

“Practical and Theoretical Aspects of The Duchemin Chansonniers of ca. 1550”

The growing demand for music prints, such as Du Chemin's *Chansons nouvelles*, is unimaginable without a readership armed with the basic musical skills required to perform the works these prints contain. How did aspiring musicians acquire these skills? For modern musicians, what special problems are presented by the printed poetic and musical texts at hand in these books? Finally, what can we learn from Renaissance music theory about the organization of individual compositions and the albums into which they were collected by editors like Nicolas Regnes, Claude Goudimel, and Loys Bisson? Pierre Attaignant, for his part, did not issue any truly practical manuals for the performance of polyphonic vocal music (although he did issue a treatise on some more abstract aspects of musical thought by the royal mathematician, Oronce Finé).¹ Yet by the 1550's, the legacy of Attaignant's chansonniers had provoked public demand sufficiently to justify the commercial publication by Du Chemin of music primers such as Claude Martin's *Elementorum musices practicae*, (issued Latin in 1550 and in French translation in 1556), Maximillian Guillaud's *Rudiments de musique pratique* (1554; in fact little more than a French summary of Martin's *Elementorum*), and Michel de Menehou's *Nouvelle instruction familiere* of 1558.² As we will discover, these modest treatises offer practical and theoretical observations about music that shed some light on the habits and competencies of the readers who used books like Du Chemin's. Through them, novice musicians could gain a basic understanding of the notation of rhythm, the tone systems of Renaissance polyphony, the rudiments of *solfege*, and even elementary composition.

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The careers and theoretical publications of Martin, Guillaud, and Menehou are interesting in their own right for what they imply about the character of the readership of Du Chemin's publications. The Latin edition of Martin's book was dedicated to Jean Brinon, a leading figure in the Parisian *parlement*, while in the French abridgement he addressed himself to Charlotte and Claude de Villemar, daughters of the bailiff of Touraine.³ Guillaud, who identifies himself as a member of the Collège de Navarre, dedicated his treatise to Claudin de Sermisy, the leading musician of the French royal court.⁴ Menehou's book is likewise directed

- 1 · His *Epithoma musice instrumentalis* was issued in 1530. See Daniel Hertz, *Pierre Attaignant, Royal Printer of Music: a Historical Study and Bibliographical Catalogue* (Berkeley: University of California press, 1969), p. 236.
- 2 · For bibliographical descriptions, see François Lesure and Geneviève Thibault, "Bibliographie des éditions musicales publiées par Nicolas du Chemin," *Annales musicologiques* 1 (1953): 269-373, Nos. 7, 32, 46, 68. The three treatises have been issued in modern reprint by Minkoff Editions of Geneva (1981).
- 3 · The prefaces are transcribed in Lesure and Thibault, "Bibliographie des éditions musicales publiées par Nicolas du Chemin," pp. 280 and 282 respectively.
- 4 · The preface is transcribed in Lesure and Thibault, "Bibliographie des éditions musicales publiées par Nicolas du Chemin," p. 281. Guillaud (1522-1597) himself must have been a man of great erudition, having earned a doctorate (with special distinction in philosophy and theology) from the Collège de Navarre in 1561, and having edited some of his father's

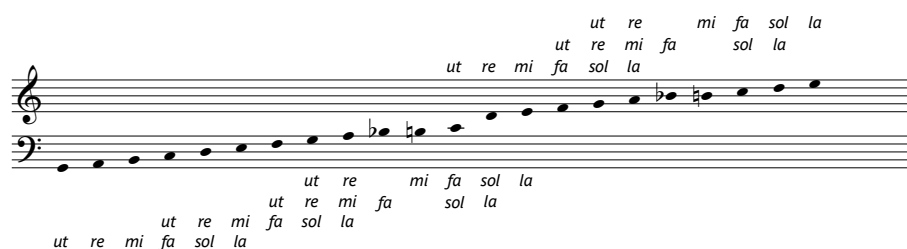
to an influential patron, the Cardinal Jean Du Bellay, uncle of the famous Pléiade poet, Joachim. Menehou himself is identified on the title page of his treatise as *maître des enfants* at the church of St.-Maur-des-Fossés near Paris. These modest treatises, in short, direct themselves to two sorts of publics: official protectors on one hand, and young readers on the other. In addressing the young daughters Villemar, for instance, Martin suggest that his text will help those (young musicians) who wish to “employ their spirits only with compositions today current among musicians.”⁵ The prologue to Menehou’s treatise similarly notes that “many young men undertake to learn music.”⁶ Taken together, the three treatises may offer practical and theoretical observations about music that shed some light on the habits and competencies of the readers who used volumes of the *chansons nouvelles*. We would do well to survey this body of thought, and its relationship to our current picture of how Renaissance musicians understood the relationship between written text and sounding object. The books also reveal the complex connections among speculative systems of musical theory, the editorial policies of printers, and the practical concerns of composers and singers.

Pitch and Solmization

Martin and Guillaud alike divided their instruction manuals into two broad sections: the first covering monophonic melodies (“*musique plaine*” in Guillaud’s terminology), the second devoted to polyphony (“*musique figurée*”). Under the former heading the authors explore the basic construction of musical space (the *gamut*, covering the diatonic tones--plus *B-flat*--from *G* to *e*”), the staff and clefs, and the set of six solmization syllables (“*voix*” is what Guillaud calls them: *ut, re, mi, fa, sol, and la*) that serve as an indispensable aid to the learning of written musical texts. None of this constituted a very novel musical curriculum. On the contrary, these elements had formed the basis of musical education of novice singers at least since the 11th century, when Guido d’Arezzo formulated them as a simple mnemonic device for singers. The method was in essence very simple: the six syllables of the hexachord were laid out in interlocking succession across the entire range of the musical compass starting on each (and only each) *G* (the *durum* hexachord: *g, a, b-natural, c, d, e*), *C* (the *naturale* hexachord: *c, d, e, f, g, a*) and *F* (the *mollum* hexachord: *f, g, a, b-flat, c, d*).⁷

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Example 2.1



French and Latin commentaries on sacred texts. See M. Cauchie, “Maximillian Guillaud,” *Festschrift Adolph Kocirz zum 60 Geburtstag*, ed. Robert Haas (Vienna: E. Strache, 1930), pp. 6-8.

- 5 · “Pour contenter ceux qui ne voudroient employer leurs esprits, que aux compositions qui on cours pour le jour-d’huy entre les Musiciens.” Quoted in Lesure and Thibault, “Bibliographie des éditions musicales publiées par Nicolas du Chemin,” p. 282.
- 6 · “Beaucoup de jeunes ens prennent pour apprendre la Musique,” he writes.
- 7 · The names of the hexachords derive from the status of the tone *B*: the *durum* took its name from the *B quadratum* that was a semitone below the tone *C*; the *mollum* from the *B rotundum* that was semitone above the tone *A*. The *naturale* hexachord involved *B* not at all, since here the semitone was between the tones *E* and *F*. Each hexachord thus shared an identical intervallic design, with the semitone at the juncture between the syllables *mi* and *fa*.

Of course, in practice, few melodies were limited to so narrow a range of tones as to be encompassed by a single hexachord. The solution offered by Guillaud and Martin (and by many other didactic manuals before them) was either simply to “borrow” a single syllable, *fa*, from a neighboring hexachord in places where a given melody exceeded the compass of a sixth by just a single tone, or to “mutate” from the original guiding hexachord to an adjacent one that afforded the range required for the remainder of that phrase. Consider, for example, the superius part of the very first composition from the *Cinquiesme livre*, Clément Janequin’s “C’est a moy qu’en veult.” This voice part fits nicely within the *durum* hexachord (on *G*), excepting the recurring tone *F* that exceeds its reach by a semitone. In this instance, Guillaud would counsel the singer to follow a rule (given in Chapter 5 of this manual) whereby a melody that went beyond the reach of the uppermost tone in a given hexachord but immediately returned to the range of that same hexachord would simply be solmized as *fa* (in our example, the first phrase of the tune would be sung as *sol, sol, sol, fa, fa, la, sol, fa, so, mi, mi, re*). Indeed, all but the very last phrase of the superius part in this piece can be sung in this way. For the last phrase, Guillaud would suggest that the singer mutate from the *durum* to the *naturale* hexachord, with the result that the final gesture of the piece would be solmized as *sol, sol, fa, mi, re, ut, re*.⁸

EXAMPLE 2.2



From a modern standpoint, it may seem illogical for musical pedagogy to have proposed a system of sight singing incapable of accommodating the range of even the simplest of melodies. But the hexachord, by avoiding the full musical octave, neatly confined itself to a map of musical space in which the singer could take a relative bearing around a single semitone (represented by *mi-fa*). The key to singing any melody thus became the mental task of moving a local frame of reference in a way that would accommodate the contours of the melody on the page. Hexachords were never intended as anything more than a practical means to aid the singer in the performance at sight of new repertoires.

Martin’s and Guillaud’s presentation of solmization did not extend to polyphonic contexts. But there is ample evidence to suggest that it was routinely used in such pieces, although not always with simple results. Indeed, modern scholars have long struggled with the implications of hexachordal practice for polyphonic music. Certain dissonant combinations (such as the tritone) frequently prohibited by theorists can in part be avoided through the judicious adjustment of solmization in ways that avoid the simultaneous sounding of *mi* and *fa* in different parts. The regulation of counterpoint at cadences, too, is at times aided by careful manipulation of hexachords. One convention of musical parlance in this repertory was that the concluding octave or unison of a cadential gesture be approached by the nearest imperfect consonance (as in a major sixth moving to an octave). Since that succession required that

8 · The guidelines for such mutation (or “muances” in Guillaud’s terminology) are too many and too complex to recapitulate here. The main error to avoid is the temptation to move from the *durum* to the *mollum* hexachords, since this would risk juxtaposing *B-natural* and *B-flat* in close succession, a melodic relationship simply not envisaged by compilers of the plainsong repertory or composers active before about 1550. For a brief guide to the strategies commonly advocated by sixteenth-century instruction books, see Nicholas Routley, “A Practical Guide to musica ficta,” *Early Music*, 7 (1985), 59-71.

one (and only one) part of a contrapuntal pair move by semitone, it followed that the last two tones in one (and only one) part should be solmized as *mi* and *fa*--even if in order to do so the singer had to imagine (temporarily) a “false” hexachord that would yield *ma* and *fa* in that position. Precisely this practice of “*musica ficta*” would have been required, for instance, at the end of Janequin’s “C’est a moy qu’en veult” (in the *Cinquiesme livre*), where the movement from *E* to *D* in the tenor part would have been paired with the movement from *C-sharp* (a “fictive” *mi*) to *D* in the superius part. Regnes did not print a sign for this inflection, but left it to the judgment of his performers to know that it belonged here.⁹

Example 2.3



It is also worth remembering in this context that Renaissance musicians made no distinction between the sign used to indicate what modern readers would understand as a “natural” and the sign used to indicate what we would understand as a “sharp.” Thus we should not be confused at seeing the same symbol used to designate *B-natural* in the superius part of Fresneau’s “Le cruel Mars” (from the *Unziesme livre*) as we find being used to designate *F-sharp* in the tenor part of Janequin’s “Amour vainc tout” (likewise from the *Unziesme livre*). In both contexts, Renaissance singers would have conceived of each of these tones as occupying the same position (“*mi*”) in two different solfege segments, or hexachords. Theirs was not a system of absolute chromatic pitches in a twelve-tone scale, but instead a pattern of relative position in which tones were understood in relation to the segments around them: the lower tone in a half-step relationship would always be “*mi*” (thus the “sharp” symbol), while the upper tone in a different half-step relationship would always be “*fa*” (thus the “flat” symbol).

Rhythm and Meter

The second half of each of our two treatises turns from questions of pitch relationships in monophony to the various signs used for meter and rhythm in polyphony. Here we find summaries of the note shapes and rests, as well as an exploration of the hierarchical relationship among the metrical levels of *modus* (the duple or triple organization of the *longa*), *tempus* (the duple or triple division of the *brevis*), and *prolation* (the duple or triple division of the *minim*). The signs for the durations themselves are simple enough to understand (indeed,

9 · Further on the problems and misunderstanding surrounding the application of *musica ficta* in editions and in performance, see Margaret Bent, “*Musica Recta* and *Musica Ficta*,” *Musica disciplina*, 26 (1972), 73-100, *ibid.*, “Diatonic Ficta,” *Early Music History*, 4 (1984), 1-48, and Gaston Allaire, “Debunking the Myth of *Musica Ficta*,” *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, 45 (1995), 110-27. Robert Toft has recently attempted to use the evidence of instrumental intabulations of vocal works (with special focus on the compositions of Josquin des Prez) to shed light on the various unwritten traditions of *musica ficta* during the sixteenth century. See his *Aural Images of Lost Traditions. Sharps and Flats in the Sixteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

they all have neat correspondence in modern notational systems). But, in other respects, the organization of those symbols into metrical systems can be rather complex. Indeed, in Chapter 13 of his book, Guillaud draws some passing analogies between the abstract, mathematical qualities of temporal proportion in sound and those aspects of some of the other disciplines of the Medieval university curriculum, namely arithmetic and geometry.¹⁰

As in the case of the interpretation of pitch signs, the notation of rhythm also presents some challenges for modern readers. According to the conventions of Renaissance musical notation, changes from duple to triple metrical patterns could be indicated in a number of ways, and at different hierarchical levels. According to one system of signs, a composer could indicate a change to triple meter using a new mensuration sign. In Fresneau's "Le cruel Mars" (from the *Unziesme livre*) for example, readers will note that although the composition begins *tempus imperfectum diminutum* (that is to say, a duple meter with the beat or *tactus* corresponding to the *breve*), it temporarily changes to *tempus perfectum diminutum* (or triple meter, still with the *tactus* corresponding to the *breve*). This same kind of shift between duple and triple mensuration will also be seen in other works from the same volume of the *chansons nouvelles*: Bense's "Qu'est Amour que je pensois," Crecquillon's "Taire et souffrir," and in De La Rue's "Si le changer." In other contexts, however, temporary shifts to ternary patterns could be indicated through the use of "coloration," in which the normally voided note heads (*breve*, *semi-breve*, or *minim*) were filled in as a sign of the transformation of the prevailing metrical pattern. No new mensuration sign is needed in these instances. What is more (as if things were not already so complicated) such "coloration" could apply not only at the level of the *breve* and *semi-breve* (called "tempus" by Renaissance musicians) but also at the level of the *semi-breve* and *minim* (called "prolation"). In the *Unziesme livre*, this convention can be seen at the words "Ha fort amour" in Janequin's "Amour vainc tout" and in Bense's "Qu'est Amour que je pensois."

In yet another context, coloration is used to caution the musician *against* making interpretive decisions that are otherwise implied by the notation. For instance, in the opening phrase of Etienne Du Tertre's "Quand tant me mectz" (from the *Sixiesme livre*), under *tempus perfectum*, a singer would normally interpret two *semi-breves* appearing between two complete *breves* as themselves being equal to a complete *tempus* (the rule normally required the singer to "alter" the second of the two *semi-breves* to be double the duration of the first). Instead, Du Tertre cautions against this reading by using coloration to show the intended effect:¹¹

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Other Notational Symbols

Modern readers will also notice a number of special symbols and figures used throughout the *Chansons nouvelles*. A *custos* at the end of each staff indicates the first pitch of the next line (see, for instance, the facsimile of Du Tertre's "Quand tant me mectz" (from the *Sixiesme livre*). These are not meant to be sung, of course, but instead help to guide the singer from one staff to the next. A *custos* appearing at the very end of a voice part indicates that the

10 · Speculation about music as a kind of sounding number had long been an important part of the European intellectual tradition. See Philippe Vendrix, "On the Theoretical Expression of Music in France during the Renaissance," *Early Music History*, 13 (1994), 249-74.

11 · For a convenient discussion of the problems of rhythmic notation, see Jean-Pierre Ouvrard, *La Chanson polyphonique française au XVIe siècle: Guide pratique*, 2nd edn., edited by Jacques Barbier (Tours: Centre de musique ancienne, 1997), pp. 58-64.

singer should return to the *signum* to repeat the last line or couplet. The *signum* is also used in canonic pieces to indicate the relative position of the *dux* and *comes* parts (but of course there are only two canonic works in the entire series--Claude Goudimel's "La terre, l'eau," from the *Second livre* of 1549, from and Jean Maillard's "Mort et Amour on semblable effets," from the *Quatorziesme livre* of 1554). Internal repeats (the need to sing the same section of music with new text) are indicated with a series of vertically aligned dots surrounded by two vertical bars (corresponding roughly to the modern repeat sign).

Modality in the *Chansons nouvelles*

Unlike Martin's and Guillaud's primer on the practical problems of solmization in monophonic music, Menehou's focus is explicitly polyphony, and, in particular, the basic information needed to compose. Here, his readers found explanation of the eight modes ("tons") of melodic organization, examples of regular and irregular cadences (in four voices), the proper treatment of consonances, and the special problems of writing in three, four, or five parts. There is much advice here that warrants further study. How, for instance, does Menehou characterize the melodic modes and their relationship to musical practice? The title of his fourteenth chapter, "des huit tons de toute Musique" suggests that the eight basic categories were a taxonomy of all of musical practice, a set of eight melodic archetypes capable of describing the range, central tones, and characteristic contours of any given melody. In a later chapter (No. 27—"Ce qui est necessaire devant que de composer"), he advises that, in polyphonic contexts, the mode is most clearly heard in the tenor part.¹² In this way, Menehou (like some other sixteenth-century writers) somewhat avoids the problematic relationship of an essentially monophonic system of categories as worked out in a polyphonic practice. Thereby he remains faithful to an ideology of thought on music--long a part of the Medieval and Renaissance reception of a classical legacy--that attempted to identify the ethical effects of the ancient modes with the gestures and processes of sixteenth-century musical parlance. Indeed, Menehou himself advises his novice composers to select a mode according to the general sentiments at hand in their chosen text: "And also as Franchinus Gaforus said, that if the text is laudatory, or modest, that it is suitable to use the first or the eighth mode. If it is bitter and hard, then the third or the seventh. And if it is pitiable or lamentable, the fourth, or the sixth, although few musicians take care with these . . ."¹³ The emotional valences of the modes, according to these writers, simply must have some connection with the ways in which composers set literary and sacred texts.¹⁴

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A number of modern scholars have studied musical compositions and aesthetic writings of the sixteenth-century for clues about how musicians of the day understood the expressive

12 · The sixteenth-century theorist Pietro Aaron offered much the same solution to this thorny problem, since in polyphony adjacent voice parts inhabit ranges that would otherwise tend to obscure the contrast between the authentic versions of the modes (the ones in which the final was also normally the lowest note in the ambitus) and the plagal versions of them (the ones in which the final was but in the center of the melodic reach of that part). Further on this problem, see Harold S. Powers, "Is Mode Real? Pietro Aron, the Octenary System, and Polyphony," *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis*, 16 (1992), 9-52.

13 · From Chapter 27, "Ce qui est necessaire devant que de composer": "Et aussi que Franchinus Gaforus dit, que si la lettre est louable, ou modeste, qu'il la convient mettre du premier, ou du huitiesme ton. Si elle est aspre, et dure du troisesme, ou du septiesme. Et si elle est pitoyable, ou lamentable du quatriesme, ou du sixiesme, combien que peu de Musiciens prennent garde . . ."

14 · Further on modal thought in the mid sixteenth-century, see Gioseffo Zarlino, *On the modes : part four of Le istitutioni harmoniche, 1558*, ed. Claude V. Palisca, trans. Vered Cohen (New Haven, 1983).

valences of traditional modal categories. In an intriguing study of the relationship between modality and the musical representation of literary texts, Jean-Pierre Ouvrard heard special correspondence between gestures associated with the Deuterus/Phrygian modes (that pair nominally based around the tone *E*) and expressions of pathos in verbal texts.¹⁵ According to Ouvrard's research, sixteenth-century musicians heard the characteristic cadence of these modes, in which the lowest voice part descended by semitone (Menehou's Chapter 24 considers these in some detail), as engendering a feeling of pathos or suffering). As it happens, such cadences, "par mi" (as French writers sometimes called them), were not confined to the so-called Phrygian modes, but were occasionally also adapted in other contexts, often (in Ouvrard's experience) in conjunction with texts expressing sentiments of suffering or lamentation. The *Tiers livre* offers two chansons that rely on precisely this semiotic code: the first phrase of Guillaud's "Faire ne puis sans dueil," for instance, concludes with a motion from *E-flat* to *D* in the bassus part (at the words "et déplaisir"), forming a "cadence par mi" with the contratenor part, which moves from *C* to *D* at the same time.

EXAMPLE 2.4

Faire ne puis

The musical score for "Faire ne puis" is presented in four parts: Superius, Altus, Tenor, and Bassus. The Superius and Altus parts are in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The Tenor and Bassus parts are in bass clef with the same key signature. The lyrics are: "Fai - re ne puis sans deuil et des plai - - sir, Ce / De - voir re - quiert ce qu'em - pe-sche de - - - sir, A -". The score illustrates a cadence where the bassus part descends from E-flat to D and the tenor part moves from C to D.

The first phrase of Martin's "Celler ne puis" uses the same contrapuntal motion (this time between the bassus and tenor voices) to underscore "le tourment." In Clément Janequin's "Sur l'aubepin" (from the *Sixiesme livre*), the composer similarly contravenes the usual proprieties of his chosen mode (in this case Mode 1 on *D*) in an effort to represent the dolorous mood of his text. Most of the cadences in this composition fall on the usual tonal positions advocated by Menehou and others (namely on the final and dominant tone of the mode (*D*, *F*, and perhaps *A* in this context). Janequin's chosen text, however, is filled with melancholy. Thus, when it alludes to the songs of Philomela (a nightingale) and Procne (a lark), two emblems of impassioned lamentation from classical literature, the parts form a phrygian cadence on *D*. *E-flat* to *D* in the bassus and *C* to *D* in the contratenor provide the foundation of this gesture, at the words "pour l'amour de la sienne." The same mixture of modal gestures is again recalled near then end of the composition, when the narrator learns to share this melancholy mood (at "a tout *dueil* je m'applique").¹⁶

15 · On the ethos of the Phrygian mode in the context of the French chanson, see Jean-Pierre Ouvrard, "Modality and Text Expression in 16th-Century French Chansons: Remarks Concerning the *E* Mode," *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis*, 16 (1992), 89-104, and Jeanice Brooks, "Ses amours et les miennes tout ensemble' la structure cyclique du *Premier livre* d'Antoine de Bertrand (Paris 1576)," *Revue de musicologie*, 74 (1988), 201-20.

16 · Further on Janequin's chansons in the context of the Du Chemin volumes, see Chapter 6, below.

Bernhard Meier has used these modal processes (if not the ancient ethnic categories *per se*) as a means of understanding how composers approached verbal texts. In an important series of writings on the subject, Meier has argued that for composers of the sixteenth century, the eight traditional modal categories constituted a clear set of contrapuntal scripts to be confirmed or thwarted in accordance with the expressive needs of a particular text. This was done much in the way that a composer of the eighteenth or nineteenth century might use an unexpected succession of harmonies to support a striking dramatic, rhetorical, or emotional element in a song or opera.¹⁷ On the other hand, Harold Powers proposed a rather different reading of modality, which stresses the many incompatibilities of that system as constructed by Renaissance theorists from Pietro Aaron to Heinrich Glarean.¹⁸ According to Powers' view, modality was a set of ideal types that only weakly determined the dynamic or expressive processes within individual pieces. Rather than a musical "essence," modality was instead a set of "signs," variously interpreted by editors according to the tonal dispositions of individual works. Such "signs" included a composer's choice of final tone (in essence, the lowest sounding pitch in the final sonority of the work), range (as indicated by the choice of clefs, either a "high" or "low" combination), and tonal background for the piece (in this case either *cantus durus*, that is with a *B-natural*; or *cantus mollis*, with a *B-flat* signed in all staves, indicating a global transposition downward by a fifth from the normal register of a given modality).¹⁹ For Powers, these tonal attributes could be used in contrasting combinations to represent a succession of modal categories. This was not always as simple as it sounds, for individual modes can be represented by more than one tonal type (for instance, the standard and transposed versions of modes 1, 2, and 6). At times, too, the same tonal type is used to represent more than one mode, as in the case of modes 3 and 4, notorious for their ambiguity, even in the sixteenth-century theoretical literature. The point, according to this line of thought, is not to decide how the individual composers understood the melodic or cadential properties of each of the eight musical modes as embodied in particular pieces, but instead to recognize how contrasting elements among the tonal types might here stand in for those modal categories. "A tonal type," as Harold Powers succinctly put the distinction, "need not 'be' a mode, but should rather be thought of as having been chosen to 'represent' a mode, to stand as the embodiment of a traditional category."²⁰

8 — In brief, for Powers, mode is instead largely an artifact of editorial, rather than compositional, processes: indeed, throughout the early years of the sixteenth century we can sense a growing awareness on the part of music editors of the ways in which their printed anthologies could be organized according to modal systems. For instance, each volume in a series of motet books issued by Susato in Antwerp is devoted to works of one of the eight modes. In contrast, in the individual books of Attaignant's main series of chansonniers from the 1530's, each includes more or less a full range of all eight modes, assembled in a sequence of four large modal divisions: *Proteus* (Modes 1 and 2), *Deuterus* (Modes 3 and 4), *Tritus* (Modes 5 and 6), and *Tetrardus* (Modes 7 and 8).²¹ The first eight books of *Chansons nouvelles* that Regnes edited for Du Chemin

17 · See Bernhard Meier, *The Modes of Classical Vocal Polyphony*, trans. Ellen Beebe, (New York, 1988) and *ibid.*, 'Rhetorical Aspects of the Renaissance Modes', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 115 (1990), 183-90.

18 · See Powers, 'Tonal Types and Modal Categories in Renaissance Polyphony', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 34 (1981), 428-70, and *ibid.*, "Is Mode Real?"

19 · Regnes seems not to have been concerned with cleffing in his books, and does not use this part of the tonal disposition of his chansons to articulate a succession of modes. It is worth noting that when Regnes's relationship with Du Chemin ended in early 1551 (just before the publication of the *Neuvième livre*) so did the practice of organizing the contents of the chansonniers by mode.

20 · Powers "Tonal Types and Modal Categories," p. 440.

21 · Concerning the organization of the Attaignant books, see Howard Mayer Brown, "Theory and Practice in the Sixteenth Century: Preliminary Notes on Attaignant's Modally Ordered Chansonniers," in *Essays in musicology: a tribute to Alvin*

follow just this sort of abstract (and largely post-compositional) plan. Not all modes are equally represented in each book, nor are representations of the authentic and plagal versions of each mode always neatly contrasted. But Regnes' books plainly group compositions of similar final tones (D, E, F, G) and general background scale (*cantus durus* or *cantus mollis*) into sets that recapitulate the four large divisions of the eight modes (see Table).

TABLE 2.1
Tonal Types and Modal Categories
in the First Eight Chansonniers Issued by Du Chemin, 1549-1551

Premier livre

Nos.	Tonal Type	Modal Group
1-2	natural/D	I
3-11	flat/G	I
12-13	natural/D	I
14-18	natural/A	II
19-23	flat/F	III
24-25	natural/G	IV

Cinquiesme livre

Nos.	Tonal Type	Modal Group
1	natural/D	I
2-12	flat/G	I
13-14	natural/A	II
15-17	flat/F	III
18-21	natural/C	III
22-25	natural/G	IV

Second livre

Nos.	Tonal Type	Modal Group
1-2	natural/D	I
3-8	flat/G	I
9-10, 13	natural/A	II
11-12 14-24	flat/F	III
24-25	natural/G	IV

Sixiesme livre

Nos.	Tonal Type	Modal Group
1-3	natural/D	I
4-13	flat/G	I
14	natural/C	III
15-20	flat/F	III
21-25	natural/G	IV

Tiers livre

Nos.	Tonal Type	Modal Group
1-5	natural/D	I
6-15	flat/G	I
16-19	flat/F	III
20	natural/C	III
21-22	natural/G	IV

Septiesme livre

Nos.	Tonal Type	Modal Group
1-2	natural/D	I
3-19	flat/G	I
20	natural/C	III
21-27	flat/F	III
28-29	natural/G	IV

Quart livre

Nos.	Tonal Type	Modal Group
1-2	natural/D	I
3-9	flat/G	I
13-15, 18-19	flat/F	III
10-12, 16-17	natural/C	III
20-24	natural/G	IV

Huitiesme livre

Nos.	Tonal Type	Modal Group
1-3	natural/D	I
4-12	flat/G	I
13-14	natural/A	II
15-23	flat/F	III
24	natural/C	III
25	natural/G	IV

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Text Underlay

The high typographical quality of Du Chemin's music books partly helps to solve some fundamental problems faced by anyone who tries to perform Renaissance vocal music from original notation: which syllables are to go with which notes? And (no less importantly) what should the singer do when the number of notes exceed the number of syllables in a given line

Johnson, ed. L. Lockwood and E. Roesner (Philadelphia: American Musicological Society, 1990), pp. 75-100. On the practices of modal representation in the Susato books, see Powers, "Tonal Types and Modal Categories," p. 445.

of poetry? There are no firm answers to these questions, and two skilled singers may well have differed on the most effective and elegant solution for a given composition. Certainly the scribes of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries sometimes seem to have been very casual about aligning text and tone. Undoubtedly, they assumed that a skilled singer would want to find his or her own solution to the puzzle. Indeed, the skill of textual underlay seems to have been one of the more subtle (and perhaps secretive) arts developed by the musicians of the years around 1500. Thus, while we have no definitive statement in theoretical sources of the day (Du Chemin's music treatises are silent on the subject), a few writers of the early sixteenth century (notably, the Italian theorist Giovanni Lanfranco and a German musician named Gaspar Stocker) alluded to the basic principles by which singers made these sort of decisions on their own.²² In general, singers were counseled: 1) to proceed syllabically, reserving any extra notes for a melisma on the penultimate syllable of a phrase; 2) not to assign new syllables to small note values (less than a semi-minim, excepting rare necessity); and 3) never to divide a dot from the note it alters or to divide ligatures among more than one syllable. Each in a series of repeated pitches would naturally receive its own syllable, since to do otherwise would result in some rather awkward vocal articulations. Precisely which syllables went with which notes was clearly a matter of considered judgment when music by Ockeghem, Josquin, and other masters of the years around 1500 was concerned. "In the older compositions," Stocker at one point advised, "the singer has many roads to choose."²³ For music of the middle years of the sixteenth century, choices were less vexing and rules less rigid. Clearly, there are many places in the Du Chemin repertory (in declamatory compositions particularly) where one must put a new syllable on a small note value such as a semi-minim, something that was to be avoided in the older repertory. Nevertheless, many of the same basic principles advocated by the theorists are implicit in the typography of Du Chemin's chansonniers, which show performers when to repeat text (see the "item" marks—"ij"), although not always how *much* text to repeat. They also indicate when to delay a final syllable or word (and thus create a melismatic extension of a phrase), and even when to repeat whole musical passages and coordinate first and second endings for such repetitions.

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From the *Tiers livre* through the *Neufiesme livre*, Du Chemin's typesetters were also careful to distinguish between the vocalized and mute *e* in final positions. This practice is particularly helpful, since it resolves certain metrical ambiguities in French poetry when it is sung to music. Of particular interest in these chansonniers is what French literary theorists of the sixteenth century described as the *coupe feminine reformée* (an innovation credited to Clément Marot) whereby a mute "e" was permitted in conjunction with the medial caesura (or coupe) typically found after the fourth syllable in decasyllabic verse. The addition of such mute syllables in this position had formerly been permitted in French verse, even though they could be understood in oral performance (and of course in musical settings) to disrupt the verse structure of the prevailing meter by extending the number syllables beyond ten. Modern scholar Henri Chamard gives as an example of the changing status of such metrical

22 · For an excellent summary of these principles see Don Harrán, "Word-Tone Relations in Musical Thought: From Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century", *Musicological Studies and Documents* 40. (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: American Institute of Musicology, 1986). Giovanni Maria Lanfranco's *Scintille di Musica*, (Brescia, 1533) recently appeared in a facsimile edition in the series *Bibliotheca musica Bononiensis*, II, 15. (Bologna: Forni, 1988). On Gaspar Stocker's writings on underlay, see Edward E. Lowinsky, "A Treatise on Text Underlay by a German Disciple of Francisco de Salinas," *Festschrift Heinrich Besseler zum 60. Geburtstag*, (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1962), pp. 231-51. Further on Stocker's writings, see Bonnie Blackburn, Edward E. Lowinsky, and Clement Miller, eds., *A Correspondence of Renaissance musicians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

23 · Lowinsky, p. 241.

irregularities Marot's reworking of a pair of lines from one of Virgil's Eclogues: "Et quelle cause si grande t'a esté / D'aller veoir Rome?--Desir de liberté" (in which the second line consists of eleven syllables) and "Et quel motif si expres t'a esté / D'aller veoir Rome? Amour de liberté." In these lines, the mute "e" of Rome and first vowel of "amour" are elided without disrupting the metrical regularity of the decasyllabic line and its customary division into four and six syllable segments.²⁴

Estienne Du Tertre's setting of "Ou est ce temps" (from the *Sixiesme livre*) nicely illustrates this *coupe feminine* in the context of the Du Chemin chansonniers. Here, the typesetter carefully marks the last letter of the word "estre" (the fourth syllable of the line) with a slash, indicating that it was to be elided with the first vowel of the next word, "un." This principle helps us to solve the riddle of underlay in this particular line of verse, since otherwise there would seem to be so many syllables that he would be compelled to align them awkwardly (and against the general aesthetic) with many small note values. It also shows Du Tertre's and Du Chemin's editors alike to have been keenly aware of the problems posed by setting French verse.

EXAMPLE: 2.5

Superius

Ou est ce temps, ou est ce temps dic - tes ma - da - moi - sel - le, dic - tes ma - da - moi - sel - le, Que ne pou - vriez es - tre un jour sans me voir,

On the other hand, as Maire Egan-Buffet has shown in her recent studies of the music of Claude Goudimel, not all composers were so vigilant in their observations of the rules of versification. Indeed, viewed from the perspective of his later efforts with the musical *Supplement* to Ronsard's *Amours*, Goudimel's chansons often contravene the principles just described.²⁵ As Egan-Buffet observes, in the chansons by Goudimel that were issued prior to 1552 (the time of his project with the musical *Supplement* to Ronsard's *Amours*) the composer often failed to observe the elision between the silent syllable and the following vowel when such patterns fall at the caesura of a decasyllabic line.²⁶ Goudimel's treatment of a line from "Tant de beaulté" (from the *Huitiesme livre*) can serve as a good example of his unusual approach to the *coupe feminine*, in this case as it appears in a poem that uses eight-syllable verse. Goudimel's treatment of the fifth line of this poem is therefore curious, since he seems to have taken special effort to force a caesura where none was normally required and where the rules of versification would suggest that none was possible. As set by Goudimel this line reads "Elle est douce elle est humaine," which ought in principle to consist of eight syllables

24 · See Chamard, "Versification," *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises*, ed. Georges Grente, 5 vols. (Paris: Fayard, 1951-71), V, 686-97. The practical aspects of French versification as they relate to text underlay in the mid-century chanson are explored in Ouvrard, *La Chanson polyphonique française*, pp. 93-106.

25 · Her findings are reported in Egan-Buffet, "The French Chanson in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century: Claude Goudimel's Treatment of the Decasyllabic Line," in *Orlando Lassus. Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium of the International Musicological Society, Antwerp, August 26-28, 1994* (Peer, Belgium: Alamire Publishers, 1995), pp. 315-25.

26 · Examples of this failure include lines in "D'amour me plainctz" (from the *Quart livre*) and "Or a ce jour" (from the *Sixiesme livre*). See Egan-Buffet, "The French Chanson in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century," pp. 315-23.

(with elisions between all adjacent vowels) but which Goudimel treats as nine by giving the second syllable of “douce” its own note. Du Chemin’s typesetter carefully shows the singer precisely which syllables to elide (that is, the juncture of adjacent vowels for each “Elle est”). Such attention to detail reminds us of the high typographical quality of the *Chansons nouvelles*. But in seeming to break the accepted rule of versification, Goudimel’s setting of this passage actually helps to mark out the hidden parallelism among the three references to the beloved and her attributes: “Elle est douce, elle est humaine, Elle ha tant bons partis en soy.”²⁷ In brief, Goudimel here contravenes musical and literary conventions in order to craft a chanson that does not only follow the form and scansion of his poetry, but also shows its meanings.

Example 2.6

Superius

Tant de beaul - té n'a el - le pas, Au moins pour en fai - re_u - ne_he - lai - ne: Mais
 ha dont l'on fait plus grand cas, Et si n'en est point plus haul - trai - ne, El - le_est
 doul - ce_el-le_est hu - mai - ne, El - le_ha tant bons par - tis en soy,

In his setting of “D’un seul soleil” (also from the *Huitiesme livre*) Clément Janequin treats the *coupe feminine reformée* in much the same way as just observed in the case of Goudimel’s “Tant de beauté.” In the sixth line of text, “Mais au contraire aussi tost qu’il s’absente” the superius clearly marks the elision that ought to join “contraire” and “aussi”. But in the tenor, contratenor, and bassus there is no slash through the final letter of “contraire”. Instead, a rest forces the performer to sing the first three words as five syllables, rather than four. These five syllables are repeated independently of the remainder of the poetic line, a pattern that in principle violates the rules of versification but in practice serves to underscore the sense of the text (by emphasizing the rhetorical shift implied by the phrase “Mais au contraire”).²⁸ In short, in these and other ways, the precise typography of the *Chansons nouvelles* points the way to a subtle and sophisticated understanding of the works printed here.

27 · For Egan-Buffer’s analysis of this work, see *Les Chansons de Claude Goudimel*, pp. 226-30. Here she compares Goudimel’s setting with one by Symon, which follows the rules of versification more closely, but lacks the rhetorical flair of Goudimel’s reading of the poem.

28 · For a modern edition of Janequin’s chanson, see his *Chansons polyphoniques*.