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Chronology of
the Works of
Guillaume Dufay



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A CHRONOLOGY OF THE WORKS OF
GUILLAUME DUFAY

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A Chronology of the Works
of
Guillaume Dufay
Based on a Study of
Mensural Practice

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To
Arthur Mendel
who directed and encouraged me
in this study from its beginning

PREFACE

The notation of the music of the first half of the fifteenth century has never been studied in detail.

Basic principles of this notational system are relatively simple and are understood well enough today. The manuals of Wolf¹ and Tirabassi,² and the more recent one by Apel,³ explain these principles in more or less clear fashion, and with their help a student can learn to transcribe almost any piece from the period. Difficulties arise only when there are errors in the manuscript, or when the composer or scribe has not understood details of mensural notation as well as the student himself.

But it is possible that a more detailed study of certain features of this notation would yield valuable information. If notational practice changed during this period and the changes could be detected, rationalized, and proven to have a chronological ordering, they could be used to date entire groups of compositions. If differences in notational practice could be detected among the works of various composers, no matter how slight and apparently insignificant the differences might be, they could help in the attribution of anonymous and dubious works to specific composers.

Various details of the notation could be taken as a point of departure for such a study. It has been suggested, for example, that a close study of ligature usage might be fruitful. But a preliminary study convinced me that valuable results could be obtained from an investigation of the different mensurations used and the signatures employed at times to specify these mensurations.⁴ I conceived of the plan of setting up a chronological outline of mensural practice against which any composition could

¹ Johannes Wolf, Geschichte der Mensural-Notation von 1250-1460 (Leipzig, 1904).

² A. Tirabassi, Grammaire de la notation proportionnelle et sa transcription moderne (Brussels, 1928).

³ Willi Apel, The Notation of Polyphonic Music 900-1600 (Cambridge, 1953).

⁴ I will use the term "mensuration" when speaking of the organization of a piece (i.e., the number of semibreves per breve, the number of minims per semibreve, etc.) and the term "signature" when speaking of the symbol used to make this organization explicit and/or tell something about the tempo.

be compared. It was necessary to have a considerable number of pieces which could be dated with some accuracy, and since I was certain that mensural practice varied from composer to composer, it was necessary that these pieces be by the same composer. Dufay was the obvious choice: his life spanned three-quarters of the century; several hundreds of works attributed to him have been preserved; and many of these pieces can be dated.

The nature of my investigation was such that most modern transcriptions were useless. Each piece was studied in its original notation. I grouped them according to notational characteristics and used datable works in each group as a basis for suggesting limiting dates for the entire group. Compositions which were written at about the same time should have common features, which can just as well be details of notation as general musical characteristics. I carried out this procedure in as inflexible a way as possible, even when there was reason to suspect that certain works did not belong where this method placed them. There may be mistakes in my chronology. I do not believe they are numerous, and I thought it preferable not to make any concessions in my procedure on the basis of other evidence.

These groups of the Dufay works, nine of them arranged in what I take to be the proper chronological order, form the skeleton of this book. I should say immediately that there is nothing startling about a chronology of all the works of this composer. So much sound research has been done in the Dufay era in recent years, a major share of it by Heinrich Bessler, that a chronology could be constructed on other types of evidence which would agree substantially with mine. Compositions which scholars have always assumed were early works fall early in my chronology, those known to be late fall in one of my later groups; pieces found only in early manuscripts turn up in one of my first groups, pieces found only in later sources turn up late. But this is the first attempt at a comprehensive chronology,⁵ and I date pieces with more precision than would be possible in a chronology based on manuscript studies or stylistic analyses of the music.

Bessler, in the seventh chapter of his Bourdon und Fauxbourdon⁶ and in a recent article,⁷ has been a pioneer in the technique of using signatures and mensurations to date certain works and groups of pieces. I will take exception to some of his assertions and conclusions in the course

⁵ I have examined 224 compositions attributed to Dufay, in one or more of their manuscript sources; these are listed in Appendix A, grouped by type of composition. The manuscripts which were available to me in facsimile or on microfilm are listed, with their abbreviations, in Appendix B; there were 59 of these.

⁶ Heinrich Bessler, Bourdon und Fauxbourdon (Leipzig, 1950).

⁷ H. Bessler, "Dufay in Rom," AfMW, 15 (1958), pp. 1-19.

of this book, but this is not meant to obscure the fact that his findings are valid and useful, on the whole, and that he was the first to attempt this method.

Around each group I have woven discussions of problems of notation and performance practice brought up by the pieces in the group, often comparing Dufay's practices with those of other composers in an attempt to show where Dufay's usages originated and which musicians seem to have been influenced by them.

The most obvious fruit of my study is the chronology, but another and perhaps equally important purpose of this book is to present a more systematic picture of fifteenth-century notational practice than has been given before. I will spend no more time than is necessary in pointing out mistakes and confusions in other works on notation, but I must say at this point that the one basic mistake in most of these has been the assumption that the "rules" of notation remained constant throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that there was one notational practice during this period, and that what was valid for Palestrina must have been valid for Ockeghem and Dufay.

My study is based on the assumption that mensuration and signatures, as well as other details of notation, found in manuscripts of the period are those intended by Dufay. It might seem possible that scribes made so many alterations, intentional or otherwise, that it would be impossible to reconstruct Dufay's practice. In the course of my study I examined a total of 224 compositions ascribed or attributed to Dufay. Some of these have come down to us in only one manuscript, and there is no way of checking their mensurations and signatures. But where there were two sources for a piece I was able to check between the two manuscripts; if there were three sources, I could make two different checks; if a work was found in four manuscripts, three checks were possible; and so on. In all, I was able to compare the same piece between two manuscripts 367 times, but even this figure does not give an accurate picture of the amount of checking I was able to do on this point. Dufay wrote for three, four, or five voices, and in every piece the mensuration and signature of each of these voices could be checked. In addition, many of the Dufay works have changes of mensuration; an isorhythmic motet may have ten or more different signatures among all voices, and a complete mass might have three or four times as many.

I did not find a single instance of disagreement as to mensuration. The only disagreement between signatures are:

Invidia inimichi, the final section, C in BU and Ox, but C
in FP;

Supremum est, middle section, C 3 in BL, Tr92, and BU, but C 3
in Mod B;

- Lauda syon, verse 14, O in Tr92 but Φ in Tr93;
Nuper rosarum, tenor, $\text{O}\text{C}\text{C}\text{C}$ in Tr92 but $\text{O}\text{C}\text{C}\text{C}$ in Mod B;
Vexilla regis, superius, changes from Φ to O in Tr92 but
remains in Φ throughout in ModB and RS15;
Magnificat octavi toni, "Deposuit ..." verse, Φ in SPB80 but O
in Tr92 and ModB;
Magnificat quinti toni, "Sicut locutus ..." verse, Φ in ModB
but O in FM112;
Belle vueilles moy vengier, C in MC but C in FM176;
Vostre bruit, C in FM176 but C in all other sources;
Missa ave regina celorum, C in all five sections in SPB80 but
C in these places in Br5557 and ModE;
Missa Caput, C in Tr89 but C in Tr90 and Tr93.

With no disagreement at all on mensurations and with disagreement on signatures no more than a small fraction of a per cent (and with only one exception the differences being nothing more than the presence or absence of the stroke calling for diminutum which, as will be shown later, is more a tempo indication than a change in mensuration), there is every reason to assume that since scribes were remarkably accurate about such matters, they have given us faithful copies of what Dufay himself wrote down.

Appendix B is a list of manuscripts used in this study, with their abbreviations. I have used the most widely accepted abbreviations, giving preference to those used in publications of the American Institute of Musicology. My only intentional deviation is in the use of "Ox" to refer to the manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canonici misc. 213 rather than the usual "O," to avoid confusion with the symbol for tempus perfectum.

Appendix A is a list of all the Dufay works. Mass cycles come first, followed by settings of individual sections of the ordinary, motets, short liturgical pieces, and finally, secular works; the pieces in each group are arranged alphabetically. I have given the number of the chronological group in which I placed each piece, and since I devote one chapter to each of these groups, this number also refers to the chapter in which the work is discussed. Following the title of each work in this appendix, I have listed all manuscripts in which I have located it, with location by page. This concordance is my own work and is undoubtedly incomplete in some few details, since a handful of manuscripts which may contain some of the Dufay works was not available to me. I have included it because I believe it to be substantially complete, and because no other comprehensive concordance of the compositions of Dufay is available in print.

There has been some misunderstanding as to what the word, "motet" meant at this time. My classification of a piece as a motet or as a short liturgical piece was done on the basis of type of setting, not the text. A sequence text set as a simple three-part harmonization of the chant melody

is a short liturgical piece, a similar text made into a longer and more elaborate piece is a motet. In this I have followed the practice of the scribe of ModB who, in his index, after an extensive group of brief settings of hymns, magnificats, and antiphons, prefaced a section of more complicated pieces with the remark "hic incipiunt motteti."

There is an acute problem of pagination with certain of the manuscripts of this period, and I can best illustrate my solution by describing the situation in one of the more troublesome sources, BL. The manuscript itself has two different paginations: each piece, or section of a piece, has a roman numeral on the verso of each opening, running from 1 to 339. In addition — or more accurately, originally — each folio has a roman numeral in the upper right-hand corner of the recto of each opening. There are difficulties with each of these systems. With the first, when a piece is added at the bottom of a page or opening, it has no number; also, since a new number is found on each opening, whether a new piece begins there or the music is a continuation of the composition found on the previous opening, a work which takes up two openings will have two numbers, one which takes up three will have three numbers. With the second system, some numbers were skipped (172-177, for example), and the three fascicles (11, 12 and 20) inserted in the manuscript after this pagination was put in do not share in it, having their own system of page numbering.

De Van's inventory⁸ assigns a number to each composition; by his count there are 328 pieces. Bessler, Reaney, and other scholars have adopted this numbering in their writings and inventories. When they refer to BL 213, this does not mean folio 213 or the 213th composition according to the numbering in the manuscript itself, but to the piece which de Van has listed as 213 in his inventory.

My own choice in this matter was dictated by a strong prejudice against any practice in a work of scholarship which puts an obstacle in the path of someone else working in the same area. The use of de Van's numbering as the only reference to a piece forces the student or scholar working with the manuscript itself to refer continually to the journal containing the inventory in order to find out just what piece is under discussion and where it is located in the manuscript. In this era of the microfilm reader, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that almost anyone with enough interest in the music of the fifteenth century to read a technical article or book about it will have access to films of some or all of the manuscripts referred to, and I believe that references to pieces in these sources should enable the reader to locate the proper spot in the manuscript with a minimum of bother.

⁸ G. de Van, "Inventory of Manuscript Bologna, Liceo Musicale, Q 15 (olim 37)," *MD*, 2 (1948), pp. 231-257.

Suppose a scholar working with the Grossim motet Imera dat hodierno in Ox finds it necessary to compare this version with those in other manuscripts. Turning to the Reaney inventory,⁹ he will find the following concordances listed: BL 203; BU 66; Em 156; PC f. 63^v; Tr 1481. When he views the film of the first of these, he will find that "BL 203" is of no help in locating the piece until he fetches the de Van inventory and decodes this inscription. Likewise, "BU 66" does him no good at all until he refers to the Besseler inventory¹⁰ of this manuscript; "Tr 1481" is meaningless without the proper volume of the DTO;¹¹ and "Em 156" needs to be translated into more useful form by the Dèzes inventory.¹² Thus he must refer to four separate places in addition to the original inventory in order to find the various copyings of this piece.

In my opinion, this is a cumbersome and bothersome system, and I have rejected it in my work. Rather than the de Van numbering of BL, I have used the original numbering (not foliation) of the manuscript itself. There is no valid objection to this system, after all. If a work covers three openings and therefore has three numbers, I cannot see that it is confusing in any way to refer to it as, for example, BL 37-39. If there are two pieces on one opening, it is clear enough to call the first BL 260 and the second BL 260^b. I have used the foliation in Ox rather than the numbering system of the Reaney inventory; I have used the numbering used in BU, whereby each page rather than each recto is given a number, rather than Besseler's numbering; I have referred to pieces in the Trent codices by their foliation rather than the number assigned them in the thematic index; pieces in Ao are identified by foliation, not by the numbering of the de Van inventory;¹³ I have not used Besseler's numbering for any of the manuscripts inventoried by him in his monumental work on the sources of this period.¹⁴ As a result, any piece mentioned in this book can be located in any manuscript in which it is found, quickly and without referring to anything else.

All references to masses, motets, short liturgical pieces and sec-

⁹ Gilbert Reaney, "The Manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canonici Misc. 213," MD, 9 (1955), pp. 73-104.

¹⁰ H. Besseler, "The Manuscript Bologna Biblioteca Universitaria 2216," MD, 6 (1952), pp. 39-65.

¹¹ G. Adler and O. Koller, "Sechs Trienter Codices. Erste Auswahl," DTO, VII (Vienna, 1900).

¹² Karl Dèzes, "Der Mensuralcodex des Benediktinerklosters Sancti Emmerami zu Regensburg," ZfMW, 10 (1927), pp. 65-105.

¹³ G. de Van, "A Recently Discovered Source of Early Fifteenth Century Polyphonic Music," MD, 2 (1948) pp. 5-74.

¹⁴ H. Besseler, "Studien zur Musik des Mittelalters II," AfMW, 8 (1927), pp. 137-258.

ular works will be by title only. Settings of the same sections of the ordinary of the Mass are numerous and I will differentiate between them by identifying each according to its location in one manuscript. To insure a common denominator among as many pieces as possible, any mass section found in BL will be designated by its number in this manuscript, no matter where else it is found, since BL contains the largest number of these pieces. If it is not in BL, I have given its location in one of the Trent codices. Since with only one exception all mass sections attributed to Dufay are found either in BL or one of the Trent manuscripts, this is a simple solution to what could have been made into a complicated matter. I have followed a similar method of identification with the several pairs of other pieces with identical texts.

Since I constantly refer to "breves," "semibreves," "flagged semi-minims," and the like, I have retained original shapes of these notes in my musical examples, which therefore belong to the category of unreduced transcriptions. I have put all voices in treble and bass clefs, though I have indicated the original clef in each case, and for convenience I have drawn bar lines, every minim, semibreve, or breve depending on the mensuration of the particular piece and the points illustrated by the example. I have not become involved in the controversial matters of text underlay and editorial accidentals, but have simply reproduced what I found in the original sources. I have retained the spelling of the period, in titles and texts.

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Gwynn S. McPeck generously made his large personal collection of microfilms of fifteenth century manuscripts available to me when we were colleagues at Newcomb College, Tulane University. Gustave Reese made a large number of most valuable suggestions and also sent me films of manuscripts I had not seen. Dragan Plamenac kindly sent me a copy of his film of a Munich manuscript that had eluded me; Kenneth Levy made a careful reading of a Dufay work in a source unavailable to me at the time; Edward Lerner called my attention to several concordances I had missed. I acknowledge, with gratitude, the assistance of these scholars.

Oliver Strunk offered penetrating and useful suggestions after seeing this study in its first version; my indebtedness to him goes far beyond this, however.

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A CHRONOLOGY OF THE WORKS OF GUILLAUME DUFAY

CHAPTER I

EARLIEST WORKS, ca. 1415-1423

The first trace of Dufay is at Cambrai, where he was an altar boy from 1409 to 1411. His first compositions must have been written there under the influence and guidance of Richard Loqueville, who had charge of the music at the cathedral from 1413 until his death in 1418. One can further assume that the music of both Loqueville the teacher and Dufay the student was influenced by compositions of the most famous musician of the day, Johannes Ciconia, who died in 1411. Since the manuscripts BL and Ox preserve pieces by Ciconia, Loqueville, and Dufay, the Ciconia works in these sources must be his later compositions, the ones still known and sung when Dufay was learning his trade from Loqueville. They are, with their mensurations:

BL 4-5	<u>Et in terra</u>	(C) C COC C
BL 6-7	<u>Patrem</u>	(C)
BL 92-93	<u>Et in terra</u>	(O)
BL 94-95	<u>Patrem</u>	(C)
BL 97	<u>Et in terra</u>	(O)C
BL 184	<u>Et in terra</u>	(O)
BL 185-186	<u>Patrem</u>	(C)
BL 249	<u>O felix templum</u>	(O)
BL 274	<u>Petrum Marcello</u>	(O)
BL 281	<u>O virum omnimoda</u>	(O)
BL 282	<u>O beata incendium</u>	C
BL 283	<u>O Padua sidus</u>	C
BL 284	<u>Venece mundi splendor</u>	(O)
BL 285	<u>O Petre Christi</u>	(C)
BL 286	<u>Ut per te omnis</u>	(O)
BL 296	<u>Doctorum principem</u>	C O C
BL 297	<u>Albane misse celitus</u>	(C)
Ox 101 ¹ 102	<u>Et in terra</u>	(C)

Signatures are rarely given at the beginning of a piece, on the assumption that the singer should be able to determine the mensuration himself, but when the mensuration changes in the course of a piece, there is always a signature to signal this change. C, O, and C are the only initial mensurations used; movement in each of these is primarily in semibreves and