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# Melodic and textual types in French monophonic song. ca. 1500

## Columbia University

1978

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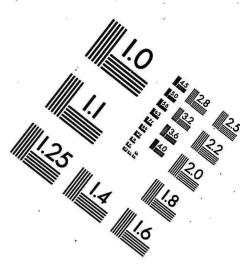
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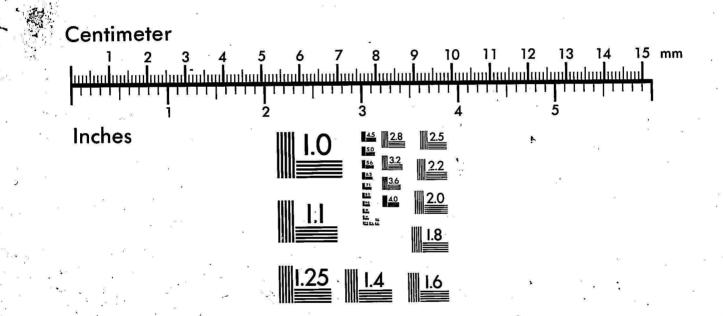
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#### MELODIC AND TEXTUAL TYPES IN FRENCH MONOPHONIC SONG

CA. 1500

#### Douglas Jay Philip Rahn

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Fhilosophy

#### COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

#### 1978

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#### ABSTRACT

Melodic and textual types in French monophonic song, ca. 1500

#### Douglas Jay Philip Rahn

Several monophonic songs in French survive from the period 1480-1520. These songs appear in about twenty manuscript and printed sources of the time. Most of these sources can be assigned fairly precise dates. The songs found in these sources are inter-related by a network of concordances but are seldom found in collections of courtly poetry and <u>vice versa</u>. This suggests that the monophonic sources represent a distinctive tradition of poetry. The songs are also associated with different social groups than are courtly products: preachers (e.g., Jean Tisserand and Olivier Maillard), nuns (e.g., the Madelonnettes), law clerks (e.g., members of the Basoche), itinerant entertainers, and members of the general public -- both literate (but not necessarily wealthy) and illiterate -- composed, performed, or listened to the pieces.

Monophonic songs differ considerably in prosody and diction from elite poetry and in melodic style from contemporary polyphonic works based on courtly poems. Nevertheless, the systematic bases of both the courtly and monophonic repertoires are substantially similar allowing comparisons to be made between them. Furthermore, recurrent features of the monophonic corpus generally accord well with systems of versification and music theory expounded at the time by writers such as Pierre Fabri, Henri de Croy, L'Infortuné, Johannes Tinctoris, Franchinus Gaffurius, Fietro Aaron, and Heinrich Glarean.

Musical features selected for analysis include meter, text underlay, phrase lengths, range (or ambitus), maneria (or mode), phrase finals (or differentiae), initial tones, cadence formulas, melismas linking phrases, leaps (i.e., disjunct motion), form, and variation. The melo-textual forms of the songs are related to the formes fixes: ballade, virelai, and rondeau, as well as contemporary developments of these (including the bergerette and chanson jolie). One can discern stereotyped rhyme schemes and patterns of phrase finals and melodic repetition. These appear to be described best in terms of a hierarchical arrangement of prosodic, rhythmic and tonal units, and all three types of organization are found to be closely connected with one another. The polyphonic songs with which the monophonic corpus is compared consist of settings of courtly rondeaux by Compère, Agricola, and Josquin, as well as other rondeau settings which appear in Petrucci's Odhecaton and Canti B. Throughout the study, the songs of Paris, Bib. nat., f. fr. 9346, the "Bayeux manuscript", are found to resemble the polyphonic pieces more than the monophonic songs of MS 12744 of the same collection. The latter in turn are found to resemble printed collections of monophonic song texts more closely in prosody than "Bayeux."

Some special features of the study include the use of statistical tests (e.g., chi-square, Student's t, x- and z-scores, and  $r_{rank}$ ), an annotated index of the monophonic songs, transcriptions of all the previously unpublished texts, and re-transcriptions of MSS 12744 and Bayeux. Finally, a minimal list of undefined concepts required to describe the

prosodic and musical regularities of the songs is developed and the findings corroborated by comparing the corpus with monophonic songs preserved in MS Dijon, Bib. mun. 517 (ca. 1475).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several people contributed substantially to the completion of this work. Foremost among these is Joel ·Newman, who supervised the dissertation, providing valuable criticisms especially of matters historical and stylistic not to mention a boundless sense of humor during some exasperating moments. Carol Robertson-DeCarbo helped clarify a number of ethnomusicological issues which underlie the study, and Patricia Carpenter enthusiastically discussed theoretical points which I have broached here. Donald Frame patiently checked the entire work, particularly the translations and transcriptions of French texts, for which he provided many invaluable annotations which appear in the Appendix. Robert Austerlitz supplied a number of linguistic comments and many insights concerning relationships between texts and tunes. I am also very grateful to Israel Joseph Katz, who supervised the work from its inception to the end of the first draft.

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The immense task of turning the original research into final form could not have been accomplished without the help of several typists and copyists. Among these I would like to cite Frank Nakashima, Colleen Lang, Charles Bogue, Susan Silver, Maureen Whitehead, and Aura McMaster.

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