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Stylistic transformation in the chansons of Antoine Busnois

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STYLISTIC TRANSFORMATION IN THE CHANSONS
OF
ANTOINE BUSNOIS

by

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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ABSTRACT

Stylistic Transformation in the Chansons of Antoine Busnois

by

Dana Dalton

The transmission of the majority of Antoine Busnois's chansons into Italian sources suggests the composer may have visited the country and may have assimilated musically Italiante characteristics into his compositional style. An analysis of the chansons shows that although a slight style change does occur in the chansons disseminated into Italian sources, this change is not necessarily Italiante in nature.
Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Honey Meconi, whose constant encouragement and guidance made the completion of this thesis possible. I would also like to thank Professor Anne Schnoebelen and Professor Samuel Jones for being on my graduate committee and offering helpful suggestions. I gratefully acknowledge Paul and Marc Lafargue for their counsel on the translations of the chansons. Finally, I wish to thank my husband, Phillip Ratliff, for carefully preparing the musical examples and providing moral support.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Many contemporary references testify to Antoine Busnois’s reputation as one of the finest composers of his generation. In the prologue to *Proportionale musices* (written before 1475), Tinctoris listed Busnois as one of the most famous of the moderns,1 and honored Busnois by dedicating his *De natura et proprietate tonorum* 2 (1476) to both him and Ockeghem. In the dedication of the *Liber de arte contrapuncti* (1477), Tinctoris extolled Busnois among others, saying that he uses their work as a model for his own.3 In


3“...hac vero tempestate, ut praeterea numeros concentores venustissime pronuntiantes, nescio an virtute cujusdam coelestis influxus, an vehementia assidua exercitationis infiniti florent compositorum, ut Joannes Okeghem, Joannes Regis, Anthonius Busnois, Firminus Caron, Guillermum Faugues, qui novissimis temporibus vita functos, Joannem Dunstable, Egidum Binchois, Guillermum Dufay se praeceptores habuisse in hac arte divina gloriantur. Quorum omnium omnia fere opera tantam suisvitudinem redolent, ut, mea quidem sententia, non modo hominibus heroibusque verumtemam Divi immortalibus dignissima censenda sint. En quoque profecto numquam considero quin latior ac doctior evadam, unde quemadmodum Virgilii in illo operis divino Ensidos Homero, Ita iis Hercule, in meis opusculis utor archiypis; praesertim autem in hoc, in quo, concordianias ordine, approbabilem eorum componenti stimulum plane imitatam sum.” Quoted from Edmond de Coussemaker, *Scriptorum de musica medii aevi novam seriem...* (Paris, 1864-76; Facsimile ed., Milan, 1931), 4:77.

“Yet at this present time, not to mention innumerable singers of the most beautiful diction, there flourish, whether by the effect of some celestial influence or by the force of assiduous practice, countless composers, among them Jean Ockeghem, Jean Regis, Antoine Busnoys, Firmin Caron, and Guillaume Faugues, who glory in having studied this divine art under John Dunstable, Gilles Binchois, and Guillaume
fact, Tinctoris cited Busnois eleven times in his treatises, more than any other composer. Loyset Compère’s motet *Omnium bonorum plena* (before 1474) names Busnois among masters of song, while Burgundian court poet Jean Molinet’s commemoration of Ockeghem names Busnois as one of the two shining stars accompanying the composer. Busnois’s skill was even recognized in Germany; Adam von Fulda’s *Musica* (5 November 1490) mentions Dufay and Busnois as models to follow in word and deed.

Busnois’s reputation continued long after his death, as evidenced by the striking number of posthumous references to the composer. A letter of 1495 to Francesco Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, recounts a performance in Venice of a motet by Busnois: “In

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Dufay, recently deceased. Nearly all the works of these men exhale such sweetness that in my opinion they are to be considered most suitable, not only for men and heroes, but even for the immortal gods. Indeed, I never hear them, I never examine them, without coming away happier and more enlightened. As Virgil took Homer for his model in that divine work the Aeneid, so I, by Hercules, have used these composers as models for my modest works, and especially in the arrangement of the concords, I have plainly imitated their admirable style of composing.” Translation from Strunk, 199.

4For a complete listing of citations, see Paula Higgins, “Antoine Busnois and Musical Culture in Late Fifteenth-Century Burgundy” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1987), 14.


“...first from Guillaume Dufay, moon of all music, light of singers, hear me, O Mother, for Dussart, Busnois, Caron, masters of song...” Translation from Gustave Reese, *Music in the Renaissance* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1954), 227.

6“Busnois Regis, amenus
Stelle sunt rentientes;
Est Obghen velut ortus
Sol lucens super omnes.”

“Let us love the glowing stars of Busnois and Regis; Ockeghem as the shining sun has risen above all.” Translation from Brooks, “Antoine Busnois as a Composer of Chansons,” 143.


“...and about my age the most learned Wilhelmus Duffay and Antonius de Busna, whose followers we wish to be, not only in word but in deed.” Translation from Brooks, 143.
truth all Venice wishes to hear nothing else." In *Toscanello in musica* (1523, 2/1529), Pietro Aron credited Busnois with the invention of the *L’homme armé* tune used as the tenor for Busnois’s mass and called him a great man and an excellent musician. In 1540, Seybald Heyden, speaking of the new art invented in England says it was made more refined after passing through the hands of Ockeghem, Busnois, and Caron. Performances of his works continued into the sixteenth century as well. In 1562 Rabelais described the music that was part of the entertainment at the banquet on the island

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8”...un altro moteto dimandase Gabrielem, è hopere de Busnois, zoè le quatro voxe, et io li ho fato un altro contra basso, che el soniamo a zinque, che in verità tutta Venetia non vol audir altro, et nui l’havemo tribulato al nostro Serenissimo, el qual ne ha gran pincere [sic] d’esso moteto...” Quoted in Edmond van der Straeten, *La Musique aux Pays-Bas avant le XIXe siecle: Documents inedits et annotes* (Brussels, 1888; reprint, New York, 1969), 8:537.

“another motet, called Gabrielem; it is a work by Busnois for four voices. And I have written another for contrabass because we play it in five parts, so that, in truth, all of Venice wishes to hear no other. And we have dedicated it to our Serenissimo, who takes great pleasure in the aforementioned motet...” Translation from Higgins, “Antoine Busnois and Musical Culture,” 9.


“...for this reason it is believed that Busnois wrote that song called *L’homme armé*, notated with the dotted signature, and that he took its tenor, and because it was short, in order to have a large expanse without changing the sign, he changed the beat, which had fallen on the perfect semibreve, to the minim. Since he was a great man and an excellent musician, this is not to be considered an error on his part, and the same thing is not to be condemned in Ockeghem and other ancients, and in Obrecht and Josquin, who followed the footsteps of their predecessors...” Translation from Aron, *Toscanello in Music*, trans. Peter Bergquist (Colorado Springs: Colorado College, 1970), 1:55.


“Georgius Forsterus, an expert in literature and medicine as well as in music, recently made available to me the work on proportions by Johannes Tintorius, in which he calls this kind of music a new art, and states that it was first created in England by a certain Dunstaple, and then given greater renown by the Frenchmen Dufay and Binchois, and finally it became more and more illustrious in the hands of Johannes Okeghem, Busnois, and Caron.” Translation from Heyden, *De Arie Canedi*, Musicological Studies and Documents 26, trans. Clement A. Miller (n.p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1972), 19.
of Lanternois, (Pantagruel, Book V), including Jac que lui ne, Tout au rebours, and Je ne fay plus. 11

Today, Busnois is often labeled as a miniaturist, perhaps owing to the fact that the largest portion of his surviving compositional output consists of chansons.12 In contrast to his twelve motets and two masses, scholars have estimated the number of his chansons to be at least sixty-one,13 an unusually high number when compared to the output of his contemporaries.14 In fact, no other composer has as many attributions in fifteenth-century chanson sources.15 Despite his productivity in this area, Busnois’s chansons have never received sufficient attention, with the relative neglect of his accomplishments leaving a gap in the history of the secular French song. Given his reputation among his colleagues and the sheer volume of his secular compositions, Busnois is clearly a composer whose place in the history of the chanson merits a thorough investigation.

11 List of chansons in Rabelais, Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Lucien Scheler with introduction by Jacques Boulenger (Brussels: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1955), 851-853. Rabelais also included Amours and Fortune, which may or may not be Busnois’s.

12 The genre itself has not always been viewed in a favorable light. Leeman Perkins pointed out that much of scholarly discussion dealing with the chanson has tended to focus on the limitations of the genre. See Leeman L. Perkins and Howard Garvy, eds., The Mellon Chansonnier (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 2:1.


14 For example, Ockeghem and Hayne van Ghizeghem each have about 20, Caron has 17, Morton has 8, Joye has 5, and Regis has 2.

15 Perkins, “Conflicting Attributions and Anonymous Chansons in the ‘Busnois’ Sources of the Fifteenth Century,” paper read at the conference, “Continuities and Transformations in Musical Culture, 1450-1500: Assessing the Legacy of Antoine Busnois,” (University of Notre Dame, 8-11 November, 1992); proceedings to be published by Oxford University Press. I wish to thank Professor Perkins for generously providing a copy of his paper before its publication. For a readily available, although incomplete, survey of the manuscripts containing Busnois’s compositions, see Geneviève Thibault, "Busnois," Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart (1952), 2:517.
The one extended study to date is Catherine Brooks’s dissertation of 1951. Prior to her study, Busnois was best represented by a few compositions in *Trois Chansonniers* (1927). Brooks’s thesis provided all of the chansons in modern edition and a biography complete at the time of writing. She used comparative tables to ascertain which aspects of Busnois’s compositional technique occurred most frequently, then highlighted Busnois’s versatility of texture, sense of polyphonic continuity, extensive imitation, and harmonic motivation. Much of her thesis is summed up in her article, “Antoine Busnois, Chanson Composer.”

In another pioneering study of the fifties, George Perle also emphasized Busnois’s compositional versatility and cited him as the most important forerunner of the Josquin generation in the use of imitation. In his study of the composer, he discussed several chansons that demonstrate Busnois’s broad spectrum of techniques, from the non-imitative *Au pvre par necessité* to *Bel Acueil*, where “all voices participate as equal partners in a consistent scheme of imitative relations.” Perle was also taken by Busnois’s harmonically oriented style and “the wonderful subtlety and ingenuity of his rhythmic ideas, probably unsurpassed in the entire history of music.”

In a third study from the early fifties, Edgar Sparks confirmed the stylistic trademarks mentioned in the work of Brooks and Perle. Challenging the notion that

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16 Brooks, "Antoine Busnois as a Composer of Chansons."


18 Although Brooks provided all of the chansons in modern transcription, her readings are not completely reliable.


21 Ibid., 94.

Josquin’s style was the product of Ockeghem’s influence, Sparks showed that the hallmarks of Josquin’s style, such as the construction of the melodic line into syncopated rhythmic patterns and the use of structural imitation, point to Busnois rather than Ockeghem as predecessor.

After that, interest in Busnois largely lay dormant until Leeman Perkins’s publication of the *Mellon Chansonnier*. This source emphasized the abundance of Busnois’s output; of the fifty-seven pieces in the manuscript, fifteen are attributed to him. As Perkins points out, this number is nearly four times as many attributions received by as any other composer included in the source. Shortly after Perkins’s edition, the publication of *A Florentine Chansonnier* (1983) underscored Busnois’s fecundity as a chanson composer. Of the compositions in this manuscript, twenty-six receive attributions to him in at least one source. In his commentary, editor Howard Brown provided a lengthy stylistic profile of Busnois, the first in three decades.

Specific compositions inspired two recent studies. Scholars investigated the Hacqueville chansons, pieces that include the name of Jacqueline d’Hacqueville, wife of a Parisian councilor, spelled out in the text or in acrostic, as evidence of Busnois’s possible involvement with Jacqueline. In his examination of the poetry, Perkins found an emotional intensity virtually unrivaled in texts of fifteenth-century chansons. Because of the personal tone of the poetry and the skillful setting of the words, Perkins assumed that the texts were written by Busnois himself, and ordered the texts chronologically by degree of

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24 Ibid., 1:4-5.


intensity reflecting the author's increasing infatuation with (and final rejection of) the subject, Jacqueline. Since the songs are potentially dateable, Perkins suggested that they could serve as a basis for determining the chronology of Busnois's oeuvre. Perkins added a fifth chanson, "A une dame," to the Hacqueville set, based on the textual reference to the colors blue and yellow, which are displayed on the Hacqueville family arms.

Paula Higgins took up this subject in her article, "Parisian Nobles." In her review of the Hacqueville pieces, Higgins faced the problem of autobiographical poetry in terms of literary criticism. She also uncovered new material on the Hacqueville-Bochart families, including evidence concerning another Jacqueline de Hacqueville. Finally, she questioned Busnois's relationship to Jacqueline and surveyed the activity of women poets and musicians in late-medieval culture, suggesting the possibility of Jacqueline's authorship of the Hacqueville texts.

Richard Taruskin's article, "Antoine Busnois and the L'homme armé Tradition," (1986) was another study to focus on Busnois as the progenitor of a style. In this case, Taruskin followed Oliver Strunk in asserting that the first L'homme armé mass may have been Busnois's. Taruskin argued that, in addition to Obrecht's work, whose L'homme armé mass is structurally akin to Busnois's, the masses of Dufay, Faugues, and Basiron also exhibit his influence by using various motives and themes from his mass.

Biographical aspects have also received recent attention. "In hydraulis revisited," Higgins's article of 1986, clarified much of Busnois's early life by examining his career in Burgundian service using the extant court accounts of Charles the Bold and his daughter


Marie of Burgundy. Higgins presented documentation verifying the composer's affiliation with St. Martin of Tours, and suggested that Busnois's homage to Ockeghem (who was the famous treasurer there) implied a literal pupil-teacher relationship existing between them. The publication of this article was followed by her dissertation, "Antoine Busnois and Musical Culture in Late Fifteenth-Century France and Burgundy," which included further investigation of his life and works.

One crucial aspect of Busnois's biography, the possibility of a trip to Italy, has not been the subject of a major study. Although there are no known records of a journey there, two Italian-texted songs, "Con tutta gentileça" and "Fortuna desperata" have been attributed to him. As Brooks points out, it was unlikely that an Italian text would be set anywhere but in Italy. The authenticity of these songs has been questioned, however, making them dubious witnesses to the presence of Busnois in Italy.

The attention of Italian theorists is another cause to speculate whether Busnois visited Italy. Tinctoris, of course, was also the compiler of the Mellon Chansonnier, a source that contained so many of his secular works. Admittedly, Busnois's skill was recognized throughout Europe, and his citation in Italian treatises may be the product of his reputation rather than a journey there.

Much stronger evidence of an Italian trip is the substantial number of Busnois's chansons that are disseminated in Italian manuscripts. Three large divisions exist in the transmission of his secular works: those existing only in the earliest Loire valley

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31 Higgins, "Antoine Busnois and Musical Culture."


33 The most recent attack is found in Joshua Rifkin, "Busnois and Italy: The Evidence of Two Songs," paper presented at the Busnois Conference, "Continuities and Transformations."

chansonniers, those found in both Franco-Burgundian and Italian manuscripts, and those appearing solely in Italian sources. Fifty-six songs attributed to him are found in at least one Italian source; twenty-eight (or thirty-two) of these are found exclusively in Italian sources.

The ramifications of this division in transmission have never been thoroughly investigated. Although the purpose of Brooks's analysis was to contribute to the understanding of Busnois's style, she did not attempt to compare the pieces disseminated in French sources with those in the Italian sources. As might be expected, the French sources are, for the most part, chronologically earlier. Regardless of whether or not Busnois visited Italy, the chansons from later sources are presumably later chansons; logically, it seems that a style change would occur in the pieces in the Italian sources.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate stylistic change in Busnois through examination of the chansons based largely on their chronological appearance, using the chronology devised by David Fallows, and to explore the possibility of a stylistic change being inspired by a trip to Italy. Brown suggested that a visit may have taken place sometime between 1482 and 1492, based on the fact that we have no information of any activity by Busnois during this time, and 1482, the year of Marie's death, would have been the end of the composer's connection with her court. Since his proposal, however,

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36For a full listing of the chansons and their sources, see the chart in Higgins, "Antoine Busnois and Musical Culture," 99-100.

37David Fallows, "Trained and Immersed in all Musical Delights," paper read at the Busnois Conference, "Continuities and Transformations." I wish to thank Professor Fallows for kindly providing a copy of his paper before its publication.

Fallows showed that Busnois probably composed all known songs before the year 1482. With this in mind, it is necessary to find a more appropriate interval for Busnois's hypothetical journey, since a trip after 1482 would have no bearing on the subject of a change in his composition. Biographical study reveals that Busnois took lengthy absences from the Burgundian court during several significant periods. These absences, which occur in the 1470s, coincide with a number of chansons appearing in Italian sources, according to the current dating of these sources.

This study cannot determine whether or not Busnois traveled to Italy. Only an archival document would prove such an association. Perhaps Busnois was particularly adept at assimilating various styles, accounting for a shift in his later pieces. It is also possible that his dissemination into Italian sources was a product of Burgundian singers emigrating to the Italian courts. Nevertheless, the stylistic analysis undertaken here is important for what it tells us about Busnois's musical development.

The thesis will be arranged in the following manner: Chapter 2 will consider the composer's life, with special emphasis on events which suggest Italian connections, such as absences from the court records as well as political and musical contacts. Chapter 3 will be devoted to analysis of the works appearing in French sources and highlighting characteristic pieces disseminated in them. Chapter 4 will do the same with the music from the Italian sources. Finally, Chapter 5 will summarize the stylistic overview. The appendices will include transcriptions of unpublished chansons and a list of readily available modern editions.

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39 Fallows, "Trained and Immersed in all Musical Delights."

CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHY

As is the case with many composers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Busnois's exact place and date of birth are unknown. It is believed that he was born ca.1430 and, as the name "Antoine de Busne dit Busnoys" indicates, his family was probably from Busne, a small town near Béthune in northeastern France.

The earliest record of his whereabouts is a document discovered by Pamela Starr in the Vatican Archives. Dating from 1461, this record states that Busnois, then a chaplain in the cathedral of St. Gatien in Tours, together with a number of cohorts, allegedly beat up a certain priest to the point of bloodshed (usque ad sanguinis effusionem) on five different occasions, actions for which he was temporarily excommunicated. Although the composer's actions appear extreme to modern readers, the story is typical of the accounts of petty clerical violence that fill fifteenth-century church documents.

After he was absolved of his crime, Busnois became associated with the collegiate church of St. Martin of Tours, whose titular abbot was the king of France. According to church documents uncovered by Paula Higgins, "Antonius Bunoys" was on 7 April 1465 promoted from choir clerk of St. Martin to the rank of acolyte and the other three minor orders in the church of St. Venant, a sister church of St. Martin. On 13 April 1465, he was elevated to the order of sub-deacon. Busnois's promotion at St. Martin to a new position at a sister church suggests Busnois's affiliation with St. Martin must have begun a number of years before 1465. As Higgins suggested, it is possible that Busnois's early training in Latin, composition, and rhetorical skills were a result of study at St. Martin.

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41 This form of Busnois's name comes from the register of singers at the Burgundian court for the year 1468, found in Jean Marix, *Le musiciaens de la cour de bourgogne au XV* siècle (1420-1467), Paris: L'Oiseau-Lyre, 1976.


43 Full citation and description of extant documentation concerning Busnois's career listed in Higgins, "In hydraulis Revisited."

44 Ibid. 75.
Further aspects of Busnois’s early training may be inferred from his presence there. Higgins pointed out that Busnois’s service at St. Martin is especially significant in light of the fact that Johannes Ockeghem held the dignity of Treasurer during the same time. Therefore, the textual references in the celebrated motet In hydraulis which refer to Ockeghem as “propago” and the association implied by contemporaries such as Tinctoris may have been referring to a literal pupil-teacher relationship rather than an allegorical one.45

Considering Busnois’s poetic talents and his affinity for chanson composition, Leeman Perkins speculated that Busnois’s connection with the Burgundian court was of long standing, and that he, like Hayne van Ghizeghem, was trained there while he was young.46 Perkins suggested that Busnois may have been put under the supervision of a musician of the chapel, gaining instruction in music while acquiring poetic skills in the vernacular from someone at the court. Perkins pointed out that Busnois began his association with the court of Burgundy not as a member of the ducal chapel, but rather as a chantre, which he defined as a chamber musician more concerned with secular song than with the music of the liturgy.

David Fallows suggested that Busnois may have spent his early years at the court of Brittany.47 Substantial evidence places poetry manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale f. fr. 9223 at that court around the year 1458. In the last part of that manuscript, the rondeau Lequel vous plairoit mieulx trouvé is ascribed to Busnois. The same section of 9223 contains the poem En tous les lieux, ascribed to Monseigneur Jacques, the same text that is found with a four-voice setting ascribed to Busnois in Nivelle. Barbara Inglis48 identified

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45Picker, “Busnois.”


47Fallows, “Trained and Immersed in All Musical Delights.”
Monseigneur Jacques as Jacques de Luxembourg, brother-in-law of Louis de St. Pol. Jacques is the main poet in this part of the manuscript, authoring twenty-one of the sixty-four poems. His work is found in no other source apart from two musical settings, making a good case for private ownership of the collection.

Given Busnois’s contribution to the collection and the likelihood that Jacques’s poetry was not very widely distributed, Fallows considered that Busnoys may have been present at the court of Brittany in the later 1450s. Further, Fallows pointed out that St. Pol is less than 20 miles from Béthune; Jacques de Luxembourg or de St. Pol could provide the link between the composer and the court of Brittany. Jacques’s rondeau *Qu’elle n’y a je le mant leng* is found as an anonymous musical setting in Dijon, immediately preceding two songs by Busnois.

In September 1465 the records of the collegiate church of St. Hilaire-le-Grand in Poitiers, which had ancient ecclesiastical and political ties to St. Martin of Tours, state that Busnois presented himself as a candidate for the position of master of the choirboys at St. Hilaire. The document contains the minutes of the chapter meeting at which the canons discussed the qualifications of Busnois and the current choirmaster. Although the canons retained the acting master, they described Busnois as “maxime expertus in musica et poetria” (extremely expert in music and poetry) and as a “multum solemnis et notabilis vir” (a very serious and famous man).

The next known document on which Busnois’s name appears comes from Charles the Bold’s records when he was Count of Charolais. Dated 14 March 1467, Busnois was accorded a gift of eight *livres* to compensate for the expenses in leaving the city of Ghent to follow the court to Bruges. This document corroborates Busnois’s famous reference to himself as the “unworthy musician of the illustrious count of Charolais,” establishing that

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Busnois was in Charles's service before he succeeded his father, Philip the Good, as duke of Burgundy on 15 June 1467. This document is the first known reference of Busnois's affiliation with Charles; in light of the discovery of the St. Martin documents, it is likely that initial contact was made sometime between 1465 and 1467.

During 1468, court documents record that Busnois received gifts for services rendered. The vagueness of the references suggests that Busnois was not yet formally associated with the Court of Burgundy; payments to him are consistently recorded as gifts rather than wages. Further, the small sum of these gifts points to the likelihood that the gifts were supplemental income to a full-time position he held elsewhere.

Busnois's name is occasionally listed in the court accounts from 1467 to 1470. During this period, several musical works described as "new" were copied into the chapel choirbooks. One of these must have been the Burgundian choirbook Brussels, Bibliotheque Royale MS 5557, which preserves ten Latin-texted works by Busnois, all later additions to that manuscript. Because of various clues in the manuscript, it is possible that the pieces may have been copied by Busnois himself, ranking them among the few autograph musical exemplars extant from the fifteenth century.

A record of Busnois's presence at the Burgundian court is contained in the register for the year 1468, although he is apparently not yet fully employed there. All of the chapel lists from June 1467-1470 survive, and none show him as official status. Marix notes that, while it shows Busnois, Basin and Hayne van Ghizeghem to have been paid as singers in that year, it does not list them as actual members of the chapel. Delay in officially joining the chapel may have been owing to Busnois's occupation elsewhere, such as training toward priesthood, university studies, or an attachment to another institution. He held benefices at Mons, Lierre, and in Furnes; a requirement of these might have been full-time work that would postpone his entering the chapel.

The first list recording his unofficial connection to the chapel is a summary of allocations to the chapel members for their livery over a nine-month period. Busnois's
name, with the title *demi-chappellain*, is appended to the end of the list with the qualification that his portion was for the month of October only. A separate entry in the accounts for November 1470 refer to Busnois as *chappellain de la chappelle dommestique de mondit seigneur*. Charles assigned various benefices to Busnois, and the court accounts for November 1470 record payment to “Messire Anthoine de Busne, dit Busnois” for “many agreeable services that he has performed and for certain causes of which [the duke] does not wish further declaration to be made here.” The vague wording in this document is typically seen in payments for diplomatic embassies and political missions. It is significant that Charles was concurrently recruiting new members for his choirs; it is possible that Busnois was sent to persuade singers from rival courts to join the Burgundian choir. An act such as this could be dangerous politically, and it would have been imprudent to describe it in detail.

A record from August and September suggests that Busnois may have been active at the chapel before October 1470. According to the documents, a cloth merchant and furrier were compensated for materials used in tailoring two long robes of fine violet cloth, each lined with the fur of 101 black lambs. These robes were given to Busnois and a Pasquier Louis, both named *chantres* in the document. The description of the robes match those worn by members of the ducal chapel, indicating that Busnois was indeed present there, although not in an official capacity. In fact, Busnois is consistently labeled as *chantre* in all the documents predating October 1470, a title that suggests he could have sung in both secular and sacred functions.

Busnois official connection with the Burgundian court chapel began in 1471; his name appears thereafter as a member of the ducal chapel on the parchment rolls (escroces) itemizing the personnel that accompanied the ducal entourage in its daily travels from 1471 to 1475. A record for 8 March 1471 indicates that he is still being paid as *demi-chappellain*; perhaps he worked at the court in a less than full time status. His standing
changed sometime between June 1471 and July 1472, when he attained the rank of *clerc*. He was elevated to rank of full chaplain between October and November of 1473.

From the surviving *états journaliers*, it is clear that Busnois accompanied Charles on his travels and campaigns and was with him at the siege of Neuss (north Germany) in 1475. After Charles’s death in the battle of Nancy, Busnois went into the service of his daughter, Marie of Burgundy, who married Maximilian I of Austria in August 1477, and Busnois is listed on Marie’s escroces until September of that year. After that date, there is no known record mentioning Busnois until 4 May 1479, when he is listed on the *états journaliers* of Maximilian I of Austria. Busnois’s service in Maximilian’s household is sporadic—his absences last for several months at a time. It was once believed that Busnois left Maximilian’s service when Marie died in 1482; however, a few reappearances in the chapel during 1482 and 1483 suggest that he stayed on for a short while in a limited capacity after that date. Apparently, Busnois's final years were spent at the collegiate church of St. Sauveur; a now lost record of his death, dated 6 November 1492, lists Busnois as *rector cantoria*. 
CHAPTER 3

A STYLISTIC EVALUATION OF THE CHANSONS
IN FRENCH SOURCES

As noted in Chapter 1, the dissemination of Busnois’s secular music could have profound implications on the study of Busnois’s stylistic development, given the clear division in transmission into French and Italian sources.\textsuperscript{49} Table 3.1 will make this distribution clear. The sources are ordered chronologically across the top, and the chanson listing down the side is ordered to reflect the appearance of each chanson according to its earliest source.\textsuperscript{50}

\textbf{Table 3.1}

\textbf{Distribution of Busnois's chansons with attributions}\textsuperscript{51}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incipit</th>
<th>Nivelle early 1460s</th>
<th>Wolf ca. 1467</th>
<th>Dijon ca. 1465-69</th>
<th>Laborde before 1471</th>
<th>Cop ca. 1469-73</th>
<th>Mellon 1475-76</th>
<th>Cas ca. 1479</th>
<th>Pix ca. 1480-84</th>
<th>Fl 229 ca. 1492-93</th>
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\textsuperscript{49}For possible biographical implications of this division, see Higgins, "Antoine Busnois and Musical Culture," 98-99.

\textsuperscript{50}Chronology based on Fallows, "Trained and Immersed in All Musical Delights."

\textsuperscript{51}See Appendix A, Source Sigla, for full citations of the sources.
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The French Sources:  
Nivelle, Dijon, Laborde, Copenhagen, Wolfenbüttel

These five French manuscripts, once called Franco-Burgundian chansonniers, are the principle sources for the secular music of the Ockeghem-Busnois generation.\textsuperscript{52} Now known to emanate from the Loire Valley region, they share striking codicological and scribal similarities, as well as a large number of repertorial concordances. As discernible from the chart, every song found in a French source is in Dijon, which is possibly the second earliest manuscript containing Busnois's chansons. The only earlier source for Busnois's compositions is Nivelle, which carries twelve. Because Nivelle is probably earlier, and because Dijon, the next earliest source, contains all songs found in the remainder of the French sources, those pieces found in Nivelle will be dealt with separately from those whose earliest known appearance is Dijon.

The Nivelle Chansons

Nivelle is possibly the earliest source containing Busnois's secular works, dated ca.1460-65 by Higgins in her introduction to the facsimile edition.\textsuperscript{53} One of the larger collections of the fifteenth century, Nivelle holds sixty-six French-texted pieces. Four of Busnois's pieces found in Nivelle are also disseminated in an Italian source; all twelve are found in other Loire Valley chansonniers. Of its thirty attributions, Busnois receives eight, more than any composer. Based on attributions from other manuscripts, eleven pieces in all can be identified as Busnois's.\textsuperscript{54} The majority of Nivelle's repertory consists of formes

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\textsuperscript{52}There are several excellent overviews of fifteenth-century sources. For a concise survey of only the most important chansonniers, see Brown, \textit{Music in the Renaissance} (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 88-90. For more complete descriptions see Helen Hewitt's edition of Petrucci's \textit{Harmonice Musices Odhecaton A} (New York: Da Capo, 1978), 105-167, and volume two of Perkins's \textit{Mellon Chansonnier}, 150-185.

fixes chansons; the sole exception is Vous marchez, a combinative chanson by Busnois that is unclassified in form.

Table 3.2 Chansons disseminated in Nivelle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rondeaux:</th>
<th>Bergerettes:</th>
<th>Unclassified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C'est bien maleur, R6\textsuperscript{55}</td>
<td>C'est vous en qui</td>
<td>Vous marchez, a4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quant vous me ferez, R4</td>
<td>En tous les lieux, a 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma damoiseille, R5</td>
<td>Lassiez Dangier</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est-il mercy, R5</td>
<td>Soudainement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le corps s'en va, R5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quant ce viendra, R6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All pieces a 3 unless otherwise noted.

\textit{Rondeaux}

Busnois's elegantly-shaped superius melodies are thought to be one of his most distinguishable trademarks. They are usually described as spanning up to a tenth or more, forming an arch that ascends quickly and syllabically, concluding in a slow, melismatic descent\textsuperscript{56} The melodies of the chansons found in Nivelle span the interval of an octave or a little less, forming two arches, the second one occurring within a smaller unit of time, usually a breve. This technique is evident in the rondeau C'est bien maleur. The range of the superius spans a seventh. The first of the arches takes the time of three breves and rises

\textsuperscript{54}D'ung autre amer is also included in this source; it is attributed to Busnois in Pixérécourt, but not likely to be by him.

\textsuperscript{55}The symbols R4, R5, R6, etc., denote the number of lines in the refrain of the rondeau.

\textsuperscript{56}Several scholars have made this observation; see Brooks, "The Chansons of Antoine Busnois," Brown, "A Florentine Chansonnier," Higgins, "Antoine Busnois," and Perle, "The Chansons of Antoine Busnois."
to the B-flat. The second, shorter arch is confined to the space of one breve, reaching up to the C.

Example 3.1 *C'est bien maleur*, mm. 1-5

Catherine Brooks noted the rhythmic similarity of many opening motives in the chansons. As with the opening of example 3.1, many of the Nivelle chansons, utilize the rhythmic motive \( \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \) at the opening of the piece:

Example 3.2a *Ma damaoiselle*

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Example 3.2b Quant vous me ferez

Example 3.2c Le corps s'en va

Example 3.2d Quant ce viendra

Contrapuntally, the writing is usually free mixed with points of imitation.

However, the degree of imitation and free counterpoint can vary widely from one chanson to another; consequently, the contratenor plays varying roles. In the songs constructed largely of free counterpoint, the contratenor generally functions as harmonic support. This is evident in C'est bien maleur. The song begins with free counterpoint, after which two imitative passages occur between the tenor and the superius. The contratenor plays the role of a supporting voice, filling out harmonies. Three other chansons in this group, Ma damoiselle, Quant vous me ferez, and Quant ce viendra, display the same texture.

In contrast to these chansons, Le corps s'en va uses imitation to articulate the beginning of each section of the chanson. The contratenor here is slightly more melodic than that of C'est bien maleur.
Example 3.3a *Le corps s'en va*, mm. 1-2

Example 3.3b *Le corps s'en va*, beginning of section B

In *Est-il mercy*, every phrase except the last is marked by a point of imitation. Here the contratenor plays a more involved role in the texture, as it is included in the first point of imitation:

Example 3.4 *Est-il mercy*, mm. 1-3
Regardless of whether the writing is imitative or freely counterpuntal, there is rarely a break in the flow of the polyphonic writing, except at medial cadences. Normally, phrases are constructed so that they overlap constantly in the several voices, and there are very few holes in the texture. *Quant ce viendra* ⁵⁸ is unique in this regard, owing to the inclusion of clear-cut phrases with all voices cadencing together, characteristic of the Dufay generation:

Example 3.5 *Quant ce viendra*

---

⁵⁸This piece exists with a *si placet* part in Mellon. Brooks suggested that the fourth voice is so well integrated into the texture that the piece may have originally been written with it, "Antoine Busnois," 1:112.
In this piece, Busnois displays his imaginative juxtaposition of textures by alternating the kind previously demonstrated with imitation. This alternation underscores the bipartite structure of the chanson.

Table 3.3 Textural layout of *Quant ce viendra*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st phrase:</th>
<th>Voices begin together and also end simultaneously, followed by a semibreve rest.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd phrase:</td>
<td>Voices begin together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd and 4th phrases:</td>
<td>Tenor and superius in imitation throughout (15 semibreves), followed by medial cadence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medial cadence:</td>
<td>Followed in all voices by semibreve rest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th phrase:</td>
<td>Voices begin simultaneously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th phrase:</td>
<td>Tenor and superius in imitation for 17 semibreves. Final cadence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the clear-cut opening phrase, *Quant ce viendra* is unique in other aspects, one being that its medial cadence is made up of a full triad; nearly every medial cadence in the songs of the French sources is made up of octaves. Secondly, this piece shows no succession of parallel imperfect consonances, a technique considered to be one of Busnois's earmarks; every other chanson in this group displays this technique to some extent. The longest passages, found in *Ma damoiselle, Est-il mercy*, and *Le corps s'en va* last three semibreves. In each of these, the passages are pre-cadential, emphasizing the cadence by setting it apart from the preceding contrapuntal texture.
Example 3.6a *Ma damoiselle*, mm. 25-26

Example 3.6b *Est-il mercy*, mm. 8-9

Example 3.6c *Le corps s'en va*, mm. 20-21

Perhaps a horizontal manifestation of his inclination toward vertical imperfect consonances is his tendency to begin a chanson by outlining a triad. An example is the beginning of *C'est bien malheur*, where a G minor triad, although foreign to the A final of the piece, is found in the tenor:
Example 3.7 *C'est bien maleur*, m. 1

In *Est-il mercy*, a triad is outlined in the opening phrase, although not so plainly as in the previous example. As indicated by the dashes, the elegant opening melody begins on G, ascends to B-flat dotted semibreve, and finally reaches the apex of D at measure three. When the voices coincide, the resultant harmony is a G minor triad, which is the final of this transposed hypodorian mode.

Example 3.8 *Est-il mercy*, mm. 1-3

The previous example provides a model of how the rhythm in these pieces features almost constant hemiola and syncopation. In *Est-il mercy*, Busnois creates contrapuntal rhythmic activity by entering imitative voices on conflicting accents:
Example 3.9 *Est-il mercy*, mm. 9-11

![Musical notation]

**Bergerettes**

The technique that sets Busnois's bergerettes apart from his rondeaux is the use of a new texture or meter for contrast in the B section. For instance, the A section of *Soudainement* opens with a simultaneous entry of the voices, followed by free counterpoint. The B section contrasts by utilizing imitation between the superius and tenor.

*C'est vous en qui* displays the type of contrast used most frequently in the later bergerettes, that is, the change of mensuration for the second half. In this case, the meter switches from triple imperfect to $\frac{\text{c}}{4}$.

Example 3.10a *C'est vous en qui*, mm. 1-2

![Musical notation]
Further, subtle contrast can be heard between the two sections— in the first, imitation is at the octave, in the second, at the fifth.

The four-voice bergerette *En tous les lieux* also utilizes a change of mensuration from perfect prolation to imperfect in its second part, which—owing to coloration—becomes triple (with passages of two-against-three) again at the end.

**Combinative**

The unclassified *Vous marchez* is a combinative chanson—a song that combines a freely composed setting of a forme-fixe poem (usually a rondeau or ballade) in the superius with one or more lower parts that quote one or several popular songs (both tunes and texts). *Vous marchez* exhibits several techniques typical of Busnois's combinative construction. First of all, the superius text is an example of a "troped" rondeau. The entire refrain of the popular song is presented at the start of the superius (distinguished in Table 3.3 by italics), and is followed by the rondeau text. Line four of the rondeau quatrains is interrupted with the first phrase of the popular song, in such a way as to comment on the rondeau text.59
Table 3.4 Superius text of combinative chanson *Vous marchez/Vostre beaute*

*Vous marchez du bout du pié,*
*Marionnete,*
*Vous marchez du bout du pié,*
*Marion, et Marion.*

*Vostre beaute tres mignonnette*
*M'a esté trop cher vendue.*
*J'amassee mieux l'avoir onc veue,*
*Néantmoins,*
*Vous marchez,*
*qu'elle soit fricquecte.*

Because the superius text and music alternate between popular song and rondeau, the piece divides into three large sections, resulting in an ABA form. The first section is repeated, modified slightly the second time, since the return of the A section lacks line 1. The A sections are marked by imitation at the fifth between tenors I and II. In the B section, the tenors appear in alternation.

**Chansons in Later French Sources**

Dijon, the earliest of the remaining sources, contains 156 French chansons plus a Latin-texted devotional motet, two bitextual chansons and a textless bicinium that were apparently added somewhat later. Dating from ca. 1470-75, the source contains all of Busnois's compositions disseminated in French chansonniers.60

Wolfenbüttel’s preponderance of compositions for three parts (only one is a 4) by composers of the Ockeghem-Busnois generation points to origins in the 1460s.61 *O rosa bella* is included in this source, but the remaining fifty-four compositions are French

59Maria Rika Maniates, ed. *The Combinative Chanson*, Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance, general editor James Haar, no. 77 (Madison: A-R Editions, Inc., 1989), lv. Her translation of the superius reads, "You walk on your tip toes, little Marion, you walk on your tip toes, Marion and Marion--Your very dainty beauty has cost me too much. I would rather have never beheld it, even though--you walk on your tip toes--it is enticing." (Popular song given in italics.)

60Date of Dijon is taken from Fallows.

61Ibid.
chansons. Although no attributions are given in the manuscript, the numerous concordant sources have made possible identification of many of Busnois's works.

Three scribal hands can be distinguished in the musical notation in Laborde, dividing this manuscript into three distinct though connected layers. The first two copyists probably worked simultaneously, in the early or mid-1470s.\textsuperscript{62} The remainder of the repertory was probably added later; the inclusion of works by Compère and Prioris have led scholars to place the date in the 1480s or early 1490s. Of the 107 compositions once included in the Laborde, ninety-six survive complete, seven others only in part. All carry a French text, with the exception of two devotional motets in Latin, two Italian-texted songs, and two textless compositions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.5 Chansons disseminated in later French sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rondeau</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A vous sans aultre</em>, R4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ha, que ville</em>, R4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chi dit on benedicite</em>, R5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mon seule et cele</em>, R5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A qui vens tu</em>, R4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bel Acueil</em>, R4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>En soustenant</em>, R5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>J'e m'esbais</em>, R5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Joye me fuit</em>, R5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>On a grant mal/On est bien malade</em>, R4, A4 (combinative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rondeaux</th>
<th>Bergerettes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Mon mignaut musequin/</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gracieuse, plaisante muniere,</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5, a4 (combinative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Quelque povre homme 1,</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vostre gracieuse,</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R5</td>
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</table>

The superius melodies of the chansons in the later French sources generally employ the same characteristics as the Nivelle group, with the difference that the superius range is now expanded. *Joye me fuit*, whose superius spans a tenth, is the first occurrence of a superius extending beyond an octave in the first phrase:

Example 3.11 *Joye me fuit*, superius, mm. 2-7

![Example 3.11](image)

*Ha, que ville* utilizes the increase in range—almost certainly for expressive purposes—with the leap of a tenth, heard at the word “detestable” before the final cadence:

Example 3.12 *Ha, que ville*, mm. 31ff.

![Example 3.12](image)
The pieces in the late French sources display a variety of contrapuntal textures. *Ha, que ville*, for instance, has very little imitation and is almost entirely free counterpoint except for a small three-note beginning of the second part in superius, imitated by the tenor two semibreves later (see example 3.12).63

At the other extreme are pieces that employ a high degree of imitation. In *Bel Acueil*, all three voices are written in the same clef. All voices participate in the imitation heard at the start of each phrase, with the voices entering closer in each successive phrase except the last.

Example 3.13a *Bel Acueil*, mm. 1-3

Example 3.13b *Bel Acueil*, mm. 12-13

63 However, the superius of *Ha, que ville* is found separately in Dijon, Casanatense, and FL 229, along with the verbal canon "Trinitas in unitate," the performance of which results in a three-voice canon.
Example 3.13c *Bel Acueil*, mm. 18-19

As unusual as that texture may appear, it is employed again in *A vous sans aultre*, where each of the three imitative voices are written with mezzo-soprano clefs.

Example 3.14 *A vous sans aultre*, mm. 1-3

Harmonically, these pieces exhibit many of the same qualities as those found in Nivelle. Busnois’s affinity for writing parallel imperfect consonances between superius and tenor before a cadence is evident, as seen in the last phrase of the first section of *A qui vens tu*:
Example 3.15 *A qui vens tu*, m. 11

Rhythmically, *Je ne puis vivre* shows some of Busnois’s most imaginative writing.

With the tenor and superius in imitation, and the contratenor in parallel tenths with the tenor, Busnois writes the contratenor so that a delayed entry into the parallel writing will create an off-beat accent:

Example 3.16 *Je ne puis vivre*, mm. 13-19

*Bergerettes*

The bergerettes in this group, like those of the Nivelle group, show contrast in the second part. *Ja que li ne* begins with a first part in 4/4, while the second part is in $\frac{4}{4}$, indicating that the tactus will relate to the breve rather than the semibreve, as was normal.\(^{64}\)
Further, the B-section provides an effective contrast with the use of a more homophonic texture:

Example 3.17 *Ja que li ne*, mm. 20-24 (B section)

In the later French group, Busnois writes only one bergerette lacking contrast between the two sections. This work, *M'a vestre*, is not only homogeneous in texture, but it also exhibits motivic unity between the two parts, the contratenor in the B section using a motive heard in the superius line of the previous section.

*Combinative*

*Mon mignault* is typical of Busnois’s combinative chansons; the popular tune is arranged in canon at the fifth between tenors I and II, limiting the contratenor to a freely composed supporting voice, except in the second phrase, where it joins in the canon at the octave below tenor I. The texts are linked in character—both are summoning frisky country girls to amorous adventures. The superius has a rondeau cinquain with a *residuum* text, whereas tenors I and II carry both stanzas of the popular song.

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64 For a complete discussion of the tempo changes inherent in this mensural sign, see Perkins, *Mellon Chansonnier*, 2:80ff.
Conclusion

The opening superius melodies of these chansons generally form two arches; the first one is longer and the second one quite short. The phrases commonly begin with syllabic writing that becomes melismatic as the line descends to the cadence. The melodies are fairly conjunct, and it is typical for one of the voices to outline a triad at the beginning of a song.

Busnois uses syncopation and hemiola to provide rhythmic interest. However, rhythmic complexity is often contrasted in the B sections of the bergerettes, which tend toward a homophonic texture.

The pieces in the French sources show a variety of textures, from nearly non-imitative writing to chansons in which the imitation is pervasive. The contratenor participates in varying capacities. When imitation is more frequent, the contratenor is generally more active in the imitation.

A continuous flow characterizes Busnois’s writing; rarely do the voices cadence together, except at medial cadences. There are a few exceptions to this standard, however, where Busnois uses contrasting textures to delineate or balance the sections of a forme-fixe chanson.

His preferred texture for combinative chansons is four voices, with two inner voices in canon or imitation. The superius carries the forme-fixe text, which is matched wittily with the text and music of a popular song. Final cadences can be set off by a series of parallel imperfect consonances, the use of which is considered one of Busnois’s most personal earmarks.
CHAPTER 4:
A STYLISTIC EVALUATION OF THE CHANSONS IN ITALIAN SOURCES

The fact that several of the important fifteenth-century chansonniers are probably of Italian origin\(^{65}\) indicates that the French chanson enjoyed considerable popularity in Italy during the late fifteenth century. It is likely that these sources were employed in the sophisticated surroundings of the Italian courts or in the magnificent homes of wealthy private citizens.

**Chansons with Mellon as the earliest source**

The Mellon Chansonnier, which in all likelihood was compiled by Tinctoris in Naples ca. 1475\(^{66}\), emphasizes the abundance of Busnois's output; of the fifty-seven pieces in the manuscript, fifteen can be attributed to him. As Perkins points out, this number is more than a fourth of the repertory and nearly four times as many works included by any other composers in the source.\(^{67}\) Ten of these are concordant with an earlier French source, leaving four chansons, all three-voice rondeaux, whose earliest source is Mellon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1 Chansons appearing first in Mellon</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rondeaux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Au povere par necessité</em>, R5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>O Fortune trop tu es dure</em>, R5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pour entretenir</em>, R5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{65}\)Dragan Plamenac, in "A Reconstruction of French Chansonnier in the Biblioteca Colombina, Seville" *Musical Quarterly* 37 (1951): 501-42; 38 (1952): 81-117; 245-77, advanced the theory that several of the important chansonniers, including Pixérécourt, Colombina, and Bologna Q 16 were written in Italy.


\(^{67}\)Ibid., 1: 4-5.
Except for *Au pobre par necessité*, the superius melodies here do not show the same long arch construction seen in the earliest chansons. However, the first phrase of *Au pobre par necessité* encompasses a tenth, although the smaller second arch seen in the earlier chansons is not used.

Example 4.1 *Au pobre par necessité*, mm. 1-6

Rather than exhibiting the idiosyncratic arch surpassing the range of an octave, the superius of *O Fortune trop* centers around G, the final of the piece, staying within a third above and a fourth below that note.

Example 4.2 *O Fortune trop*, mm. 1-8
Likewise, the superius lines of *Pour entretenir* and *Ung plus que teulx* are confined to the area around their finals.

Example 4.3a *Pour entretenir*, mm. 5-8

![Musical notation for Example 4.3a](image)

Example 4.3b *Ung plus que teulx*, mm. 1-10

![Musical notation for Example 4.3b](image)

Common to all of the melodies in this group is the use of $\text{♫ ♪ ♪ ♪}$ as an opening motive. In the case of *Ung plus que teulx*, the motive is heard in the tenor and modified in the superius, as seen in example 4.3b.

The nature of this motive influences the texture of *Au povre par necessité*, resulting in a rhythmically simpler piece overall. Even though all chansons begin with this motive and all are in $\text{♩ ♩ ♩ ♩}$, such simplification does not always result. In *Pour entretenir*, the passage that accompanies the opening motive uses small note values and syncopation, contributing to the rhythmic complexity of the piece as a whole. (See example 4.3a)

As is typical of most of the Mellon chansons, *Pour entretenir* uses a mixture of imitation and free counterpoint. In this chanson, imitation is heard in all voices, and occurs between superius and tenor in the second phrase. Typically, these two voices often converge in parallel motion, which frequently occurs before a cadence. However, it is noteworthy that in this group there are more instances of parallel writing that occur within a
phrase—Busnois apparently begins using the texture for purposes other than signaling a cadence.

Example 4.4 *Pour entretenir*, mm. 12-14

*Au povere par necessité* is out of the ordinary in this respect, since it makes no use of parallel writing. However, the absence of homorhythmic imperfect consonances is only one characteristic that sets this song apart from the others. *Au povere* is one of the few examples in Busnois’s chanson output that uses no imitation. This piece is constructed entirely of free counterpoint; interest lies in its frequent use of cadence formulas as melodic material, often combining with the contratenor to produce a deceptive cadence. Further, this chanson exhibits a high amount of dissonance—a passage of successive suspensions is featured prominently.

Example 4.5 *Au povere par necessité*, mm. 24-25.
A typical trait of Busnois is to unite separate parts of a chanson through motivic unity. In *Au povre*, the suspensions of example 4.5 are foreshadowed by a similar rhythmic motive in the second phrase of the superius.

Example 4.6 *Au povre par nécessité*, mm. 9-12

An aspect this otherwise unusual chanson has in common with the other songs first appearing in Mellon is the use of a full triad at the medial cadence. This distinctly separates these pieces from the chansons in earlier sources. As mentioned earlier, the medial cadences of the songs found in French manuscripts almost always consist of octaves. Further, all of the chansons in this group have medial cadences built on the fifth degree of the scale, giving them a harmonic V-I orientation, in the modern sense of the term.

**Chansons occurring in sources later than ca. 1479**

**The sources**

The principal sources of this late Italian group are Pixèrecourt, Casanatense, Florence 229, and Bologna Q 16. Possibly the earliest of these, Pixèrecourt is thought to be of Italian origin because of the use of a formal Roman book hand and the systematic Italian corruption of the French poetry. Further, the texts of the chansons are consistently restricted to an incipit or, at most, a refrain, and all additional strophes have been routinely omitted, as they generally were in Italian sources. Alternatively, the text for a significant group of secular Italian pieces has been carefully and accurately written, suggesting that the manuscript may have emerged from an Italian milieu.68
Because the repertory contained in the collection is clearly earlier than that of Florence 229, which was illuminated in the same workshop about 1490, it can be assumed that the Pixérécourt chansonnier was compiled early in the 1480s. Of the 170 compositions included in the manuscript, the first two are devotional Latin motets, nineteen are Italian-texted songs, three use Spanish poems, one is textless, and the remainder are French chansons.

An escutcheon on the first notated folio of the manuscript Casanatense\(^6^9\) shows the combined arms of the ducal houses of Gonzaga and Este. This source may have been intended as a gift for Isabella's wedding on 11 February 1490—its compilation could have taken place between 1479-1481.\(^7^0\) Arthur S. Wolff suggested that the collection may be the "libro da canto figurato che scripse e notò Don Alessandro Signorello," commissioned for illumination by Ercole I in 1485.\(^7^1\) The contents apparently reflect to a considerable degree the repertory that was current at the court of Ferrara, judging from the exceptionally large place given to works by Johannes Martini, who was active there from 1474 until his death in 1497. That situation, in view of Isabella's well-known interest in the arts and particular affection for music, suggests that the manuscript was intended mainly for her and that her favorite compositions were included in it. Of the 123 works in the collection, 105 are French chansons while eight pieces are Italian-texted, four in Flemish verse, three with Latin text or incipits, and three are textless.

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\(^6^9\)Casanatense, ca. 1479, may be the earliest source for four of Busnois's works: Acordes moy, Le monde est tel present, Pucelotte, and Seule par moy.


The illuminations and decoration of the Florence 229 have been attributed to Gherardo and Monte di Giovanna del Fora, indicating that the collection was copied in Florence. Howard Brown suggested that it was being prepared for King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary when news of his death reached Florence early in 1491, that it was then purchased by Lorenzo the Magnificent, and finally presented as a gift to Alessandro Braccesi, whose arms are to be seen at the foot of folio iv\textsuperscript{V}.

He also demonstrated that the miniature portrait generally believed to have been that of the composer Johannes Martini is probably instead that of Braccesi himself. The repertory is one of the largest of the period, comprising a total of 268 pieces, the majority of which are French chansons. However, sixteen are also found with Italian texts, one with Flemish, one with Latin, and eighty-four with no text at all. Of the textless group, five are mass sections and four are motets, but the majority seem to be secular works.

The scribe of Bologna Q 26 signed his name, "Marsilius," and the date 1487 at the end of the table of contents. The subsequent additions that were made to the original repertory were probably copied mainly in the 1490s. Because of the inclusion of pieces written on both Italian and Spanish texts, the manuscript may have originated in an Italian center with Spanish connections. However, a large number of compositions shared with Pixèrècourt, and Florence 229 points to links with Florence as well. Of the 131 pieces included in the collection, eighty-seven carry texts in French, thirty in Italian, and eight in Spanish; in addition, there are five song-motets and a polyphonic mass. However, in every instance except three the text is restricted to a few words of the initial line. Similarly, there are no attributions, and the composers who can be identified through concordant sources (including Busnois) are primarily those represented in the later additions to the codex.

\textsuperscript{72}Brown, A Florentine Chansonnier, 1: 13ff.

\textsuperscript{73}Perkins, Mellon, 2: 152.
### Survey of chansons which appear in sources dated ca. 1479 or later

#### Table 4.2 Chansons appearing after ca. 1479

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rondeaux</th>
<th>Bergerettes</th>
<th>Unclassified, free form. or other</th>
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<tr>
<td>Acordès moy, R4, a 4</td>
<td>C'est ne pas moy</td>
<td>Le monde est tel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seule a par moy, R5</td>
<td>Maintes femmes, a 4</td>
<td>Pucellote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advegne qu'advenir, R5</td>
<td></td>
<td>†J'ay pris amours, a 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faites de moy, R5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bone chiere</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ma tres sourveraine, R4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Con tutta gentilezza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quant j'ay au cuer, R5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pauix mesdisans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quelque povre homme 2 (a second and entirely different setting of the same text) R5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Terrible dame, a 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Je ne demande, R4, a 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ung grand povre homme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>†Amours amours</td>
<td></td>
<td>Corps digne/Dieu quel mariage, a 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>†Amours fait moutill est delTant que nostre, R5, a 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>L'autier la pieça/En l'ombre/Trop suis jonette, a 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L'autier que passa, a 4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Une filleresse/Vostre amour/S'il y a, a 4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Je ne demande lialité</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amours nous traitetJe m'en vois, a 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All chansons a 3 unless otherwise indicated.

†indicates chansons with conflicting attributions among its sources.
Rondeaux

One of the most notable characteristics of these chansons is the use of text expressiveness. For example, *Seule à par moy* shows a deliberate use of melodic leaps, downward for despair on "espoirée" and upwards for indignation on "grand tort."

Example 4.7a *Seule à par moy*, mm. 4-13

Example 4.7b *Seule à par moy*, mm. 24-34

Further, the contratenor appears to be used for expressive means. The repetition of its first phrase seems to reflect the monotony of being "all alone in my chamber." (See contratenor line in example 4.7a.)

*Seule à par moy* is outstanding in other aspects as well; as a late fifteenth-century chanson it is unconventional in its use of two time signatures (the contratenor employing cut-c and the superius and tenor using O2), since polymetrical arrangements such as this are seldom found in the secular music of this era.

However, the prevailing meter in these chansons, as in all chansons found only in the Italian sources, is $\frac{6}{8}$. When derivation does occur, it serves to contrast a section, as in *Faiies de moy*, which, owing to coloration, shifts into triplets for the last twenty-three breves.
It has been shown earlier that Busnois's use of duple meter, especially in the B sections of the bergerettes, generally coincides with writing that is more homophonic in texture. Because of the use of this meter, the chansons in the Italian group appear at first glance to be rhythmically less complex than the earlier works. As it turns out, the seeming simplicity that is employed at the start of these songs tends to evolve into syncopated passages as the pieces progress, as seen in this example from *Faulx mesdisans*:

Example 4.8a *Faulx mesdisans*, mm. 1-4

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Example 4.8b *Faulx mesdisans*, mm. 50-54

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Another aspect shared by all of the chansons in the Italian group is imitation. It is not uncommon for Busnois to modify the imitative voice slightly, as in *Adevgne qu'alvenir* ⁷⁴:
Imitation is extensive in several of these chansons. In *Seule à par moy*, the beginning of each phrase is marked by the tenor and superius in imitation either at the octave or unison. The increasing importance of the contratenor is evident in this work as well; while the superius and contratenor are in imitation, the contratenor foreshadows an important melodic segment that will subsequently become a climactic moment in the superius line. (See example 4.7b.)

Regarding extensive imitation, none of the pieces in Italian sources are comparable to *Bel Acueil* or *A qui vens tu*, in which the contratenor was involved in the all points of imitation. However, the role of the contratenor expands significantly in the chansons in late Italian sources, most notably by its extensive participation in parallel imperfect consonances, which up to this point has not been seen. Again, *Seule à par moy* serves as an example. In this passage, the tenor and the contratenor pair to create a duet—a striking contrast to the imitation that has gone before.

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74 Catherine Brooks mentioned this piece as one of the two (the other being *Au povre par necessité*) chansons which do not exhibit imitation; see “Antoine Busnois,” 88. Clearly, *Au povre* excludes imitation, but *Advegne* does not merit this categorization.
Example 4.10 Seule à par moy, mm. 34-36

_Acordés moy_ and _Je ne demande autre de gre_ are the four-voice rondeaux in the latest sources. These later four-voice chansons show the forward-looking pairing of voices that was to be taken up and perfected by Josquin. As Brooks pointed out, Busnois often juxtaposes the old with the new;\(^75\) this is certainly the case with _Acordés moy_, which utilizes innovative pairings (examples 4.11a and 4.11b) while employing the anachronistic device of hocket near the end (example 4.11b).

Example 4.11a _Acordés moy_, mm. 1-16

\(^{75}\text{Brooks, 129ff.}\)
ce que je pense.

cor des moy

ce que je pense.
Example 4.11b Acordés moy, mm. 47-51

Bergerettes

The two bergerettes in this group exemplify the variety found in Busnois’s compositions of the same form. *C’est nes pas moy*, a three-voice bergerette, displays the common mensural change for contrast in the B section, in this case, from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{2}{2}$.

Although imitation occurs throughout, the second part is further distinguished by the use of repeated notes in all voices.

*Maintes femmes* is unique in many ways. Contrast between the two sections is achieved by the use of two different, enigmatic verbal canons for each. In the manuscript Seville, three of the four voices are written out, and the canons indicate the means of deriving the fourth. Fortunately for the modern reader, Petrucci’s *Canti C* prints the chanson with the canons and their *resolutiones*. The first, “Odam si protham teneas in remisso, Dyapason cum paribus ter tene has” (If you hold back the first song [i.e. the superius] you should augment three times in equal divisions at the octave) means that if all notes of the superius up to the medial cadence, white or black in the original notation, that are longer in value than a semibreve (held back) are taken out and put into this rhythmic

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76Translated by Brooks, 130.
pattern \( \frac{1}{2} \), (augmented three times in equal divisions) at the lower octave, the proper tenor part will result.\(^{77}\)

The second canon states, "Voces a mese nonnullas usque lycanosipatton psallens recurre singulas" ("Reiterate singly, singing, some notes from mese [A below middle C] to lichanos hypaton" [the D below that A].\(^{78}\) The piece is even more unusual in that it employs a retrograde construction in the tenor.

Unclassified

The traits of the unclassified pieces agree with three important points noted in the formes fixes chansons: 1) the prevailing meter is \( \frac{1}{4} \); 2) of the pieces with medial cadences nearly all employ full triads or the root and the third at that point, with the sole exception of Pucellote; 3) the increased importance of the contratenor is apparent, as evident in Je ne demande lialté, where a duet of fourteen breves between the tenor and contratenor opens the chanson.

Of the thirteen pieces of unclassified form, five are four-voice works. Brooks has suggested the abundance of four-voice compositions reflects the wane of the formes fixes while four-voice writing began its popularity.\(^{79}\) Although Brooks was not surveying the chansons chronologically, her statement is insightful, since this last group of chansons has the largest percentage of both unclassified chansons and four-voice works of any group.

The presence of paired voices makes Terrible dame stylistically compatible with the other four-voice works of this set. As with the four-voice rondeau Acordés moy, its

\(^{77}\)The musical and verbal canon is written out in Canti C. See Hewitt's edition of Petrucci's Canti C.

\(^{78}\)For a full discussion, see Hewitt, "The two puzzle canons in Busnois's Maintes femmes" Journal of the American Musicological Society 10 (1957): 104-110.

\(^{79}\)Brooks, 134
innovative voice pairing is juxtaposed with the use of an older device, fauxbourdon.
Paradoxically, the employment of fauxbourdon itself is both innovative and anachronistic.
A technique normally based on plainchant and found in the sacred music of the Dufay
generation, is here used in a secular, non-cantus firmus composition. The technique is
used in alternating passages set in low and high registers, representing dialogue between
two lovers.

Example 4.12 Terrible dame, mm. 1-9
Combinative chansons

Amours nous traita/Je m'en vois is representative of Busnois's combinative writing in several aspects. First of all, the superius carries the courtly text, which is unclassifiable because of the lack of residuum text. The superius and contratenor II are paired by their similar textures and occasional homorhythmic sections. The tenor and contratenor, carrying the popular melody, are in canon at a fourth below.

Conclusion

The most notable textural change occurring in the chansons disseminated only in Italian manuscripts is the incidence of parallel imperfect consonances. These passages are more frequent and last much longer than those in the earlier chansons. Further, rather than serving a pre-cadential function, these passages are found both at the opening and middle of phrases. The increasing importance of the contratenor can be seen in the parallel writing, since its involvement in that texture is prominent in the latest chansons.

Innovative pairing of voices is heard in the four-voice works, often juxtaposed with an older compositional technique, such as fauxbourdon or hocket.

With very few exceptions, all medial cadences in the chansons disseminated in the Italian manuscripts are made up of a full triad. Only one chanson in a source dated ca. 1479 or later uses a bare-octave medial cadence; the rest use a full triad.

Busnois uses mensuration exclusively, although other meters are used for internal contrast. Pieces using that mensuration are rhythmically less complex than those using perfect prolation. However, the chansons written in imperfect meter tend to become more rhythmically complex as the piece progresses.

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80Maniates suggested the superius is a ballade, based on the use of a repeat sign, see Combinative Chansons.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Several conclusions can be drawn from surveying the chansons according to their earliest appearance:

1. A melodic curve, which often spans an octave, is particularly evident in the earlier chansons. Later chansons make use of a greater range when they do form the typical arch. However, there are frequent occurrences of melodies which center around an important pitch, staying within a fifth of that note. A phrase usually begins more or less syllabically on longer note values and become more melismatic, using faster values, toward the cadence.

2. Rhythmically, the pieces in C are less syncopated and complex, especially in the earliest bergerettes. In the later pieces, all of which begin with the C mensuration, the rhythm often begins fairly simply, evolving into syncopation toward the final cadence.

3. The contratenor usually provides harmonic support in the earliest chansons, rather than participating fully in imitation or parallel motion. When the contratenor is part of a point of imitation, it participates only in the first phrase of the piece. The striking exceptions to this are Bel Acueil and Au povre, both of which have three equal voices in imitation throughout. In the later works, the contratenor becomes an important part of the texture, especially in its inclusion in series of parallel imperfect consonances.

4. Medial cadences of the earliest pieces are almost always made of octaves or the final and the fifth, while the medial cadences of the later chansons are usually full triads. Of the medial cadences made up of all root, or root and fifth, the majority (seventy-nine percent) occur in chansons from French sources; of the types of root and third and complete triads,
the majority are from Italian sources (seventy-eight percent and seventy-one percent, respectively).

5. The four-voice pieces from the later Italian manuscripts show the innovative use of paired voices. In the earlier four-voice pieces in French manuscripts, four-voice writing is similar in texture to three-voice pieces, that is, contrast and musical interest are achieved texturally by alternation of imitation, some use of parallel imperfect consonances, and motivic unity in all voices. The difference becomes clear when comparing Quant ce viendra, a typical early four-voice chanson from Nivelle, to Acordés moy, which is disseminated in Pixèrècourt.

6. The use of paired voices, a forward-looking technique, is seldom combined with an older device, such as fauxbourdon or hocket.

7. Imitation plays an important part in both early and later compositions. Most of the later pieces not only display a great deal of imitation, but the imitation also tends to last for a longer period of time, usually just before a cadence.

Whether or not these changes are significant enough to warrant drawing a conclusion is the most pressing problem of this study. If one concludes that a significant style change does occur in the later pieces, specifically those in sources after ca. 1479, the question remains as to when Busnois would have traveled to Italy. The Burgundian court records reveal a gap that would have provided the composer with ample opportunity to visit there. In January of 1477, Busnois's employer at the court of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, died in the Siege of Nancy. At that point, Busnois entered the service of his daughter, Marie of Burgundy, and he is listed as present in her escroces up to the time of her marriage to Maximilian I of Austria in August of 1477. Information concerning Busnois
does not appear on Maximilian's court records until 4 May 1479, leaving a period of one year and eight months when Busnois's whereabouts are unknown. A trip at this time would explain the style change in the chansons found in Pixèrècourt, which was very likely compiled around 1480.

Higgins noted three Italianate style traits which seemed to occur in the late chansons. She says, "Busnois’s later style, like that of Josquin, becomes markedly less imitative, less rhythmically rambunctious, and even more harmonically conceived than his earlier works." This study shows that her assertion is not entirely valid. However, given the nature of the changes that do occur, David Fallow's assertion that more than two-thirds of Busnois's chansons were probably written before 1462 may be the most plausible assessment stylistically.

This slant on the issue brings up another question—if Busnois did write fifty or more chansons before 1462, what did he compose in the remaining thirty years of his life? Perhaps there are more sacred pieces yet to be found, or perhaps Busnois, one of the most illustrious composers of the late fifteenth century, occupied himself with other work.

A stylistic study cannot determine the events of Busnois's life. Only archival documents can verify those. The traits present in the later chansons are not dramatic and not necessarily Italianate in nature; perhaps the shift is owing to Busnois's increasing maturity as a composer. Even taking into account the large amount of Busnois chansons in Pixèrècourt and the current dating of that source, the attributions in that source may not be entirely reliable, since Dijon, a manuscript emanating from the composer's milieu, often does not attribute the same chansons found attributed to Busnois in Pixèrècourt.

Further, the dissemination of his works into Italian sources may have been the product of Burgundian singers emigrating to the Italian courts. Nevertheless, given his

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81 Paula Higgins, "Antoine Busnois," 44.
82 Fallow, "Trained and Immersed in All Musical Delights."
position in the history of the chanson, stylistic analysis is important for what it tells us about Busnois's musical development.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


### APPENDIX

#### The Sources

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