

# Two fifteenth-century songs and their texts in a close reading

Autor(en): **Planchart, Alejandro Enrique**

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## TWO FIFTEENTH-CENTURY SONGS AND THEIR TEXTS IN A CLOSE READING

by ALEJANDRO ENRIQUE PLANCHART

Among problems faced by editors and performers of fifteenth-century music, text underlay remains one of the most vexing. The reasons for this are not far to seek; surviving sources present a variety of scribal practices and degrees of competence, and the writings of contemporary theorists are virtually silent on this matter.<sup>1</sup> Something of what Gaspar Stocker or Giovanni Lanfranco have to say on text underlay can be applied back to the music of the late fifteenth century,<sup>2</sup> but even so, the theorists' advice seems to founder when one encounters the intractable ligation of the lower voices of sacred works in such manuscripts as Cambrai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 6 and 11 – where there are often not enough ligatures or even enough notes to accommodate the text – or the seemingly random ligation one finds in the Trent Codices.

Earlier scholarship had viewed these parts as being taken by instruments, but it has become clear that this view is untenable, particularly in the case of the liturgical music. Recent work in the records of institutions as varied as the choirs of English collegiate churches and their counterparts in Brussels,<sup>3</sup> Cambrai cathedral,<sup>4</sup> the courts of Savoy and Burgundy,<sup>5</sup> the papal chapel,<sup>6</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Don Harrán, „In Pursuit of Origins: The earliest writing on text underlay (c. 1440),“ *Acta Musicologica* 50 (1978) 217-240, gives the one surviving theoretical account of text underlay before 1450 – a single page of the most elementary rules – and provides a useful exegesis of it. See also Harrán, *Word-tone relations in musical thought from antiquity to the seventeenth century*. Musicological Studies and Documents 40 (Stuttgart: American Institute of Musicology, 1986), pp. 67-75.

<sup>2</sup> On Stocker see Edward Lowinsky, „A Treatise on Text Underlay by a German Disciple of Francisco Salinas,“ *Festschrift Heinrich Bessler zum sechzigsten Geburtstag* (Leipzig 1961), pp. 231-251; and on Lanfranco see Don Harrán, „New Light on the Question of Text Underlay Prior to Zarlino.“ *Acta Musicologica* 45 (1973) 24-56; and Lanfranco, *Scintille di musica* (Brescia: Ludovico Brittanico, 1533; facsimile, Bologna 1970).

<sup>3</sup> See Roger Bowers, „*Choral Institutions within the English Church: their Constitution and Development, 1340-1500*,“ Ph. D. Dissertation (University of East Anglia, 1975), and Barbara Helen Hagg, „*Music, liturgy, and ceremony in Brussels, 1350-1500*,“ 2 vols., Ph. D. Dissertation (University of Illinois, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> Craig Wright, „Performance practices at the cathedral of Cambrai, 1475-1550,“ *The Musical Quarterly* 64 (1978) 295-328.

<sup>5</sup> Marie-Thérèse Bouquet, „La cappella musicale dei duchi di Savoia dal 1450 al 1500,“ *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 3 (1968) 233-285; Craig Wright, *Music at the Court of Burgundy 1364-1419: A Documentary History*, Musicological Studies 27 (Henryville: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1979), Jeanne Marix, *Histoire de la musique et des musiciens de la cour de Bourgogne sous le règne de Philippe le Bon (1420-1467)*, Straßburg 1939 (Sammlung musikwissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen 28 ).

<sup>6</sup> Pamela Starr, „*Music and music patronage at the papal court, 1447-1464*,“ Ph. D. Dissertation (Yale University, 1987).

the court of Ferrara,<sup>7</sup> point inescapably to the conclusion that the performance of almost all fifteenth-century liturgical and devotional music was entirely *a cappella*. Indeed, this new view of the performance practices of the fifteenth century,<sup>8</sup> has been expanded by some scholars to the realm of secular music of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as well,<sup>9</sup> even though this has not met with universal approval.<sup>10</sup> At this stage, however it may be fair to say that archival and iconographic evidence gives overwhelming evidence that, with very few exceptions, instruments were not used in the performance of fifteenth-century liturgical music,<sup>11</sup> and that in the performance of the secular repertory of composed polyphony instrumental participation has left far fewer traces than it was assumed, even though Howard Brown has built an impressive dossier of iconographic information concerning the *vielle* and harp as instruments used in the performance of polyphony.<sup>12</sup>

My purpose here is far from presenting a systematic view of the kinds of problems that the interpretation of the documentary, iconographic, and musical evidence present. This evidence at times seems wholly contradictory, though such an impression may simply be a misperception on our part caused by the our preconceptions and the historical distance that separates us from the fifteenth-century repertoires. Rather I will take up a few examples that one may use as a guide to deal with these repertoires, and which may also be used to make us see where our own historical perspective may be distorting our perception of these works.

My first example is one of the best-known works of the late fifteenth century, best-known today, for in its own time it seems to have had a very limited, though significant circulation. It is the setting of the song „L'homme

<sup>7</sup> Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara, 1400-1505* (Cambridge 1984).

<sup>8</sup> James McKinnon, „Representations of the mass in Medieval and Renaissance art.“ *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 31 (1978) 21, „a recently emerging, highly-qualified *a cappella* hypothesis.“

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Page, „Machaut's ‚pupil‘ Deschamps on the performance of music: Voices or Instruments in the 14th-Century Chanson?“ *Early Music* 5 (1977) 484-491; idem, „The performance of songs in late Medieval France,“ *Early Music* 10 (1982) 441-451; David Fallows, „Specific information on ensembles for composed polyphony, 1400-1474,“ *Studies in the Performance of Late Medieval Music*, ed. Stanley Boorman, Cambridge 1982, pp. 109-160.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Howard Mayer Brown, „Review of *The Castle of Fair Welcome: Courtly songs of the later Fifteenth century*, Gothic Voices (Hyperion, A66194),“ *Early Music* 15 (1987) 277-279.

<sup>11</sup> See the iconographic evidence marshaled in McKinnon, „Representations of the Mass,“ *passim*. For some exceptions to an *a-cappella* performance of liturgical music see Wright, *Music at the court of Burgundy*, p. 52, note 5, and Alejandro Enrique Planchart, fifteenth-century masses: Notes on chronology and performance,“ *Studi Musicali* 10 (1981) 8-17.

<sup>12</sup> Howard M. Brown, „The Trecento Harp.“ *Studies in the Performance of Late Medieval Music*, ed. Stanley Boorman (Cambridge 1982), pp. 35-73; id., „The trecento fiddle and its bridges“, *Early Music* 17 (1989) 308-329.

armé“ found anonymously in the Mellon Chansonnier,<sup>13</sup> in a three-voice version, and in a four-voice arrangement in the Casanatense song book,<sup>14</sup> with an ascription to „Borton,“ which has traditionally been identified as Robert Morton.<sup>15</sup> What follow are some observations concerning the text setting in this work as presented in the recent edition of the Mellon Chansonnier.<sup>16</sup>

The song is typical of the combinative chanson of the late fifteenth century in that it superimposes a courtly *rondeau* in the superius over two voices derived from a monophonic chanson rustique. If we assume that the monophonic song is that given in the Naples manuscript that transmits the six anonymous masses on „L’homme armé“,<sup>17</sup> the *chanson rustique* is not presented in Mellon in its entirety in any given part. Instead it is divided among the two bottom voices, which add a number of motives to it. What is crucial in this case is that the approach to the text setting in both tenor and contratenor is that of a *chanson rustique*, that is an entirely syllabic setting.

Right at the outset, however, the manuscript, despite the care that the scribe takes with text, presents us with a problem in the underlay. The opening of the contratenor, with melodic material derived from the middle section of the song, does not fit the music, there seems to be one extra note, and the repeated notes do force the text setting to begin with a syllable for each of the first three notes. The editor’s solution has been to break the normal French elision of the words „homme“ and „armé“ to accommodate the extra note, a clumsy setting that does justice to neither music nor prosody. It also violates the nature of the text setting in the *chanson rustique* repertory, which is what seems to govern the texting of the lower voices of this chanson.

<sup>13</sup> Leeman L. Perkins and Howard Garey, eds., *The Mellon Chansonnier*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979) 2: 124-125.

<sup>14</sup> Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, MS 2856. See Arthur Sheldon Wolff, „*The Chansonnier Biblioteca Casanatense 2856: History, purpose, and music*,“ 2 vols., Ph. D. Dissertation (North Texas State University, 1970).

<sup>15</sup> For a recent attempt to ascribe the work to Antoine Busnoys see Richard Taruskin, „Antoine Busnoys and the *L’homme armé* tradition,“ *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 39 (1986) 290-292. On historical grounds the ascription to Busnoys strikes me as singularly implausible.

<sup>16</sup> Perkins and Garey, *Mellon*, Vol. 2, pp. 124 (facsimile) and 125 (edition).

<sup>17</sup> Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS VI. E. 40, fol 58v. See Dragan Plamenac, „La chanson de L’homme armé et MS VI. E. 40 de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Naples,“ *Fédération archéologique et historique de Belgique: Annales* 25 (1925) 229; also Judith Cohen, *The six anonymous L’homme armé masses in Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS VI E 40*, Rome 1968 (Musicological Studies and Documents 21). Leeman Perkins, „The *L’homme armé* masses of Busnoys and Ockeghem: A comparison,“ *The Journal of Musicology* 3 (1984) 371-373, proposes, following Plamenac, that the text repetition set to a falling fifth motive at the end of the first part of the song was not part of the original monophonic version, but rather a result of a polyphonic elaboration. The matter makes little difference in this case.



Example 4:

mm. 2 - 3

L'o - me l'o - me l'o - me ar - mé

mm. 12 - 15

A l'as-saut a l'as-saut l'o - me lo - me l'o - me l'o - me ar - mé

There is the need for an emendation of the text underlay in the contratenor, but the emendation is at the opening of the song and not at the end. What the edition of Mellon gives us are two equally unmusical solutions to a simple problem. Musically apart, even on philological grounds the logical place to assume that the scribe may have made a mistake is the opening of the contratenor, since the opening is the place that would most likely be open to contamination from the scribe's knowledge of the text as set in the *chanson rustique*. Two other editions of the work, one in the collected works of Morton,<sup>18</sup> and one in the study of Morton's songs by Fallows,<sup>19</sup> split the difference, so to speak, by avoiding any emendation in the text. They preserve the clumsy opening but do not compound the error at mm. 14-15.

In passing let me note the one contrapuntal problem in the song, the contratenor f at the start of m.14, present both in Mellon and in the instrumental arrangement in Casanatense 2856. Perkins and Fallows allow it to stand, Atlas emends it to d, but the passage is a variation of the opening, which suggests that a g, in unison with the discantus is the correct note at this point. Morton apparently was sufficiently concerned with avoiding untoward dissonances to have altered an f of the cantus firmus to g (contratenor, m.10) to avoid a clash, however temporary, with the discantus.

The text underlay of the discantus presents a different set of problems, both in terms of the manuscript and of the edition. The approach to text-setting in this voice is not that of the *chanson rustique*, that is, a simple almost completely syllabic setting of the text, but rather it is typical of the kind of text setting we find in the courtly songs of the middle and late fifteenth century, where the coordination between music and text is far less obvious than what one finds in the monophonic chansons of the time. The editor has taken here the unusual step of compressing the entire first line of the poem to fit the first five perfections of the music, and then repeated the phrase „Le doubté Turcq,“ so that it eventually does fall where the scribe placed it in the manuscript.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Morton, *The collected works*, ed. Allan Atlas, New York pp. 7-8 (Masters and Monuments of the Renaissance 2)

<sup>19</sup> David Fallows, *Robert Morton's songs: A study of styles in the mid-fifteenth century*, Ph. D. Dissertation (University of California at Berkeley, 1978), p. 203.

But in so doing he destroys the way in which the composer has written the music so that the caesura of the line falls on the breve:

In sera pour vous conbatu / le doubté Turcq.

In this case the scribe's text placement was accurate and sensible, at least in so far as aligning the phrases of text with the section of music under which they fall. But there is also a small detail of musical calligraphy that may be used as a guide to the relationship between the text and the music in the first phrase; it is the two black semibreves in the discantus. They are not ligated, either in Mellon or in the textless version in the Casanatense manuscript. Now, I do not place a great deal of faith in the ligation patterns of fifteenth-century codices, but Mellon is a remarkably careful source and, as a rule, patterns of two semibreves, unless they are part of a completely syllabic setting (usually near the start of a piece), tend to appear in the form of ligatures *cum opposita proprietate*. My own sense of the notational practice of the mid-fifteenth century is that ligation of such patterns is even more prevalent in connection with the use of coloration. In these circumstances the separate notation of the two black semibreves at the start of the discantus in *Il sera pour vous conbatu* goes as far as the semiotics of fifteenth-century notation can go to tell the singer not to sing a new syllable of the first note of the pair. (see Fig. 1, p.20/21)

The *rondeau* of the discantus presents a number of problems that are typical of what one encounters in fifteenth-century courtly poetry. If we set it out with a line-by-line syllable count we have the following:

Example 5:

Form	Line	Text	Syllables
A	1	Il sera pour vous conbatu	8
	2	Le doubté Turcq, Maistre Symon	8
B	3	Certainement ce sera mon,	8
	4	Et de crocq de ache abatu.	8
a	5	Son orgueil tenons a batu	8
	6	S'il chiet en voz mains, le felon.	
A	1	Il sera pour vous conbatu	8
	2	Le doubté Turcq, Maistre Symon.	8
a	7	En peu de heure l'arés batu	8
	8	Au plaisir dieu. Puis dira-on,	8
b	9	„Vive Symonet le Breton	8
	10	Que sur le Turcq s'est enbatu!“	8
A	1	Il sera pour vous conbatu	8
	2	Le doubté Turcq, Maistre Symon	8
B	3	Certainement ce sera mon,	8
	4	Et de crocq de ache abatu.	8

The *rondeau* is absolutely regular in its syllable count but, as Fallows already pointed out several years ago, there are some serious problems in coordinating the text and the music.<sup>20</sup> In his study of the work Fallows sets up something of a straw man in order to demonstrate that indeed only an octosyllabic *rondeau* quatrain would fit, however clumsily, the piece at hand.<sup>21</sup> Although I agree with his assessment of this, nonetheless, the syntactical structure of the poem poses a number of difficult choices for the performer.

Even after one takes into account the problems that Fallows pointed out in his analysis of this song, such as the absence of cadences at line ends, the overshooting of the cadence by line 2, and the fact that the high point of the song and the one cadence not on g happen on a passage that has no text in the manuscript, the text of the refrain fits adequately the melody of the discantus.

The text of the stanzas, however, presents more serious difficulties because the syntactical units in the stanza do not match rhythmically those of the refrain and thus the stanza runs into problems with the phrase structure of the music. The lack of correspondence between syntactical units in refrain and stanza is indeed something that plagues a large proportion of pieces in the formes fixes, but seldom as acutely as here.

The first problem comes in the correspondence between lines three and six. The syntax of line three divides it into two units of four syllables, which can be easily sung to the phrase leading to the mid-point cadence and the four-note fanfare figure that follows the cadence. The syntax of line six, however, divides it into phrases of five and three syllables respectively. This structure simply cannot be accommodated to the music without doing some violence to either the music or the text. Perkins takes the easy way out by not underlying the stanza at all. Fallows places the syllables of line six exactly where the corresponding syllables of line two fall – an understandable choice in a dissertation example that is not intended to be a performance edition – but in so doing he does great violence to the text, since the caesura created by the breve g divides the phrase as follows: S'il chiet en voz / mains, le felon. Atlas accommodates the extra syllable in the first phrase by setting it to the minim f, but this leaves only three syllables for the fanfare figure in mm. 6-7. The singer has then the choice of replacing the first two minims of the figure by a semibreve or using some form of throat articulation to make clear the second minim on a syllable, something that a fifteenth-century

<sup>20</sup> Fallows, „Robert Morton's songs," pp. 218-220.

<sup>21</sup> Fallows, „Robert Morton's songs," pp. 215 and 220. Richard Taruskin, in a polemic communication in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40 (1987) 152, cites Fallows out of context in an effort to shore up his claim to Busnoys's authorship of the song, but Taruskin's argument evaporates when one reads Fallows entire discussion of the text underlay.



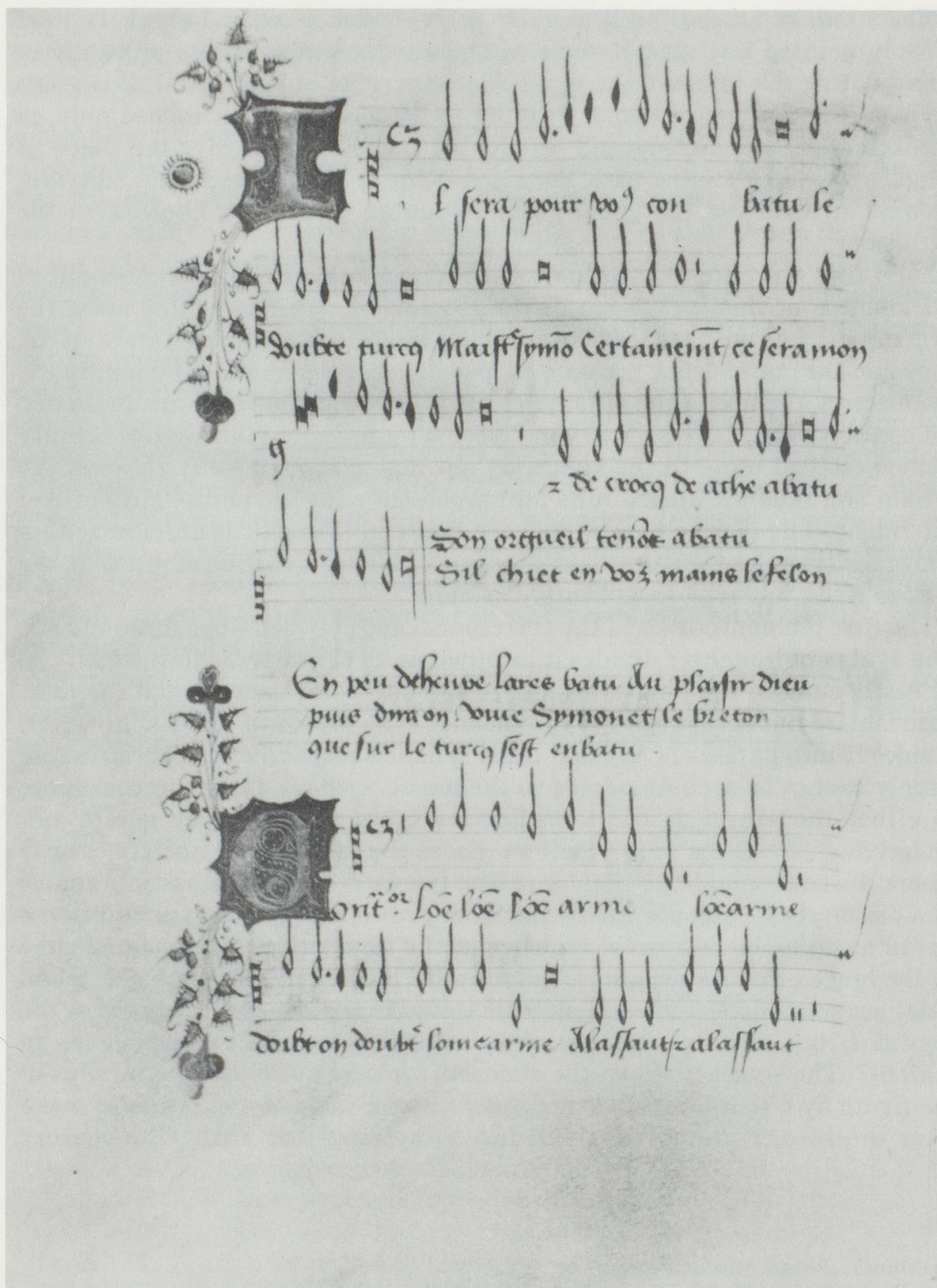


Fig. 1: Robert Morton, „Il sera pour vous combatu“.  
 (Reprinted from the facsimile edited by L. L. Perkins/H. Garey, *The Mellon Chansonnier*,  
 New Haven and London 1979, 124)



Enoz some some lomearme lomearme lomear

me doit on doubter lomearme. On a fait p tout ai

er assaut dun haubregon de fer loe loe loearme

loe arme loearme doit on doubter

que chm se doit armer assaut assaut loe

loe loearme loearme loearme doit on doubt'

singer had to be able to do if we are to judge from the large number of such note-repetitions in the secular and sacred repertoires of the time, including the melisma in mm. 10-12 of this song (if that was indeed meant to be a melisma). Either solution has its drawbacks, both do some damage to the rhythmic drive of the passage, and the second moves the discantus even further away from the world of the *chanson rustique* inhabited by the lower parts. A third solution, perhaps more intrusive from the museum curator perspective that governs much modern scholarship but closer to the world of the *chanson rustique* and its descendants in terms of actual performance, is the addition, *ex tempore et sub accidens*, of a syllable to the discantus at this point, for example, „et le felon,“ for „le felon,“ something that barely affects the sense of the interjection and that is done by folk singers in several cultures to this day in similar circumstances. Indeed, the manuscript transmission of the cantus firmus of the work lends some plausibility to this suggestion. The cantus firmus at this point has the figure d-d-d-G. The version of the melody in the Naples mass manuscript gives the text for this figure as a repeat of the phrase „doibt on doubter,“<sup>22</sup> but Mellon gives the text as „et l'homme armé,“ a phrase that, in the context, makes as much or as little syntactical sense as the solution proposed here for the discantus. Now, I would be the last to advocate such an intrusion in a *chanson courtoise*, but the combinative chanson is indeed something different, and within the tradition of the combinative chanson Morton's piece represents an extreme case of „rusticity,“ so to speak. This is, in any case, some of the kind of thinking that a performer should do, thinking that may not make the pure musicologist comfortable, but then, the pure musicologist seldom has to walk on a stage and put a piece such as this across to an audience in all of fifty-seven seconds.

Not surprisingly the next problem is posed by lines 8-9, which fall across the same mid-point cadence. The problem of line 8 is not rhythmic, the line is divided into two groups of four syllables, which can be sung easily where the corresponding syllables of the refrain are sung. The problem is semantic: the second half of line 8 belongs with line 9, and to sing it before the mid-point cadence makes nonsense of the text.<sup>23</sup> Line 9 poses a very serious problem in that the music for it consists of two identical patterns of four notes separated by a rest, but the words yield a pattern of five and three syllables. Perkins just avoids the issue, Fallows sets the text by where the refrain has

<sup>22</sup> Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS VI. E. 40, fol 58v. See facsimile in Taruskin, „Antoine Busnoys,“ p. 256.

<sup>23</sup> In this context it is interesting to note that the manuscript has no *signum congruentiae* for the mid-point cadence, something that may be a scribal slip in an otherwise very careful manuscript, or it may indicate that the coordination of music and text in this song was thought to be perhaps more flexible than in most *rondeaux*.

it, giving us the setting „Vi-ve Si-mon- / -et le Bre-ton,“ which is understandable in the context of his study but it makes no sense syntactically, and Atlas gives an interesting „Vi-ve Si-mon-... / Vi-ve Si-mon-...,“ and then sets the entire line to the textless melisma that follows in the manuscript. I will again propose a more extended tinkering with the text underlay based in part on the premise of „contamination“ discantus by the ethos of the *chanson rustique*.

First of all, the enjambment across the mid-point cadence is really damaging to the sense of the text in a way that I find in no other fifteenth century work by a composer of Morton's stature, so I would simply repeat „au plaisir dieu,“ for the fanfare figure and begin the B section of the *rondeau* with the new sentence, something that is far closer to the approach to syntax that we find in the rest of the late fifteenth-century repertory. This gives us a four-syllable phrase for the first of the two four-note figures. For the text of the second figure I would again turn to the notion of „rusticity.“ Lines 9 and 10 are a putative direct quotation, and one that will be said, when the deed is done, not by one person but by many, the joyous shout of the *vox populi*. Now, anyone who has heard the natural rhythm of the spoken language will be aware that in French, as in most Romance languages, a number of common contractions are normal part of colloquial speech, and that these contractions become, in fact, more pronounced in song and when shouting any phrase, be it a political slogan or an expression of delight at a drunken party. In French the word, „vive,“ as in „Vive la France!“ or „Vive le Roy!“ has a long history of being said not as two syllables but as one long or accented syllable when used in an exclamation. Thus the second four-note figure can indeed be sung to this phrase in its „exclamation mode,“ so to speak, as „Vive Sy-mo-net.“ The complete line, „Vive Symonet le Breton,“ sung in this manner, also fits perfectly the melisma in mm.10-12, so that one would then have, after the mid-point cadence „Puis dira-on, Vive Symonet, Vive Symonet le Breton,“ and if one is willing to break the one ligature of the melisma the line can be indeed sung as eight syllables. Further, the melisma and the high point now do indeed coincide with the textual high point of the entire song.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> On the other side of this argument one may note that there is something of a tradition (going back at least to Binchoys) of having a textless line at this point in the stanza and allowing it to carry the highest pitches. This is compatible with the notion that clear text declamation is harder on high pitches. In favor of such a view one may also note the absence of a rest after the last note of the discantus on m.9, which could imply that the melisma is an extension of the phrase in m. 9 rather than musically a separate entity. But the case of *Il sera pour vous* may well be an exception to this tradition in the sense that, as detailed below, the text of the stanza cannot be accommodated without intruding into the high melisma. Instances of such conflict between a tradition and an actual work are not infrequent in pieces which, like *Il sera pour vous*, represent early attempts in a certain direction, in this case the genre of the combinative *chanson*.

But this, in turn opens a new problem. If lines 8-9 force such a solution (and such a solution would be needed even if one were to sing „puis dira-on“ before the mid-point cadence), what is to be done with this melisma and the refrain text? Atlas's solution for this is to set „certainement“ twice to the figures in mm. 8-9, and the entire line (breaking the ligature), to the melisma. This is indeed rhetorically felicitous, as it gives the melodic high point to the one text phrase whose function is to assert emphatically all that has been said to that point.

Should one accept this setting of the refrain, then the decision regarding lines 8-10 needs to be reconsidered. Does one then keep the correspondence as close as possible and sing „puis dira-on“ to the fanfare before the mid-point cadence and sing „vive Symonet, vive Symonet, vive Symonet le Breton,“ to mm. 8-12? That is certainly a possibility, though it seems to me that, in a work as „contaminated“ by popular idioms as this that kind of consistency is not absolutely necessary.

Setting text to the internal melisma in this song, which becomes a necessity once the syntax of the text is analyzed as has been done here, probably carries as a consequence that some text should be set also to the final melisma. The repetition of the phrase, „de ache abatu,“ as Perkins and Atlas have it, makes good sense, though Atlas's setting of the second syllable of „ache“ under the *g* semibreve is the better solution, since the stanza phrase that forms a plausible syntactical unit, „le Turcq s'est enbatu,“ has an extra syllable that can then be sung to the *a'* dotted minim that precedes the *g*.

Underlying much of what I have presented here thus far is a set of historiographic ideas concerning fifteenth-century music that have been articulated most cogently for the repertory of late fifteenth-century songs by Fallows in the first chapter of his study of Robert Morton:<sup>25</sup> briefly, that the textual and musical phrase structures of the songs are generally congruent, that composers did have a relatively precise idea of how the text went with the music, at least in terms of phrase structure, and that a careful – and critical – examination of the sources does yield some hints of such an idea. But it will not do simply to duplicate mechanically the text placement of the refrain in the stanza. An analysis of the stanza's syntax may lead to a different text underlay. Many of the ideas presented above also apply to the devotional and liturgical repertories of the period, which have been studied far less than the songs from this point of view.

Before leaving this piece let me raise one further matter of the text itself as a text, a matter that puzzles me not only for itself but for the absolute lack of reaction on the part of all scholars that have worked on this song. It concerns the opening line, „Il sera pour vous combatu le doubté Turcq.“ The

<sup>25</sup> Fallows, „Robert Morton's songs,“ pp. 3-8.

source for the text is Mellon, and the *rondeau* refrain is copied only once, that is, unlike Dijon 517 and other chansonniers, the scribe of Mellon does not give the refrain incipit after any of the stanzas. Thus our sole authority for this reading is the single appearance of the line in Mellon.

Does that line really make sense? I think not. Its sense, that someone will fight the Turk in Symon's name and therefore in his absence, is flatly contradicted by absolutely everything that comes afterwards in the poem. Who is being referred to by the „voz“ of „voz mains?“ Who is the subject of the verb „l'arés batu?“ Who will be cheered for his victory? All of this points to Symon le Breton himself. The manuscript, despite the very clear reading, „pour,“ in the first line, has a scribal error that, given all the context that follows, no classical text editor would have allowed to stand. What I suspect we have here is an abbreviation that was incorrectly expanded somewhere in the transmission of the text. The sense of the poem absolutely demands the word „par“ instead of „pour“ at this point. This, in fact is not a trivial matter, for it changes entirely our view of the purpose and date of the work. Until recently the accepted opinion was that put forth by Fallows, that the song dated from 1463, when Symon retired from the Burgundian chapel.<sup>26</sup> It has been questioned recently by Richard Taruskin, who would have Busnoys as the author of the work.<sup>27</sup>

My view of the meaning of the song, that Symon is being teased about actually going on a crusade with the knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece – represented symbolically by the 31 tempora of the song<sup>28</sup> – could change the date of the composition drastically and make it much earlier, though not quite as early as the Feast of the Pheasant, since Morton appears for the first time in the Burgundian chapel roster in 1457.<sup>29</sup> In 1455 Charles VII, albeit reluctantly, gave Philip the Good permission to recruit for his crusade in French lands,<sup>30</sup> and a document from late in 1454 shows that provisions were being made for who among the chaplains was to follow the duke in the crusade.<sup>31</sup> Thus the years after Morton joined the chapel were the high-water mark of the crusading mania in Burgundy. *Il sera pour vous conbatu* could have been written any time between 1457 and 1463, when Symon le Breton retired to Cambrai. The close connection of the song with the masses by Du Fay and Ockeghem suggests that the three were composed roughly at the same time. Leeman Perkins has suggested that, given the political situation at the time, this could only have taken place shortly after the coronation of

<sup>26</sup> Fallows, „Robert Morton's songs,“ pp. 210-212.

<sup>27</sup> Taruskin, „Antoine Busnoys,“ pp. 288-292.

<sup>28</sup> See Taruskin, „Antoine Busnoys,“ p.272 and note 31, citing William Prizer's unpublished paper „The Order of the Golden Fleece and music.“

<sup>29</sup> Fallows, „Robert Morton's songs,“ pp. 271-272.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good: The apogee of Burgundy* (New York 1970), p. 365.

<sup>31</sup> Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, p. 362.

Louis XI, when relations between Burgundy and France were amicable for a very short time.<sup>32</sup> In any event, it is during this time that the commissioning of the two masses, and the writing of a song teasing a Burgundian chaplain about going on an arduous crusade could have been written, and they must have been written in relatively quick succession since by 1462 a derivative work, the *Missa L'homme armé* of Johannes Regis, had also been composed and was copied into the choirbooks at Cambrai.<sup>33</sup> Recently Richard Taruskin, in an article containing a brilliant analysis of the *Missa L'homme armé* of Busnoys, has proposed that Busnoys is in fact the author of *Il sera pour vous*, and that this song and the mass by Busnoys are at the root of the entire *L'homme armé* complex.<sup>34</sup> The brilliance of Taruskin's musical analysis should not blind us to the historically faulty reasoning behind this thesis. Paula Higgins has now shown that Busnoys was at Tours from 1460 to at least 1465;<sup>35</sup> in those circumstances it is more than unlikely that he could have composed a work that deals in terms of jocular familiarity with one of the senior chaplains of the Duke of Burgundy, but there is more. When Busnoys entered the service of Charles the Bold is not known with certainty, but Higgins's work allows us to place the beginning of his employment during the years 1465-1467, since *In hydraulis* must have been composed when Busnoys had become a member of Charles's court but before Charles became duke of Burgundy. I place this motet at the very beginning of Busnoys's service in Burgundy and see it as Busnoys's farewell to Ockeghem upon leaving Tours. Be that as it may, Busnoys and le Breton were never in Burgundian employ at the same time, and there is absolutely no reason for Busnoys writing his *Missa „L'homme armé“* before 1465 at the earliest.<sup>36</sup>

The import of this was first noted by William Prizer, who has now suggested the most likely occasion for the composition of the Masses upon *L'homme armé* by Du Fay and Ockeghem are the years when Philip was allowed to recruit in France, roughly from 1455 to 1461.<sup>37</sup> My own feeling is that the masses may come from the end of this period giving the rapidly worsening situation between France and Burgundy after 1455 and the fact that they do seem to be related in some manner to Morton's song, which

<sup>32</sup> Perkins, „The *L'homme armé* Masses of Busnoys and Ockeghem,“ pp. 364-356.

<sup>33</sup> Jules Houdoy, *Histoire artistique de la cathédrale de Cambrai, ancienne église métropolitaine Notre-Dame* (Paris: Damascène Morgand and Charles Fatout, 1880), p. 194.

<sup>34</sup> Taruskin, „Antoine Busnoys,“ pp. 292-293.

<sup>35</sup> Paula Higgins, *In Hydraulis revisited: New light on the career of Antoine Busnois*, „*Journal of the American Musicological Society* 39 (1986) 69-76.

<sup>36</sup> In the course of the controversy following Taruskin's „Antoine Busnois,“ in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40 (1987) 139-143, and 576-580, professor Taruskin makes the suggestion that Charles could have commissioned the *L'homme armé* mass from Busnoys during a two-week visit at Tours in 1461. From a historical point of view this is patent nonsense. At that time Charles was seriously estranged from his father over Antoine de Croy, and Busnoys was still a largely unknown composer.

must date after 1457. Du Fay, who as we now know, wrote a cycle of masses for the Order of the Golden Fleece in the 1440s,<sup>38</sup> would have been a logical choice to write his mass for this crusading effort, and if Duke Philip was recruiting in France with the consent of Charles VII or during his brief „honeymoon“ with Louis XI, it would stand to reason that he would have asked Ockeghem for a similar work. In any case, Philip was also being asked to make decisions on which of his chaplains would accompany him to fight the infidel, and this context would be far more appropriate for the composition of a work such as this song. A reedition of the song following the lines of thought outlined above appears in Example 6 (see p.22f.).

In the repertory of the straightforward chanson courtoise of the fifteenth century the correspondence between text and music is not always as problematic as what we encounter in *Il sera par vous combatu*, and it may seem the height of perversity that I will use for my next example another work where the problems of correlations between text and music are clouded by other issues. My other example is Guillaume Du Fay's *Craindre vous vueil*, arguably the last of his songs to be copied into Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canonici misc 213.<sup>39</sup> Two thirds of the music of this song appear also in Ox 213 set to an Italian text of unclear form, *Quel fronte signorille*, which has the notation „*Romae composuit.*“ Several studies of Ox 213 have now made it very clear that the annotations and dates found in this source are eminently trustworthy, and that the dates do refer to the time of composition, not the time of copying.<sup>40</sup> Thus *Quel fronte signorille* must date from the years 1428-1433, which were the only years Du Fay spent in Rome, while *Craindre vous vueil* is apparently a later version, probably originating during Du Fay's first stay in Savoy in 1434-1435. The piece has caused some controversy. Nino Pirrotta and Margaret Bent at different times questioned the authenticity of the Italian version on account of its odd form and the curious lack of finality of the cadence at the end of the piece,<sup>41</sup> but David Fallows and Graeme Boone argue convincingly that the French version must be a contrafact since it does not follow Du Fay's usual approach to scansion, and the relation between musical phrases and text lines is anomalous.<sup>42</sup> I agree with their view, even if it appears strange to have a dedicatory acrostic set to something of a contrafact.

<sup>37</sup> William Prizer, „The Order of the Golden Fleece and music,“ Paper read at the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, Vancouver, 1985.

<sup>38</sup> Alejandro Enrique Planchart, „Guillaume Du Fay's benefices and his relationship to the court of Burgundy,“ *Early Music History* 8 (1988) 158-160.

<sup>39</sup> See in particular Graeme Boone, „Dufay's early chansons: Chronology and style in the manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canonici Misc. 213,“ Ph.D. Dissertation (Harvard University, 1987), p. 229.

<sup>40</sup> David Fallows, *Dufay*, rev. ed. London, 1987, p. 285, note 13, with references to further literature.



Example 6:

Il sera par vous combatu - L'ome armé

C3

Robert Morton

1. 4. 7. Il se - ra par vous con - - ba - - tu, \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Son or-gueil te - - nons a - - - ba - - - tu, \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. En peu de heu - re l'a - rés ba - - tu, \_\_\_\_\_

L'o - me, l'o - me ar - mé, l'o - me ar - mé l'o -  
 L'o - me, l'o - me, l'o - me ar - mé, l'o - me ar - mé

4  
 Le doub - té Turcq, Mai - stre Sy -  
 S'il chiét vos mains, et le fe -  
 Au plai - - sir dieu au plai - sir  
 me ar - mé doit on doub - ter, l'o - me ar - - - mé.  
 l'o - me ar - mé doit on doub - ter, Et l'o - me ar - mé.

7  
 mon. 2. 8. Cer - tai - ne - ment ce se - ra mon.  
 lon. 6. Puis di - ra on, "Vive Si - mo - net,  
 dieu.  
 A l'as - saut! et a l'as - saut! Que ches -  
 On a fait par - tout cri A l'as - saut!

10



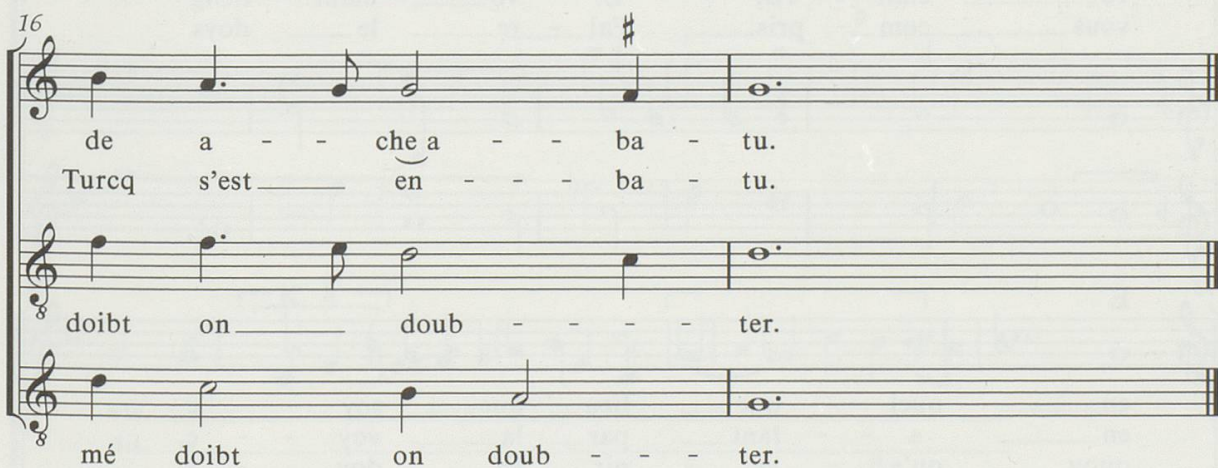
Cer - tai - ne - ment - ce se - ra mon.  
vive Si - mo - net le Bre - ton,  
cun se doibt ar - mer, A l'as - saut, a l'as - saut!  
D'un hau - bre - gon de fer.

13



Et de crocq de a - che a - ba - - tu, crocq  
Que sur le Turcq s'est en - ba - - tu, le  
l'o - me, l'o - me, l'o - me ar - mé, l'o - me ar - mé, l'o - me ar - mé  
l'o - me, l'o - me, l'o - me ar - mé, l'o - me ar - mé, l'o - me ar -

16



de a - - che a - - ba - tu.  
Turcq s'est en - - ba - tu.  
doibt on doub - - - ter.  
mé doibt on doub - - - ter.

Emmendations:

Text: Line 1: Ms. *pour* corrected to *par*.

Music: Measure 14, contratenor: first minimum *f* corrected to *g*.

Example 7:

Craindre vous vueil

Guillaume du Fay

A

1. 4. 7. Crain-dre vous vueil dou-l-ce da-me de pris, A -  
 3. Ja-mais ne suy-an-nui-eux-ne pen-sis, Ne  
 5. De vous a-mer-cel m'est un-pa-ra-dis, Ve-

B

5

mer, doub-ter, lou-er en  
 dou-leu-reux, quant je voy  
 u-les bien qui sont en

C

9

vo en dis, Tout mon vi-vant,  
 clair vis, Et vo main-tieng  
 vous com-pris, Fai-re le doys

D

13

E

en quel-que lieu que soy-e,  
 en a-lant par la voy-e,  
 quoy qu'a-ve-nir en doy-e,

18

F

G

Et vous don - ner, ——— m'a - mour, ma seu - le  
A vous me rens, ——— ly - es mieux que je

22

H

joy - - - - - e,  
soy - - - - - e,

26

I

b

b

Le cuer de moy tant que je se - ray ———  
Joi - eu - se - ment en bon es - poir tou - - -

30

K b

vis. \_\_\_\_\_  
dis. \_\_\_\_\_

But „Craindre vous vueil“ is not entirely a contrafact, Du Fay has made a number of changes in the piece, not the least of which is the addition of eight perfections at the end of the song that make it an extraordinary work from a musical point of view. It may be useful here to examine the music of the French version of the song by itself. I am deliberately avoiding at this point an extended discussion of the musical changes between the Italian and the French version because that would take too long and lead us far astray, but let me point out that I regard the addition of key-signatures to tenor and contratenor in Craindre vous vueil an important part of Du Fay's revision of the piece in the sense that the signatures clarify a number of problems and at the same time do change the piece considerably in what they imply in terms of *musica ficta*. For ease of reference I have marked the phrases of the piece, as I hear them, with letters A to K. (see Example 7, p.24f.)

The song is not in a mode, but rather in what Harold Powers has called a „tonal type,<sup>43</sup> and a tonal type that Du Fay was to use in a large number of works centered on C. The song makes it clear that he regarded the sound universe of this tonal type as consisting of an octave species congruent with our C-major scale, which was articulated into a fifth, c-g and a fourth g-c'. Phrase A presents the fifth in the discantus and the fourth in the tenor; phrase B presents the fourth in the discantus and the fifth in the tenor. Thus the discantus presents the octave species in its „authentic“ form and the tenor presents it in its „plagal“ form. Even though the fifth is presented in a „closed“ manner, that is with an arch that rises from c to g and returns to c, the entire two-phrase exposition creates the sense of a gradual octave rise from, c to c'. Phrase C transverses this entire space downwards and establishes the low b as a kind of inverted climax. Phrase D then recovers the fifth exposed by phrase A, but does it in an „open“ manner, rising to the g, while phrase E returns to the melodic space of phrase B but in a „closed“ manner, going from g to c' and back to g. Thus a series of formal symmetries has been established, where phrases A and D cover the same space in a complementary manner, as do phrases B and E, with the central phrase C contrasting with everything else around it by being the only one that moves consistently in a different direction. The goal notes of the phrases add to this: A and B end in c, D and E end on g, and the unique phrase C ends on the low b.

<sup>41</sup> Margaret Bent, „The songs of Dufay: Some questions of form and authenticity,“ *Early Music* 8 (1980) 454-459, and Nino Pirrotta, „On text forms from Ciconia to Dufay,“ *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music. A Birthday Offering to Gustave Reese*, ed. Jan LaRu, New York 1966. Reprinted New York 1978, pp. 673-682.

<sup>42</sup> Boone, „Dufay's early chansons,“ pp. 230-232. Follows in Guillaume Dufay, *Opera omnia*, ed. Heinrich Besseler. 6 vols, *Corpus mensurabilis musicae* 1 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1951-1966) [henceforth CW], Vol. 6, *Cantiones*, rev ed. (forthcoming), notes to nos. 7 and 58.

<sup>43</sup> Harold Powers, „Tonal types and modal categories,“ *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 34 (1981) 428-470, particularly pp. 429-434.

The function of phrase *C* is made even more clear by a change in the tonal world of the piece at that point. The presence of the e-flat in the contra sets off a chain-reaction of *musica ficta* that effectively changes the octave-species, so that phrase *C* inhabits a different tonal space from those that precede it.<sup>44</sup> One could argue that the new tonal context created by the *musica ficta* of phrase *C* need not spill over beyond its cadence and to phrase *D*, though the spill-over is justifiable and is supported by phrase *I* later in the song.<sup>45</sup>

The second half of the *rondeau* begins with two phrases that recall phrase *C*, but this time within the main octave species of the song's tonal type. Further, while phrase *C* barely dwells on the high *c'* – the upbeat is absent from „*Quel fronte signorille*“ – the phrase pair *F-G* begins firmly on that note and descends through the entire octave with little turning around. In this sense they are an inversion of phrases *A* and *B*. It is also worth noting that this sense of descent is emphasized by the tenor, which, for once in the song, moves in parallel motion with the discantus. Phrase *H* explores the upper tetrachord of the octave but introduces two elements thus far absent from the work, it is the only time that a phrase dwelling in that tetrachord uses notes belonging to the octave species presented in phrase *C*, and it is the only one of the three phrases dwelling in that tetrachord that moves down. Thus the opening of the second part of the *rondeau* is used by Du Fay to lend formal weight to several of the crucial traits of the one odd phrase of the first half. Phrase *I* recalls phrase *D* in a more expanded manner, but in addition makes very explicit the octave species used for phrase *C*, supporting the pivotal role of that phrase in the shape of the work as well as the extension of that tonal world to phrase *D* in the first half. Bessler did not see this and his failure to carry out the implications for the discantus of the e-flats in the contratenor and the tenor not only obscure the shape of the song but result in a discantus line in phrase *I* that is needlessly difficult to sing in tune even by the most experienced singer.

Phrase *K* recapitulates phrases *A* and *B* in a compressed manner, something similar to what Du Fay does near the end in other early songs such as „*Adieu ces bons vins*“.<sup>46</sup> For once in the piece the octave *c-c'* is heard in ascending order within one phrase, and the tenor supports this ascent by recapitulating its own movement for phrases *A-B* but reducing it to the the essentials in the

<sup>44</sup> In this context it should be noted that the usual way in which modern scholars speak of the contratenor as an inessential part is misleading, particularly in Du Fay's music. This voice may not be part of the basic contrapuntal backbone, but it is in many instances „compositionally“ crucial. In much of the late music of Du Fay it is the contratenor that often announces a new section of the work. In the early music it does considerably more than fill out the harmony or add rhythmic activity. The use of the contratenor by Du Fay has yet to be studied carefully.

<sup>45</sup> Note also that phrases *C* and *D* are the only phrases of the song that are not separated by a rest.

<sup>46</sup> See the analysis in Fallows, *Dufay*, pp. 86-88.

contrary-motion c-G and g-c. The effect of the phrase is to reaffirm the main tonal-type of the song in the most direct way, something that is needed after phrase I, which presents the crucial segment of the other octave species used in the piece in its most expansive and explicit manner.

In any event, the compositional revision of the song, which includes not only the added accidentals to in the lower voices, but details such as the crucial upbeat figure in m. 7 of the discantus and the addition of the final set of phrases, is both extensive and sophisticated – I have barely touched the surface here. It clarifies its new incarnation as a *rondeau* and produces a work of extraordinary balance. In this context it is then very surprising to note that the text (which must be by Du Fay himself, since it has an acrostic associating his name with someone called Cateline) does not fit well with the music in terms of its phrase structure.

Example 8:

Form	Line	Text
A	1	Craindre vous vueil, douce dame de pris,
	2	Amer, doubter, louer en fais, en dis,
	3	Tout mon vivant, en quelque lieu que soye:
B	4	Et vous donne, m'amour, ma seule joye,
	5	Le cuer de moy tant que je seray vis.
a	6	Jamais ne suy annuieux ne pensis
	7	Ne douleureux quant je voy vo clair vis
	8	Et vo maintieng en alant par la voie.
A	1	Craindre vous vueil, douce dame de pris,
	2	Amer, doubter, louer en fais, en dis,
	3	Tout mon vivant, en quelque lieu que soye.
a	9	De vous amer cel m'est un paradis,
	10	Vëu les biens qui sont en vous compris;
	11	Faire le doy quoy qu'avenir en doye.
b	12	A vous me rens, lyes mieux que de soye,
	13	Ioyusement, en bon espoir toudis.
A	1	Craindre vous vueil, douce dame de pris,
	2	Amer, doubter, louer en fais, en dis,
	3	Tout mon vivant, en quelque lieu que soye:
B	4	Et vous donne, m'amour, ma seule joye,
	5	Le cuer de moy tant que je seray vis.

Lines 1, 6, and 9 of the poem are set to phrase A, without much of a problem. Lines 2, 7, and 9, however, are divided among phrases B and C. This, though contrary to Du Fay's usual text setting, works well enough for lines 7 and 9, where the break comes at a grammatically plausible point in the text. But it does not work at all for line 2, where the sense would demand a break, if there must be one, after „louer.“ The same problem appears in the setting of lines

3, 8, and 11. In this case the break is at least believable for lines 3 and 11, but it makes no sense for line 8. The setting of lines 4 and 12, divided among phrases *F* and *G*, and concluding with the long melisma of phrase *H*, is perhaps less problematic in that the strong downward motion does manage to tie both texted phrases into a clear period. But there is the problem that a similar structure is found in phrases *A* and *B*, which are separated by the text. This, however, may be something that is meant to underscore the expository nature of the first two phrases. Phrases *A* and *B* present the basic tonal material of the work for the first time, when a separation of the pentachord and the tetrachord are crucial to an understanding of the song's structure. It does appear that Du Fay heard phrases *F*, *G*, and *H* as forming in some sense a continuous whole. The text setting of lines 5 and 13 to phrase *I* is as straightforward as that of the opening line of the *rondeau*.

Graeme Boone, in an extraordinary study of French scansion as it applies to the early fifteenth-century chanson, has noted also a number of problems of scansion and accentuation in the text setting of „Craindre vous vueil“,<sup>47</sup> though I cannot agree with his view that the scansion of line 3 is incorrect. The scansion of that line has been altered by the unique device of „suspended coloration“ which Boone notes.<sup>48</sup> One of the principal effects of hemiola coloration in the kind of 0 mensuration Du Fay uses after 1430 is an increase of rhythmic intensity by creating three „downbeats,“ one on each breve. Of these, the first and the third are always the most important, and the second is treated often as subsidiary.<sup>49</sup> In this case Du Fay has treated the black breve *b'* in m. 14 as a main downbeat, the black breve *g* as a subsidiary one, and then treated the figure *c'-b'-a-g* as a normal perfection in *O*, with a downbeat on *c'*, followed by the final downbeat of the coloration pattern, on the semibreve *b'* in m. 16. Thus Du Fay's scansion of the end of lines 3 and 8 is indeed quite correct. Only in line 11 do we encounter a scansion problem in this phrase.

Nonetheless, the relationship of text and music in *Craindre vous vueil* contains anomalies, some of which may be the result of its being a contrafact. But it will not do to explain all of them in such a manner, all the more since the musical revision of the song reveals considerable care and sophistication.

<sup>47</sup> Boone, „Dufay's early chansons,“ pp. 230-232. Boone's work on scansion is only hinted at in his dissertation. It is presented more fully in an important but as yet unpublished paper, „Poetic Scansion.“ I am most grateful to professor Boone for having sent me his work while still in progress.

<sup>48</sup> Boone, „Dufay's early Chansons,“ pp. 229-230.

<sup>49</sup> No systematic study of this aspect of coloration in *O* has been published. My conclusions are based on the performance of several hundred works from ca. 1430 to 1470. The approach to coloration I suggest here seems to be common to the music of Du Fay, Ockeghem, Obrecht, Frye, and the anonymous English authors of the cantus firmus masses transmitted in Trent Codices 88, 89, 90, and 93.



Boone is perhaps closer to the mark when he suggests that this may be an experiment on the way towards the more flexible text setting that Du Fay uses in his later music.<sup>50</sup> Like other early experiments, this one contains traits that Du Fay did not retain in his later works, as well as others that he refined considerably. But the detailed examination of the experiment *per se* is useful in clarifying our view of the stylistic direction in which Du Fay's later secular music was to move.

<sup>50</sup> Boone, „Dufay's early chansons," pp. 231-232.