. While her endeavour to transcribe her source more correctly is laudable, it is hard to accept her positive ascription of “jazzy” to this song as better founded aesthetically than Wolf’s derogatory evaluation of it as “uninspiring”, especially as both the song’s composition and Wolf’s judgement of it were undertaken from a pre-jazz point of view.

striking characteristic of the first phrase of *Que pena maior* reproduced as ex. 4-87 is not its use of syncopation, proportion, the Latin language or notational complications. It is the sounding G-sharp/B-flat/G discord in the second *brevis* unit and subsequent, at times tortured, harmonic behaviour interspersed by moments of conventional clarity.

My ensemble and I performed this song (with voice and two Vielles to heighten the tension) in an illustrated lecture at the 2009 Plainchant and Medieval Music Society conference in Huddersfield. While attracting attention, this seemingly impossible reading was accepted without comment also by the most knowledgeable of audiences, who took it as part of the musical language and indeed charm of the style. As with most other audiences, much of their enjoyment came from the lack of orthodoxy and the mischievous creativity the style conveys.

I separate and qualify these comments, as it could well be that the emphasis on harmony is more a consequence of subliminal modern patterns of musical appreciation, even in those familiar with medieval repertoires.

5. Case studies

In each of the four case studies below, an individual work or a group of songs is examined in order to highlight specific aspects of the *Ars subtilior* repertoire. They demonstrate the practical application of some of the stylistic concepts surveyed in the previous chapter, the relationship between this style and other forms of musical production, and also serve to evaluate our conceptualisation of *Ars subtilior* when faced with newly resurfaced compositions. The following analyses will not therefore attempt to present each song discussed in all its richness, but instead concentrate on a specific question, concept or aspect of this musical style.

Angelorum psalat (**Ch**, f. 48v) is of unquestionable *Ars subtilior* credentials. It is of specific interest here because the difficulties in interpreting its notation have resulted in the lack of an accepted transcription for this song. The existence of competing, but still problematic, solutions offer us a unique opportunity for examining what we consider to be stylistically acceptable and technically plausible: a kind of inverse analysis where musicological understanding is probed in order to reinvent a medieval work. In the current context though, I will use the lack of a clear transcription to explore only the larger-scale, structural and visual compositional decisions made in the process of its creation, in order to find an expressive framework in which they could be interpreted.

Antonello da Caserta's *Amour m'a le cuer mis* (**ModA**, ff. 11v-12) is a more typical *Ars subtilior* ballade, and is relatively straightforward to transcribe or perform. This clarity will be used to examine the practical, everyday ways in which the special characteristics of this style were used as technical and expressive aids in structuring and propelling extended forms, without aiming for extremities or requiring any textual justification.

Je suis cellui (**Paris**, ff. 154 & 156-154v & 156v) is a newcomer to the modern scene, having only been rediscovered at about the time I undertook this work. As it is technically simpler than the previous works described, its incorporation into the *Ars subtilior* fold may be questioned. I will use it here to examine the integration of some of the less extravagant stylistic features described in the previous chapter into our understanding of *Ars subtilior*

style, and attempt to evaluate this song's relevance to the style as a whole. Its recent arrival on to the modern musicological scene will be useful later on in the chapter where I will discuss the influence of specific single pieces on our understanding of the style as a whole.

The last case study will look at a number of widely distributed French songs which also found their way into *Ars subtilior* collections.⁵³⁵ Apart from offering a better picture of a late fourteenth century mainstream, these songs give rise to a number of questions that are of interest here. Should we consider these songs *Ars subtilior* compositions? On what grounds were they deemed interesting enough for inclusion in specialist collections? What was the relationship between the popular and the specialised? Once these questions are answered one can go further and postulate on the degree to which the *Ars subtilior* was integrated into the sum of musical culture and production.

An overview of characteristics, technicalities, historical context, and modern preoccupation will be offered for each song. A transcription with relevant remarks will follow, leading to an analysis of the work according to the parameters dealt with in each case-study. The chapter will then end with a more general discussion concerning the influence of single works on our understanding of the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon as a whole, and the relevance of the works examined within this scheme. Different currents and usages within the styles will be discussed, as well as the relationship between the special and the ordinary, the complex and the simple.

Angelorum psalat

Angelorum psalat is a two-part Ballade with a Latin text, transmitted uniquely in **Ch** (f. 48v). It is ascribed to 'S Uciredor', and has the ascription 'Retro morde[n]s ut ffera pessima' in the tenor.⁵³⁶ In the cantus, it presents the largest variety of different note-shapes in a single piece, while the tenor uses traditional note-shapes (with the addition of *dragmae* in the B section), governed by five appearances of the numeral '3' and three of the numeral '2'. The tenor begins and ends each of its three form parts with red coloration (each new section

⁵³⁵ This group has already been specified p. 63 above in the context of their manuscript distribution. Of the group of seven songs with eight or more surviving concordances (outside the Machaut collections), only three will be looked at in detail, namely, *En discort*, Johannes Vaillant's *Par maintes fois*, and P. de Molins' *De ce que foul pense*.

⁵³⁶ 'Biting behind like an evil beast'. This phrase appears also in the penultimate line of the song's text. For possible interpretations of this ascription see pp. 171 and 210.

heralded also by Θ), and uses black notation in between. Both voices sport two flats in the key signature, but these two are E-flat and A-flat, with B-flat not signified throughout the piece.⁵³⁷ It seems that nothing about this work is straightforward.

There is as yet no convincing identification for the composer of this work. In line with the explanation given in footnote 2 above, most musicologists read the ascription as written in retrograde and referring therefore to a ‘Rodericus’. Suggested identifications for the composer of this song were Rodrigo de la Guitarra, or one or the other of the Johannes Rogerii.⁵³⁸ Contrary to older views, these are by no means the only candidates. In the archives of the Avignonese papacy for example, one can find many men called ‘Rodericus’, especially in those periods of the Schism when Iberian support was crucial to its survival, and concessions of grace towards Spanish ecclesiastics grew exponentially. Within this group, one can also find musically-oriented men whose name could have been manipulated to an inverted ‘Rodericus’ in an ascription. These include Lambertus de Rode, Ennecum Roderici de Foa (or maybe Roa), Alfonso Roderici, Rodericus de Linya or Egidius Roderici to name but a few.⁵³⁹ There is no case to support any one of these men as a better candidate than another, or indeed a better candidate than known musicians such as Rogerii. The name could also refer to a saint’s or place name (or both). Neither I nor Di Bacco propose it. Still, they exist, making an ascription by process of elimination untenable.

The text of the ballade may contain some clues to its context (see figure 5-1). When compared to other such works, the Latin text of the ballade coupled with its clear religious imagery could lead one to imagine an origin linked to one of the Papal courts of the

⁵³⁷ The only written-in *ficta* are high E-flats (an octave above the signature inflection) for each of this notes’ three appearances, and a high D-natural for the first note of the C section (all in the cantus).

⁵³⁸ For Roderigo de la Guitarra see Reaney, ‘The Manuscript, Chantilly’, pp. 78-79, Josephson, ‘Rodericus’, p. 113, and Maricarmen Gómez, ‘Some Precursors of the Spanish Lute School’, *EM*, xx (November, 1992), pp. 583-593, esp. p. 585. At the time these identifications were made, he was the only Rodrigo known to have been a musician. For the ascription to Johannes Rogerii see Crawford Young, ‘Antiphon’, pp. 14-15.

⁵³⁹ Lambertus de Rode is referred to in 1375-6; Ennecum Roderici was *clericus capelle* and familiar of King Juan de Castile, and asked for a benefice in the diocese of Oxoin in 1382; Alfonso Roderici was a cleric from Burgen, who asked for a benefice there in 1404. He acted as *clericus capelle* for Henry III of Castile, and died in 1407; Rodericus de Linya was a familiar of Pope Benedict XIII and of Cardinal Tiransonensis. He died in January 1410 and his benefice of the parish church in Saragossa was conferred to Geraldus Geraldus who was the papal *magister capelle* at the time, suggesting perhaps a link between the two men; Egidius Roderici was of noble birth and was attested to as a singer and familiar of Queen Catherine of Castile in a document which carries the ascription ‘Genova 1409’. Heartfelt thanks to Giuliano Di Bacco for sharing with me some of the unpublished fruits of his archival labour.

Schism.⁵⁴⁰ The discrepancy between the laudatory first quatrain and the damning continuation, the use of emotive and venomous language, and the lack of a moralistic call for repentance, may suggest that there is more to the text than a vague reiteration of original sin.⁵⁴¹ The alternative is to interpret it as an allusion to a specific event, giving it meaning as a political, probably even propagandist work.

5-1. *Angelorum psalat - text and translation.*⁵⁴²

<p>Angelorum psalat tripudium musicorum pandens armoniam orpheycam plectens sinphoniam procul pellens vanum fastidium</p> <p>Qui operum fuit incium delictorum frangens constanciam duplicatum ostendens animum pomum prebens cunctis letiferum.</p> <p>Ista gerit vices luciferi que principi suppremo voluit coequari set tandem corrui In profundum abissi Inferi⁵⁴³</p> <p>Pestifera in qua superbia Ingrata es deo et homini [in] retro mordens ut fera Pessima ante blandis ut faus Innocui.</p>	<p>Let the dance of angels sing [<i>or play</i>] psalms spreading the harmony of musicians; plucking the Orphic consonance, driving afar empty indifference.</p> <p>He who was the beginning of works, breaking the consistency of crimes, displaying a doubled mind, supplying the apple that brought death to all.</p> <p>She performs the part of Lucifer, who wished to be made equal to the supreme prince, but fell at the last into the depth of Hell's abyss.</p> <p>In which pestilential pride ungrateful one [<i>fem.</i>], thou art to God and man, biting behind like an evil beast thou fawnest afore like the face of one innocent.</p>
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The best candidate I can suggest for the female person referred to in the text is Queen Joanna of Naples. Pope Urban VI was born in Naples and was therefore her subject, but following his election to the papacy became a Feudal competitor. Initially, Joanna supported

⁵⁴⁰ Apart from the obvious references to the fall of Lucifer and Original Sin, 'fera pessima' alludes to Genesis 37:20, 33 (Joseph's betrayal by his brothers), a text used also in a Lent Responsory. Many associative links were surely also made with St. John's Revelations, especially 4:6, 15:2, 16:2, and 18: 4, 14, 22, adding apocalyptic connotations to the damning character of this song. I would like to thank Marc Lewon for sharing with me his findings in this regards. For the context of the Latin songs in **ModA**, See Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 69-78.

⁵⁴¹ An interpretation suggested in Josephson, 'Rodericus', p. 113. Similar language is to be found in Machaut's *Fons totius superbike – O livoris feritas – Fera pessima* (motet 9), which received a political interpretation in Kurt Markstrom, 'Machaut and the Wild Beast', *AM lxi* (1989), pp. 17-26.

⁵⁴² I would like to thank Leofranc Holford-Strevens for this translation, as well as Marc Lewon, Giovanni Cantarini, Nicolas Savoy and Nicoletta Gossen for their help in translating and interpreting this text. Red letters indicate ornamented letters in the original.

⁵⁴³ 'ri' is copied twice in the manuscript

Urban's chaotic election of 1378.⁵⁴⁴ The group of French cardinals who felt betrayed by Urban's behaviour and claimed that the election was invalid changed her mind. She quickly withdrew her support of Urban and invited the recalcitrant cardinals to repair to Fondi and hold a new election, where Clement VII was elected in 1379, thus starting the Schism. Her allegiance did not remain constant even after the second election, but she mostly sided with Clement VII and the Avignonese cause.⁵⁴⁵ From Urban's viewpoint, this made her open to charges of betrayal and the appropriation of the godly authority to create and undo popes, making the accusations in the song plausible. Urban (with Catherine of Sienna at his side) went on to excommunicate Joanna and act to remove her from her throne, supporting Charles of Durazzo as the rightful King of Naples.⁵⁴⁶ Joanna was finally defeated and imprisoned by Charles in August 1381, and murdered in captivity in May 1382. As the female figure in the text has a negative connotation, such identification would result in the song being connected to the Roman papacy. The female person inhabits the entire second half of the entire text, is spoken to directly, but is described as having already fallen from grace. Identification with Joanna would therefore suggest a date between her excommunication and murder, namely between 1380 and 1382. The most natural interpretation for the male figure (second quatrain) in the song is Clement. In Urbans' view Clement ungratefully betrayed the duly elected pope, showing his duplicity, while still presenting himself as worthy of the papal position. Therefore, the comparison with the snake in the Garden of Eden is not out of place. As far as Urban was concerned Clement was a continuing nuisance and, being the false claimant, his demand for papal authority would bring eternal death (in the figure of the poisoned fruit) to those who followed him.

The choice of *Ars subtilior* style, relatively less popular in the Roman curia, could be a propagandist decision, designed to show legitimacy and attract interest from the other side of the fence.

If one gives more weight to the likelihood that *Ars subtilior* works originate from the Avignonese papacy, the identification with Joanna becomes unsuitable. Instead, a more

⁵⁴⁴ For the conditions in Rome during the election see Richard C. Trexler, 'Rome on the Eve of the Great Schism', *Speculum*, lxii (July, 1967), pp. 489-509.

⁵⁴⁵ See Clinton Locke, *Ten Epochs of Church History* vol. viii: *The Age of the Great Western Schism*, (The Christian Literature Company, 1896), available also at http://www.third-millennium-library.com/MedievalHistory/GREAT_WESTERN_SCHISM_DOOR.html.

⁵⁴⁶ For some of the language used by St. Catherine see Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints, and Visionaries of the Great Schism, 1378-1417*, (Pennsylvania State Press, 2006), pp. 51-52.

allegorical identification of the feminine character in the text could be proposed: the city of Rome. All accounts of the double election describe the insistence of the city's populace on the election of an Italian Pope playing a central part in the inception of the Schism.⁵⁴⁷ The text would then fit in with the very beginning of the Schism. The French cardinals who elected Urban under duress in Rome rebelled against his authority when his behaviour did not follow their expectations. It would have been easy for them to portray Urban as duplicitous and the origin of their problems, but it was the behaviour of the Romans after the death of Gregory XI and during the 1378 election which led to his translation in the first place. It would not be out of character for the cardinals (or Clement once he was chosen) to bolster the legitimacy of the return of the now divided papacy to Avignon in such language, and to use musical propagandist means. The 'vain nuisance' can then be interpreted as Rome itself or the brief episode in which the papacy left Avignon. The references to Original Sin further discredit the Roman papacy by highlighting the severity and illegitimacy of Urbans' personal betrayal and the sin of pride committed by the Roman populace. The text would then fit as part of the legitimisation efforts of the schismatic group, be that during the 1378 election itself, to celebrate the subsequent return to Avignon, or in the subsequent efforts to recruit political support. The venom used to describe a pope is not unusual. Even by subsequent followers of the Roman papacy, Urban was regularly named and depicted as the *bestia terribilis* or *ferra ultima* in fifteenth-century versions of the *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus* or Pope Prophecies.⁵⁴⁸ While this interpretation of the Prophecies may not have occurred as early as 1378, the use of the phrase 'fera pessima' in the *Angelorum psalat's* text may well allude to this famous work, further strengthening the song's apocalyptic associations.⁵⁴⁹

Whichever interpretation is adopted, the reiteration of 'fera pessima' in the tenor ascription

⁵⁴⁷ For historical context and different contemporaneous accounts of the proceedings see Trexler, 'Rome on the Eve of the Great Schism'. The fall into the abyss of hell would then refer only to Lucifer, the implications towards Rome itself being its fall from grace following the newly justified move of the papal seat from it, or perhaps a vague and general warning for its future.

⁵⁴⁸ See Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries*, pp. 166-78 for the history and constant reinterpretation of these prophecies. They were already used as propaganda tools in the election of popes at the very beginning of the fourteenth century (ibid. p. 168), and manuscripts as early as 1410-1417 (**Rossi374**) equate the beast of the apocalypse with Urban (ibid. p. 172). See also Hélène Millet, "*Il libro delle immagini dei papi*" *Storia di un testo profetico medievale* (Rome, 2002), pp. 29, 74-6 and 158 for more depictions of Urban as the *bestia terribile*.

⁵⁴⁹ For apocalyptic echoes in this text, see footnote 540 above. It is tempting to read the 'innocence' referred to in the last word of the text as a reference to a person. Indeed, Young interprets it as a reference to Pope Innocent VII from a Benedictine vantage point of 1403 (when Rogerii is documented as working in Benedict's chapel) as he maintains that Innocent's "political designs just prior to his brief and turbulent tenure as Roman pope from 1404-06 were surely under close observation by Benedict and his circle in 1403" (Young, 'Antiphon', p. 15). Sadly, this is unlikely, since one would expect a reference to pun on the name itself rather than use 'innocui'. Young's assertion is also problematic in that it is hard to imagine an indirect pun being made on a pope's name before it was even chosen and adopted.

surely strengthened its already present biblical echoes of brotherly betrayal, a notion easily translated to fit the cardinals' feelings at the beginning of the Schism.

Modern scholarship has formed an uneasy relationship with this piece. Some concerted attention was given to it by Josephson, but as his solution did not seem to satisfy musicological or performance needs and no better solution became evident, it has been more or less ignored for a long period.⁵⁵⁰ A recent article by Crawford Young was dedicated to this song, and offered a substantially different solution, but again, without dispelling the historical, musical and theoretical fog which surrounds it.⁵⁵¹ None of these inquiries attempted a full musical, historical or expressive analysis of their outcome, concentrating mainly on the technicalities of transcription. Not many other songs have two articles dedicated solely to them, making *Angelorum* seem disproportionately popular in musicological circles. Still, mainstream musicology routinely ignores this work, or refers to it in passing as an example of extreme difficulty, perhaps due to the inconclusive character of these two studies.

When looking at the manuscript, it seems that this song uses both unique signs and uncommon interpretations of more standard ones. Surprisingly, usage does not seem to be consistent: two groups of the same note-shape (red, lower-flagged *semiminime*) appear in the piece. In the first line of the cantus (see below) the group consists of nine notes while in the third line it consists of eight. Both seem to occupy the space of one *semibrevis*.⁵⁵² It would be very unusual for augmentation to occur in the second group, as perfection rules do not normally apply to special note-shapes.⁵⁵³ The alternative reading – understanding the shape to represent two different proportions – would result in the proportional instability of a single note-shape which is unique in the *Ars subtilior* repertoire, and has not occurred in a single

⁵⁵⁰ See Josephson, 'Rodericus', and Greene's remarks in the critical apparatus of *PMFC*, xix, p. 189 where he admits that, "The present transcription is based largely on his [Josephson's] study, but a better reading of bars 4b-6 is provided here".

⁵⁵¹ Young, 'Antiphon'. The musicological skirting around this work is attested to by its exclusion from the extensive appendix of Stoessel, *The Captive Scribe*, where 69 of the most complex and outstanding *Ars subtilior* works are transcribed, but not *Angelorum*.

⁵⁵² It appears that some correction was applied to the last of the signs in the second group. This might attest to the scribes' realisation of this problem, and perhaps also to a half-hearted and inconclusive attempt to resolve it. Greene interprets the second group as shorter than the first, but still does not use the same proportion in both cases.

⁵⁵³ Using perfection rules in such a context would make the interpretation of special note-shapes much harder, and would go against the expectation of readers to figure them out in the context suggested pp. 163 and 165-6 above.

work since Petrus de Cruce (or ever since). Groups of red-hollow notes are introduced by a O , unless they begin with (line six) or only consist of (first line) half-coloured notes. Is the lack of a O in these cases due only to the scribal difficulty in fitting it in, or should they be interpreted differently? How should the unique shapes be interpreted? To what degree, if at all, should we allow a doubling or tripling of note-shapes per value? As has been pointed out by previous scholars,⁵⁵⁴ a typically stable tenor usually helps the reader to answer these questions. This is not the case here, as the unexplained numerals in the tenor make this voice, if anything, harder to understand. The only consensus available at the present is that the key signature should be amended by a B-flat, or at least that such inflection should be routinely added as *ficta*.⁵⁵⁵

Example 5-2 presents both Young's and Greene's editions besides the **Ch** original. In order to ease the comparison, they have been re-barred to maintain the overall mensural context. Rhythmic groupings have been similarly adjusted to maintain a reference to the constant underlying beat. Coloration and special note-shapes are not shown in these transcriptions, as the original is also given. In order to enable a contrapuntal assessment and comparison, a score version of Greene's edition is presented in example 5-3, followed by one of Young's edition in example 5-4. Some, but by no means all of the changes made by these scholars in their reading of the source were detailed in the critical apparatus of both transcriptions, neither of which are included here.⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵⁴ Josephson, 'Rodericus', p. 113; Hirshberg, *The Music*, p. 330; Young, 'Antiphon', p. 11.

⁵⁵⁵ Conceptualising a hexachord-combination in which *fa* is sung on E and A would naturally result in the use of B-flat. For more on pitch-structures and hexachordal systems see pp. 121-7, esp. p. 124 above.

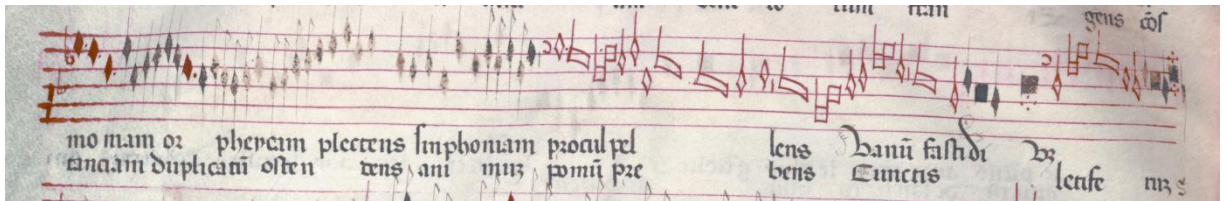
⁵⁵⁶ Josephson's version is not included because Greene's transcription is entirely based on it. At present I am unable to present a more satisfactory or consistent edition myself.

5-2. Rodericus, *Angelorum psalat*, Ch, f. 48v, original, Greene and Young



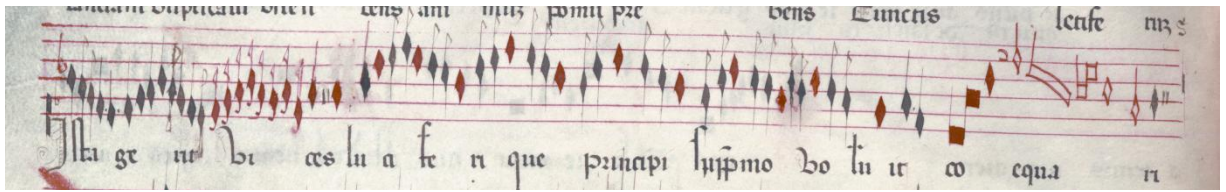
Greene

Young



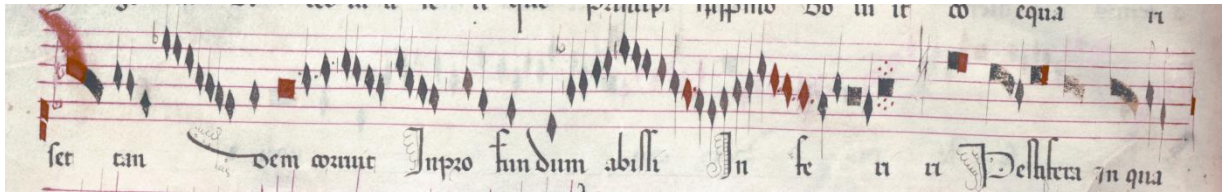
Greene

Young



Greene

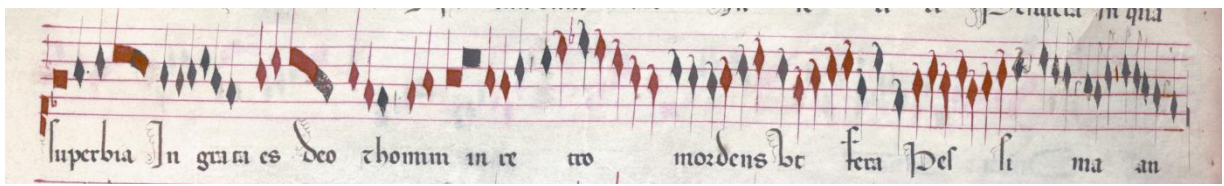
Young



Greene



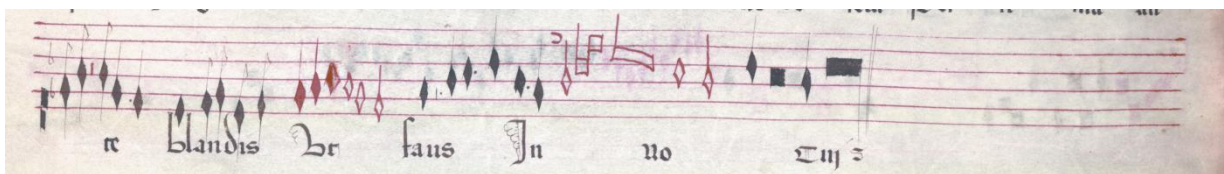
Young



Greene



Young



Greene



Young



Greene

Greene

Young

Young



Greene

Greene

Young

Young



Greene

Greene

Young

Young

5-3. Rodericus, *Angelorum psalat*, Ch, f. 48v, Greene's edition

An--ge--lo--rum psa--lat tri--pu--di--
qui o--pe--rum fu--it i--ni--ci--

- - - - -um, mu--si--co-- - - - - -rum,
- - - - -um de--lic--to-- - - - - -rum,

pan--pens ar--mo--ni--am,
fran--dens Con--stan--ci--am,

or--phe--y--cam plec--tens sin--pho--ni--am,
du--pli--ca--tum os--ten--dens a--ni--mam,

1. pro--cul pel--lens va--num Fas--ti--di--um

2. po--mum pre--bens cunc--tis le--ti--fe--rum.

Is - - - ta ge - - - - rit vi - - - - - ces Lu - -

- ci - - - fe - - - ri qui prin - - -

- ci - - pi sup - - - pre - mo vo - - - lu - - it co - -

e - qua - 4 - - - - ri, set tan - - - - -

- - - - - dem co - ru - it

in pro - - fun - dum a - - bis - - si in - - - -

- - - fer - - - - - ri. Pes - - ti - - - - - fe -

- - ra in qua su - - per-bi - a in -

gra - ta es De - - - - - o et ho - - mi - - ni, re - - tro

mor - - - - - dens ut fe - - ra pes - - - - -

- - - - - si - - - - - ma an - - - - - te blan-dis ut

faus in - - - - - no - - - - - cu - - - i.

5-4. Rodericus, *Angelorum psalat*, Ch, f. 48v, Young's edition

An-ge-lo - - - - rum psa- - - - lat tri- - - - pu - - - di - -
 Qui o-pe - - - - rum fu- - - - it i- - - - ni - - - ci - -

- - - um mu- - - si- - co- - - rum pan- - dens ar- - - -
 - - - um de- - - lic- - to- - - rum fran- - gens con- - - -

mo-ni- - - - - am or - phe- - - - y - - - - cam
 stan-ti- - - - - am du - pli- - - - ca - - - - tum

plec- - - - tens sin- - - - pho- - - - ni - - - -
 os - - - - ten- - - - dens a - - - - ni - - - -

am pro- - - - cul pel- - - - - lens va- - - - - num fas- - -
 mam po- - - - mum pre- - - - -

- ti - di - um bens cunc- - - - - - - - tis le- - - - ti - fe - rum

I - - - - sta ge - rit vi - - - - ces Lu - - ci - - fe -

- - - ri que prin - - ci - - pi sup - - pre - - mo vo - - lu -

it co - - - - e - - qua - - - - ri set tan - - -

- - - - - dem cor - - ru - it

In pro - - fun - dem a - - bi - - si

in - - - - - fe - - - - ri

ri Pes - - - - ti - fe - - ra in qua su - per - -

bi - - - - a in - - gra-ta-es De - - o et ho - - - mi - - ni in

re - - - tro mor - - - dens ut fe - - - ra pes - - -

si - - ma an - - - - - - - - te blan-dis ut faus

in - - - - - - - - no - cu - i.

Both Young and Josephson presented their efforts as a factual catalogue of how this song works, as if settling the matter once and for all.⁵⁵⁷ However, comparing the two editions exposes major differences. Even the more common notational tools such as *dragmae* and red-void coloration are transcribed differently. It is also clear that both versions make many corrections to the original, both in terms of notational signification and pitch. Neither is

⁵⁵⁷ Greene was more cautious, but this is perhaps to be expected as this piece was a minor part of his effort in the complete edition of *Ch*, and the version he used was to all extents and purposes Josephson's.

particularly strict in following perfection rules, nor presents a consistent system of sign-interpretation. The resulting settings are hard to integrate with our expectations of medieval counterpoint, cadence and sentence structure or rhythmic behaviour. Greene's remarks in his critical apparatus and complete avoidance of *ficta* suggestions (even for the final cadence) make plain that he acknowledged this state of affairs, but could not present a better solution. Young and Josephson, on the other hand, each consider their solution to be both close enough to the source and adequate for performance or stylistic analysis.⁵⁵⁸

With such a degree of uncertainty, it is hard to interpret localised phenomena convincingly, or support the harmonic tendencies described by Josephson.⁵⁵⁹ Even after discounting reading errors, inconsistencies in interpretation, and the unremarked changing of a number of not-unclear pitches from the original, one may assign different degrees of stylistic likelihood to occurrences in the different editions. One can debate the likelihood of strong, protracted and consecutive dissonances which appear away from a recognisable cadential progression or underlying harmonic structure. Different interpretations of signs may be more or less likely in late fourteenth century notational grammar, even when more than one solution "works". There is a case to be argued for aesthetic concepts like 'Ockham's Razor' to apply, making the simplest possible interpretation preferable to others. In light of the survey given in the previous chapter, one can argue that such likelihoods should be judged according to the ability to fit them in into an expressive, interpretative context. In this case-study however, the lack of interpretative clarity will mean that only the more formal stylistic characteristics described in the previous chapter will be commented upon, to set a contextual scene in which one may hope a future, convincing transcription may be analysed.

It seems that in this piece, every attempt was made to create a high-register, subtle, but direct statement. The use of a Latin text – and an allegorical, enigmatic text at that – can be seen as a sign of authority and rhetorical accomplishment, on top of the suggestion that it

⁵⁵⁸ Josephson 'Many Roads Lead to Rome', pp. 94-7 uses this song (among others) to comment on various aspects of *Ars subtilior* style as a whole. Young opens his latest recording project, Ferrara Ensemble, 'Corps féminin - l'Avant-garde de Jean Duc de Berry' (*Arcana* A355, 2010) with his version of this piece.

⁵⁵⁹ See Josephson, 'Rodericus', p. 117-9 and 'Many Roads Lead to Rome', pp. 94-5. Young, 'Antiphon', pp. 13-4 goes into more interpretative detail of his technical choices, making them more approachable even when the argument is not accepted. While a few of his observations stand also without accepting his transcription, their formulation using anachronistic word-painting vocabulary serves only to blur their validity (certain note-shapes looking like a bear's bloody teeth, for instance). For a different conceptualisation of the visual expressivity of this and other passages see pp. 225-6 below.

hails from an ecclesiastic surrounding.⁵⁶⁰ The use of the musical ballade form, in spite of the text's own structure which would more naturally fit a motet setting, can also be seen as an attempt to bring into play the expected seriousness and respectability associated with the ballade, above all other strictly secular forms. The seeming disparity between text and musical structure is interesting. It may suggest that either the text had an independent origin, distinct from the musical setting, or that if they were conceived as a pair, whomever came up with it was not particularly adept at secular or vernacular composition.⁵⁶¹

The unusual tonal system chosen, the song's modal behaviour and its range can be said to mirror the choice of language and suggest similar connotations. The complex and extreme key-signature contains echoes of theoretic and intellectual pretensions.⁵⁶² Modal orientation is destabilised by the non-standard combination of sonorities at the beginnings and ends of the form-parts (it is impossible to comment on internal cadences within each section). This can be seen in the choice of *ouvert* and *clos* sonorities, and the tenor's avoidance of the cantus' musical repetition in the refrain. As a result, the song ends with an E-flat sonority, instead of a B-flat, which would have been expected after hearing the *clos* of the A section. The very high range may allude to the medieval literary ideal of vocal and expressive aesthetics, or again, simply be a design to make this song stand out.⁵⁶³

An interesting nod towards clarity and directness (not to mention another mark of difference) can be seen in the decision to score the work for only two voices. The avoidance of a contratenor diminishes the potential friction between the voices, and therefore contributes to the clarity of what would anyway be a complex piece. The clear character-definition of the two voices (one concerned with note-shapes, the other with proportions) would also be diminished by a third voice, as it would have to echo one of the other voices,

⁵⁶⁰ A similar use can be seen in Bartholomeus da Bononia's *Que pena maior*, where the text is more personal, but the worth of the speaker and his detachment from the crowd which he opposes is strengthened by the use of rather convoluted Latin. For more on the use of Latin in secular composition and such works' association with papal contexts see p. 191 above. That Latin was not the only language with which Schismatic popes were referred to in musical settings is attestable in Philipoctus da Caserta's *Par le bon Gedeon*.

⁵⁶¹ This friction is less evident in other Latin ballades. Overall structural, syntactical and phrase-number organisation follows the traditional ballade template, even if some (like Zachara's *Sumite karissimi* or Bartholomeo da Bononia's *Arte psalentes*) eschew the traditional rhyme-scheme. For such text in **ModA**, see Stone, *The Manuscript Modena*, pp. 69-78.

⁵⁶² See the link with theoretical conceptions of the hexachordal system discussed pp. 123-4 above. This holds even if this is the only way in which a three-flat system can be notated using hexachord combinations.

⁵⁶³ For the poetic idea of medieval singing see *Pour haut et liement chanter* (**Cyp**, f. 104v), already mentioned on pp. 50-1 above. On use of extreme ranges and this work's place within the available range see Lefferts, 'Signature-systems', p. 124 and pp. 134-5 above.

bridge the two, or be simpler in character and notation. The very differentiation of the tools used in the two voices suggests an attempt to use every kind of subtlety on offer in one piece. This was probably designed to add to its worth, and by extension the validity of its text. This is taken even further in the repetitive coloration-structure of the tenor, and in the use of the most expansive, most prone to technical manipulation, and least common mensuration.⁵⁶⁴ The (probable) changing meaning of a reduced number of signs in one voice and the (possible) use of different signs to signify the same rhythmic value in the other introduces intellectual mirroring between the two.

The very use of the special note-shapes is telling. Even when temporal interpretations are unclear, the composers' attitude to the use of special note-shapes is visually evident. Special note-shapes tend to appear in separate, self-contained groups, and in certain repeated combinations.⁵⁶⁵ This cataloguing urge (which occurs in many medieval texts) can be seen as an attempt to demonstrate knowledge or skill and therefore authority.

It is possible to interpret this mechanical approach as a sign of unease with the use of such signs, which is not to be found in the works of a composer such as Senleches. One can go even further and say that the extensive use of rhythmic and melodic sequences also in phrases which use more standard note-shapes betrays a general lack of compositional confidence.⁵⁶⁶ Alternatively, and in my opinion more interestingly, the preoccupation with manipulating and repeating smaller melodic and rhythmic formulae can be seen as a central element in the expressive context of the piece. Rather than a lack of confidence, it can be read as showing compositional skill in using one of the popular musical effects of the time, validating the text through constant repetition and emphasis. As this kind of repetition is more commonly found in the religious sphere, its structural use can be seen as an attempt to

⁵⁶⁴ Awareness of large-scale form was important in *Ars subtilior* works, as the popularity of isorhythmic songs attest. See pp. 77 and 120 above. For another large-scale composition in Θ see *Je suis cellui*, p. 237-48 below.

⁵⁶⁵ See for instance the middle of the first line of the cantus where there is a repetition of a grouping comprising of a *minima*; half red, a half red-hollow *semibrevis*; a tailed *dragma*; a red *semibrevis*, and a *minima* rest enclosed between two dots. Another group is the set of red and black upper-tailed *semibreves-maiores* in the second half of the fifth line of the cantus.

⁵⁶⁶ See for instance the long section of red *semibrevis* and two flagged *dragmae* in the middle of the third line of the cantus, or the groups of a *minima* rest followed by two *minime*, a *semibrevis* and other *minima* in the next line. The tenor also participates in this game – see the rhythmic unit of two *minime* followed by two *dragmae* in its second line.

synthesise the religious and secular styles in a work which aims to bridge both worlds and operate in the seam between them.⁵⁶⁷

More interestingly, it is possible to view the visual impact of different notational choices on a par with other compositional techniques in the creation of specific structural expression and text-interpretations. Just as it is possible to read melodic high points and low points as markers of important locations in the text, emphasis can be given to words set to music which is characterised visually. The lowest note of the cantus melody (middle C) marks out the words ‘armoniam’, ‘pellens vanum’, ‘constanciam’, ‘prebens cunctis’, ‘ista gerit’, ‘coequari’, ‘profundum’, and ‘blandis’, which can be put together to form a narrative such as ‘harmony repels vanity, constancy is offered to all. By trying to usurp power, she betrayed her pretentious, flattering lowliness’. Melodic highpoints (E-flat a tenth higher, marked out further by the addition of an inflection before each appearance), bring together ‘tandem’, ‘abissi’, and ‘retro’, offering ‘[you will] end up back in Hell’. In a similar vein, one can put together areas set with red-hollow notation:⁵⁶⁸ ‘procul pellens vanum fastidium’, ‘pomum prebens cunctis letiferum’, ‘coequari’, ‘ut’, and ‘innocui’. With minor readjustment, these snippets can be read, ‘as if innocent, equating the offering of a poisoned apple with driving away empty indifference’. Furthermore, the two most visually striking sections of the cantus (the rhythmic sequences discussed above in the middle of the third and fifth line) mark out ‘luciferi que principi suppremo voluit’ and ‘retro mordens ut fera pessima’, meaning ‘it was Lucifer who wanted to be the supreme prince’ and ‘biting from behind like a wild beast’ respectively. The second of these text-lines is further highlighted by being copied beside the tenor incipit. It is therefore possible to construct a variety of competing narratives, all of which strengthen the central ideas of betrayal and retribution that characterises the text as a whole. Undoubtedly, a trained analytic ear would be able to discern a number of these narratives also in performance, as it is likely that the visual effects carry audible

⁵⁶⁷ The appearance of a short isorhythmic effect (end of the fifth line and beginning of the sixth line of the cantus) strengthens this idea. A three-note rhythmic structure (flagged *dragma*, *minima*, flagged *dragma*) repeats on a four note melodic unit (three notes and a rest) which is in itself sequential, repeating a third lower after nine notes. This reading counts on the second flagged *dragma* in the first rhythmic grouping of the repetition having lost its intended flag, bringing in another level of likelihoods, namely the kind of correction necessary. In this instance, this correction is supported by the extensive use of sequencing and repetition in this voice, and the fact that otherwise this would be the only lone-standing *dragma* in the piece. The many erasures in this song may hint that it was problematic already for the original scribe, and that while some re-editing was undertaken, the appearance of other, uncorrected problems is not out of the question. For a list of erasures see Young, ‘Antiphon’, p. 16.

⁵⁶⁸ For another case of this device being used for visual expression see *O bonne douce Franse* pp. 187-8 above.

consequences in performance.⁵⁶⁹ Still, the heightened visuality of their notation strengthens their importance, and also allows the song to be meaningful away from performance as a layered work of art.

The combination of all the authority-implying, difference-marking and ability-signifying elements described above, come together as an attempt to create a ‘best of the best’ song in all possible aspects. Even without having a score with which to analyse smaller-scale expressivity, the assignation of expressive qualities to compositional choices enables the reader to conceive of this song as a work which takes every care to attract attention to its text and confer legitimacy and authority on its message. Such sentiments chime in perfectly with both text interpretations suggested above, and the conception of this piece as a propaganda tool in the most pressing argument of the day – namely, the Great Schism.

Amour m’a le cuer mis

A number of sections of Antonello da Caserta’s *Amour m’a le cuer mis* have already been used as examples in the previous chapter, as this song contains many of the various *Ars subtilior* techniques surveyed.⁵⁷⁰ Here, however, we are concerned not with the independent appearance of each feature and its details, but with the way they are put together to form a structured whole.

This ballade, uniquely transmitted in **ModA** (ff. 32v-33), was chosen to represent the “higher-middle-range” of the *Ars subtilior* corpus. This group includes extended songs which use a combination of *Ars subtilior* techniques as part of their musical language, but without reaching (or indeed aiming for) extreme usage or any exceptional singularity. Much of the repertoire can be put into this category, including many works by Antonello and Philipoctus da Caserta, Solage, Trebor, and Matteo da Perugia among others, as well as a host of anonymous compositions.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁹ See Young’s interpretation of the ‘retro mordens’ passage for a counter-example.

⁵⁷⁰ See ex. 4-20, 4-22, 4-55 and 4-79 and surrounding discussions above.

⁵⁷¹ Just one such song is *Medee fu*. As examples of the reverse, Zachara da Teramo and Johannes Ciconia can be said to have used *Ars subtilior* techniques specifically to create extreme and singular compositions. None of this is of course qualitative. For their use of this style see p. 299 below.

ModA contains only one strophe for this ballade (figure 5-5), which is as typical an *Amour courtois* text as one can wish for, using no special vocabulary or grammar, and incorporating no acrostic or other structural complication.

5-5. Anotnello da Caserta, *Amour m'a le cuer mis* – text and translation⁵⁷²

<p>Amour m'a le cuer mis en tel martire que mayntes fois le jour mon corps tressue, et souvent fois pense et souvent sospire, souvent me cangie la colour et se mue, en tel estat ma vie est tenue; pour ce n'est il pas del tout a sejour <i>celli qui est surpris de fin amour.</i></p>	<p>Love so torments my heart that many times a day my body is covered in sweat and often am I lost in thought and often I sigh, often my face changes its hue and alters; in this state my life is trapped; for he knows no true peace <i>who is captured by Courtly Love.</i></p>
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While the music contains some complex syncopation, three kinds of coloration, and the proportions *dupla*, two kinds of *sesquialtera* and *sesquitertia*, transcribing it is relatively straightforward. The unusual use of fractions for proportional signification in the cantus is self-explanatory and does not require a canon instruction.⁵⁷³ Context can explain the three different ways in which the simultaneous *sesquitertia* section is shown in the three voices. The cantus incorporates a number of proportional changes signified by the aforementioned fractions, so it made sense to carry on with the system for this proportion. The tenor only changes for short stretches and progresses relatively slowly and regularly, making it easier to visually comprehend the entire proportional section. This, combined with the unsurprising inverse interpretation of red *semibreves* in O, can perhaps explain why relatively standard shapes were used, even if not with their most common meaning. The contratenor has a longer proportional section than the tenor and moves more quickly, which requires a clearer sign of separation from its surroundings, and one which does not require the ability to visualise the entire section. Red-hollow notation answers all these needs. Stone remarks that even the erasures in the copying of this work were done in order to ease its reading and avoid ambiguity.⁵⁷⁴ I would go further and say also that the erasure in the cantus (substituting the original red with black-hollow to signify *sesquialtera* on the *semibrevis* level in O) has a

⁵⁷² I would like to thank Fabrice Fitch and Marc Lewon for their help with the translation of this text.

⁵⁷³ Busse-Berger suggests that this technique is “probably found for the first time” in this song. Her cautious tone is understandable, as it appears also in the two compositions by Cordier added to **Ch** and in a number of songs in **Cyp**. See Anna Maria Busse-Berger, ‘The Origin and Early History of Proportion Signs’, *JAMS*, xli (autumn, 1988), pp. 403-33, esp. p. 403. This usage seems to be a practical reaction to the problem of a lack of standardisation in the use of proportion signs discussed p. 170 above. Goscalch uses similar fractions in his *En nul estat* (**Ch**, f. 39v), but for signifying mensuration change rather than proportion.

⁵⁷⁴ See Stone, *Writing Rhythm*, p. 111-2.

similar origin. Without the erasure, red would have to signify shortening in the cantus and lengthening in the tenor. The scribe clearly decided that an unusual non-proportional interpretation of coloration is more understandable than a proportional one, and changed the reading of the cantus to accommodate the use in the tenor.

As the transcription in example 5-6 below shows, the contratenor still contains a few errors: ‘a)’ marks where an E is written as a *semibrevis* in the manuscript, ‘b)’ marks the location of an F-D c.o.p ligature in the source. All these notes are transcribed as *minime*. All four locations are easily rectified through context or by examining the musical rhyme in the refrain.⁵⁷⁵ The transcription uses ‘r.’ to indicate red coloration, ‘r.h.’ to indicate red-hollow coloration, and ‘b.h.’ to show black-hollow coloration. All three last until the appearance of an ‘*’.

The transcription is then presented a second time, condensed onto a single page in order to make it easier to form an overall impression of the song. In this version, dissonant melodic and harmonic behaviour, the location of proportions, syncopations, imitations, and cadences are highlighted. This graphic representation of the techniques found in the song make it immediately clear that no bar passes without Antonello using some kind of typically *Ars subtilior* effect. This in itself suggests that the techniques involved were considered (at least by him) essential in composing such an extended song as this one (performance of this one strophe takes up to four minutes). Furthermore, it quickly becomes evident that his use of *Ars subtilior* techniques is carefully planned, following repeating patterns, manipulated each time to form expectations only to frustrate them later, perhaps matching the mood of the text. The details of these expectations, as well as an account of the structural organisation of the different compositional techniques used, follow the two editions.

⁵⁷⁵ The replacement of two *minime* by a c.o.p. ligature in the *clos* cadence of the A part is interesting, as the necessary visual manipulation of what appears in the source is substantial. This may act as a note of caution against over-reliance on the editorial guidelines I proposed on p. 201 above.

5-6. Antonello da Caserta, *Amour m'a le cuer mis* (ModA, ff. 32v-33)

1. A - - mour m'a le cuer mis en
 2. Et sou - vent fois pense et sou -

tel mar-ti - re Que
 -vent sos-pi - re Sou - - -

4
 2

0
 que mayn-tes fois le jour mon corps tres-su -
 vent me can - gie la co - lour et se mu -

a) a)

9

6

3

3

3

3

3

3

1. 3 3

2. 3 3

-e:

-e:

1. 2.

b)

3. En tel es-tat ma vi - - e est te-nu -

e Pour ce n'est il pas del

8

6

tout a

r. *

r. *

r.h. *

0

se - - - jour

b.h. 3 3 3 # *

Cel - li qui est sour- - -

- - pris de fin

9 6 3 3 3

3 3 3

A - - - mour.

1. A
2. Et

mour - m'a le e mis en sou -
sou - ven fois pense et sou -

re
Que
Sou

mar-ti re
vent sos-ti re

layn-tes fois le jour mon corps tres-su -
me can-gie la la co - lour et se mu -

Cel - li qui est sour -
- pris de fin

3. En tel es-tat ma vi - e est te-nu -
our.

re Pour ce n'est li pas del
tout a r. r. g.

Legend:

- Dissonances (dashes mark out first consonant phrase)
- Complex syncopation
- Cadences (dashes signifying unfulfilled cadential progressions, letters showing tonal area)
- Proportions (different shades of green for each one)
- Range highpoints
- Imitative entrances, upbeat motif

The overall harmonic language of this song is remarkably consonant and follows normal cadence locations. While it is not the *finalis* D sonority which opens the piece, a beginning on A in a D Dorian composition can hardly be seen as exceptional. The degree of harmonic control is seen in the setting of the first line of text (marked out with a red dash above), which, while containing some complex syncopation, involves only three very short and passing dissonances in the lower voices. Two of these are part of the cadential formula at the line's end, where harmonic friction is expected. Most of the song follows the expectation created by this consonant beginning, with a relatively low degree of harmonic friction inserted in the proportional sections. Still, there are important exceptions, and harmonic and melodic dissonance will have an important structural role to play further on as surprising inflections destabilise what would otherwise be normal sonorities.

The setting of the first line of text is propelled by the use of syncopation in the cantus. This technique offers no resting point for the voice, but is not so extravagant as to attract attention away from the text. Four *breves* of syncopation culminate with an avoided E cadence (by the cantus) which forces the music on into two D cadences (the first avoided by the tenor and contratenor) establishing the modality of the song. Rather than progressing straight on into the next line of text, the form-part is extended by the insertion of a long melisma on the first syllable of the next line, thus separating the two. To keep the ear interested throughout this long insertion, we are introduced to the first proportion in the piece, coupled with a simultaneous ascent in the range used in all three voices. The cantus attempts a (externally syncopated) cadence on G which is ignored by the other voices the first time, but completed when reiterated. On the way we are introduced to some tension-generating *ficta*, with the tenor playing a B-flat after a protracted B in the cantus, and the cantus retaliating with an F-sharp while the tenor is still holding a B-flat. The G cadence should, by right, have signalled the end of the melisma, so in order to extend it further a new proportion has to be introduced, leading the listener back to a D cadence and the continuation of the text. Even before arriving at the second line of text we have been introduced to most of the main building-blocks of this song and to their basic constellations: texted syncopated sections followed by melismatic proportional ones, with the avoidance and reiteration of cadences and the insertion of harmonic tension on a consonant backdrop playing an important part. Still, it is not yet clear what role will be played by each technique in the development of the song,

and one important motif is still missing. Both these elements receive due attention in the setting of the second line of text.

Following the lead of the song's beginning, another text-carrying syncopated passage is presented, creating a musical association between the two texted sections. This spills into a new idea: quick, successive entrances incorporating all voices and using similar rhythmic materials. The build-up this creates (heightened by two more avoided cadences on E and F) leads on to the expected proportional melisma. At this point there is a danger of sliding into a repetitive comfort-zone of clearly separated sections and sounds. In order to avoid this and keep the audience interested, Antonello not only establishes the newly proposed F sonority with a polyphonic cadential progression, but goes on to shatter the sound-expectation by using an inflection to produce an augmented rather than a pure fifth at the cadence location. With this shock-tactic, Antonello both signals the up-and-coming end of the form part and creates enough tension to propel the music on until the final cadence arrives.

The modal location of the cantus in the *ouvert* cadence is not particularly surprising, but the sonority created avoids the more usual perfection, and the ensuing leading sonority does not direct the ear to any recognisable modal centre.⁵⁷⁶ Instead, it introduces a sonority which is foreign to the mode, leaving the listener with an unresolved, unfulfilled feeling. The first full cadence to appear is on the seventh *brevis* of the repetition (after 20 *breves* without a full cadence if one also counts the end of the first A section), binding together the second and third line of text following the poem's syntax. The *clos* ending starts with the same note-combination as the *ouvert*, but without the double inflection, immediately suggesting a change of direction which duly arrives with the cadence on the next *brevis*. By this time the repeated sentence structure has been heard four times and created an expectation for the music to follow.

The setting of the two text-lines of the B section break the habit, as the expected musical structure of the fifth line is spliced together with the sixth. The sixth line of text exactly follows the form of the second (and fourth) line in the A part: a syncopated section followed by motivic imitation which leads to a proportion. This leads the listener to associate the remaining, non-proportional melisma of the B part with the section's first text-line, which has

⁵⁷⁶ See ex. 4-22 above.

no appended melisma of its own. This structural syncopation attracts attention to these two lines of text, which contain the core ideas of this poem – the lover’s entrapment and never-ending search for peace or solace. Further attention is attracted to the beginning of the B part by the use of new techniques and materials. The first five *breves* connect the B part to the end of the A part by referring to the harmonic surprise which was so prominent in that section’s end. The new harmonic surprise (a shift from a c-sharp/e/g-sharp leading sonority to a wholly unexpected F/c/c’ perfection, further undermined by the contratenor sounding its lowest note) is combined with melodic surprises. Both cantus and contratenor use unusual melodic progressions including a major seventh, diminished fourth, and augmented fourths and a fifth. The transition from the second *brevis* to the third (where the cantus leaps a diminished fourth upwards and the contratenor an augmented fifth downwards) is further emphasised by a move from the melodic highpoint of the tenor to the melodic highpoint of the cantus. It is also marked by the first appearance of *semiminime* in this song’s cantus (indistinguishable in transcription from the quick notes in the A section, which were *minime* written in *dupla* proportion). The tension created by these surprises is resolved by a double cadence on A (the tenor and contratenor aborting the first attempt), to which no melisma is appended. Instead, the sixth line of text is reached immediately, complete with the expected sentence structure the listener has grown accustomed to in the A section. To avoid too mechanical a repetition, Antonello not only incorporates a new proportion, but creates a new effect by involving all voices in the change. This simple device is perhaps the most audibly clear effect in the piece (at least from a modern listener’s point of view), demonstrating that even within the *Ars subtilior*, effectiveness does not necessarily rely on complication. The *sesquitertia* section is further characterised by being the only part of the song to contain a quick succession of fulfilled cadences. The remainder of the melisma releases the accumulated tension with a less structured collection of recognised effects, making the transition from D to the expected *ouvert* cadence on E at the end of the section. A second appearance of *semiminime* strengthens the link of this melisma with the beginning of the B section.⁵⁷⁷ While constantly referring back to methods and expectations created in the A section, the B part reconfigures them in a more eventful manner, creating a link with the preceding material but assigning greater importance to the B section’s text.

⁵⁷⁷ The use of *semiminime* instead of proportion in both these sections may be practical rather than structural, as only a short sequence appears each time (see parallels in the discussion of *sesquitertia* pp. 227-8 above). Be that as it may, both the resulting visual input and the short, ornamental melodic gestures (rather than a structural proportional change) create visually discernable and musically audible links between the two lines.

It is expected that the refrain will bring together all the musical and technical ideas presented in the song. Antonello duly obliges, but surprises the listener with the order and content of his refrain. From a beginning on a relatively weak G the listener is led directly into another strong *ficta* dissonance (F/A/f-sharp) which heralds the arrival of yet another kind of proportion. The immediacy of these techniques' arrival goes against all the expectations created thus far in the song. The G cadence at the end of the proportion is avoided by the lower voices, leading instead into a short imitative section, punctuated by another two less strong *ficta* dissonances – G/B-flat/e and F/A/c-sharp. As with all previous *ficta* clashes, it is again the role of the contratenor to add the offending inflection, or not to follow the cadential expectation. The subsequent D cadence is once more aborted, leading on to another syncopated section, highlighting the words “de fin (amour)” and the courtly character of the love dealt with in the text, and creating the expectation for a return to the musical sentence structure established in the A section to wind down the song. This expectation is fulfilled as a G cadence (showing that there is still some way to go before arriving at the *finalis*) is followed by a longer imitative section which leads through avoided cadences on E and D towards F, where the striking inflected F/c-sharp/f cadence from the A section is repeated, heralding the expected musical rhyme and *clos* cadence. In a last nod towards the role of *ficta* and dissonance in the ambiguities of this work, the location of the *ouvert* cadence in the repetition is inflected only in the cantus, creating another F/A/c-sharp clash before the final cadence.

The analysis above is far from exhaustive. Nevertheless, it should be enough to demonstrate that the use of each *Ars subtilior* technique in this song is controlled and structural. *Ars subtilior* devices are combined in order to maintain longer musical sentences, and create large-scale expectation which can then be manipulated as the work develops, coming together to form an expressive language. None of the uses of proportion, syncopation or notation are in any way extreme in this song. While the sonorities used are at times unusual, the dissonances operate within the realm of *ficta* and can therefore be understood (without diminishing from their structural and audible importance) as separate from the underlying consonant counterpoint. This is a mature *Ars subtilior* piece which uses stylistic features as part of a coherent musical language. The language itself is based on surprise, exceeding expectation and attracting attention through the unusual. This does not necessarily mean though that each work which uses it aims to be exceptional or extreme. As much

attention is given to musical extremities or contextualising dedications, it is important for us to remember that such occurrences have to be supported by an understandable mainstream in order to be meaningful.

Je suis cellui

Je suis cellui is a three-voiced ballade uniquely and anonymously transmitted in **Paris**.⁵⁷⁸ Its three voices operate in an unmarked Θ , but otherwise follow normative usage as regards range and notation.⁵⁷⁹ Indeed, the only notational difficulties arise from the damaged state of the fragment and the scribes' insistence on not using coloration (even though the musical *hemiola* effect is used often). No special note-shapes, mensuration or proportion signs appear.⁵⁸⁰

Everist suggests the source to be northern-French, but this does not shed much light on the origins of our particular piece. The text does not offer any concrete clues either, apart from a degree of literary awareness.⁵⁸¹ This may serve to indicate only a higher likelihood that it originated in an intellectually central context rather than a peripheral one. Musical use of imitative motifs link this piece to *Pictagoras*, but again, the coupling of these two pieces in this source may be rather due to this similarity than indicative of a common origin.

⁵⁷⁸ This source is a miscellaneous collection put together in 1918, containing 166 paper leaves. The materials in it range from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, and include accounts, correspondences of Charles VII and Louis de Gravile, Saints' lives, a commentary, a contract, a fragmentary treatise on baptism, and other texts. It ends with 13 musical folios containing fragments from four different sources. Ff. 159-166v contain mid-fifteenth-century sacred music, ff. 158-158v contain two early fourteenth-century motets, and ff. 157-157v contain a Gloria and a Credo, also from the fourteenth century. Ff. 153-156v are of interest here. These four leaves form two couples. In each couple one page should be placed above the other in order to reconstruct the original bifolio, which were apparently a part of a fourteenth-century source of secular polyphony in folio format. One leaf is constructed by placing f. 156 above f. 154 and contains the end of the tenor of Suzoy's *Pictagoras*, *Jabol et Orpheus* and *Je suis cellui* spread over both its sides, the other leaf is constructed by placing f. 153v above f. 155 and contains the cantus and the beginning of the tenor of *Pictagoras* on one side and a unique but sadly badly damaged song (*Ay mare*) on the other. See Everist, 'A New Source', pp. 284-7.

⁵⁷⁹ A small irregularity involves the contratenor which tends to move below the tenor for unusually long stretches of the song. See, for example, the setting of the first line of text in the transcription in ex. 5-8 below.

⁵⁸⁰ It seems to be the scribe's habit to use the most traditional signs possible. This is also evident in *Ay mare*, where it is the traditional mensuration-signs and coloration which are used to express complicated proportions (with the aid of a canon instruction), rather than numerals or other signs. Contrary to Everist's assertion, normal use of coloration does not appear. Hollow notes do appear in both other songs with a *duplasesquitercia* outcome (8:3 proportion in both cases, but as the context is different and a canon instruction is used, this is in no way a standardised meaning in this source). This can also be seen as a comment on the act of using special note-shapes, rather than their musical results, as a determinant of *Ars subtilior* style.

⁵⁸¹ See figure 5-7 below.

The structure and themes of this text follow the courtly mainstream (ex. 5-7), but the idea of taking comfort in literature, the rather convoluted, Latin-like grammar, and the use of some unusual vocabulary distinguishes it from a the kind of generic text we encountered in Antonello's song.

5-7. *Je suis cellui* – text and translation⁵⁸²

<p>Je suis cellui qui gist en ytargie e [n'estoi]t mort contre droit de nature quant ma dame de moy sest esloignye e [mourir] ne puis quan essperis dure s[e je me] suis donques en aventu[re] [et je souffre cent milles peines dures] pour son amour dont Ne me puis setrayre sy pri amors quil cy vueille retrayre.</p> <p>Jay prins confort en cil qui versefie disant que nulz selon droite escribture ne doit jouir de de doucour resiouie Sainsois il na gouste de doulour dure Sy espoir donc que lamour france et pure de ma dame pour qui tel ma(a)l jendure Me guarira sans p me fere plus trayre Sy pry amours etc.</p>	<p>I am he whose lies lethrgic, and [was not] dead – contrary to nature's rules – when my lady departed from me, and can not [die] while my spirit lasts. [So I find myself] in such danger [and suffer a hundred thousand harsh pains] for her love, from which I can not retire. Thus I pray Love that he may go away.</p> <p>I have taken comfort in him who versifies, saying that none – following true scripture – may enjoy the sweetness of joy unless he had already endured dire pain. So I hope that the frank and pure love of my lady, for whom I endure this malady, will heals me, without letting me linger. Thus I pray Love that he may return.</p>
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The form used is rather expansive, with a large number of long lines.⁵⁸³ This preoccupation with size is mirrored not only in the mensuration chosen, but also in the length of the setting and the formal separation between the B section and the refrain.⁵⁸⁴ One structural anomaly is the lack of musical rhyme between the *clos* cadence of the A section and the end of the refrain, a stylistic trait which appears in around 90% of the ballades of the repertoire, as well as some virelais.⁵⁸⁵ A further scribal anomaly consists of the copying of

⁵⁸² I would like to thank Els Janssens, Nicoletta Gossen, Emma Cayley and Jacques Boogaart for their help with completing, transcribing and translating this text. The reading of the first verse is still very uncertain, and should remain tentative. For example, many readers (including Everist, 'A New Source', p. 291) interpret the last word of the first line of this song as 'partargie' rather than 'ytargie', even though it is not unclear in the source, and is copied also in the tenor ascription on the reverse.

⁵⁸³ Many musical settings of such long forms use a repeating B section, see Machaut's *Phyton le mervilleus* or the anonymous *Pour haut et liement chanter* (Cyp, f. 104v).

⁵⁸⁴ Everist marks it out as the longest surviving work in Θ , transcribed over 65 9/8 bars, with Philipoctus da Caserta's *En remirant vo douce pourtraiture*, (Ch, f. 57) being its closest rival with a transcription lasting 49 *brevis*-long bars. A comparison of songs' length arranged according to whether a formal separation exists between the B section and refrain can be found in Plumley, *The Grammar*, pp. 242-3.

⁵⁸⁵ See, for example, Bartholomeus da Bononia's *Que pena maior*.

this work on both sides of a single leaf. This seems to have occurred as a space-filling measure after the contratenor of *Pictagoras* became unavailable.⁵⁸⁶

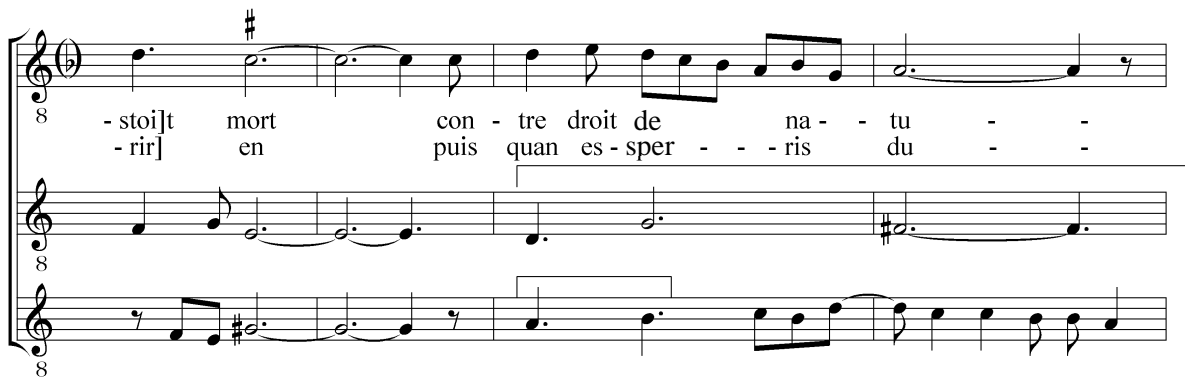
In the transcription presented as ex. 5-8 below, accidentals are written in their original location in the manuscript. Those appearing at the beginning of a line are interpreted as part of a key signature, apart from the B-flat heading the contratenor's third line which appears immediately before the note it affects. Two further flats in the tenor, which appear towards the end of its second and third line, are also taken as key-signature indicators and are shown below with parentheses. This unusual reading was taken following the overall use of accidentals in this song. All other local *ficta* indications appear immediately before the notes they affect, even written on top of other notes when the note affected is in the middle of a ligature.⁵⁸⁷ In the case of the first E-flat sign in the tenor, no E appears between it and the end of the line. In order to make sense of this situation, I suggest that these two signs are key signatures wrongly moved from the beginning of a line to their current location during the song's copying. This was perhaps due to an attempt to save space when approaching the end of the page. Such errors are more likely to happen when an unusual copying procedure is used (as is the case here). The two flat signs appear in similar positions in both tenor lines, leaving roughly a staff's-worth of music between them, if it is accepted that the exemplar had a similar staff-length to font-size ratio. Small notes in this transcription indicate my insertions to fill the lacunae in the manuscript. Roman numerals represent new lines in the original, and their number in relation to each voice.

⁵⁸⁶ This arrangement is contrary to that suggested by Everist, but is supported by the crossed out 'contratenor' ascription for the empty staff that separates *Pictagoras*'s tenor and the continuation of *Je suis cellui*, as well as the re-ascription of the *Je suis cellui* tenor (with the complete first line of text) but not of that of *Pictagoras*. It seems to me that *Pictagoras* was prepared as a three part song in normal consecutive copying on a single opening, and that something happened in the course of the copying for the scribe to abandon its third voice and change the planned layout of the next piece. I cannot offer an explanation as to why a shorter piece was not copied into the remaining space and the remainder of *Je suis cellui* copied on the next verso as planned. Everist's explanation has *Je suis cellui* planned in this impractical way, with the recto side of the following opening reserved for *Pictagoras* and the scribe jumping back to the top of the facing verso in order to finish copying its tenor. If this was the case I would expect the remainder of *Je suis cellui* to appear at the top of the verso side, and the end of the tenor of *Pictagoras* below it. I find that the convolutions and impracticalities of this explanation make it less likely, both from the musical and the scribal points of view.

⁵⁸⁷ This happens at the end of the tenor's first line.

5-8. *Je suis celui*, Paris, ff. 154 & 156-154v & 156v

I
 le
 Quant
 I
 I
 suis cel - - -
 ma da - - -
 - lui qui gist en y - tar - gi - e
 - me de moy s'est es - loi - gny - e
 II
 e [n'e - - -
 e [mou - - -
 II



- stoit] mort con - tre droit de na - - tu - -
- rir] en puis quan es - sper - - - ris du - -



- - - - - re III S[e



je III



me] suis don-ques en a-ven - tu - - - -

8 IV - - - - - [re et je souf- -

8 - fre cent mil-les pei-nes du - - res]

8 V Pour son a-mour dont Ne me puis s'et - ray - - - -

8 - - - - - re Sy

pris a - mors VI qu'il cy vuei - lle re - tray -

re

Apart from its expansive size, the harmonic behaviour and changing *ficta* attract the most attention in this song. While facing a number of challenges, the modal centre of the ballade remains a clear and relatively stable C. Nevertheless, the tonal system around the C centre is far from straightforward.⁵⁸⁸ All voices acquire or lose (if not both) structural accidentals, climaxing in a marked flattening of modal orientation towards the end of the piece. Only the B section has a substantial section in which a normal key-signature combination is kept; it starts without any flats in the signature and ends with two flats for the lower voices and one for the cantus (even here the B-flat in the tenor is only implied). Throughout the rest of the song, every kind of complicated combination discussed on pp. 123-4 above occurs. An

⁵⁸⁸ For similar cases in C pieces, see p. 126 above and transcriptions of Machaut's *De petit peu* in ex. 5-12 and 5-13 below. The tendency to darken rather than to brighten modal contexts as songs develop is discussed in Plumley, *The Grammar*, pp. 17-20.

inverse relationship between the voices is found in the setting of the second line of text where the cantus sports a flat while the lower voices do not. An extended relationship is found in the refrain where the lower voices operate with two flats while the cantus has none. An ambiguous combination can be observed in the beginning of the piece (among other places) where the contratenor has a flatter key-signature than the tenor.

Interestingly, this structural game is not always audible, as a lot of the local inflections (or *ficta* suggested on the basis of harmonic alignment, melodic gestures or cadential progression) do not follow the context suggested by the structural changes. The initial B-flat signature in the contratenor, for example, should probably not apply to the first B to appear, since it is preceded by a G-sharp. One may choose not to apply it to the third B either if a *ficta* clash between tenor and contratenor is to be avoided. This leaves one quick B-flat at the end of the first melisma as potentially the only audible effect of this sign. Furthermore, written changes in the key signature may come a long time before they even have a chance to affect the sounding music. The change in the tenor to E-flat in the B section for example, appears more than nine full *breves* before the next E appears, which may well have been inflected anyway in practice as it is a part of a plagal cadence to D. This hints that the structural changes in the key-signature may have an expressive quality and are not purely functional.

The constant change in tonal system seems to mirror the theme of change in the text, manifesting itself in the lady's distancing, the prayer in the refrain for Love or Hope to go away, and the lover's seemingly constant change of heart on whether he wants to be comforted and hopeful or not. The 'unnatural' system used for the setting of the first line of text (and perhaps also those used in the rest of the piece) may refer to the unnatural between-life-and-death state of the lover as described in that line, or at least attract attention to the text. Even the initially surprising range of the contratenor can be seen as a manipulation of the standard setting technique to suggest that something is amiss with the natural order of things.

Other stylistic features point in a similar direction: while much of the melodic material is relatively standard, a number of strange leaps and written-out or implied chromaticism attract

the listener's attention and prevents coherent expectations to be formed.⁵⁸⁹ Unusual characteristics of the roles of different voices further add to this effect.⁵⁹⁰ The harmonic element is central in creating the tortured and unnatural atmosphere required by the text. While no alternative is proposed for C as the central sonority (perhaps mirroring the refusal to fundamentally change the speakers' state of affairs), it is only arrived at with a strong cadence three times throughout this long piece. Two of these arrivals are at the *clos* ending and the final cadence.⁵⁹¹ The opening C sonority and the cadence at the end of the first line of text are both destabilised by ensuing protracted leading sonorities to D (E/G-sharp/C-sharp both times) two or three *breves* later. Destabilising techniques are also used for the central counter-sonority D and other arrivals throughout the piece. The first full cadence to D appears in a very weak position (end of *brevis* four), and the three protracted D-related sonorities in the first 11 *breves* are all destabilised, through the insertion of imperfect consonances (*brevis* 6), the swapping of voice-roles (*brevis* 8), or both (*breves* 10-11, with the addition of movement in the tenor). The next protracted sonority unfolds in such a way as to make it progressively more ambiguous (G→B→E on the setting of 'qui'). Harmonic richness seems to be a general preoccupation, with imperfections inserted in many places where a perfection could have been expected. Clear examples are the first and final sonorities of the B section and the beginning of the refrain. Sharps are added contrary to the melodic progression and cadential goal of the tenor's *ouvert*, or just before a darkening of the harmonic context (setting of 'aventure' and 'retrayre' in the cantus), attracting additional attention to these locations. The number of dissonances is increased to mark the beginning of the refrain, or to emphasise 'contre droit de nature' by composing 'against the rules' (*breves* 23-24).⁵⁹² The use of imitation and its link with *Pictagoras* (setting of 'donques en aventure', the participation of all the voices is fuller here than in Suzoy's song), as well as the avoidance of special notational effects has already been mentioned above (p. 237).

⁵⁸⁹ See, for example, the written-in inflection in the first melisma in the cantus and contratenor, the *facta* harmonically implied at the beginning of the last melisma, and the augmented fifth leap required of the contratenor in the transition between the B part and refrain. Other similar examples occur.

⁵⁹⁰ See, for example, the setting of the first three words, where the contratenor provides the basis for most sonorities while the tenor inserts imperfections, sometimes (the setting of 'cellui') rising above the cantus. The notable exception here is the eighth *brevis*, where the tenor gives the basis of the perfection, but it is the contratenor which sounds the octave and offers the most melodic line above the cantus, which sounds the fifth.

⁵⁹¹ The third arrival happens in the melisma ending the setting of the first line of text, establishing the sonority as central for the song, but even here it is weakened by the swapping of voice-roles between cantus and contratenor described in the previous footnote.

⁵⁹² On the understanding of such occurrences without resorting to a word-painting aesthetic, see pp. 159-60, 225-6 and 261-2, but esp. pp. 246-7 below.

Rhythmically, this song is not particularly complex. Most syncopation remains within the *brevis* unit, but longer and compound syncopations do occur (foremost in the setting of ‘aventure’). External syncopation is used in a number of locations throughout the piece, an example appearing in the first melisma. Further blurring is caused by rhythmic imperfection of longer units from both sides, as occurs at the final cadence of the B section. It seems that the composer was more interested in contrasting movement with stasis, used simultaneously to support the extended structure and to express the disjointed and artificial state of affairs described in the text. Melodic and rhythmic sequencing is also widely used in combination with the stricter imitation, appearing in practically every melisma in the song. This gives the composer another tool in propelling the song forward through the long lines of this expansive setting.

No proportional relationships are used. The text setting, when it can be ascertained, seems to follow the standard procedure of syllabic declamation with an extensive melisma on the first and last syllables of every line of text. The syllabic sections, though, are at times very protracted (as in the first line of text). Exceptions occur in the second line of text as well as the penultimate line and the refrain. The exceptions attract attention to the unnatural state of affairs described in the second line, coupling it with the impossible nature of the speaker’s love described in the penultimate line, and finally with the lover’s prayer in the refrain. As seen in the first two case studies, the process of setting up and diverging from expectation marks out the most important elements of the text, even when taking into account the lacunae in this fragment and its obscuring of part of the original underlay.

Some of the effects described above come close to sounding like word-painting. I would suggest that a different frame of mind is in operation here, one which bridges the medieval technique of signification and the later word-painting aesthetic. I believe that the conceptual mode of operation here is twofold. Firstly, the general structural and systematic organisation of a work mirrors or interprets the tone or overall meaning of the text. Secondly, a more direct and specific interpretational and expressive structure is created by attracting the attention of both ear and eye to specific locations within the setting of the text which are highlighted as important. Attention can be attracted by the avoidance of structural or local expectations, by dissonance, or by the insertion of an *Ars subtilior* device such as syncopation, proportion, or a visual cue. That the composer chose to use a device appropriate

to the meaning of the text (as in the dissonances on ‘contre droit de nature’) can then be seen as an aesthetically pleasing wink to the audience, rather than an inbuilt attempt to imitate a word in sound.

Considering the absence of central features such as proportional behaviour or special note-shapes, should we categorise this song as *Ars subtilior*? On the one hand, it is possible to find similar text-content, setting and formal organisation in the works of Machaut. After all, shifting signature-inflections were already encountered in Machaut’s works, ballades such as *Se pour ce muir* use the same mensuration and contain some chromaticism, and compilers of *Ars subtilior* collections also show interest in older works.⁵⁹³ On the other hand, the extent to which these devices are used here seems to suggest an interest in extremities not usually evident in Machaut’s style. This tendency appears also in the size of setting, use of sequencing and imitation, use of ficta, and swift shifts between the static and the flowing.⁵⁹⁴ While the syncopations are by no means extreme, they are more extensive than would be expected in other surrounding styles.

A strictly technical approach to this question will therefore leave this song balanced on the *Ars subtilior* border: while not displaying proportions, special notational use, or much in the way of syncopation, there is enough in it not to sit comfortably with any other stylistic tag available. A nudge in the *Ars subtilior* direction is provided by Chapters 2 and 4 which demonstrate the weaknesses in overreliance on Günther’s original style-defining characteristics, and identified many other traits which interested *Ars subtilior* practitioners (a number of which appear in this song). For me, the congruence of features appearing in this song suffice for inclusion in the *Ars subtilior*, even without the appearance of the clearest identifiers. That the original compiler of this source thought the same may be suggested by its location next to two other, more clearly *Ars subtilior* compositions. This might compel us to place it within the *Ars subtilior* framework, whatever its origins may have been.

I believe that the appearance and combination of techniques that are used in this song would not have been meaningful without the influences and conceptualisations which formed

⁵⁹³ See p. 126 below, the following discussion and pp. 63-5 below respectively. Even if to a lesser extent, *Se pour ce muir* also includes small-scale syncopation, rhythmic displacements, and some unusual rhythmical and harmonic choices. See also discussion of the dating of *Ut pateat evidenter* in footnote 414 above.

⁵⁹⁴ Comparative traits for the last two elements can be found in Solage’s *Calectone* (Ch, f. 50).

the *Ars subtilior* compositional style. This is of course a subjective judgment. It may well have been that without the ascription to Machaut, I would put *Se pour ce muir* in the same category as *Je suis cellui* and think of both as *Ars subtilior*. The similarities between the two works open up the discussion concerning the relationship between the *Ars nova* and *Ars subtilior* examined also in the next case study. To what degree could Machaut detach himself (or should we detach him) from the changing musical fashions of his latter years? Should we conceive of his later works as operating within the same cultural trends which shaped the styles of his younger contemporaries' work, even if he chose not to use the more extreme of the new techniques becoming fashionable at the time? Is there more value in considering his output as a unit, rather than representative of half a century of cultural change? After all, we know that his popularity if anything increased in the decades following his death, with the copying and distribution of his complete-works manuscripts and the popularity of his works in many of the courts central to the *Ars subtilior*.⁵⁹⁵

Answers to these questions hang more on style-definitions and the reasons behind them than on the music itself, and will be considered again in the next chapter from my own personal viewpoint. Before coming down on one side or the other, I would like to examine the seam between the *Ars subtilior* and other stylistic currents from another direction, namely, the relationship of compilers of *Ars subtilior* music with the most popular songs of the day, old and new.

De ce que foul pense and other popular songs

With 12 musical copies, P. de Molins' *De ce que foul pense* is the most widely copied song in the surviving sources of the period (not counting the dedicated Machaut manuscripts). While heading the list of multiple copied songs of this time, the wide appeal its concordances demonstrate seems to have been extended to a whole group of songs, including *Jour a jour* and Machaut's *De petit peu* with ten surviving (non-Machaut manuscript) copies, *Or sus dormes* and Vaillant's *Par maintes fois* with nine versions, and *En discort* and *Je languis* with eight appearances each.⁵⁹⁶ It is clear that not all these concordances are relevant to a discussion of *Ars subtilior*, as some sources in which these songs are found were created in a very different aesthetic environment, and were designed for a different audience and cultural purpose. After all, their very popularity made these songs ideal candidates for instrumental

⁵⁹⁵ See, for example, the case of Aragon on p. 94 above.

⁵⁹⁶ See footnote 148 above for the manuscripts containing each song.

arrangements or re-texting, be that in a different secular context or in a transition towards the religious sphere.⁵⁹⁷ Textless copying is not surprising either, as many of these songs work well for *Alta cappella* and may have also been used for signal music or dance accompaniment.⁵⁹⁸ Still, between them, **Ch** and **PR** contain all the songs in this group (**ModA** contains only *De petit peu*), showing that they were deemed interesting also in an *Ars subtilior* context.⁵⁹⁹

With a song such as *En discort* this is perhaps less surprising. This song contains frequent mensuration-changes in its tenor, extensive use of *ficta*, external syncopation, rhythmic and melodic sequencing and repetitions, difficult melodic progressions, and a contratenor which continuously adds friction, dissonance and destabilises harmonic centres (see ex. 5-9 below). All these features come together to form a piece which would have found a comfortable home even in **Ch**.⁶⁰⁰ The pattern of its transmission may even suggest that it is somewhat later than the other songs in this groups, and perhaps originated in an *Ars subtilior* context.

Example 5-9 below is taken from **PR**, even though it contains a number of mistakes: the *ouvert* cadence of the contratenor is missing, and the *clos* cadence of the cantus is written a third down. There is also a dot missing between second and third *brevis* of the contratenor refrain. All these locations are easy to correct independently, and are corroborated by the reading in **Ut**.

⁵⁹⁷ Of the seven songs dealt with here, four appear in **Fa**, with *Jour a jour* appearing twice, and *En discort* having a version also in **Bux**. Two songs receive new secular texts in both **WolkA** and **WolkB**. Latin, religious contrafacta are found in **Str** (six of the seven), **MuEm** (two songs), **Mu**, **BaKir**, **Vien5094**, and **Warsaw5084** (one in each).

⁵⁹⁸ The appearance of *De petit peu* and *Je Languir* in **Pr** as well as that of *Jour a jour* in **LoCot** are particularly suggestive of this direction, but the textless transmission of three out of the five songs copied into **Pit**, two of the four in **FP**, and the single appearances in **Lo29987** and **Basel** may also be connected to such usage (fragmentation makes it hard to comment on appearances in sources such as **Ghent**, **Nur25**, **PadC** and **Parma**). A not dissimilar later parallel can be seen in the use of *Ellas la fille Guillemin* (**Montecassino**, f. 3v) by Domenico da Piacenza in his dance treatise, even though he provides only a single textless voice in his treatise.

⁵⁹⁹ **PR** contains *De ce que foul pense*, *Jour a jour*, *Or sus dormes*, *En discort* and *Je languis*; **Ch** also includes *De ce que foul pense*, as well as *De petit peu* and *Par maintes fois*. Other sources which are of relevance here are the different sections of **CaB**, which include two versions of *De ce que foul pense* and one of *de petit peu*, **Bcl/Leclercq** which offers a version of *Par maintes fois*, and to a lesser extent **Ut** which contains also *En discort*. See following discussion.

⁶⁰⁰ This is not diminished by the choice of the **Ut** scribe to exchange the mensuration changes in the tenor with red passages.

5-9. A discort son desir, PR, f. 70

8
A la dis - - - cort son De - sir et
la sont ra - ga - - gnit li - quelz a

8
es - - pe - - ran - - ce de - dens mon cuer ne
plus po - - san - - ce nul po - oir n'ai

8
s'en pue - - - lent par - - - - -
tout me co - ment sou - - - - -

8
- - - - - tir - - - - - fir
- - - - - 1. 2. - - - - - 1. 2. - - - - - 1. 2. # #

Detailed description: The score is in 3/4 time and consists of four systems. Each system has three staves: a vocal line (treble clef), a piano accompaniment line (treble clef), and a bass line (bass clef). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first system ends with a repeat sign and two endings. The second system has a time signature change to 2/4. The third system has a time signature change to 3/4. The fourth system has a time signature change to 3/4 and includes first and second endings for the piano accompaniment and bass line.

lur vol - - len - - - te mais

je puis bien gle - - - - ir que

se ma da - - - me ne me fait de nous l'a - cort rien ne me

puet tant va-loir com la

Similarly, the **Ch** version of Vaillant’s *Par maintes fois* includes the use of *dragmae* (and dotted *minime*) to signify *sesquitertia*. Constantly changing phrase-lengths result in multiple occasions of external syncopation (see ex. 5-10 below). This is also a rather lengthy song, being one of the only songs in **Ch** where a single side did not suffice for its notation.⁶⁰¹ This song’s text is not only naturalistic, but plays on (rather subversive) double meanings, and it is by a composer already represented in the collection.⁶⁰² It does not look out of place in this source.

5-10. Johannes Vaillant, *Par maintes fois*, Ch, f. 60-59v

⁶⁰¹ In this case, no space was lost on copying text, as no residual strophes appear (unlike Cesaris’ *A dieus d’amours*, ff. 46v-47, where one stave is given over to text, the omission of which would have made the song fit on one side).

⁶⁰² *Tres doulz amis – Ma dame ce que vous – Cent mille fois*, f. 17v; *Pour ce que je ne say gairez*, f. 26; *Dame doucement attrait – Doulz amis*, f. 26v, and *Onques Jacob por la belle Rachel*, f. 27. The music to all these songs is uniquely transmitted in this source. Another long naturalistic song in this group is *Or sus dormes*, not discussed at any length here.

mais ne s'i veult le cu- cu a-cor-der, ains

veult chan- - ter con- tre ly par en - vi - - - - -

e, "Cu- cu, cu- cu, cu- cu," tou-te sa vi - - - - e,

car il veult bien a son chant des-cour- der; et pour- tant dit le reu-si-gnol

et cri-e: "Je vos co-mant qu'on le tu - e-et o-ci - e: tu - e, tu-e,

tu - e, tu - - e~o-ci, o-ci, o - ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o - ci, fi-de-li, fi-de-li, fi-de-li,

fi, o - ci, o-ci, o-ci, o - ci, o-ci, o-ci, o - ci, o-ci, o-ci; fi, fi, fi, du

cu-cu qui d'a-mors veult par - ler." Si "As - - - - -

vous sup - pli, ma tres douce a - lou - -et - - - - - te,
sem-bles vos: pren-es la car - di - -net- - - - - te,

que v|o|u|s vo|u-lles di - re un-re chan - son; "Li-re, li-re, li-re, li-re, li - re -
fai - tes chan-ter la calle et le san - son; tu-es, ba-tes le cu-cu pi-le - bis -

lon; que dit Dieu, Dieu, que dit Dieu, Dieu, que te dit
son!" "Il est pris, pris, il est pris, pris il est pris,

Dieu, que [te] di Dieu, Dieu, que te dit Dieu, Dieu, que te dit Dieu, Dieu?" Il est tamps,
pris." "Or soit mis [a] mort, soit mis a mort, mort, soit mis a mort, mort." Or a - loms

il est tamps que le rous - si - no - let di - e sa chan-so-net-
seu - re - ment an - jo - li - ver nos qu'et cul-lir la vi - o - le -

te: "O - ci, o-ci, o - ci, o - ci, o-ci, o - ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci se-vont que
te; a - mi, a-mi, a - mi, a - mi, a-mi, a - mi, a-mi, a-mi,

nos vaut guer - - ro - - yant. a-mi tou-dis se - ray le dieux d'a - mours pri-ant.

That the proportional element of this song was deemed essential to its character can be seen in Oswald's version of it, which is the only song in his oeuvre in which he not only uses *sesquitertia*, but signifies it in his notation. This was not slavish copying of the original either, as the location of the *sesquialtera* sections in Oswald's version do not always match the French original (if anything, he adds more of them). Again, it seems that a song famous throughout Europe owed its origin to *Ars subtilior* practices and ways of thinking. This evidently did not stand in the way of its popularity or use in an array of cultural functions.

Interestingly, **Ch** does not offer the most complicated version of this song. This honour must be given to the combined fragments **BcI/Leclercq**, which transmit a virtually complete texted triplum, a slightly fragmented tenor, and half the contratenor (see ex. 5-11 below).⁶⁰³ The most obvious difference is the added fourth voice, with smaller-scale additions (such as the *sesquialtera* grouping in the *clos* cadence of the contratenor) occurring also in the known voices. It is the content of the added voice which is interesting here, as it makes clear the *Ars subtilior* context in which it was added.

Rather than an additional subservient accompanying voice, the triplum is very involved in driving the piece, introducing extra harmonic, melodic and rhythmic friction. Already in the setting of the first line of text (see setting of "owi recorder" in the transcription below), an insertion of a C-sharp *ficta* transforms the A sonority from a cadential arrival point to a leading sonority towards G, which is then avoided by the tenor, making it seem more involved in the polyphonic structure. This double-cadence also serves to strengthen the external syncopation effect through repeated stressing. This happens throughout the piece. The next example is in the third line of the text ("ne se vault"), where the triplum creates a cadential progression in relation to the tenor which was not there in the three part setting. This strengthens the bridge the triplum builds between the two sentences in the cantus, stresses another external syncopation, and gives more importance to C as a structural sonority. The following G cadence in the other voices is then further weakened by the insertion of an imperfect consonance in the triplum, showing its importance in the song's new harmonic and modal constellation. The triplum participates in many instances of imitation with the cantus, but not always in a reactive position.

⁶⁰³ In the following transcription the first ligature of the triplum is read as two *breves* even though a c.o.p. ligature appears in the source. The missing cantus and contratenor sections (marked by small notes) were taken from **Luc** ff. LXXIVv-LXXVv.

5-11. Johannes Vaillant, *Par maintes fois*, BcI/Leclercq

Par main-tes fois ai o-wi re-cor-der

Par main-tes fois ay ou-y

du rou-sig-noul la dou-che me-l-di-re-cor-der du ro-si-gnol la dou-che me-lo-die

- e mais ne se veult le cu-cu a-cor-der ains veult
mais ne s'i ve-ut le cu-cu a-cor-der, ains ve-ut

chan-ter con-tre li par en-vi-e

e, "Cu-cu, cu-cu, cu-cu," tou-te sa vi-e, car

il veult bien a son chant dis-cor-der;
 quar il ve-ut bien a son chant dis-cor-der; pour ce li dist li

et por-tant dit li rou-si-gnoul et cri-e: "tu-e,
 ro-si-gol et cri-e: "Je vos co-mant qu'on le tu-e o-ci-e:

tu, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, tu-e, tu-e, che foul cu-cu, fi-de-li
 tu-e, tu-e, tu-e, tu-e, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, fy

fi, o-ci, o-ci, o - ci, fi-de-li fi, fi-de-li fi, fi-de-li,
 fi-de-li, fi - de-li, fi-de-li, fy, o - ci, o-ci, o - ci, o - ci, o-ci, o - ci, o -

fi-de-li, fi, fi, fi, du cu-cu qui d'a- mours veult par - ler."
 ci; fy, fy, fy, du cu - cu qui d'a-mours ve - ut par - ler."

Je vous sup - pli, ma tres dou- che
 "As- - sem- - blez vous: pre - nés la car-
 Si vous sup - pli, ma tres douce a - lou -
 "As - - - - sem-blés vous: pren-és la car- di -

a - lou-wet- - te que vous voul- - liés di - re vos- tre chan-
 -di - net- - te fai-tes chan- - ter la cal - le et le san -
 -et- - - - te, que vous you - liés di - re vos- tre chan-
 -net- - - - te, fai-tes chan - ter la calle et le san -

son; que te di Di - eu, que te di Dieu,
 son; il est pris, pris, il est pris, pris,

son; "Li-re, li-re, li-re, li-re, li-re - lon; que dit Dieu, Dieu, que dit
 son; u-és, ba-tés le cu-cu pi-le-bis - son!" "Il est pris, pris, il est

que te di Dieu, que t'en di Di - eu que t'en di Di - eu
 il est pris, pris, soit mis a mort soit mis a mort

Dieu, Dieu, que dit Dieu, Dieu, que te di Dieu, Dieu, que te dit
 pris, pris il est pris, pris." "Or soit mis a mort, soit mis a

que t'en di Di - eu, que t'en di Di - eu il est temps
 soit mis a mort soit mis a mort. Or a-loms seu - re-ment an -

Dieu, Dieu, que te dit Dieu, Dieu?" Il est tamps, il est tamps que le rous -
 mort, mort, soit mis a mort, mort." Or a - loms seu-re - ment an - jo - li -

que rou-sig-nouls dit sa chan-so-net o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-
jo-li-ver nos et cul-lir la vi-o-let-te; a-mi, a-mi, a-mi, a-mi, a-

si-no-let di-e sa chan-so-net- - - - te: "O-ci, o-ci, o-
ver nos et cul-lir la vi-o-let- - - - te; a-mi, a-mi, a-

ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, se-ront qui vos vont guer-ro- - yant.
mi, a-mi, a-mi, a-mi, a-mi, tou-dis se-ray le dieux

ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci, o-ci se-vont guer-ro- - yant.
mi, a-mi, a-mi, a-mi, a-mi, a-mi, tou-dis se-ray le dieux d'a-

d'a-mours pri-ant.

mours pri- - - ant.

The first audible imitation occurs on the setting of “la [douche melodie]” (second text-line), where the triplum introduces the melodic material of the subsequent cantus entrance. The imitation on “a son chant disorder” is interesting, as this marks the change of direction in the song’s text. From this point on naturalistic bird-song imitation using syllables such as “tue” and “oci” take on a homicidal character following the command to kill the cu-cu bird. Already in the three-part version, this is the location of the first proportion in the piece attracting attention to it. Its effect is enhanced by imitation and the repetition in the cantus.

The imitating voice also creates a strong dissonance, attracting further attention to this text.⁶⁰⁴ Later on in the naturalistic sections, the imitations in the triplum do much to thicken the texture and emphasise the *sesquialtera* effect.

It is interesting to think of the relationship between the two versions. **BcI/Leclercq** is the only surviving four-part version of this song. **Ch**, though, does show a good knowledge of Vaillant's work, and this song is copied in the section reserved for four-voiced composition in this manuscript. This suggests perhaps an awareness of the existence of a triplum, which either became unavailable or was left out because of lack of space at the time of the copying. In any case, both versions fit well with an *Ars subtilior* origin and context. The possibility that the triplum was an external addition to Vaillant's composition designed to enhance its *Ars subtilior* credentials leads us directly towards the main questions of this case study, namely, on what grounds were popular songs deemed fit for inclusion in specialist collections? If songs were adapted to fit a new context, what was deemed necessary for their integration into an *Ars subtilior* fold?

Two older songs for which we need to answer these questions are Guillaume de Machaut's *De petit peu* and P. de Molins' *De ce que foul pense*. As they are included in our 'formative group' of manuscripts, something must have attracted the compilers to them. As far as *De petit peu* is concerned, the appeal of songs with ever-changing modal structures was already discussed in p. 126 above. The very active contratenor (and its unusual destabilising range and cadences) articulated by short rests may also have been deemed interesting to *Ars subtilior* musicians.⁶⁰⁵ It is certainly not notational, proportional or syncopation subtleties which caused the **Ch** scribe to copy it into his manuscript. Example 5-12 shows this version (the same voice-combination appears also in **FP** and **Pit**), with a correction of the location of one dot. Under the setting of the word "aivoir" in the tenor, the manuscript places a dot after, rather than before the E. Interestingly, this version is not Machaut's original, who set his song with three voices, but with a triplum rather than a contratenor. The circulation of this song in the standardised late-fourteenth-century scoring (with a new *Ars subtilior*

⁶⁰⁴ See remarks pp. 246-7 above for a discussion of whether this is word-painting or a pleasing, planned coincidence which uses the compositional tool of attracting attention by the use of dissonance to manipulate the medieval system into matching words and sounds. Other such cases feature on pp. 159-60 and 225-6 above.

⁶⁰⁵ See parallels in works discussed in Leech-Wilkinson, 'Articulating', or the behaviour of Matteo da Perugia's new contratenor for Machaut's *Se vous n'estes*, the end of which is transcribed as ex. 4-19.

contratenor) rather than the original popular mid-century one is perhaps telling of the expectations of *Ars subtilior*-minded scribes in the generation following Machaut's death.

5-12. Guillaume de Machaut, *De petit peu*, Ch, f. 18v

The musical score is written in 3/4 time and consists of four systems. Each system includes a vocal line and three lute accompaniment staves. The lyrics are as follows:

De chas - - - - - pe - tit peu
 - - - - - cuns a -

de - ni - ent vou - len - - - te de moult as - ses doit pren - - -
 - mans de s'a - mie - en bon gre las - se dou - len - te or

voy - - - - - dre ce m'est
 que mes a - - - - -

vis - - - - - mis He vult

The score features various musical notations including rests, accidentals (sharps and flats), and first/second endings for the lute accompaniment.

original identity while offering much compositional freedom.⁶⁰⁶ I would argue that adding a fourth voice is not only less intrusive to the host composition, it also raises the status of the composition, as seen by the emphasis given to the number of voices in the compilation of manuscripts.⁶⁰⁷ Interestingly, this is the only four-part song in **ModA** (see ex. 5-13 below). As was the case with *Par maintes fois*, the new contratenor bridges sentences, imitates the different voices, inserts avoidable harmonic and melodic friction, and creates external syncopation where none existed previously. Many of these effects are visible – and some were observed – in the **Ch** version above. Note, for instance, the external syncopation created by the short rhythmic sequence (and directed cadential sonorities) under “sour volente ne mon” in the B section, or the chromatic shift from Bb to B, distorting the cadence immediately before the beginning of the refrain. Particularly interesting in this case though, is the relationship between the two orbiting voices, as their extremities of range underline their quick shifts between musical cooperation and head-on harmonic collisions. From the song’s beginning (and throughout its duration), the quick moving voices exchange ‘up-beat’ entrances and hocket-like progressions, goading each other on, and creating a sense of restless propulsion. Structural divisions are created when both voices refrain from such entrances and follow the tenor rhythm (as under “mult”, marking the transition from the first to the second line of text of the A section). Harmonic collisions are most audible when the contratenor harmonically subverts cadences (*ouvert*, *clos* and final cadences, as well as the cadence before the refrain marked out by the chromatic progression described above), as traditionally triplum and contratenor voices aim for the same cadence notes. The mirroring of the original high triplum, with a contratenor mostly set underneath the tenor, make these interactions clearly audible, on top of being structurally pleasing.

Matteo da Perugia provides us with plenty of evidence for the inclusion of newly-written voices in **ModA**, but this contratenor does not seem to be one of them. All four voices are transmitted also in **CaB** (f. 15v), which tantalisingly offers fragments of what looks like a fifth voice. Sadly, the fragmentary state of this manuscript does not enable a reconstruction of this voice’s content, or allow us to discern whether it was supposed to be used in a five-part rendition, or operate as an alternative voice. The damage is such that it is impossible to rule out the possibility that this voice actually belongs to a different composition.

⁶⁰⁶ For the similar technique of adding or exchanging contratenors see pp. 136-9, 160 and ex. 4-19 above.

⁶⁰⁷ See pp. 77-8 above.

5-13. Guillaume de Machaut, *De petit peu*, ModA, f. 26

De ca - - - - - pe - tit
 - - - - - scun a - -

peu de - ni - - ent vo - - len - te de
 - - mans de la mi - e a bon gre las -

mult as - ses doit pren - dre ce m'est a
 - se dou - - - lent or voi - - ye que mes a -

vis
 - mis

1. 2. 1. 2. 1. 2. 1. 2.

8 Ne vuelt sou- - - si-san-ce a - voir sour vo - len -

8 - te ne mon pe - tit pov - - re croi - re

8 ne pu - - - et ains ma pour ce guer- - -

8 pi on - - - ques n'a - - - ma qui pour ce peu hay

Whatever the fifth voice in **CaB** turns out to be, it is clear that both the four-part and the three-part, contratenor versions had their own distribution patterns with no relation to the Machaut manuscripts (which all present the three-part, triplum version). While there is no reason to believe most scribes would have known which version is original and which a later adaptation, the circulation of such works in versions more appealing to *Ars subtilior* tastes indicates again that we are dealing here with a cultural phenomenon with its own international supply and demand influences. While local manipulation of external materials undoubtedly occurred, it cannot explain all cases of *Ars subtilior* adaptations of older songs.

A similar pattern can be seen in the transmission of *De ce que foul pense*. Again we find that the version in **Ch** is a basic three-part setting with no clear *Ars subtilior* characteristics (see ex. 5-14 below). That this is the third of the group of widely distributed songs (and the last to appear in **Ch**) for which we have more complex versions elsewhere should remind us that what we have, and the sources we take as central, were not necessarily representative, and do not offer the most extreme readings of the music of the time.

The three-part setting does not contain much to commend it to *Ars subtilior* practitioners. Its inclusion in **Ch** may be due to its popularity, or simply because the compiler liked it enough to forgive it its antiquated feel. Alternatively, one can note the hoquet-like, imitative phrase ending the A section and refrain as perhaps unusual enough to be of interest to a compiler who chose the rest of the repertoire in this source, especially since the tenor also contains an extended external syncopation. This phrase also contains a sequence in the cantus, which uses a rhythmic constellation repeated throughout the song, and can be said to go against the song's mensuration. It is also possible that the complete absence of stable cadences on the *finalis* F sonority, in which all three voices fulfil their expected functions, would have been considered more radical later in the fourteenth-century than at the time of composition.⁶⁰⁸ Furthermore, a number of notated (or implied) F-sharp and C-sharp create friction with the signature B-flat in the lower voices and destabilise the overall F sound. Put together, these features may well have been enough to create interest in both audiences and compilers thinking in *Ars subtilior* terms.

⁶⁰⁸ The closest places to a strong F cadence are at the end of the first line of text (where the contratenor avoids the cadence) and the end of the fifth line of text (first text line of the B section, where the tenor avoids the cadence). For extensive use of cadence-avoidance as an important structural feature see case studies 2 and 3, pp. 226-48 above. Full cadences do occur towards other sonorities. See, for example, the end of the B section (E cadence) and the second *brevis* of the C section (C cadence).

5-14. P. de Molins, *De ce que foul*, Ch, f. 53v

De car ce que foul pen - se sou-vent re - maynt
par pen- - - ser et cui-dier me des - trant

he - - - las je le puis bien par moy prou -
A - - - mours le corps et fayt mon cuer cre -

ver
ver
ver

En - - - sy m'es - tuet les griefs mauz en - du - rer ce - le - e - - ment pour
vos da - me ho-nou - - re - e - - - - e

Three four-part versions of *De ce que foul pense* survive, one in **PR** and two in different sections of **CaB**. One of the **CaB** versions shares the same triplum as the **PR** version. Subsequently, while one of these triplum voices may have been a local reworking which enjoyed no wider circulation, the distribution of the other should span at least from northern Italy to the Low Countries (as was the case with *De petit peu*). I have already mentioned the suitability of this song for dance accompaniment, and the central role of the Low Countries in the circulation and distribution of musical material.⁶⁰⁹ With this in mind, I would suggest that when one finds an unusual song-setting in that area, it is just as likely to be a version brought in from afar and distributed onwards as it is to be of closed, local relevance.

The four-part versions are of course more interesting from the *Ars subtilior* perspective (see ex. 5-15 and 5-16 below). As well as looking at each case for its own merit, it is possible to analyse the different emphases created by the new voices in order to postulate which characteristics of the original song were considered attractive to begin with. One can immediately see that neither triplum offers any proportions. Perhaps this would have marked out the new voice too strongly, or taken too much attention away from the texted cantus. Both new versions emphasise imitation, while using richer imperfed sonorities and a higher degree of avoidable dissonance. They both encourage every hint of instability found in the original.

⁶⁰⁹ See pp. 248-9 for other contexts in which this song is found. For the Low Countries in the context of *Ars subtilior* style, see Chapters 2 and 3, esp. pp. 73-4, 92-6, 100, 102, 192-3 and footnote 305.

5-15. P. de Molins, *De ce que fol pense*, PR, f. 71v

De car ce que fol pen - se lo - - - - vent
par pre - - ser et cui - dier me

re - maint e - las je le pui bien par moy cru - - - - er
dest - rant A-mours le vie et fait mon cuer pru -

Ain - si m'es - - tu - - et les gref mal - e er - - - -

- oir ce - le - e - ment poie vous da - me ho - - - nour - - -
- - - - er D'an - si lan - - - - guir en es - tran -
- ge ton - - - tre

The **PR** (repeated in **CaB**) triplum starts off closely linked to the other textless voices, creating an expectation for a relatively docile, uninvolved voice, which would later be disappointed. After the initial ornamented movement, it only contains small rhythmic adjustments which could be read as a small-scale parcel of instability, hinting at what is to come and the song's new context. Alternatively, they could be simply be understood as practical measures to avoid parallel octaves with the contratenor. Interestingly, it is the cantus which contributes more to the mensural instability in the second line of text. While underlay is not always clear in **PR**, it seems that it is used here to shift the mensural feeling

from O to C.⁶¹⁰ The triplum, meanwhile, maintains the O feeling in the first two *breves*, then joins in the new temporal division for one unit, followed by the same rhythmic pattern already presented in the first line, turning it into a rhythmical motif. It then goes on to destabilise further the attempted G cadence on “par”, only to pause before any arrival point is reached, in preparation for its most important input to this song. The triplum marks the beginning of the hocket phrase of the last melisma (pointed out already in the three-part version) by pre-empting the counter-rhythmic cantus motif and repeating it every alternate *brevis* until the end of the form part. As with the previous example, the added triplum is not limited to a reactive role. Apart from the clear imitation and added rhythmic instability this creates, a parallel is formed between the two duets: the hocket-like exchange on the *semibrevis* level between tenor and contratenor is mirrored by the similarly imitative exchange on the *brevis* level between cantus and triplum, attracting even more attention to this melisma. There was obviously no problem with the dissonance that the first triplum entrance creates. It can be seen either as an acceptable sacrifice in the creation of the imitative effect, or as an attention-seeking signal announcing the arrival of an interesting musical phenomenon and the approaching end of the section.

Enjoying its new-found independence, the triplum goes on to offer a series of avoidable dissonances in the beginning of the B part. This is followed by further destabilising rhythmical groupings, which participate in another rhythmic (if not melodic) exchange: in the fifth text-line with the contratenor, and in the sixth with the cantus. The most striking harmonic addition made by the triplum comes at the end of the B section, where an elaborate progression towards a destabilising C-sharp in the final A sonority forces a strong tritone B/F between it and the tenor as well as some melodic chromaticism.⁶¹¹ The triplum starts the refrain with an imitation of the cantus’ first melodic movement, and continues its rhythmical exchanges with the cantus, preparing the ground for the two duets which come back in the musical rhyme.

⁶¹⁰ *Je languis*, not discussed in detail here, is extreme in the duality between the notated C and the sounding O and C, this perhaps explains its appeal to compilers who collected *Ars subtilior* materials.

⁶¹¹ The melodic chromaticism may be increased if one decides to soften the tritone on the beginning of the second to last *brevis* of this section by the insertion of a B-flat followed later by a B.

5-16. P. de Molins, *de ce que fol pense*, CaB, f. 18v

De ce que fol pen - se sou-vent re - - maint
 car pen-ser et cui - di-er me des - - trant

he - las le je le corps puis bien et par moy pro -
 A - mours le je le corps et fait mon cuer

ver cre - - - ver

Ein - - - si m'es - tuet les gries mauz en-du - rer ce - le - - e - - ment [pour

The musical score consists of five systems, each with a vocal line and two lute accompaniment staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, accidentals, and repeat signs with first and second endings. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

v]ous da - me ho-no - - re - - - - - e

D'ein - - si lan - - - - guir en est-ran-ge con - tre - - - - -

- - - - - e

The second **CaB** triplum (ex. 5-16) is more subtle and sophisticated, both in its imitative and destabilising techniques. It is also freer with its use of inserted dissonance. In comparison to **PR**, the underlay here is much less regular. The triplum follows suit, and does not affiliate itself too closely with any voice or mensural trajectory, while remaining fast-moving (as is traditional of an upper voice). Instead, it progresses in short melodic phrases, as if commentating on its surroundings.

The illusion of shared purpose created by the short parallel movement in the first melisma is quickly shattered. Already in the fourth *brevis* the triplum imitates the counter-rhythmic structure of the first texted notes of the cantus, while moving to its highest range, and setting off with a strong and avoidable dissonance. This *brevis* unit attracts much attention to the triplum, and acts like a calling card, creating expectations for what is to come. The surprise is even more effective, since the triplum's behaviour before and after it is completely unexceptional. The next disorientating phrase of the triplum comes with the text "je le puis". In it, a long step-wise ascent leading to a dissonant A announces the sonority arrived at later on the word "moy", but goes against the cadential progression to G attempted by the other voices one *brevis* before that. The triplum uses extreme means to avoid the G cadence, holding a syncopated C over both the leading sonority A/C-sharp/F-sharp(→E) and G cadence. This destabilising progression in the triplum works not only harmonically, but also rhythmically. It can be seen as a syncopation of an entire *brevis* unit, which is divided up in the traditional C *semibrevis-minima-semibrevis-minima* rhythm, which is often used in this song as a counter-rhythm to the overall O divisions. This unit (and others to come) can therefore be seen as a short, syncopated mensural change, a technique relevant only to the *Ars subtilior*. That this is not a one-off occurrence can be seen in the following hoquet-like melisma. Similarly to the other four-part version, the triplum here cannot resist imitating the cantus' motif. This time the formula is repeated only once in the triplum, but as compensation it is pushed a *semibrevis* out of sync, aligning itself with the external syncopation in the tenor. The triplum then goes on to pre-empt another arrival on A, this time for the *ouvert* cadence. Again, this is done using a strong and avoidable dissonance. The dissonance is repeated also for the *clos* ending, where it is begrudgingly resolved to the fifth C. Both the dissonance and its non-cadential resolution serve to highlight the lack of normal cadences in this song. The insistence on A also changes the relationships in the modal scheme of the piece. It strengthens a bi-polar F ↔ A modal organisation which was not central to the three-part version, and weakens the G sonorities which played a more important role in the original. Once more, the added voice is an active intervention, and not a dispensable afterthought. It changes the composition dramatically, and makes it suitable for a different context.

As in the beginning of the song, the triplum starts the B section inconspicuously. It echoes the hoquet-motif presented by the tenor and contratenor at the end of the A section in

its second *brevis*, and then goes on to imperfect another G sonority. Rhythmic manipulation starts again with the next line of text, where another syncopated C unit (this time without participation from any other voice), is followed by two similar but synchronised units which repeat until the motif is taken over by the cantus in its cadential figure towards G. The overall progression towards C is aborted also in the three-part version, but the triplum weakens the cadential feeling further by inserting an F against the cantus' and contratenor's F-sharp. A further syncopated imitation follows, but in a different location in relation to the beat, leading to another reiterated (and still dissonant) A cadence at the end of the section.⁶¹² The refrain follows a similar structure, with short counter-rhythms bridging over cantus rests, but otherwise not hindering the texted part of the section. Another (synchronised) counter-rhythmic group then gives a reference point to the syncopated group which is included in the musical repetition.

Both the triplum voices examined have profound effects on the pieces to which they were appended. While both emphasise counter-rhythms, modal patterns, imitations and repetitions that are already in the original three-part version, one uses more clearly *Ars subtilior* related techniques than the other. Both add much avoidable friction to the harmonic language of the song, and reconfigure the importance of certain locations or sonorities within it. Is this enough to call them *Ars subtilior*?

From the manuscript evidence, it is clear that practitioners of *Ars subtilior* music were also interested in this, as well as the other popular songs discussed above. This should be enough for us to try and find a way in which to incorporate them into our understanding of what *Ars subtilior* is. If we see the *Ars subtilior* as that side of musical production preoccupied with high-status 'art-music', we may conclude that the very popularity of these songs gave them enough status to be incorporated into *Ars subtilior* collections. Alternatively, we may think that four-part songs were still rare enough to be thought of as special regardless of their style. Seeing *Ars subtilior* as an aesthetic preference as well as a social tool, we can look for musical characteristics which we think would have interested *Ars subtilior* compilers. We can even simply regard these songs as representative of a relatively low degree of *subtilitas* (at least as far as the most striking *Ars subtilior* techniques are concerned), and therefore placed at the opposite end of the *subtilitas* spectrum to a work such

⁶¹² The 'downbeat' of the first syncopated group was a *minima* before the overall *brevis* beginning, in the second and third groups it was a *semibrevis* late, and here it is a *semibrevis* early.

as *Angelorum psalat*. The cohabitation this implies then becomes less problematic, as their parallel existence provides necessary contrast, each giving the other meaning.

As different guises can imbue a piece with different meanings, there is no reason not to see some of a song's versions as relevant to the *Ars subtilior* while others are not. *Jour a jour* for instance, has very different versions surviving. Its appeal to collectors of *Ars subtilior* (through mensuration changes similar to those in *En discort*) was further enhanced by the addition of a fourth voice in **PR**. Still, it was clearly deemed appropriate also for a myriad of more functional uses, from the textless, two-part version in **Pit**, through the ornamented **Fa** version, to the simplified (perhaps prepared for amateur performance) version in **LoCot** with its new contratenor. German (**WolkA** and **WolkB**) and Latin (**Str**) contrafacta allowed it to be used in even wider cultural contexts. Defining the song as relevant only or even primarily to one of these contexts and dismissing the others as accidental re-workings seems to me to miss a central point about medieval musical culture. This case study has dealt with structural adaptation (mostly through voice-addition), but one also should keep in mind the possibility of ornamentation discussed above (pp. 71-3) in changing a work's character. In light of all this, perhaps we should not even look for clear borders between broadly contemporaneous styles, as the lack of an Urtext tradition made it easy and even natural to adjust music to changing contexts.

Conclusion

When looking at the stylistic musical traits of any historic period, the contours we see are unavoidably tied to the survival patterns of materials. Our understanding of some styles or techniques depends on the survival of single sources.⁶¹³ I hope to have demonstrated that with the *Ars subtilior* we are lucky enough to have a range of evidence which can give a wider historical and stylistic picture. Still, it is clear that sources are missing when looking at any medieval musical style, and that each manuscript found or lost changes our understanding of the style in question. This makes the definition of specific stylistic traits problematic whichever style is looked at. The situation with the *Ars subtilior* is particularly difficult.

⁶¹³ See, for example, the dependence on **Rossi** in our understanding of early *Trecento* secular music, or on **Fa** or **Robertsbridge** in our understanding of early intabulation techniques.

If we think that the *Ars subtilior* depends on different degrees of non-standard avoidance of stylistic norms for its expressive palette, we become more reliant on extreme works to show us not only the techniques available, but the possible extent of their usage. Extreme occurrences tend, by their very nature, to be singular. Singular occurrences are more prone to be lost. Looking at the *Ars subtilior*, we are not only more reliant on single pieces in defining the overall style, but a larger percentage of the repertoire incorporates extreme usage in one way or another. It is reasonable to imagine for example, that if f. 59 of **Ch** was torn out, a piece like *Fumeux fume* would have been considered impossible in a medieval context, as indeed was *Ut pateat evidenter* up to its recent rediscovery. The same can be said about *Sur toute fleur* (**Cyp**, f. 137) in the context of proportional behaviour, *La harpe de melodie* (**Chic**, f. 10) in terms of visuality, or even *Je suis cellui* in terms of setting-size. This list could go on to include a myriad of notational uses, harmonic progressions, structural and canonic behaviour and more. It is just as easy to suppose that things we consider never to have happened may turn up in a newly rediscovered source, or that they once existed but are lost forever.⁶¹⁴ It is clear that erasing songs from the repertoire, or finding still more extreme examples, shifts the borders of what is deemed possible (or standard) in a style in which exceeding expectations is part of everyday currency.

Angelorum psalat is a good reminder of this problem, since we know it is there and can see the signs it uses, but cannot decipher their exact meaning or musical outcome. The fact that we do not possess a clear enough understanding of any of its parameters to consider a solution satisfactory can suggest that this song could be used as a litmus-test for our musical and historical knowledge. A different starting point would support different readings, and lead to both technical and musical results being considered more or less likely. After all, over-reliance on the authority of a technical solution has already claimed a victim in the recording of Olivier's *Si con cy gist* before its more likely but notationally extreme solution was published.⁶¹⁵ It seems that once we convince ourselves that something is correct, interpretative creativity can find its way through seemingly insurmountable difficulties. *Angelorum* is also a reminder that medieval expressivity is not wholly linked to sound, with notational, technical, structural and visual elements (which can easily be ignored or treated as a problem to be solved), also playing an important part in composers' palettes.

⁶¹⁴ That two examples of extremes were taken from newly-emerged sources (*Je suis cellui* and *Ut pateat evidenter*) is instructive in this regard.

⁶¹⁵ See this piece and the modern history of its performance see footnote 79 and p. 190 above.

The addition of less extravagant examples to the repertoire is also important. The ‘extreme’ label attracts interest, but simultaneously marks specific works (and the style as a whole) as anomalies. To understand the relationship and function of this music in a larger cultural context, the re-evaluation of the border with normality is just as crucial as that of extremity. Having only extremes in mind, the music of the *Ars subtilior* can seem like a collection of intellectualised abnormalities, with no connection or relevance to their surrounding mainstream culture or performance. Alternatively, extremes can be thought of as one side of a complete gray-scale in a flexible and functional musical system which also accommodates a variety of mainstream and simpler styles. This can give the music cultural context, explain its popularity and durability, and allow us to interpret the more extreme cases as expressive choices made under specific circumstances by certain individuals who pushed the system to its creative limits.

Three of the case studies examined could be seen as representatives of some kind of *Ars subtilior*-related mainstream. *Amour m’a le cuer mis* was used to examine the large group of clearly *Ars subtilior* works which do not take extremity as their main goal and purpose. It demonstrated that the typical complexities, anomalies and *subtilitas* found in this music can be formulated into a practical and expressive musical language. One may even ask whether Antonello saw the use of *Ars subtilior* as special when composing in French style. He may not even have been interested in the way specifically *Ars subtilior* features were notated, but perhaps only as the standard, available building-blocks to be used for effective combination in practice. This leads us to shift our gaze from the appearance or otherwise of individual notational or compositional techniques, and concentrate instead on their combination and the effect they create together. It can also help to turn some of the curious and unique characteristics of *Ars subtilior* style into elements of a common, understandable parlance.

Je suis cellui examined the kind of technical mainstream which does not involve specifically *Ars subtilior* characteristics in its notation and performance, but still demonstrates a close enough cultural origin to merit being included in this style. This inclusiveness raises the importance of less flamboyant musical and technical stylistic elements, which were not included in Günther’s original definition of the style. While not being necessary for modern cataloguing purposes, this recalibration (as well as the musical

elements themselves) is indispensable in an attempt to rethink this style as a part of an integrated cultural context.

De ce que foul pense and the other widely copied songs of this period examined the relationship between the *Ars subtilior* and what could be thought of as an external mainstream. This resulted in an acknowledgment that the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon did not see itself nor was considered by others to be independent and separated from other forms of musical production, be they functional or stylistically different. Older songs could easily be reinterpreted to fit *Ars subtilior* interests or adapted to high-light changing fashions. Works originating within an *Ars subtilior* mainstream were in turn used and adapted to fit different, parallel or later cultural contexts. To varying degrees, this style seems interwoven with general musical production, fashion and development. Like every other cultural force, it constructed its own rules, but with constant and unavoidable links to the rest of musical and general culture which surrounded it.

I hope to have demonstrated the usefulness of my interpretative approach in finding a place in practice for the stylistic features described in Chapter 4. Throughout these studies, my emphasis was on the combination and manipulation of stylistic features, be that as part of a large structural organisation or for specific local expressivity. The results were of course specific to the songs chosen, and were not integrated into a comprehensive system. Whether we want to be able to understand and interpret medieval song expressively (rather than technically), or whether our goal is to make history relevant to modern culture, such an integrated system, embedded in a cultural and intellectual context, is essential. A first step in this direction is attempted in the following conclusion.

6. Conclusion – a working definition for *Ars subtilior* style

It is impossible to provide answers to all questions pertaining to the physical, sociological, technical or musical aspects of *Ars subtilior* style. This was already made clear in relation to some of the source materials,⁶¹⁶ but is equally relevant to every other aspect of the enquiries undertaken in this work. Even a supposedly disinterested re-evaluation of every shred of evidence with the slightest relevance to this style would not suffice to overcome the underlying incompleteness of the materials we have to work with. It is also impossible to isolate the *Ars subtilior* from our understanding of medieval culture as a whole. In short, we can never fully know the past. I would like to avoid this trap by not claiming to make a definitive statement in the following remarks. They are presented here as just one way in which the materials hitherto discussed can be considered together in a useful fashion. This is the context in which I interpret the term “a working definition”. After the technical analyses of the previous chapters, it is the expressive inner workings of *Ars subtilior* style that are of interest here. In the following remarks, I will try to locate the mechanics of expressivity within their original medieval context. Once such a system of understanding these musical phenomena is defined, it can also be used in current analysis and performance of this repertoire. In other words, I take “a working definition” here as a subjective attempt to find meaning in the musical practice which modern research (following some medieval commentators) named *Ars subtilior*, with the goal of enabling a contextual, interpretative approach to both its study and performance.

Often during the course of this work, I have mentioned contextualisation as an important part of understanding and constructing meaning. In order to form a system for understanding and interpreting the *Ars subtilior*, I will begin with a short exposition of my conceptualisation of musical expressivity and stylistic change in the Middle Ages as part of the wider intellectual culture of the time. Building on these ideas, some preceding and coexisting musical conventions will be explored in order to facilitate a survey of the interactions between the *Ars subtilior* and other music produced at the time. Once a model for the workings of this style is in place, I will present a personal re-evaluation of how *Ars subtilior* can be defined when taking into account all the information discussed in this thesis. The

⁶¹⁶ See Chapters 2 and 3 above.

chapter will end with some thoughts about the usefulness of the conceptualisations expressed here for both modern and medieval contexts.

Thoughts concerning medieval expressivity

The Romantic view of the history of artistic endeavour was of a march towards realism, just as general history was the story of progress.⁶¹⁷ The musical translation of such a sentiment is the complete saturation of the musical language with word-painting. The concept of word-painting became so strong that it even encompassed rather abstract musical constructions. Functional harmony became an intuitive language: major keys ‘were’ happy, minor ones ‘were’ sad.⁶¹⁸ The audible imitation of a text or idea in itself became abstract. A demonstrative example is Bartok’s attempt to make the listeners ‘hear’ the glittering of gold, when the third door is opened in his *Bluebeard’s Castle*.⁶¹⁹

Even though contemporary cultural production has by now moved on from these concepts, they have had such a long and established tradition that even today it is difficult for us to relate to a culture which does not base itself on the instinctive, emotional connection (however artificial this intuition is) between sound constellations and their descriptive meaning. The production and consumption of visual art, both through the acceptance of a multitude of its modernist movements into the cultural mainstream, and following historic re-evaluation, tends still to be more accepting of the abstract than music, at least as far as the general public is concerned.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁷ See, for example, Heinrich Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (Munich, 1915), translated by Marie Donald Mackie Hottinger as *Principles of Art History* (New York and London, 1932), where the main developments in art-history from “primitive” (i.e. medieval) to representational art are summarised in pp. 14-6 (of the English edition). For a larger view of progress in cultural, philosophical and material history see John Beattie Crozier, *Civilization and Progress* (London: Longmans & Co., 1888, republished by Read Books, 2008).

⁶¹⁸ The strength of these convictions can be seen in Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music* (Oxford, 1959), Chapter 2 (pp. 34-112), which analyses the elements of musical expression. A considerable section of it is dedicated to “proving” that the classical harmonic system is based on the overtone series and is therefore natural and applicable also to the Middle Ages. The underlying belief in the expressive qualities of the classical system was clearly enough to overcome the factual, cultural and aesthetic inconsistencies.

⁶¹⁹ See Carl Stuart Leafstedt, *Inside Bluebeard’s Castle: Music and Drama in Béla Bartók’s Opera* (Oxford, 1999), p. 100.

⁶²⁰ The importance of this change is summarised in Ernst Hans Joseph Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (London: Phaidon, 1960), p. 4 as following: “There was a time when the methods of representation were the proper concern of the art critic. Accustomed as he was to judging contemporary works first of all by standards of representational accuracy, he had no doubt that this skill had progressed from rude beginnings to the perfection of illusion. Egyptian art adopted childish methods because Egyptian artist knew no better. Their conventions could perhaps be excused, but they could not be condoned. It is one of the permanent gains we owe to the great artistic revolution which swept across Europe in the first half of the twentieth century that we are rid of this type of aesthetics.”

A number of studies have highlighted the extent to which medieval culture and education were memory-based.⁶²¹ These works suggest that while memorising by rote was an essential pre-requisite to learning and understanding, it was not in itself creative. Creativity arises from the compartmentalisation of the memorised material (usually using visual aids), and the flexible reworking and creation of thematic, visual or audio links between these dissected chunks of information. This active memory-skill involves by its very nature the creation of a set of expectations in the minds of both propagators and consumers of culture. These expectations can then come together to form meaning. In the context of musical culture, these expectations and meanings can be found in the rules and habits of each identifiable style, be they written or oral, strict or flexible.⁶²²

Medieval art and literature, being representational and denotative respectively, had the ability to use or create links and expectations directly between ideas.⁶²³ These linked expectations could, when fulfilled, be used to strengthen moral, authoritative or religious purposes. When social expectations are contradicted, as can be found in marginalia decoration, misericord carvings, or works such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, their effect could be ironic or comical. Medieval music, essentially a non-denotative medium, was one step of abstraction removed from such uses, even when used explicitly as a memory tool rather than for personal expression.⁶²⁴ The sound of the music itself could set a mood, but it did not convey a concrete message. It had an inbuilt need to attract attention to its text (or specific loci within it) in order to muster interpretative, expressive or didactic powers.

⁶²¹ Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* and Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* were already mentioned footnotes 112, 165 and 495 above. Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), and *The Web of Images: Vernacular Preaching from its Origins to St Bernardino of Siena* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) are important additions.

⁶²² See Busse Berger, *Medieval Music* for the interaction between orality and notation, as well as for a description of how similar mental and mnemonic techniques created different musical styles in different cultural contexts (Chapter II). For a more general discussion of expectation and meaning in music see Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

⁶²³ See, for example, the changing visual input in the different stages of Dante's *Comedia*, or its coupling of moral sentiment with striking images, which can be accessed independently through visual media, described in Lina Bolzoni, 'The impassioned memory in Dante's *Comedia*', in Yolanda Plumley and Giuliano Di Bacco (eds), *Citation, Intertextuality and Memory in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, vol 2: *Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Medieval Culture* (forthcoming).

⁶²⁴ An example of the mnemonic use of music is the organisation of antiphonaries, where text could be divided up into groups to be memorised according to their mode and formulaic behaviour. For the tension between the naturalistic and the intellectual see Leach, *Sung Birds*.

Actively functional music, designed to promote specific acts such as military compliance, dance or prayer, needed to possess a clear musical language, and avoid excessive surprises which would come in the way of fulfilling the musical expectations. Otherwise, movements on the battlefield would not be clear or soldiers' morale damaged, religious ritual may be disrupted, and lack of coordination between dancers could create social tension. Small-scale surprises are possible to create excitement or show ability in dance, or to stress important words in the liturgy, but they cannot be truly challenging.⁶²⁵ A performer of secular songs in a courtly setting would not have had to worry about influencing the movements of his or her audience, or following religious dogma. While the performance itself had a social function and entertainment value, its musical content could be freer, more personal and expressive. Even when music was integrated into secular ceremonies, its role can be seen as social and interactive, and therefore only passively functional. All of this leaves more room for personal expression and individualistic differentiation. Indeed, musicians competing for attention and favour in such contexts would want to attract attention to their efforts. The clearest mark of both expression and distinction would have been the surprising unfulfilment of musical expectations, used for attracting attention to a work as a whole, or to specific elements within it.⁶²⁶

The acquisition of any language depends on repetition.⁶²⁷ This would have been tacitly accepted in a culture where learning by rote was a matter of course. Repeated dashing of expectations weakens the aborted expectation's strength. At some point, the surprise becomes expected and is incorporated into the language. A new expectation replaces the old, and new forms of transgression have to be found. This is in an uncontroversial model for the process driving medieval stylistic change, relevant also to any other repertoire. It finds echoes in the traditional theory of musical periodisation, and when combined with other

⁶²⁵ Giovanni Ambrosio for example, notes that, "One is yet able to obtain another experience by doing the opposite. In this other way, one dances a *saltarello* according to its *tempo*, and the musician with other *misure* tries in every way to draw the dancer from the *tempo*". See William A. Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music: Twelve Transcribed Italian Treatises and Collection in the Tradition of Domenico Piacenza* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1995), vol. 1, pp. 135-6.

⁶²⁶ For a parallel, secular, non-musical cultural trend which combined ritualistic behaviour with a delight in the exceptional and the ingenuous, see the process of gift-giving in Brigitte Buettner, 'Past Presents: New Year's Gifts at the Valois Courts, ca. 1400', *TAB*, lxxxiii (December, 2001), pp. 598-625, esp. pp. 604-8 on the insistence on subtlety, ingenuity and interpretative depth on top of the obvious monetary value and visual effect.

⁶²⁷ See Barbara Jonhstone (ed.), *Repetition in Discourse: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 2 vols (Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex, 1994).

influences such as composer-personality, changes in cultural context and technology, can be integrated also into more refined definitions of style.⁶²⁸

Both Carruthers' analysis of the construction of memory and Bolzoni's concept of its use in art and moral discourse attribute a major role to visuality in medieval memory. Visuality manifests itself in mnemonic techniques, the presentation of written materials to be remembered, the interpretation of visual arts, and the construction of mental images in ordered to internalise ideas expressed in literature or oration. As discussed above,⁶²⁹ musical production was not immune to these influences, for the copying of manuscripts, choice of text, compositional procedure, and perhaps even performance techniques, all used varying degrees of visuality at different times and places. Consideration and manipulation of visuality seem therefore particularly important in the more oral and abstract culture of the Middle Ages.

How then, does the *Ars subtilior* fit into all of this? Can a single unifying intellectual characteristic be defined that would codify a relationship between it and general late-medieval culture? Or, in other words, can we find a medieval thought-process through which a definition for this style as a separate musical entity makes sense or is useful?

My attempt to contextualise the *Ars subtilior* centres around an awareness of the expressive processes described above. As previously mentioned, stylistic change (which seemed to have been a constant in fourteenth century music) involved the process of manipulating musical expectations. I propose that the uniqueness of *Ars subtilior* style arose from the adaptation of the process, and its transformation from a largely unconscious model of musical change, into a prime stylistic trait. Different techniques for avoiding the fulfilment of expectation become expressive, meaningful tools in the prevalent language of this style. They lose their role as 'stylistic destabilisers' in the process of change from one coherent stylistic language to the next. The degree of self-awareness required to establish such a language does not seem to me out of place when looking at *Ars subtilior* repertoire and

⁶²⁸ For musical periodisation see Henry Leland Clarke, 'Toward a Musical Periodization of Music', *JAMS*, ix (Spring, 1956), pp. 25-30. This is another case where the *Ars subtilior* was ignored as it did not fit with the general scheme presented pp. 27-9. For a more complete consideration of style see Leonard B. Meyer, *Style and Music: Theory, History and Ideology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), esp. pp. Chapter 1 (pp. 3-162).

⁶²⁹ See pp. 185-6 and 188-9 above, but also Smilansky, 'A Labyrinth'.

theory.⁶³⁰ Self-awareness is attested to in many song texts, notational choices, visual significations, and theoretical constructions.

If this is accepted, and we decide to define musical *subtilitas* as the creation of expression by a self-conscious striving against normative expectations, we can make sense of the extremes found in this style, as well as their coexistence with the different kinds of mainstream musical styles examined in the previous chapter.⁶³¹ A transgression-based model of expressivity is not in itself new.⁶³² I would simply like to extend it from being applicable to single phenomena, to becoming the central characteristic of this style. The same model can then be applied also to the decline of *Ars subtilior* practices, as divergence from its central characteristics resulted in the establishment of a new simplified style.⁶³³

Throughout this work, a number of hints suggested *Ars subtilior* music occupied a high cultural register.⁶³⁴ The coexistence with simpler music would have fed *Ars subtilior* composers with ready-made expectations against which they could ‘rebel’. This possibility explains the relatively long shelf-life enjoyed by this aesthetic phenomenon. If a linear temporal shift was in operation, one would have expected the *Ars subtilior* to shrivel away quickly as it would not have had a conventional style-base with which it could interact. Considering this style as simply a dead-end reaction to the *Ars nova* as it developed towards the *international* style, implies that it does not have an independent value. Its longevity would then be a mystery.⁶³⁵ In my opinion, more questions are answered when considering the *Ars subtilior* as but one of a number of registers in the overall musical culture. This view provides a mechanism by which both the rise and demise of this style can be rationalised and, by extension, its contents understood.

⁶³⁰ Once a language, however complex, is established, it is of course possible that composers may have used it in a less self-conscious way, much in the same way as they would have done with any other recognisable stylistic language.

⁶³¹ The creation of expectations and their thwarting were mentioned in the description of a number of the features of *Ars subtilior* style (see, for example, pp. 77, 82-3, 114, 116, 120, 147-8, 156-8, 173, 178, and 198-9 below) and featured heavily also in the case studies.

⁶³² Fuller, for example, already explored some means for strengthening or weakening cadential progressions according to the degree to which standard progressions are followed or avoided while codifying the basis of fourteenth-century harmonic language in the mid 1980s. See Fuller, ‘On sonority’, pp. 54-60 or for a later expansion, ‘Tendencies and Resolutions’.

⁶³³ For a more detailed discussion concerning the characterisation of this style as a repertory or a style-period see pp. 293-300 below. A similar model was also used to describe other musical styles. For its application to Romantic harmonic usage see Meyer, *Style and Music*, Chapter 7 (pp. 218-272).

⁶³⁴ See, for example, pp. 60-1, 91, 100, 112-3, 118-9, 185-90, 193-4 and 198-9 below.

⁶³⁵ This was characteristic of early interpreters, but still has resonance in Apel’s cyclical concept of style-development. See pp. 31-3 above.

To support this view, a number of characteristics described in this thesis could also be understood as markers of exclusivity, defining ‘in-crowds’ in the face of general practice.⁶³⁶ The very difficulty of composing and performing this music (and by extension, the ability to appreciate it as an audience) marks out its practitioners as ‘special’.⁶³⁷ The continuing and extensive interest in quoting other works can be understood also in terms of composers’ attempt to show the breadth of their knowledge and give audiences a chance to demonstrate their cultural proficiency by recognising the quotation, on top of their specific expressive and meaningful use. An even tighter clique was created when composers exchanged quotations, showing a direct reciprocal awareness of each other’s work. While some technical notational tools were purely pragmatic, others can be said to mirror intellectual preoccupations of the time, implying that composers, performers and audience are to be counted as part of the educated elite.⁶³⁸ Other incorporations of visuality were not only practical for learning and remembering this music, but were also a means to bolster composers’ hold on their work, their reputations, and the social value of the composition away from performance.⁶³⁹ The incorporation of special visual cues (especially when connected to a work’s notation) would naturally make scribes more careful in their copying, as a copy would have to be similar to the original in order to maintain its meaning. Composers could use this to try and make sure their work was not overly manipulated or corrupted in distribution, and at the same time take more responsibility (and therefore credit) for it. The construction of a personal notational style (as in the works of Senleches for instance) could also ensure personal recognition. Finally, a song imbued with visual signification (or which at least stands out visually) can be considered to be transformed into an independent work of art. By containing visual elements which are attractive also to non-musicians, the work on the page becomes an exotic object which comments on its owners’ status and worth even when not performed. A manuscript containing this repertoire is therefore transformed from a single status-enhancing object to a container for multiple works of art, raising its social significance, and marking it out even in comparison to other books of music. Both over-visuality and the ingenuity involved in under-visuality could qualify copies of such works also as gifts, further raising the social,

⁶³⁶ See, for example, pp. 67, 163-5, 190, 193 and 195-7 above.

⁶³⁷ Perhaps more than other musical styles, it may have been associated with high literacy in both performer and audience. Still, as the music may well have been memorised for performance, and perhaps also transmitted orally, and as the visualisation of works within it enabled their appreciation also as a visual image, this assertion should remain tentative.

⁶³⁸ For an examination of *Ars subtilior* practices in these terms see Stone, *Writing Rhythm*, part two (pp. 160-291), or Tanay, *Music in the Age of Ockham*, esp. Chapter vii (pp. 170-204).

⁶³⁹ See pp. 190 and 197 above.

status-giving qualities of this style.⁶⁴⁰ In light of this registral multiplicity, and in order to understand the workings of this style, it is first necessary to present the norms with which *Ars subtilior* could interact.

Building-blocks of *Ars subtilior*

Chapter 4 attempted to discern the effects of specific compositional tools, as well as the relationships between some of those techniques, considered solely from the vantage point of the music. In light of the ideas presented above, a fuller sketch of the meaning behind the underlying stylistic features of the *Ars subtilior* can only be achieved by comparing them to standardised modal, rhythmic, and setting- or scoring-related behaviour that can be defined at the time. As the likely origin (and standard technical and stylistic affiliation) of the *Ars subtilior* was in the French cultural orbit, the following remarks centre on French rather than Italian *Ars nova* practices.

With the pervasiveness of singing or listening to plainchant in daily life, there is no avoiding the centrality of the ideas and sounds codified in the medieval Church's modal system. When polyphony entered the frame, the situation became more complex. Perhaps as an attempt to avoid diminished fifths (fourths were considered a dissonance anyway, so augmented fourths did not require the special treatment given to their enharmonic counterparts), a common constellation of hexachords arose, in which the lower voices operated one degree flatter than the upper ones. The weakening of the modal system is made apparent by this choice, and was further enhanced by the rise of directional harmonic leading from imperfect to perfect consonance in the form described by Fuller.⁶⁴¹ This allowed for the insertion of further accidentals to enhance both harmonic and melodic tension, and a gradual move away from a reliance purely on the hierarchical relationships between the different steps of the modal scale. Chromaticism and difficult intervallic progressions were used, but in exceptional circumstances.⁶⁴² The majority of *ouvert* locations fell a step above the *clos*, or otherwise in a location on the scale which naturally resulted in a plagal cadence.⁶⁴³

⁶⁴⁰ The importance of visulaity and ingenuity in gift-giving is one of the main points of Buettner, 'Past Presents'.

⁶⁴¹ See footnotes 88 and 110, as well as pp. 140-2 above.

⁶⁴² See Brothers, *Chromatic Beauty*, or Jan W. Herlinger, 'Marchetto's Division of the Whole Tone', *JAMS*, xxxiv (Summer, 1981), pp. 193-216, esp. 193-7.

⁶⁴³ See discussion of pitch-structures, pp. 121-7 above. I regard also cantus *ouvert* locations a third below the *clos* when the tenor harmonises them with a fifth rather than an octave as part of this group.

Rhythmic perception was governed by the four mensurations, with a marked preference for C, in which coloration was not considered surprising, and a relative distancing from O which contained the most ambiguities as regards both coloration and perfection rules. In the French *Ars nova* as a whole, but particularly in the song repertoire, rhythmic units tended to remain strictly defined. Simple syncopation appeared, but again only occasionally. Changes of rhythmic units within a piece were very uncommon. The rhythmic values used tended to be in the standard range between *longa* and *minima*.

Standard scoring was for three parts, with one texted and two untexted voices, the latter moving around a fifth lower than the former. The alternative, scoring the second non-texted voice as a triplum which uses the same range as the texted cantus rather than a lower contratenor, was not uncommon. Monophonic and two-part composition was still popular. *Formes fixes*, motets and Mass movements were standard, with the odd fully canonic song making an appearance.⁶⁴⁴ Melismas were often used to separate the settings of each text-line and mark ends of sections, but they were mostly kept rather short.⁶⁴⁵ As a result the overall size of the musical setting was kept relatively compact. Settings of *grandes ballades* with a repeating musical B section were not so common, but did occur occasionally. The texts of polyphonic secular songs tended to adhere to courtly themes.

When *Ars subtilior* composers came to interact with these basic expectations, they had multiple ways by which to disrupt each one. It seems that some of these expectations were standardised in order to ease subsequent deviation. The expected norm concerning scoring for example became more rigid, with the three-part option with a contratenor becoming normal, and all other scorings becoming exceptions.⁶⁴⁶ Every choice creates a different effect, and therefore conveys a different meaning. Dashing an expectation can create a sense of instability, a specific mood, forward propulsion towards a future resolution, or attract attention to a specific location in a piece. Meaning still arises from the combination of

⁶⁴⁴ See, for example, the five canonic songs in **Iv**: *Talent m'es pris* ff. 10 & 52; *Tres dous compains*, ff. 51v-52; *Se je chant mains* f. 52v, and *Umblemens vos pri* ff. 58v-59.

⁶⁴⁵ Exceptions do occur, such as the extensive syncopations and melismas in Machaut's *Quant je ne voy*. Especially when looking at his later output, it is hard to say whether we should still regard him as an older authoritative voice which sets the norm, or as continually innovative composer who participates also in the new musical currents of his later years and composes against the old norms he previously helped establish. For another discussion of this duality see the discussion of *Se pour ce muir* in comparison with *Je suis cellui* pp. 247-8 above.

⁶⁴⁶ For comments on the underlying standardisation of harmonic language and cadential progressions see pp. 122, 138-9, 143-4 and 154 above.

expectations, the links between them, and the degree of fulfilment of each one and their sum. This suggests that an attempt to find a unique and universal description of the effects of each strategy of this kind would be unhelpful.

Destabilising techniques include deviation from the harmonic or melodic modal context (inflection as well as dissonance), proportion and both internal and external syncopation.⁶⁴⁷ Perhaps with the exclusion of external syncopation, all these effects create their own miniature expectations in their need for resolution. While each technique can be used both for one-off, localised effect and larger-scale or structural use, modal deviation, external syncopation and simultaneous proportional shifts lend themselves better to localised use, while internal syncopation and proportional cross-rhythms are easier to stretch over longer sections.

The inner workings of each technique shape its effect. In terms of the ‘stretched-out’ techniques, syncopation is relatively easy to digest and typically incorporates a degree of harmonic richness, making it useful in creating a feeling of displacement coupled with a clearer sense of direction. Proportional relationships between voices are harder to follow and involve rhythmic as well as harmonic friction, giving the illusion of independence between voices. These characteristics allow for proportional relationships to lend themselves more easily to creating disorientation than clear directionality, even though an expectation for a resolution is still present. Disorientating techniques are especially effective when used at the beginning of a work, as audiences were not yet provided with stable rhythmic units and modal centres to hold on to. Such usage in itself creates structural expectations for the song’s continuation, which can then be manipulated.⁶⁴⁸

Other, less extravagant but by no means less audible techniques can be used to attract local attention. These can involve the breaking of standard underlay-patterns by inserting additional melismas or leaving expected ones out, or by arranging the stresses of the text to

⁶⁴⁷ For the two definitions, see pp. 175-6 above.

⁶⁴⁸ See discussion of *Amour m’a le cuer mis* pp. 156 and 233 above, or the different expectations arising from the beginnings of the different triplum voices added to *De ce que foul pense* pp. 272 and 275-6 above. Different relationships can be seen also in *Fumeux fume* (Ch, f. 59) which starts as it means to continue, in comparison with *Roses et lis* (Ch, f. 22) which begins with extensive syncopations but continues using simpler rhythms for the majority of its song. Surprising melodic and harmonic beginnings were supplied in ex. 4-34 and 4-87. For a similar notion concerning the setting up of tonal expectations in Machaut’s songs, see Plumley, *The Grammar*, pp. 147-63.

work against the music's rhythmic units.⁶⁴⁹ Additionally, the use of *coronae* to highlight names or key words became particularly popular, especially in dedicatory works.⁶⁵⁰ Other, more general techniques to create friction, surprise or expressive meaning include: the scale of the setting and scoring;⁶⁵¹ the departure from textual thematic conventions; the texting of more than one voice (be it with the same or a different text); using special hexachord-combinations resulting in conflicting or unusual key-signatures;⁶⁵² adding dissonance (through inflection or note combination), and using the extremities of the Guidonian range, and even transgressing it. Each technique brings a different kind of instability to the equation. Less common is the use of non-standard voice-combinations (unless combined with canonic behaviour or special texting pattern), or the setting of non-*formes fixes* texts.⁶⁵³

In light of the tendency to write longer works, compositional techniques were necessary also to maintain this expansion. In addition to the use of proportions and syncopations to extend single phrases, additional, tailor-made expectations were created for individual works, to be fulfilled or dashed as the case may be. Imitation (between voices, or naturalistic imitation) signals that a game is being played which makes the listener look out for more. It draws attention to the motif used, and draws the ear away from the central texted voice. Sequences, once recognised, similarly create the expectation of continuity. Canonic voices by their nature let the audience know what to expect, but simultaneously challenge them to notice and follow all the voices. The same goes for the insertion of other kinds of hidden voices or isorhythmic structures. Self-referential texts create an expectation for the music to reflect their content. Musical and textual citations and allusions create a local expectation similar to that of imitation, with the addition of cultural self-assertion (for both composer and audience), and the enriching of a song's layered meaning through the interaction with the

⁶⁴⁹ For an example of the first technique, see Solage's *Saincy estoit* (Ch, f. 36), where a protracted melisma (combined with a proportional shift in the speed of rhythmic progression) marks out the name 'Jhean' in the middle of the second line of text. The second technique was highlighted in relationship with Bartholomeo de Bononia's *Que pena maior* and Matteo da Perugia's *Puis que la mort* on pp. 132-4 above.

⁶⁵⁰ See pp. 134 and 145 above. For a non-dedicated work, see *Toute clerte* (Ch, f. 13).

⁶⁵¹ Scoring a work with two voices tends to give the effect of enhanced clarity, and makes it easier to follow both text and music. This allows more extreme use of other techniques. Scoring in four parts gives the sense of fullness, richness and increased level of activity. Smaller details, the text, or the use of more extravagant techniques are harder to follow. Longer works (see *Je suis celui* for example) carry more weight but can become relentless, while very short songs (such as *O bonne douce Franse*) can be seen as either lighter or as an unexplained shock to the system, leaving the listener disoriented and unfulfilled.

⁶⁵² The different possibilities for achieving this were presented pp. 123-4 above, and their consecutive application in a single piece were presented in case study 3, pp. 237-248 (esp. pp. 243-4) above.

⁶⁵³ See the text of *Angelorum psalat* figure 5-1 and the discussion of the discrepancy between its form and that of the music on pp. 222-3 above.

original context of the borrowed material.⁶⁵⁴ These were only the audible techniques. Apart from the social, practical and mnemonic uses of visuality, the use of special visual means, or deviation from the visual norm, can be used also expressively within a single-piece context, setting structural expectations or attracting attention to specific locations within it.

I believe that this simple conceptual shift allows for an expressive system to be constructed for this style. It allows us to understand varying degrees of use of *Ars subtilior* characteristics. While enabling us to incorporate this style's stranger instances into a practical, coherent culture, it finds room also for more nuanced use. Instead of judging compositions according to whether a stylistic feature appears in them or not, we can determine whether the use or avoidance of a technique was part of an examination of its limits, or simply as part of a language of manipulating expectations. The system thus created can then be used to understand medieval songs in context, and incorporate the *Ars subtilior* into a model of stylistic musical change in the middle ages. It also allows for musicological analysis of expression within this music to complement research into its technical features. This in turn can offer a gateway through which its performance can be approached. The next step now would be to see whether it is possible to anchor this concept of *Ars subtilior* style into a social and cultural medieval context.

An overall picture?

Throughout this work I have resisted giving clear and defined borderlines for the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon. Even without clear edges, there is enough substance to this phenomenon to be able to consider its essence and interaction with its surroundings. It is debatable whether there is more merit in viewing the *Ars subtilior* as a style-period (at least within the context of French music) or as one stylistic trend among a host of competing, parallel practices.⁶⁵⁵ It is clear therefore that strong arguments could be made either way. I would suggest that a resolution for the matter is unlikely to depend only on a correct interpretation of the surviving evidence, but will be possible only once a consensus is reached concerning the very act of definition, its use and the concepts behind it.

⁶⁵⁴ See p. 197 above for the example of Senleches's *Je me merveil – J'ay plusieurs*.

⁶⁵⁵ This topic was discussed in the 2001 *New Perspectives on the Chantilly Codex* conference. While no clear consensus emerged, opinion moved away from considering the *Ars subtilior* as a style period.

Defining *Ars subtilior* as one among many stylistic trends enables it to have clear borders, since a mechanism is formed for excluding from consideration works which do not fit within the chosen fold. Still, the problem of privileging characteristics for the stylistic trend remains, and results can vary greatly if different geographic, linguistic, intellectual or notational affiliations are emphasised. Following this approach makes it harder to contextualise this phenomenon within general medieval culture, as doing so involves considering all those works not deemed fit for inclusion under this term. The exclusivity offered by its adoption is therefore lost. It is also harder to base a narrow definition of a stylistic trend on a wide concept of medieval thought and culture rather than narrow segments of it, or individual pieces of evidence which fit the chosen agenda. This makes narrow definitions of stylistic trend more prone to influence by modern preferences or practicalities.

The definition of *Ars subtilior* as a style period incorporates it within a wide contextual background, since it implies that it will have relevance to every part of musical culture, and that its origins are to be found in medieval culture as a whole. While this idea is attractive, it is hindered by the parallel transmission and archival coexistence of *Ars subtilior* and other contemporaneous as well as older musical styles, the need to consider unwritten traditions in the mix, and the ever-present cultural demand for the kind of functional music which the *Ars subtilior* repertoire cannot supply.

That the French tradition seemed to enjoy a wider distribution and more active circulation than the Italian, Spanish, English or German traditions before the second or third decades of the fifteenth century suggests that we may want to consider French music as a major, unified and coherent cultural force with a pan-European appeal.⁶⁵⁶ On the other hand, it was also shown that this music did not travel as a stable edifice, but interacted with other traditions and was adapted to different local needs. This suggests that while French culture had a wider international appeal, it was not adopted wholesale. Cultural currents in the context which led to the creation of this music and in those in which it circulated may have been very different. The possibility of simplification or ornamentation of music of varying character in practice (in addition to those examples found in written sources) further blurs the line between the original context and the use of both *Ars subtilior* and simpler music.

⁶⁵⁶ The meagre crop of French, non-Machaut manuscripts in this period makes this assertion tenuous, as the counter-influence of other traditions in France is hard to determine.

How then can we conceptualise the seemingly inconsistent evidence before us? Can we isolate appropriate performance opportunities for this music in the medieval past to match its evident popularity in many of the leading courts in Europe? How and why did this style come about? Can we find reasons for the timing and the way in which the change I proposed above as central to the uniqueness of this style took place?

I believe a layered concept combining elements from both the style period and the stylistic trend perspectives is of most use here. To make sense of this phenomenon, it is necessary to pinpoint a cultural and social need which was felt by all those who cultivated this style, as well as a mechanism through which this music could be distributed into wider layers of society. For my view of the *Ars subtilior* to be credible, the need in question has to manifest itself in the allure of 'exceptionality' to a wide section of society, at least as far as passively functional music is concerned. This is not to say that we should look for a medieval search for extremity for its own sake, but only for a prevailing intellectual atmosphere which made exceptionality an underlying musical-linguistic trait. The trait itself will then be closer to the fore or further in the background according to the registral or functional use of specific pieces. Put bluntly, I believe this need was for status and legitimacy in a time where cultural change was trying to keep up with intellectual, economic and circumstantial developments.

If we believe (as I propose) that a natural process brought together the exceptional conditions necessary for the creation of this style, a much wider anthropological study would have to be undertaken in order to study the processes and reasons for change in late-medieval intellectual culture and their specific implications for music. Somewhere in the process of such a study one would surely find the myriad historical events and developments which have already been linked to this style. These included the Black Death, the Hundred Years War, intellectual and philosophical advances, and of course the Schism.⁶⁵⁷ The rise in status and influence of the universities, the growing centrality of intellectual authority, the attempts to bolster national identity in the face of enemies with a similar culture (be that in the context of the Hundred Years War or Schismatic rivalries), and the professionalization,

⁶⁵⁷ Most of these factors were sweepingly referred to in the quotation from Vernier presented p. 44 above. They can also be found in more scholarly contexts, from Günther's original definition of the *Ars subtilior* term, to the more recent work of Tanay and Stoessel. Another example of a re-formulation of an existing cultural idea in the pursuit of status and legitimacy, which came about in the same circumstances was the ritualisation of gift-giving. See Buettner, 'Past Presents', pp. 600-2 and 613-9.

individualization and celebrity of artisans during the economic and cultural recovery from the Black Death were likely contributors to the directions in which this style developed.⁶⁵⁸ The primacy of French culture as a mark of respectable ‘otherness’ as attested to by the distribution of French music, poetry and literature in other countries was also a likely influence, as well as many less sweeping and more personal factors. When looking at the patterns of patronage by the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy, for example, both men cultivated more than one musical style. This can be explained as an unremarkable adherence to changing fashion. More interestingly though, seeing *Ars subtilior* as a style intimately connected to the past (refining, extending and manipulating inherited expectations), and the *International* style as an attempt to create a cultural break and a new beginning, makes sense of the timing of this change of preference. Promoting *Ars subtilior* practices during Charles VI’s infancy and bouts of madness fitted in with both Dukes’ attempts to present themselves as the rightful heirs of French culture and therefore legitimate governors of the realm. Preferring the new and different aesthetic when faced with a revitalised French monarch presented their musical (and by extension, political) independence at a time when consolidating power within their own regions became a more pressing issue. In the context of this argument it does not matter whether these were intentional choices and the music used as propaganda,⁶⁵⁹ or subconscious currents which swept musical style in this direction. What is important is that it is possible to match the stylistic characteristics of *Ars subtilior* music with other political and cultural trends. A similar case could be seen in the tension between international expansionist ambitions and internal instability of the Italian dukedoms and city-states. As a general outline, it is possible to argue that the competitive atmosphere thus created contributed to a rise in the number of musical posts (in particular through the founding of personal or competing institutional chapels), and an international race to fill them.⁶⁶⁰ The growing importance of learning and the dire need for legitimisation felt by

⁶⁵⁸ The importance also of secular culture in the schismatic context is demonstrable by the rival popes’ need to rely on secular powers to justify their positions. Another early catalyst in the development of this style may have been the French need to reassert cultural identity (if not superiority) during the captivity of Jean II in England. For the mirroring process in the English use of language as a self-defining tool during the Hundred Years War, see Ardis Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford, 2010). The importance of creative individualisation and taking credit for composer’s work was discussed in a number of contexts above, from the growing popularity of ascriptions in musical sources (p. 84), to composers use of visuality in their notational technique (pp. 67, 162-3, 165, 187 and 288-9).

⁶⁵⁹ See the contextualisation of *Angolorum psalat*, pp. 208-10 and the discussion of dedicatory songs, pp. 96-7 above.

⁶⁶⁰ See Chapter 3 above for the international careers of some musicians and the cosmopolitan combination of musical personnel in most central courts. The second half of the fourteenth century saw the foundation of household chapels by all the French princes. See Plumley, ‘An ‘Episode’, pp. 116-7 and 124-8.

many courtly and ecclesiastical leaders demanded a show of authority, ability, worth and continuity from composers, performers, patrons and audiences. It is not surprising that virtuosic refinement and complication of older trends seemed to have been deemed more suitable than a break with the past and a new beginning. This allowed patron and audiences to emphasise continuity, worth and improvement, and gave composers and performers means for personal distinction while maintaining the authority and legitimacy attached in medieval culture to tradition.

Anchoring the *Ars subtilior* to such underlying cultural forces can explain its appeal in a wider context than its original French locality. The forces described above influenced first and foremost the higher intellectual and aristocratic layers of society, these being the same people who had both the reasons and the means to maintain musical production and shape stylistic development. We can therefore safely imply that the *Ars subtilior* began as a high-level musical reaction to a specific contextual need.⁶⁶¹ This allows us to use developmental terms when examining the relationship between it and the surrounding styles, as they also had their inception in a reaction to other needs of the same social layers. Describing the *Ars subtilior* as answering a specific set of needs also enables us to explain its parallel existence with other musical phenomena, as well as the differences in its manifestation in different courts and contexts. The Visconti use of *Ars subtilior* style to demonstrate international status and worth did not conflict with their use of *Trecento* style to demonstrate their nationalistic credentials and symbiosis with indigenous culture: whether consciously or not, the use of each style answered a different set of needs. The inception of this style as high-status music is useful in allowing parallel, lower-status music to supply the expectations with which the *Ars subtilior* interacts.

This is not to say that this music is strictly elitist. After all, the consumption of different musical registers was never synonymous with the different social strata. On the contrary – the highest layers of society would have most use also of the most functional music. While variation in interest probably existed, it is likely that the core differences in musical consumption between the higher aristocracy and the lower aristocracy, bourgeois or

⁶⁶¹ Again, this is not necessarily a conscious invention, and many other influences such as intellectual and technical currency or personal availability and involvement may well have directed the development of the style. The specific social and political link is emphasised here only as it enabled the practical coupling of these influence and their wider distribution through society.

intelligentsia were quantitative rather than qualitative. Dance music for example probably penetrated all these social strata. When music was used to distinguish and elevate a social class, competing estates could raise their own status by emulating it. Some groups lower down the social order at times defined themselves and their aspirations by showing an extensive interest in high culture.⁶⁶² Furthermore, inter-registral exchanges are never one-sided. While the *Ars subtilior* required other musical registers to draw expectations from, it is clear that *Ars subtilior* works were themselves adapted for other purposes. We have encountered such songs adapted for functional purposes, stripped of key features of the style, or reinvented into a new context, keeping only some melodic material from the original.⁶⁶³ These adaptations should not be regarded as marginal anomalies at the edges of the phenomenon, but as the natural process by which high culture feeds upon its surroundings and is itself subsequently re-absorbed back into more common usage. Without this process, high-register cultural activities would not be able to influence general style. Without a mechanism for change in the general style, large-scale stylistic-periodical change cannot take place.⁶⁶⁴ Once a degree of exceptionality was thus assimilated into other parts of musical production, its allure for high-register purposes dwindled, making room for the next, simplifying cultural force. Like the rise of the *Ars subtilior*, it is clear that its demise was influenced by many other, non-musical forces which can only be hinted at here. These may have ranged from shifts in the political fortunes of key *Ars subtilior* centres,⁶⁶⁵ through the need of the Church to mark a new beginning after the Schism, all the way to the aristocratic attempt to legitimatise their power and influence in a world where new military tactics and technology made their traditional foothold over society increasingly redundant.

When considering the wider social relevance of the *Ars subtilior*, we should keep in mind that, until recently, all notated music was essentially elitist. Even at times where this elite

⁶⁶² On the problems with over-concentration of activities in central courts see Tomasello, 'A Footnote', pp. 95-100. For a more specific discussion of the cultivation of polyphonic songs by the bourgeois already in the 1330s, see Plumley, *The Art of Grafted Song*.

⁶⁶³ See the discussions of **Pit, Bud, Pr, Fa, Bux, WolkA, WolkB** and other sources described pp. 70, 192, 248-9 and 278 above.

⁶⁶⁴ This is by no means unique to the *Ars subtilior*. This cross-fertilisation can be seen in the absorption of characteristics of high musical style into dance music, and the subsequent adaptation of these very dance forms into abstract high-style genres. This process occurred throughout the history of western music, and can, for example, be discerned in the development of the medieval *formes fixes*, the baroque suite and the classical symphonic minuet.

⁶⁶⁵ For the changes in patterns of patronage by the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy see p. 296 above, to which may perhaps be added the escalation of hostilities between the Burgundian and Armagnac factions. Another example is the disintegration of Visconti power and with it, its imperial pretensions after Giangaleazzo's death.

was relatively broad, and public performances were routinely staged, the inception of new styles and the impetus for change mostly came from either an intellectual or aristocratic elite, if not a combination of both.⁶⁶⁶ This element of music-history is more visible with the *Ars subtilior* repertory only because of the extreme difficulty in performing some works (a difficulty which is not necessarily appreciated by the audience) and this style's proposed reliance on simpler styles with which to interact. Still, one can claim that its special circumstances facilitated distribution, as the period saw feverish international exchanges focused through a small number of centres, be they the Parisian intellectual power-house, the curia in Avignon, or any one of the councils called to resolve the Schism. The growing Third Estate in the meantime, would have supplied a demand for music written for the aristocracy, as the status and allure of high culture would not necessarily be coupled with the means to maintain and initiate it, or a context in which it could flourish.⁶⁶⁷ There is no reason therefore to see the social relevance of this music as narrower than other styles.

We can therefore think of the inception of *Ars subtilior* as a French style period which fulfilled important pan-European cultural needs, and had therefore a resonance outside the kingdom. At the same time, as it required external tradition with which to interact, it was not inclusive enough to fulfil all the aesthetic, cultural and functional needs of any one location, not even in its original context. This in-built duality can go some way to explaining the ease with which it was adapted in non-French contexts and coexisted with other indigenous traditions. In an Italian context for example, *Ars subtilior* conveyed cosmopolitanism, while most high-register musical needs could be provided just as well by the *Trecento* style.⁶⁶⁸ It is not surprising therefore to see that *Ars subtilior* works composed in Italy tended to stress the more extravagant elements of the style, amplifying the difference between it and the local tradition. When Zachara da Teramo or Johannes Ciconia used this style, they took the opportunity to go to the extreme in using style-elements not available to them in their everyday musical language.⁶⁶⁹ In contrast to the Italian context, where this music was used

⁶⁶⁶ This should not be confused with a style's cultivation and popularity.

⁶⁶⁷ See, for example, the discussion of the early history of **Ch** on p. 91 above.

⁶⁶⁸ As an example, see the co-existence of *Ars subtilior* and *Trecento* style compositions dedicated to Giangaleazzo Visconti. The composers relevant to the *Ars subtilior* who did so were mentioned pp. 107-8 above. The Italian works dedicated to the Viscontis include Bartolino da Padova's *Le aurate chiome* and *Alba colomba*, Antonello da Caserta's *Del glorioso titolo* and Johannes Ciconia's *Una panthera*. See Sarah M. Carleton, *Heraldry in the Trecento Madrigal* (PhD. diss. for the University of Toronto, 2009), p. 41.

⁶⁶⁹ See, for example, the extreme syncopations in Zachara's *Sumite karissimi*, the proportions, mensurations and citations in Ciconia's *Sus une fontayne*, and his proportional canonic composition *Le ray au soleyl*. That

as an additional layer to an already vibrant musical culture, the Cypriot collectors of this repertoire attempted to import an entire culture to compete with the indigenous traditions. It therefore makes sense that their great anthology presents a complete grey-scale of compositional techniques and registral relevance, from the most extravagant and extreme manifestations of this style's possibilities to straightforward and simple compositions. Similarly, different uses and circumstances would incur different degrees of scribal intervention. Some scribes may have tried to present themselves (and by extension the commissioners of their work) as participants in the creative process by adding layers of visual subtlety.⁶⁷⁰ Others were interested first and foremost in clarity, while a third group may have directed its activities strictly towards practice, attempting to simplify the notation as much as possible.⁶⁷¹ All this is even before considering scribal intervention when wholesale adaptations and reworking are concerned.

We still have to make sense of the difficulty we face in finding performing situations and performer-constellations for this music. After demonstrating how the use of some popular *Ars subtilior* techniques could be professionally and socially useful to performers, composers and audiences, this state of affairs seems even more surprising.⁶⁷² I would suggest that even when looking for practical performance-situations for the style, its musical, transgression-based model of expression can come to our aid. My musical model puts exceptional occurrences as a main expressive characteristic of *Ars subtilior* style. Extending this concept to the music's actual performance implies that its very use was considered exceptional. If we see the use of this style as having status-giving potential, it seems plausible to assume that it was used to mark out special events against the background of everyday musical performances.⁶⁷³ If this was so, it would have made little sense to maintain a troupe dedicated to exceptionality, as its services would not be routinely required. Instead, elevating otherwise everyday practitioners to perform exceptional musical tasks in specific circumstances can highlight the importance of the occasion. Being able to rise to the challenge conferred extra status on performers and composers, and perhaps more importantly,

Ciconia was probably educated first and foremost in the French style does not change the fact that he spent most of his career as a composer in an Italian context, writing for Italian audiences.

⁶⁷⁰ This may perhaps give a context for the historiated song in **Chic**. See pp. 75, 107, 186 and footnote 463 above.

⁶⁷¹ See, for example, the discussions of **Cyp** and **Paris** pp. 65-6, 161-2, 170 and 237 above.

⁶⁷² See pp. 61, 67, 101, 165-6, 187, 191, 194-8, 265, 277-8, 288-9, 295 and 297-300 above.

⁶⁷³ These could be the celebration of specific events, the entertainment of special guests, or the conveyance of important messages. This agrees also with the large number of dedicatory and celebratory works within this style.

gave them a competitive advantage in the job-market over those who could only perform their everyday duties. It would be natural to assume that those musicians whom we know to have composed in this style also had the ability to perform their work. Giving them a practical impetus to publicise these abilities, would allow us to imagine them doing so even without it being part of their official duties.⁶⁷⁴

Even though we do have evidence of a number of locations where a sufficient number of such musicians worked simultaneously, and for long enough periods for this approach to be practical, there is no reason to restrict *Ars subtilior* performance only to those people whom we know to have composed in this style.⁶⁷⁵ It is just as likely that patrons employed the most highly skilled musicians available as a sign of status and worth, and that most performers working for the important patrons of the time were therefore over-qualified for their everyday duties. This would suggest that a much wider pool of performers was available for the realisation of *Ars subtilior* songs. It raises the possibility that even minstrels or chaplains who did not show any direct, compositional interest in this style could at least hold one of the lower voices when called upon.⁶⁷⁶ If we keep in mind the popularity of virtuosic and exotic freelance performers attested to by account books and literary references, the growing patterns of municipal patronage, and the likely availability of *Ars subtilior* song in certain private mercantile residences, it is possible to imagine ample opportunity for this repertoire to transgress both its elitist origins and everyday musical practice.⁶⁷⁷ Even if we had no evidence for musicians being engaged specifically to perform this music, we could be safe in believing that the ability to do so would not have been that uncommon. Still, similarly to other cultural activities, the more able practitioners would have gravitated towards important social, economic or intellectual centres, allowing for the elite to maintain its musical edge over the rest of society.

⁶⁷⁴ For the discrepancy between the duties composers of *Ars subtilior* music were hired to perform and their written output see p. 89 above.

⁶⁷⁵ See pp. 90 above. Different lengths of professional co-operation see footnote 153 and pp. 93 above.

⁶⁷⁶ Many *Ars subtilior* tenor-lines are not harder than equivalent parts in any other mensural traditions, and it was not necessary to be extravagant in order to be subtle. This can be seen in *Sans joye avoir ne puet* (**Ch**, f. 23; **Pit**, f. 27v-28) for example, where the upper voices indulge in compound syncopation, but the tenor progresses only in *semibreves* and *breves* and with no melodic surprises, or in the songs discussed on pp. 137-9. The subtle use of less extravagant techniques was examined in case studies 3 and 4.

⁶⁷⁷ See, for example, p. 91 above on the ownership of **Ch**. For the evidence from account books and literary mentions see pp. 85-91, 97-8 and 100-1 above.

The identification of general underlying forces at work in the formation of the style makes another musicological debate less urgent: namely, whether this style originated with written music or with performance practice which then had to be notated. Since performers, composers and scribes belonged to the same cultural milieu, they would surely have felt these pressures pushing them in a similar direction. First instances could have come from either group, and it may be that both possibilities happened simultaneously but independently in different places. As the distribution of this style widened, it is just as easy to imagine its introduction to a new location through memorised performance (which would spur composers and scribes to find ways to notate it), as it is to think of an arrival of a manuscript, enabling composers to study and conceive of *Ars subtilior* as a purely written phenomenon while performers retrained to be able to execute it. The *Tractatus figurarum* seem to indicate that the former scenario did occur. If we imagine that the arrival of **Cyp** on the mainland resulted in the performance of some of the more complex work contained in it, or that exemplars travelled independently of performers, the latter scenario seems just as likely. The non-standardisation of notational technique meant that at least an element of the latter possibility happened whenever a written source was used for learning a piece. Still, since no written account from a performer's viewpoint survived, this has to remain in the realm of speculation.

In sum, the emerging picture is of the *Ars subtilior* as a hyper-creative style which follows its own logic and fits in with the overriding cultural influences and demands of its time and place. Its eccentricities can be read as expressive tools, which came together in different combinations to reinvent the familiar, in the same manner as did poetic and literary forms and topics of the time.⁶⁷⁸ As with all styles, the exponential growth in the number and kinds of compositional tools available would enhance the expressivity and effectiveness of *Ars subtilior* rather than hide a lack of essence. There were of course more and less able composers. Still, there is no reason to believe that the expectation of individualistic expansion and manipulation of technical tools as a stylistic trait affected the omnipresent ratio between more and less able practitioners. Similarly, intellectual, technical and notational preoccupations can be understood as means of adding expressive layers to a work

⁶⁷⁸ The clearest examples of this are in the poetry competitions upon a pre-given refrain popular in the various Puy flourishing throughout late medieval France. See, for example, Elizabeth C. Teviotdale: 'The Invitation to the Puy d'Evreux', *CM*, lii (1993), pp. 7–26, Plumley, *The Art of Grafted Song*, or the pre-given refrain lines from the Puy of Amiens for the years 1460-1517 copied into **Pa145**. The same attitude can be seen in the delight in quoting and re-working both music and text.

rather than standing in the way of expressivity. After all, whenever music and its performance are described, they always bring to the fore associations of sweetness and attractiveness.⁶⁷⁹ This music would not have been composed or consumed if both performers and audiences did not find it alluring and pleasurable.

Understanding the appearance of the *Ars subtilior* as a natural, logical process (even if the mechanics of this process cannot be fully clarified) enables us to accept it into both the historical and the musicological fold. It can then be used as an exception with which we can re-investigate our concept of normal stylistic change in the Middle-Ages. Fitting it into a location and time frame, and identifying underlying unifying principles which make sense of this style, makes it possible to perceive it as intuitively expressive and meaningful within its host culture. It also enables modern interpretative analysis and knowledge-based, expressive performance. The model presented here allows every part of the *Ars subtilior* phenomenon to gain in importance. The marginal and simpler occurrences become as central to the feasibility of the style as its main corpus. Its adaptations and mutations in the course of time and geographical distribution become as important to its meaning and study as the original impetus for its creation.

Throughout this work, notions of the margin and the marginalised kept coming to the fore. This happened in the context of the modern study, appreciation and performance of the *Ars subtilior* style. It arose with regard to the sources which contain it and its position within them. Marginalisation resurfaced when concerning the distribution of this phenomenon and the audiences it reached in the Middle Ages themselves. Finally, it was discussed how some of the technical and expressive elements used in this style's composition and performance were (perhaps unintentionally) undermined in favour of its more striking features in modern evaluations. One can read this dissertation as a structured attempt at dismissing the validity of such notions in every one of these contexts in turn. As my goal is so programmatic, it is easy to accuse me of interpretative bias. After all, many decades have passed since *New Musicology* taught us such bias is unavoidable in any historic or interpretative research. Other interpretations for the evidence presented above are of course possible. The

⁶⁷⁹ Many works discussed in this work portray such sentiments, including *Pour haut et liement chanter*; Senleches' *La harpe de melodie* and *Je me merveil – J'ay pluseurs*; Suzoy's, *Pictagoras Jabol et Orpheus*; Bartholomeus da Bononia's *Que Pena Maior*; Matheus de Sancto Johanne's *Are post libamina – Nunc surgunt*; Vaillant's *Pour ce que je*; Rodericus' *Angelorum psalat*; *Le mont Aon*; *Musicorum inter collegia*; *Appollonis ecclipastur*, and others.

interpretations I offer are made to enable new debate, not end it. For me, the important element is that considering the currently available information, it should not be possible to dismiss any aspect of the *Ars subtilior* as random, unworthy of study or performance, or devoid of reason and meaning.

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