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# The Origin of the Hocket

By WILLIAM DALGLISH

IN A RECENT ARTICLE, Ernest Sanders has discussed the species of medieval discant variously called *truncatio*, *resecatio*, *altrinsecatio*, and *hoquetus*.<sup>1</sup> Hocketing was widely used in medieval music, and Professor Sanders's article provides a convenient survey of those uses. He discusses certain theoretical descriptions of hocket and sets forth his theory concerning its origin. Since I have for some time been interested in many of the things Sanders discusses and since our opinions differ on several matters, I offer here my views for consideration.

In particular, I believe the origin of the hocket to be other than that suggested by Sanders. I think that hocketing was but one of a number of improvised manipulations of Gregorian melodies common before the Notre-Dame music was composed, that the knowledge of these procedures remained current throughout the Middle Ages,<sup>2</sup> and that the "makers of discant"—the composers working in the written tradition—often drew upon this repertory of discant devices when composing.<sup>3</sup> I shall not attempt to describe here all such devices. (Many details of medieval improvisation are, in any case, irretrievably lost.) Rather, my intention is to demonstrate something of the probable importance of improvisation in the musical life of the Middle Ages by establishing that hockets were first extemporized by singers and only later written down by composers.

Concerning the origin of the hocket, Sanders says that its development was a result of what he terms the more "spacious and 'measured' rhythms" of the music of Perotinus and his successors in comparison with that of Leoninus.<sup>4</sup> In this, he endorses the view of Anselm Hughes,<sup>5</sup> who, in explaining certain

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Sanders, "The Medieval Hocket in Practice and Theory," *Musical Quarterly* LX (1974), pp. 246-56.

<sup>2</sup> They were apparently still known in relatively recent times. Cf. Jean Prim, "*Chant sur le Livre* in French Churches in the 18th Century," this *JOURNAL* XIV (1961), pp. 37-49, and the sources cited there.

<sup>3</sup> Recently, a convincing case has been made for the influence of certain improvisational procedures on the music of Dufay. Cf. Charles Warren, "Punctus Organi and Cantus Coronatus in the Music of Dufay," *Papers Read at the Dufay Quincentenary Conference* (Brooklyn, N. Y., 1976), pp. 128-43. The classic work on the topic of improvisation is Ernst Ferand, *Die Improvisation in der Musik* (Zürich, 1938), to which general acknowledgment is made.

<sup>4</sup> Sanders, p. 246.

<sup>5</sup> Sanders, p. 248, n. 1.

examples of hocket in the *New Oxford History of Music*,<sup>6</sup> said that they had “been selected to show how hocketing may . . . have grown naturally out of the rhythmic patterns in customary use, not out of the natural depravity of the singers, as most medieval and many modern writers would have us believe.” The treatise called the Anonymous of St. Emmeram (discussed below) gives several examples of hockets based on liturgical cantus firmi, which circumstance is proof sufficient for Sanders to say that the “emphasis placed by the writer on a proper mensural fundament indicates that the origin and continuing principal locus of hoquetus was in cantus-firmus polyphony. . . .”<sup>7</sup>

We need not be concerned with the depravity of singers, whether natural or acquired. But we should not allow our admitted ignorance of the particulars of medieval improvisational practice to blind us to the probability of its existence and importance. To disallow the likelihood that hocketing originated as one of those extravagances of vocal virtuosity against which one medieval writer after another fulminated in favor of seeking its origin in the repertory which first records its use—the polyphony in measured rhythm of Perotinus and his successors—is unwise, because it is incompatible with the long-standing historical hypothesis that polyphony itself had its origin in improvisation, as the *Musica enchiridis* and the many discant treatises coming after it would seem to confirm.

Beginning at least as early as the twelfth century and continuing to the end of the Middle Ages, there are copious reports of flamboyant and unorthodox singing in church. Taken together, they call up the image of a performance practice characterized by willfulness and ostentation, within which hocketing could easily have had a place. The Romanesque aesthetic was characterized by a feverish and bizarre inventiveness, which, in the visual arts, was even then being resoundingly decried because of its “amazing misshapen shapeliness and shapely misshapeness.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> II (Oxford, 1955), p. 397.

<sup>7</sup> Sanders, p. 250.

<sup>8</sup> *Mira quaedam deformis formositas ac formosa deformitas*. Cf. Erwin Panofsky, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures* (Princeton, 1946), p. 25.

Even the language of the condemnation reflects the fanciful, not to say phantasmagoric character of late eleventh- and twelfth-century art, as Meyer Schapiro pointed out in a brilliant essay (“On the Aesthetic Attitude in Romanesque Art,” *Art and Thought* (London, 1947), pp. 135–6): “[The condemnation] resembles in its chiasmic, antithetic pattern a typical design of Romanesque art.” This same “chiasmic” quality is part of Romanesque music, not only in the obvious case of many sequences (which Denis Stevens has aptly described as those “wantonly neglected monuments of baroque music and poetry in the Middle Ages”) but also in the notation and style of much early polyphony. The written records we possess of the polyphony of St. Martial serve as a case in point, for their intertangling lines and their occasional spirals and cascades of notes render vivid visual testimony to the rhapsodic, highly idiosyncratic musical aesthetic of the period.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who uttered this famous ejaculation of dispraise, was a man with the bumptious self-righteousness of the puritan moralist—a man capable of humbling influential abbots and of remonstrating with kings. Such a man predictably held strong views on music, particularly since music was such an important part of life in the Cistercian foundations. In writing to Guy, Abbot of Montier-Ramey,<sup>9</sup> Bernard discussed the Office which he had composed at the Abbot's request for the Feast of St. Victor. He expressed his opinion of what musical composition and performance should be and, by implication, made it clear that neither always met his ideal:

Shall I begin anew to praise upon earth one [i.e., St. Victor] who is deemed praiseworthy and praised in heaven itself? To try to add to the praises sung in heaven were a depredation rather than an augmentation. Not that men should deny their praises to those who are glorified by the angels, but in their festivals anything that savours of novelty or frivolity would be out of place. . . . But if you want to hear something new, and if the occasion demands it, then let something be chosen that would both please and profit the hearers. . . . If there is to be singing, the melody should be grave and not flippant or uncouth. It should be sweet but not frivolous; it should both enchant the ears and move the heart; it should lighten sad hearts and soften angry passions; and it should never obscure but enhance the sense of the words. Not a little spiritual profit is lost when minds are distracted from the sense of the

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It is not until the twentieth century that notation once again sometimes attains the evocative quality it had during the twelfth century (cf. Erhard Karkoschka, "Darmstadt hilft der Notation neuer Musik," *Melos* XXXIII (1966), p. 81 *et passim*). For example, the notation of a composition such as the *versus*, *Per partum virginis* (Paris, B.N., lat. 3549, fol. 150<sup>v</sup>; reproduced in *MGG* XI, col. 1265), is more than tonal stenography. It is a picture of the musical character of a performance of that work. That this could be so is perhaps attributable to the greater freedom in matters of detail which this music tolerated. The notation was not intended unequivocally to convey one pre-performance intention with respect to duration of notes and rests, vertical alignment of parts, and other like parameters. Rather, as with certain experimental notations of the present, it left much freedom to the performer. It is for this reason that attempts to find in pre-Notre-Dame music a rational and coherent system of rhythmic organization similar to the rhythmic modes are in my view doomed to fail.

The aesthetic attitude of the Romanesque is described by Schapiro (p. 130) as one which, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, had emerged into "a new sphere of artistic creation . . . imbued with values of spontaneity, individual fantasy, delight in colour and movement and the expression of feeling, that anticipate modern art." By the thirteenth century, the *deformitas* of the Romanesque was gone. Its place had been taken by the virtues of the Gothic: Order. Symmetry. Reason. Conformity.

Perhaps the clearest manifestations of the change of attitude from the Romanesque to the Gothic are the Albigensian Crusade, because for the first time on a large scale it made deviance from orthodoxy a crime punishable by death, and Scholastic philosophy (Thomism particularly), because, with its mesmeric ratiocinations and sublimation of spontaneity, it made system-making a beatitude. Scholasticism, in Panofsky's words, was a mode of thought ruled by the "postulate of clarification for clarification's sake" (*Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York, 1957), p. 35). In music, the *Magnus liber organi* furnishes a glimpse of polyphony in transition from the freedom of the Romanesque to the control of the Gothic.

<sup>9</sup> Not to be confused with Guy, Abbot of Charlieu, who authored the treatise on discant printed in Coussemaker, *Histoire de l'harmonie au moyen-âge* (Paris, 1852), p. 254 (cf. Otto von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral* (New York, 1956), p. 41).

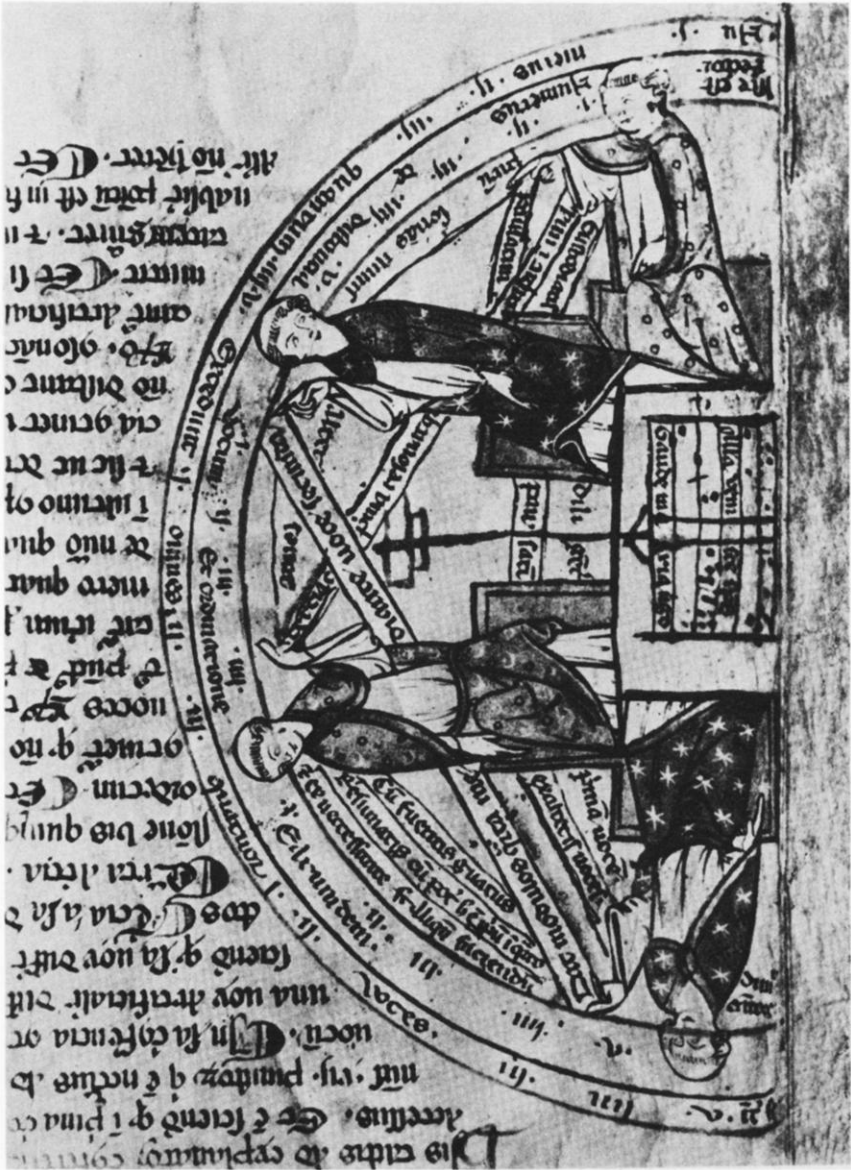


Figure 1. Four clerics improvising descant. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D. 75, fol. 18<sup>v</sup> (66% of original size)

words by the frivolity of the melody, when more is conveyed by the modulations of the voice than by the variations of the meaning.<sup>10</sup>

The criticism in St. Bernard's letter is oblique. For more direct (and more sardonic) appraisals of singing in the twelfth century, we have, among others, the famous passages in the *Policraticus* of John of Salisbury<sup>11</sup> and in the *Speculum caritatis* of Ailred of Rievaulx,<sup>12</sup> the latter work purportedly written at the request of St. Bernard himself.<sup>13</sup> The excerpt from the *Policraticus* serves to illustrate the condemnatory tone of both. "Music," John says, "sullies the Divine Service,

for in the very sight of God . . . [the singers] attempt, with the lewdness<sup>14</sup> of a lascivious singing voice and a singularly foppish manner, to feminize all their spellbound little fans with the girlish way they render the notes and end the phrases. Could you but hear the effete emotings of their before-singing and their after-singing, their singing and their counter-singing, their in-between-singing and their ill-advised singing, you would think it an ensemble of sirens, not of men. . . . Indeed, such is their glibness in running up and down the scale, such their cutting apart or their conjoining of notes, such their repetition or their elision of single phrases of the text—to such an extent are the high or even the highest notes mixed together with the low or lowest ones—that the ears are almost completely divested of their critical power, and the intellect, which the pleasurableness of so much sweetness has caressed insensate, is impotent to judge the merits of the things heard. Indeed, when such practices go too far, they can more easily occasion titillation between the legs than a sense of devotion in the brain.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Except where noted, all the translations in this paper are my own. In this case, I have used the translation in Bruno S. James, *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux* (London, 1953), p. 502. Latin text in Jacques P. Migne, *Patr. Lat.*, CLXXXII, cols 610–11. The *Officium de S. Victore* is printed in volume II of the new edition of the works (which does not yet include this letter) edited by Jean Leclercq et al. (*Sancti Bernardi opera* (Rome, 1958), p. 501ff). Concerning the Office, see Jean Leclercq, "Saint Bernard écrivain d'après l'office de Saint Victor," *Recueil d'études sur Saint Bernard et ses écrits* (Rome, 1962–6), II, p. 149 (= *Revue bénédictine* LXXIV (1964), p. 155).

<sup>11</sup> Text: Clement Webb, ed. *Ioannis saresberiensis episcopi carnotensis policratici* (London, 1909), I, pp. 41–2; *Patr. Lat.*, CXCIX, col. 402; and elsewhere.

<sup>12</sup> Text: *Patr. Lat.*, CXCIV, cols. 571–2, and elsewhere. Ailred's complaints about singers were paraphrased by Guibert of Nogent in one of his sermons (cf. Pierre Aubry, "Les Abus de la musique de l'église au xii<sup>e</sup> et au xiii<sup>e</sup> siècle d'après un sermon de Guibert de Nogent," *La Tribune de St.-Gervais* IX (1903), p. 57).

<sup>13</sup> David Knowles, *Saints and Scholars* (Cambridge, 1962), p. 39.

<sup>14</sup> In this context, the word *luxus* has overtones connecting it to the medieval sin of *luxuria*, concerning which see *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (Paris, 1924–50), IX, p. 1339ff.

<sup>15</sup> Webb, pp. 41–2: *Ipsium quoque cultum religionis incestat, quod ante conspectum Domini . . . lasciuientis uocis luxu, quadam ostentatione sui, muliebribus modis notularum articulorumque caesuris, stupentes animulas emollire nituntur. Cum praecientium et succipientium, canentium et decinentium, intercentium et occinentium praemolles modulationes audieris, sirenarum concentus credas esse, non hominum. . . . Ea siquidem est ascendendi descendendique facilitas, ea sectio uel geminatio notularum, ea replicatio articulorum singulorumque consolidatio, sic acuta uel acutissima grauibus et subgrauibus temperantur, ut auribus sui iudicii fere subtrahatur auctoritas, et animus, quem tantae suauitatis demulsit gratia, auditorum merita examinare non sufficit. Cum haec quidem modum excesserint, lumborum pruriginem quam deuotionem mentis poterunt citius excitare.*

Similar descriptions of the state of singing occur over and over again in the Middle Ages, as the following sampling shows:

St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermon 47 on the Song of Songs*, ca. 1150:

See to it, brothers, that you participate in the Service both reverently and punctually, not indolently, not half-asleep, not yawning, not saving your voices, not skipping over words nor lopping them off in the middle, not singing in a womanly way, stuttering through the nose with fractured and muffled voices,<sup>16</sup> but manfully, as is only proper, producing voices filled with the Holy Spirit in both sound and affect.<sup>17</sup>

David of Augsburg, *De exterioris et interioris hominis compositione*, ca. 1235:

Nor should you divide up the notes in a courtly way when singing, for, if you ask how to please God in singing, then, the more simply you sing, the more you will please him.<sup>18</sup>

*Statuta antiqua* of the Carthusian Order, before 1259:

Since it is the duty of a good monk to lament more than it is to sing, let us therefore use our voices to sing in such a way that lamentation and not delight in singing will be occasioned in our hearts, which . . . can be accomplished if those things which serve to delight in singing be removed, such as the breaking up of notes, ornamental melismas,<sup>19</sup> the repetition of notes, and similar things, which belong more to *curiositas* than to chaste song.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, 122-3: "Ful wel she soong the service dyvyne/Entuned in hir nose ful semely."

<sup>17</sup> Leclercq, *Opera*, II, p. 66: Strenue quidem, ut sicut reverenter, ita et alacriter Domino assistatis, non pigri, non somnolenti, non oscitantes, non parcentes vocibus, non praecedentes verba dimidia, non integra transilientes, non fractis et remissis vocibus muliebre quiddam balba de nare sonantes, sed virili, ut dignum est, et sonitu et affectu voces Sancti Spiritus deprementes. . . .

<sup>18</sup> David of Augsburg, *De exterioris et interioris hominis compositione*, as cited in Hilarin Felder, *Geschichte der wissenschaftlichen Studien im Franziskanerorden* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1904), p. 428, n. 4: Nec vocem curialiter frangas in cantando, quia, si quaeris Deo placere in cantando, tunc, quanto plus cantaveris simpliciter, tanto magis ei placebis. David of Augsburg's tract was ascribed to various authors in the Middle Ages, including St. Bonaventura (cf. P. S. Jolliffe, "Middle English Translations of *De exterioris et interioris hominis compositione*," *Medieval Studies* XXXVI (1974), p. 259ff).

<sup>19</sup> Possibly this *inundatio vocis* is similar to the *punctus organi* discussed by Warren in his article (cf. note 3 above).

<sup>20</sup> The so-called *statuta antiqua*, collected by Prior Rifferus in 1259, were a compilation of all the "statutes hitherto passed of a general and permanent value" (cf. Ethel Thompson, *The Carthusian Order in England* (London, 1930), p. 109ff). For a discussion of the role of the Carthusians in Gregorian chant, see Benoit-M. Lambres, "Le Chant des Chartreux," *RB* XXIV (1970), pp. 17-41. Text in Martin Gerbert, *De cantu et musica sacra* (St. Blasien, 1774), II, p. 97: Quia boni monachi officium est plangere potius, quam cantare, sic cantemus voce, ut planctus, non cantus delectatio sit in corde: quod . . . poterit fieri, si ea, quae cantando delectationem afferunt, amputentur, ut est fractio & inundatio vocis, & geminatio puncti, & similia, quae potius ad curiositatem attinent, quam ad simplicem cantum.

This passage speaks directly against *curiositas*, the cardinal sin of music. It is against this sin that the other excerpts given in this paper were also directed (cf. Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (New York, 1960), p. 96). The idea that a monk sings to praise God but avoids enjoying singing is, of course, an old one, going back at least to St. Jerome (cf. F. Müller-Heuser, *Vox humana: Ein Beitrag zur Untersuchung der Stimmästhetik des*

*Statutes of the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order, 1258, Article II:*

Because sinfulness with the voice when chanting again and again dishonors the reputation of our order and because it was for just this reason that the Holy Fathers [of our order] providently ordained that moderation be maintained in that which should radiate sobriety and encourage devotion, it is strictly enjoined on the cantors of the whole order that they themselves observe this [moderation] and that they see to it that others observe it. If in fact anyone in singing shall have been observed to have transgressed the bounds of this sobriety, he should be punished so severely that the punishment of that one will hold others in check and restrain them from future sinfulness of this kind.<sup>21</sup>

Roger Bacon, *Opus tertium, 1267:*

At present, the abuse of singing has increased steadily throughout the Church to the extent that the chant has fallen away from its ancient sobriety and strength. Having lost its natural probity and grace, it has lapsed into a shameless flaccidity. It now manifests a faddish propensity for new harmonies, a prurient inventiveness in proses, and a tasteless delight in a multiplicity of cantilenae. More than anything else, this decline of the chant is manifested in those voices, adolescent in their effusiveness and feminine in their dissoluteness, which counterfeit in falsetto the sacred and manly harmony almost everywhere throughout the Church. If I wanted to, I could give specific illustrations of the state of affairs in the greatest cathedral churches and other famous collegia, institutions in which the whole Divine Liturgy is in disarray because of the evils I have mentioned.<sup>22</sup>

*Statutes of the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order, 1320, Article IX:*

Not wishing further to tolerate the ridiculous novelties imposed on the Divine Office, the General Chapter orders and appoints that the ancient form of singing handed down to us from our Blessed Father, Bernard, be firmly held to, syncopation of notes and also hockets being forbidden in our singing simply because such things better serve dissoluteness than devotion.<sup>23</sup>

*Mittelalters* (Regensburg, 1963), p. 18, and Théodore Gérold, *Les Pères de l'église et la musique* (Paris, 1931), p. 113, et passim).

<sup>21</sup> Joseph-M. Canivez, *Statuta capitulorum generalium ordinis cisterciensis* (Louvain, 1933-41), II, pp. 435-6: Item cum excessus vocum in cantu dehonestet multipliciter nostri Ordinis honestatem et idcirco provide ab antiquo per sanctos patres fuerit institutum quod mediocritas conservetur in eo quod gravitatem redoleat et devotionem debeat incitare, districte praecipitur cantoribus Ordinis universi, ut hoc ipsi observent, et ab aliis diligentissime faciant observari; si quis vero in cantando modum gravitatis huius excessisse notatus fuerit, taliter castigetur quod poena illius ab excessu huiusmodi alios retrahat in posterum et comescat.

<sup>22</sup> For Roger Bacon and music, see Hermann Müller, "Zur Musikauffassung des 13. Jahrhunderts." *AfMw* IV (1922), p. 405ff and Gerhard Pietzsch, *Die Klassifikation der Musik von Boetius bis Vgolino von Orvieto* (Halle, 1929), p. 87ff. The text is in John S. Brewer, *Fratri Rogeri Bacon opera quaedam hactenus inedita* (London, 1859), pp. 297-8: Sed jam per ecclesiam paulatim crevit abusus cantus, qui a gravitate et virtute antiqua cecidit, et in mollitiem inverecundam lapsus, mansuetam et naturalem probitatem amisit; quod novarum harmoniarum curiositas, et prosarum lubrica adinventio, multipliciumque cantilenarum inepta voluptas manifestat. Et super omnia voces in falso harmoniam virilem et sacram falsificantes, pueriliter effusae, muliebriter dissolutae fere per totam ecclesiam comprobant illud idem. Possem ponere exempla de maximis ecclesiis cathedralibus, et aliis collegiis famosis; in quibus totum officium confunditur propter haec vitia, quae narravi.

<sup>23</sup> Canivez, III, p. 349: Item, ridiculas novitates superinductas in officio divino nolens sustinere de cetero, Capitulum generale ordinat et diffinit quod antiqua forma cantandi a beato



In the company of the above condemnations, the well-known bull of Pope John XXII, *Docta sanctorum*,<sup>24</sup> may be seen not as an isolated remonstrance against the sophistications of ars-nova polyphony but rather as yet another in a series of attempts to curb the extravagant liberties regularly taken by singers in performing church music. Although it was pointed out a number of years ago that this bull was directed against singers and not composers,<sup>25</sup> notices of it continue dutifully to reappear describing it as an example of papal disenchantment with the musical style of Philippe de Vitry and others. Probably nothing was more remote from the minds of the framers of this document than to have attempted therewith to interdict the rarefied art of the French ars nova. It is far more likely that the papacy itself had no brisk interest in even issuing such a document, and that it was done at the instance of some pressure group with a direct interest in seeing the highest authority in the Church officially censure profligate singing—the Cistercians for example.

If, on the basis of the above quotations, it is conceded that medieval discantors may have improvised hockets, it then becomes of interest to consider the particulars of the procedure. It is known that, in the Middle Ages, two or more singers often rendered the solo portions of liturgical music (even if such sections were not being sung polyphonically). It would not be difficult to imagine such singers being occasionally led by *curiositas* into the aberration of hocketing, were it not for one inescapable problem: the rhythm of the melodies treated in this way.

The controversy concerning the rhythm of Gregorian chant (if, indeed, it ever had *one* rhythm) is musical scholarship's slumbering *bête noire*,<sup>26</sup> and I

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patre nostro Bernardo tradita, sincopationibus notarum et etiam hoquetis interdictis in cantu nostro simpliciter quia talia magis dissolutionem quam devotionem sapiant, firmiter teneatur.

In addition to the texts cited, see Giuseppe Scalia, ed. *Salimbene . . . di Adamo: Cronica* (Bari, 1966), I, pp. 262ff and 545ff (English translation in George G. Coulton, *From St. Francis to Dante* (London, 1907); Felder, p. 440; and the wealth of information in Karl G. Fellerer, "Kirchenmusikalische Vorschriften im Mittelalter," *KmJb* XL (1956), p. 1ff.

<sup>24</sup> Text in Gerbert, *De cantu*, II, pp. 93-4, and elsewhere.

<sup>25</sup> Fellerer, p. 6: "Die Constitutio 1324 beschäftigt sich ausschliesslich mit dem gregorianischen Choral und seiner Vortragsweise als dem liturgischen Gesang."

<sup>26</sup> Concerning this subject, see, among others: Jan W. A. Vollaerts, *Rhythmic Proportions in Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Chant* (1960); E. Cardine, "Le Chant grégorien: Est-il mesuré?" [a review of Vollaerts], *Études grégoriennes* VI (1963), p. 7ff; Ewald Jammers, "Was können wir den frühmittelalterlichen Theoretikern über den Choralrhythmus entnehmen?" *Mf* V (1952), p. 24ff; Jammers, "Grundsätzliches zur Erforschung der rhythmischen Neumenschrift," *Buch und Schrift* V/VI (1942/43), p. 87ff; Jammers, *Der mittelalterliche Choral* (Mainz, 1954); P. Lucas Kunz, "Organum und Choralvortrag," *KmJb* XL (1956), p. 12ff; Peter Wagner, "Choralia II: Alte Erklärung des Choralrhythmus," *KmJb* XIX (1905), p. 69ff; Wagner, *Einführung in die gregorianischen Melodien* (Leipzig, 1911-21), II, p. 211ff and III, p. 270ff; Richard Crocker, "*Musica Rhythmica* and *Musica Metrica* in Antique and Medieval Theory," *Journal of Music Theory* II (1958), p. 2ff; André Mocquereau, *Le Nombre musical grégorien* (Tournai, 1908-27), I, p. 156ff; Theodor Seelgen, "Zur Frage des mittelalterlichen Choralrhythmus," *KmJb* XXIX (1934), p. 7ff; Johannes Wolf, *Handbuch der Notationskunde* (Leipzig, 1913-19), I, p. 146ff; Gregorio Suñol, *Introduction à la paléo-*

have no wish to rouse it. But it is obvious that hocketing is incompatible with the ebb-and-flow pulse inevitably resulting from the application of the Solesmes principles. Some precise measuring of notes would have been prerequisite to the use of truncation. Is there any evidence to suggest that, in the later Middle Ages, Gregorian chant was sung in measured rhythm?

Everyone interested in early music knows Franco of Cologne's proverbial definition of organum. "Properly defined," he says, "organum is a polyphonic piece not measured in all its parts."<sup>27</sup> Less commonly known, perhaps, is that Franco's treatise contains two definitions of organum. Wordiness was not one of Franco's failings, yet, apparently because of the wide currency of the word in its other meaning, he felt obliged to include a second definition. "What everybody calls organum," he said, "is any ecclesiastical chant which is measured."<sup>28</sup>

This second type of organum is rarely described in any detail by the theorists, but it is alluded to by many. John of Garland, for example, informs us that, "in a general way," the term *organum* applies to anything which is measurable.<sup>29</sup> Jacob of Liège repeats Franco's definition,<sup>30</sup> and Jerome of Moravia even gives some rules for applying long and short values to chant.<sup>31</sup> Thus, with respect to both chant and polyphony, there might be more than unfounded speculation behind pseudo-Tunsted's remark that music in the Carolingian period had no precise measure but that it gradually had acquired one by Franco's time.<sup>32</sup> In this connection, we might also recall the observation of Walter Odington that "among the earlier discantors, the long had only two beats, but it was later brought to perfection so that it might have three, in likeness to the Holy Trinity,"<sup>33</sup> which implies the existence of a pre-modal

*graphie musicale grégorienne* (Tournai, 1935); Gustave Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1940), p. 140ff; Thrasybulos Georgiades, *Musik und Sprache* (Berlin, 1954); Willi Apel, *Gregorian Chant* (Bloomington, Ind., 1958), p. 126ff.

<sup>27</sup> CoussS, I, p. 134b; S. Cserba, *Hieronymus de Moravia O. P.: Tractatus de musica* (Regensburg, 1935), p. 258; Gilbert Reaney and André Giles, *Franconis de Colonia: Ars cantus mensurabilis* (Rome, 1974), p. 80: Organum proprie sumptum est cantus non in omni parte sua mensuratus.

<sup>28</sup> CoussS, p. 118b; Cserba, p. 231; Reaney, p. 25: Communiter vero dicitur organum quilibet cantus ecclesiasticus tempore mensuratus.

<sup>29</sup> Erich Reimer, *Johannes de Garlandia: De mensurabili musica* (Wiesbaden, 1972), I, p. 35: ... prout organum generaliter dicitur ad omnem mensurabilem musicam.

<sup>30</sup> CoussS, II, p. 394b; Roger Bragard, *Jacobi Leodiensis: Speculum musicae* (Rome, 1955-73), VII, p. 24: Est enim quidam discantus simpliciter qui in omni sua parte certo tempore mensuratur. Alius est discantus secundum quod est organum duplum, quod dicitur organum proprie dictum vel purum. Communiter, ut ait Franco, dicitur organum quilibet cantus ecclesiasticus tempore mensuratus.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Cserba, p. LXIIff and William Waite, *The Rhythm of Twelfth-Century Polyphony* (New Haven, 1954), p. 28, n. 32.

<sup>32</sup> CoussS, IV, p. 297a and III, p. 363b.

<sup>33</sup> CoussS, I, p. 235b; Frederick Hammond, *Walteri Odington: Summa de speculatione musicae* (Rome, 1970), pp. 127-8 (there is an English translation in Jay A. Huff, *Walter*

system of rhythm based not on subdivision but on addition, the rhythm resulting from the informal agreement on the part of the singers to apply certain simple principles of measure to the neumatic notation from which they were reading, some notes being short, others long.<sup>34</sup>

Fortunately, one theorist not only confirms the existence of this procedure (which he calls the *modus organicus*) but also gives some details about it. In his *Tractatus practice cantus mensurabilis ad modum ytalicorum*, Prosdocius de Beldemandis says:

Since we have given no reasons for the above rules governing ligatures . . . and that you may therefore have some such explanation . . . you should know that before the invention of [the art of notating] mensurable music, people of former times had a certain way of singing plainchant which they called the *modus organicus* because they had derived it from the playing of the organ. The method consisted in not performing all the notes of the plainchant in the same rhythm, but lengthening some and shortening others according to the different groupings of the notes and according to the difference in the ligatures, some having stems and others not. And from observing these distinctions [in the shapes of the notes and the ligatures, the notational system of] mensural music had its origin.<sup>35</sup>

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*Odington: De speculatione musicae* (Rome, 1973), p. 8): Longa autem apud priores organistas duo tantum habuit tempora, sicut in metris, sed postea ad perfectionem ducitur ut sit trium temporum ad similitudinem beatissimae Trinitatis. . . .

<sup>34</sup> Cf. the remark of Anonymous IV (*CoussS*, I, p. 344a; Fritz Reckow, *Der Musiktraktat des Anonymous 4* (Wiesbaden, 1967), I, pp. 49–50; English translation in Luther Dittmer, *Anonymous IV* (Brooklyn, N. Y., 1959), p. 41): . . . quoniam in antiquis libris habebant puncta aequivoca nimis, quia simplicia materialia fuerunt aequalia. Sed solo intellectu operabantur dicendo: intelligo istam longam, intelligo istam brevem.

<sup>35</sup> This passage occurs in only one of the copies of the treatise. Since that copy was unknown to Coussemaker, it does not appear in his version of the text. On this point, see F. Alberto Gallo, "La tradizione dei tratti musicali di Prosdocius de Baldemandis," *Quadrivium* VI (1964), pp. 57–82. There is an English translation (from which my translation diverges in a few details) in Jay A. Huff, *A Treatise on the Practice of Mensurable Music in the Italian Manner* (Rome, 1972), p. 48. Latin text in Claudio Sartori, *La notazione italiana del trecento* (Florence, 1938), p. 64: Et quia de supradictis regulis . . . nulla ratio assignata est, ut ergo de ipsis habeatur aliqua ratio . . . sciendum est quod antiqui ante inventionem cantus mensurati quendam habebant modum cantandi in cantu plano quem modum organicum appelabant, quoniam ipsum acceperant ab organorum pulsatione. Modus ergo iste erat quod non pronuntiabant omnes figuras cantus plani sub eodem valore sed aliquas elongabant et aliquas abreviabant secundum ipsarum figurarum divisas dispositiones et secundum diversitatem ligaturarum cum caudis vel sine caudis et ab illis diversitatibus sumpsit originem cantus mensuratus. . . .

In recent years, the subject of *cantus fractus*—as this practice of singing Gregorian chant mensurally came to be called—has received little attention. The few studies devoted to it are therefore out of date. The most important of these is Maximilian Sigl, *Zur Geschichte des Ordinarium Missae in der deutschen Choralüberlieferung* (Regensburg, 1911), a book which gives, in diplomatic transcription, a number of melodies in mensural notation from manuscripts in Munich and Stuttgart. Other studies important to the topic are: P. Raphael Molitor, *Deutsche Choralwiegendrucke* (Regensburg, 1904); Molitor, *Die nach-tridentinische Choral-Reform zu Rom*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1901–2); Otto Marxer, *Zur spätmittelalterlichen Choralgeschichte St. Gallens* (St. Gall, 1908); Peter Wagner, *Kyriale nach den deutschen Choralhandschriften* (Graz, 1904); Heinrich Hüschen, *Heinrich Eger von Kalcker: Das Cantuagium*

In his article, Sanders discusses the explanation of hocket given in the treatise of the Anonymous of St. Emmeram.<sup>36</sup> This is indeed an important, if at times also an exasperatingly perplexing source. At one point, the treatise contains a musical example labelled *Amen*, which the author identifies as an *Ave Maria*<sup>37</sup> and which he describes as follows:

Here the author [this part of the text is a gloss] wishes to illustrate how semibreves, when used in various types of song but mainly in hockets, are combined with one another [to equal the value of a breve], as, for example, in the triplum of *MANERE* in the brevis mode, and in certain hocketed conductus without a real tenor, such as in the conductus *Ave Maria* hocketed.<sup>38</sup>

Example 1

*Ave Maria* from treatise of Anonymous of St. Emmeram (Sowa, p. 99)

(Cologne, 1952); Johannes Wolf, "Eine deutsche Quelle geistlicher Musik aus dem Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts," *JbP* XLIII (1936 [1937]), p. 30ff; Arnold Schmitz, "Ein schlesisches Cantional aus dem 15. Jahrhundert," *AfMw* I (1936), p. 385ff.

<sup>36</sup> Heinrich Sowa, *Ein anonymes glossierter Mensuraltraktat: 1279* (Kassel, 1930), p. 97ff. Sanders gives a translation of a part of the chapter on hocket in his article (p. 248), in which there are several places where I would favor a rendering different from his, notably in the sentence beginning "Et hoc dupliciter aut per uoces utrinque simplices uel compositas. . .," which is translated as: "And there are two ways to do this; either both voices have unisons or different pitches. . . ." It is clear elsewhere in the treatise (chapters Ia and Ib) that what is meant by *figurae simplices uel compositae* is "notes and ligatures," making the sentence read: "And there are two ways to do this: either both voices have single notes or both have ligatures, or one voice has single notes and the other has ligatures." Also, I think the phrase "nisi aliquando conueniat in motellis" is best rendered simply as: "except as may sometimes occur in motets."

<sup>37</sup> The melodic material of this example corresponds almost exactly to the termination (over the word *alleluia*) of the Offertory *Ave Maria* for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on the 8th of December (not to be confused with the much better known Offertory with the same title for the Fourth Sunday of Advent). Now the Feast of the Immaculate Conception was not accorded official sanction by Rome until the pontificate of Pius VII in the nineteenth century (the apparition of Our Lady at Lourdes was instrumental in securing this sanction), but it was widely celebrated in the Middle Ages (cf. E. Vacandard, "Les Origines de la fête de la conception dans le diocèse de Rouen et en Angleterre," *Revue des questions historiques*, XVII (1897), p. 168ff). All the other items of the new Mass were adapted from existing music (detailed by Gajard in *Maria*, II (1952), p. 346ff, where all the items of the Proper are mentioned except the Offertory). Pierre Combe, who was kind enough to check the records of the Abbey of St. Pierre in Solesmes respecting this matter, reports (after some discussion about whether Dom Pothier or Dom Fonteinne had the greater share in fashioning the music): "Il reste assuré que cet offertoire vient de Solesmes et date de la 2<sup>e</sup> moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle."

<sup>38</sup> Sowa, *op. cit.*, p. 99: Hic uult actor ostendere qualiter huius semibreues per cantus uarios et precipue per hoquetos posite sunt confuse, sicut patet in triplo de "Manere" breuis modi, et in aliquibus conductis sine tenore proprio hoquetatis, ut in "Aue Maria" hoquetato.

It is probable that what is meant here by *conductus* is not the Notre-Dame polyphonic *conductus* but rather an unassuming monophonic devotional song.<sup>39</sup> If so, the passage serves as rare testimony within the written tradition to what was a common practice in the improvised one—the reworking of a melody in hocket.<sup>40</sup>

There are several bits of circumstantial evidence which support this view. First, that the passage is a fragment of a lost polyphonic *conductus* in Notre-Dame style is unlikely for the reason that the usual *sine littera* notation common in the melismatic sections of such pieces is absent, it being written in breves and semibreves instead of longs and breves. Second, the author refers to his example as “the *Ave Maria* hocketed,” not as “the hocket *Ave Maria*.” This seemingly trifling distinction is actually of great importance, for the use of the past participle *hoquetato* in place of the noun *hoquetatio* is precisely the correct one to describe improvised hocketing; it clearly implies some substantive change in the original character of the piece imposed by the action of the verb *hoquetare*.

Finally, there is the matter of the label *Amen*, implying the position of this hocketed passage at the conclusion of the composition. As is known, it was a common practice in the Middle Ages to add terminal melismas—called *neumae*—to certain types of Gregorian chant.<sup>41</sup> They apparently functioned as codas affording an opportunity for more ecstatic singing.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps in analogy to the *neumae*, hockets came to be improvised as bravura conclusions for certain liturgical and para-liturgical items. This is made more likely by the fact that a number of later motets and other pieces have such terminal hocket sections. Example 2 shows how such a coda might have been improvised. The hocket conclusion is based on the music of the opening of the piece, a Respond from the MS Paris, Bibl. de l’Arsenal 279 (cf. *Processionale monasticum*, p. 244), the melody of which is similar to the *Ave-Maria* hocket, although it is unlikely that the two are related.

The St.-Emmeram treatise follows the fashion of its time in cataloging the divisions and subdivisions of its topic in neat Aristotelian manner. Thus, two categories of hocket are recognized, those *with truncation* and those *without truncation*, each of which has two subcategories, *with* and *without tenor* in the

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Anonymous IV (Reckow, I, p. 70): Quandoque simplex organum dicitur ut in simplicibus conductis.

<sup>40</sup> The theorists of the time seem to know of two types of hocket, the one written, the other improvised. For example, Walter Odington (*CoussS* I, p. 250a; Hammond, *op. cit.*, p. 145; Huff, *Odington*, pp. 38–9): Verum est alia species hoquetorum quae tantum duplex est quos simplices vocant quae fiunt super cantus notos decoros, ut dum unus unum accipit. . . .

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Manfred Bukofzer, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (New York, 1950), p. 249.

<sup>42</sup> For an interesting discussion of the origins of this type of singing, see Walter Wiora, “Jubilare sine verbis,” *In memoriam Jacques Handschin* (Strasbourg, 1962), pp. 39–65.



beginning of the chapter, where the author says that he wishes to deal with hockets, "by the aid of which one can learn

to recognize and use in practice every *equipollentia* and *convenientia* of note values [possible in the notational system]. . . . For truly, *hoquetatio*, by virtue of its very name, may be correctly called . . . harmony.<sup>44</sup>

The etymological derivation is blurry, but the meaning is clear enough. Hocket is a kind of rhythmic harmony because whenever truncation is applied to a *res facta*, it becomes of necessity an exercise in *equipollentia*.<sup>45</sup> Hocket usually involves truncation, but to the medieval musician, rhythmic *equipollentia* may well have been its salient technical attribute,<sup>46</sup> so that any piece derived from another through rhythmic permutation would have been a hocket, whether or not it used hocketing in the more usual sense.

Let us now consider in turn each of the four subcategories of hocket. The first type, *without truncation and with text*, probably refers to some type of contrafactum procedure involving rhythmic readjustment.<sup>47</sup> The treatise contains no musical example of this type; one has the impression that it is included more for ballast than anything else. Yet examples of this procedure do in fact survive from the thirteenth century. The composition entitled *A l'entrade d'avrillo*, included by Jacob of Liège in the seventh book of the *Speculum musicae*,<sup>48</sup> shows, in its third section, a readjustment of the music of the first to accommodate a new text, as shown in the next example:<sup>49</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Sowa, p. 97: . . . intendit actor propositum declarare, videlicet de hoquetis per quos omnis equipollentia siue conuenientia figurarum . . . dignoscitur et habetur. Que quidem hoquetatio . . . athonomatice nuncupari poterit armonia.

<sup>45</sup> Which meaning of hocket makes the derivation of the word from Arabic *al-qat'*—a "cutting apart" or "breaking apart"—all the more likely. Cf. Husmann, *MGG*, VI, cols. 704–6.

<sup>46</sup> Usually *equipollentia* is discussed by the theorists in terms of the rhythmic equivalence of the upper parts to the tenor.

<sup>47</sup> For examples of this type of rhythmic readjustment to accommodate a new text to essentially the same music, see Georg Reichert, "Wechselbeziehungen zwischen musikalischer und textlicher Struktur in der Motette des 13. Jahrhunderts." *In memoriam Jacques Handschin* (1962), p. 151ff and my article "The Use of Variation in Early Polyphony," *Musica. Disciplina XXVI* (1972), p. 37ff.

<sup>48</sup> CoussS, II, p. 429; Bragard, p. 70. The piece is transcribed in Heinrich Husmann, "Der Hokus A l'entrade d'avril," *AfMw XI* (1954), pp. 296–9.

<sup>49</sup> This is not, strictly speaking, an example of *transmutatio modi*, which involves a change from a *modus rectus* to one *in ultra mensuram*, but it is worth noting that the St.-Emmeram Anonymous treats *transmutatio modi* at length in his treatise.

## Example 3

A l'entree d'avrillo, mm. 9-12 and 70-73 in superposition

b. mm. 70-73

veng - tiu - do'' To - pi - na de Ka - be - re - la - de se cla -

a. mm. 9-12

na - do tro - vai ga - io ri - se

The second type of hocket, *without truncation and without text*, refers to textless compositions making little or no use of truncation but based on another composition or another part of the same composition. There is such a composition among the textless pieces appended to the Bamberg Codex. It is on the tenor *NEUMA*<sup>50</sup> and appears to be a textless reworking of the motet *Ave, lux luminum—Ave, virgo rubens—NEUMA* also found in this source.<sup>51</sup> A part of the beginning of each of these works is shown in Example 4.

The hocket *with truncation and with tenor* is the most familiar. Hockets built on cantus firmi may be divided into two kinds: those freely composed (such as Machaut's *Hoquetus David*) and those based on other pieces. Apparently, examples of both types are given in the St. Emmeram treatise, the freely composed hocket being represented by the third example based on the tenor *IN SECULUM* (cf. Ba, no. 104)<sup>52</sup> and the other type by the first example in the chapter based on the tenor *MANERE*, which is a truncated version of the motet *Maniere esgarder—MANERE* from the MS Munich, B.S., Gallo-Rom. 42,<sup>53</sup> as shown in Example 5.

<sup>50</sup> This melody is cited as the *neuma primi toni* by Odington (*CoussS*, I, 219b; Hammond, p. 103).

<sup>51</sup> Pierre Aubry, *Cents motets du xiii<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1908), nos. 102 and 84 respectively.

<sup>52</sup> The other examples based on the *IN SECULUM* tenor resemble known hockets, but are not identical with them.

<sup>53</sup> Fol 8<sup>v</sup>. Luther Dittmer, *A Central Source of Notre-Dame Polyphony* (Brooklyn, N. Y., 1959), p. 170. I have not found a convincing source for the second example of hocket on this tenor, though it bears some resemblance to *Maniere esgarder* at the appropriate place (the example is not drawn from the beginning of the piece). This second example contains a distinctive alteration of the tenor melody (*B<sub>4</sub>* for *C* as the fourteenth pitch) which, if correct, would serve to distinguish unequivocally the model for the hocket.





Last, there is the hocket *with truncation and without tenor*. This type was usually improvised, so that few traces of it have survived in the written tradition. An exception is the truncating sections of the composition *A l'entree d'avril* (cf. above, Ex. 3), which present the music of the texted portions in two voice parts without a tenor cantus firmus.

## Example 6

Truncated and non-truncated versions of *A l'entree d'avril* compared

The image shows a musical score for Example 6, comparing truncated and non-truncated versions of the piece "A l'entree d'avril". The top system, labeled "Hocket", consists of two staves. The first staff has a triplet of eighth notes marked "3 1". The bottom system, labeled "Chanson", also consists of two staves. The lyrics "A l'en - tra - de d'a - vril -" are written below the bottom system. A vertical dashed line separates the two systems, indicating a comparison of the truncated hocket version with the non-truncated chanson version.

Professor Sanders says that hocket as an "exclamatory or pictorially decorative device disappears from the motet in the thirteenth century, and is in the fourteenth century found occasionally in chansons, in Italian madrigals and ballate, and in chaces and caccie."<sup>54</sup> It seems to me that exactly the reverse is true. Only infrequently was hocketing used in a pictorial way in the motet, whether of the thirteenth or of the fourteenth century. (Its use in the motet was almost always structural, or at least not patently descriptive.) But in the other forms mentioned, and especially in the madrigal, the use of hocket in onomatopoeic, pictorial, and even allegorical ways was frequent, as has been shown by Othmar Wessely.<sup>55</sup>

This inquiry into the prehistory of hocketing demonstrates two things. First, there was a strong formative influence exercised on early polyphony by

<sup>54</sup> It is not true, as Sanders maintains, that the little treatise edited by Santorre Debenedetti ("Un trattatello del secolo XIV sopra la poesia musicale," *Studi medievali* II (1906-7), p. 59ff; cf. Nino Pirrotta, "Ballate e 'soni' secondo un grammatico del trecento," *Saggi e ricerche in memoria di Ettore Li Gotti* (Palermo, 1964), III, p. 54) mentions hocket only in connection with motets. In talking of sonnets (p. 80), it says: "Et si alicui gallicum tetigeris, erunt plures hochetti."

<sup>55</sup> "Über den Hoquetus in der Musik zu Madrigalen des Trecento," *De ratione in musica: Festschrift Erich Schenk zum 5. May 1972* (Kassel, 1975), pp. 10-28.

the practitioners of that evanescent art which Tinctoris and others called *discantus supra librum*, an influence which the written records taken alone are inadequate to substantiate. Second, the vocal performance practice of the late Middle Ages was one characterized by fantasy, variety, and color. Musical performances of the period were probably often far removed from the genteel Cecilianism which characterizes so many renditions of this music in the present day.

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