

# Composership Before Music Printing (12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Centuries) – A Research in Progress

Pascale Duhamel

School of Music, Faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa / Fulbright Canada Research Chair at University Vanderbilt 2019-2020

## State of the Question

- ❖ Orality plays a great role in how music is created and transmitted.
- ❖ Most of the music is transmitted anonymously.
- ❖ **Merging of orality and anonymity:**
  - ❖ **Notions of author and composer are foreign to the Middle Ages.**

## Medieval Authorship in Literary Studies

- ❖ In the last 20 years, literary studies revealed various manifestations and modalities of the authorship in the Middle Ages.
  - ❖ Whereas musicology is reassessing 16<sup>th</sup> c. composership, **the literary studies' conclusions have barely been considered to reassess composership before music printing.**

## Composers' names – presence and uses

- ❖ From the 12<sup>th</sup> c. on, there is growing impulse to add composer's names in music manuscripts.
- ❖ **Where, when, how, why, are composers' names added** in musical manuscripts?
  - ❖ In order to understand **modalities of the composer's emergence.**

- Embedded Signatures – Mss. Attributions – Indexes
- Chansonniers – *Opera omnia* – *De Viri illustribus*
- Composers' portraits – Names in Sacred Music Mss.
- Composers' names in music treatises – etc.
- What follows are preliminary results:**



BnF fr.  
12473  
f.15v

## 12<sup>th</sup> c. Troubadours

- ❖ Signatures embedded in songs are tied to expressions of originality and worth;
- ❖ Names in *partimens* show troubadours know each other.
- Troubadours' ideas about making music**
  - ❖ sense of their music and text's worth;
  - ❖ awareness of their originality and personal style;
  - ❖ sense of community of creators through personal contacts and reputation of each other's work.

## 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> c. Chansonniers

- ❖ Troubadours and trouvères collections arranged by composer. In manuscripts and in Indexes.
- ❖ Clear rubricated attributions inside manuscripts.
- ❖ Portraits show the creator musician in position of authority.
- ❖ Visual signs of authority are borrowed to university mss.
- ❖ *Opera omnia* appear for Guiraut Riquier, Adam de la Halle, Jean de l'Escurel, Guillaume de Machaut.



BnF fr.  
25566

BnF fr.  
844 f.Cr

## 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> c. Sacred Music Manuscripts

- ❖ The two first mss. of only sacred music with attributions date from 1360-1400, and come from around Avignon (Sorbonne Rés. ms.1\*; Apt 16bis\*\*).
- ❖ A majority of mss. with attributed sacred music also include secular music, esp. motets (Ivrea 115; Modena α.M.5.24). Hence a possible channel of transmission to sacred music of the idea of attribution.
- ❖ At the start of 15<sup>th</sup> c. (Old Hall Ms.\*\*\*; Aosta 15; Modena α.X.1.11) attributions for sacred music becomes more frequent.



\*J. Lambuleti



\*\*J. Tapissier



\*\*\*Leonel Power

## What next ?

- ❖ Preliminary results will be deepened and confirmed;
- ❖ A manuscript corpus will be constituted to allow comparative and quantitative studies on topics such as chronology and geography, from points of view such as name frequency and genres;
- ❖ Publications will target early music scholars, but also early music enthusiasts, in order to debunk the notion that there was no idea of the music creator/composer in the Middle Ages.

## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my colleagues at Vanderbilt University, Fulbright Canada, and the students of my seminar MUS4701 (University of Ottawa).