

CHAPTER X

The School of Notre Dame, II: Conductus and Motet

THE CONDUCTUS

Large as the repertory of organum is, it by no means constitutes the entire output of the Notre Dame composers. All of the manuscript sources contain settings of Latin poems that do not belong to the official liturgy of the Church. The most extensive collection of such settings appears in the Florence manuscript (*F*), where we find 130 two-voice, 56 three-voice, and 3 four-voice compositions. In addition, two sections of *F* contain a total of 143 monophonic settings of Latin poems. Whatever their subject matter may be—and it covers a rather wide range—these pieces are commonly assigned to the class of composition known as *conductus*.¹ In *The Play of Daniel*, pieces identified as *conducti* were processional songs, presumably the original meaning of the term. The repertory of Santiago de Compostela from the mid-twelfth century also contains *conducti*—both monophonic and polyphonic—that probably served the same function. By the thirteenth century, however, *conductus* had become a general term with approximately the same meaning as the *versus* of St. Martial. Some *conducti* have semiliturgical texts that commemorate a specific festival of the Church or honor an individual saint. A few are tropes of *Benedicamus Domino*. Many texts of a more topical nature refer to political events, celebrate the coronations of kings or bishops, mourn their deaths, or issue summonses to a crusade.² Still others teach moral lessons or attack social evils, often with bitter satire that spares no one, not even the clergy itself. This textual variety makes the *conductus* difficult to define and its function difficult to determine. Some *conducti* could, and probably did, serve as unofficial additions to the liturgy. A more appropriate use for others might have been the musical and moral instruction of the young or the leisure entertainment of clerics and scholars. As the texts move away from obviously sacred

1. *Conductus* is properly a fourth-declension noun (pl. *conductus*). It is more convenient, however, to follow the many medieval writers who treated it as second declension (pl. *conducti*).
2. See L. Schrade, "Political Compositions in French Music of the 12th and 13th Centuries," *AnM*, 1 (1953), pp. 9–55.

subjects, they begin to overlap with secular Latin song, and a clear line between the two is impossible to draw. This is particularly true of monophonic songs, with which we shall deal in the following chapter. Here, the polyphonic *conducti* preserved in the Notre Dame manuscripts will be our primary concern.

In their musical forms and styles, *conducti* vary almost as widely as does the subject matter of their texts. Nevertheless, their distinguishing musical characteristics are somewhat easier to describe. As a starting point, we may take the directions that the thirteenth-century theorist Franco of Cologne gives for composing a *conductus*. Franco states that "he who wishes to write a *conductus* ought first to invent as beautiful a melody as he can."³ He then treats this melody as a tenor against which he writes a *duplum* in *discant* style. If he wishes to write a *triplum*, he must keep the tenor and *duplum* in mind, so that if the *triplum* makes a discord with the tenor it will be concordant with the *duplum*, and vice versa. The same principle applies in adding a *quadruplum*. If it makes a discord with one voice, it should be concordant with the others. From this description we see again that the successive composition of voices was the normal procedure, and we may infer that each successive version of a *conductus*—beginning with the monophonic tenor—was complete in itself. That this inference is true in many cases is proved by the differing versions of *conducti* that have been preserved. The *conductus Veri floris* (Of the true flower) provides one of the most striking instances. What is essentially one setting of this text appears in no fewer than nine manuscripts in versions for one, two, and three voices.⁴ Numerous *conducti* appear in one source with only two voices and in another with an added *triplum*. This situation is characteristic of much music in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and we cannot always tell which version was the original. In some cases it seems that third and fourth voices were added later, perhaps even by different composers.

Another inference that has been drawn from Franco's prescription for composing *conducti* is that their melodic material is entirely new. As a result, we frequently read that *conducti* are the first completely original polyphonic compositions. The statement may be generally true, but it needs qualification. According to a slightly later theorist, Walter Odington, the tenors of *conducti* might be either previously known or newly invented melodies. In fact, some tenors of *conducti* also appear as monophonic secular songs in the vernacular. One of the best-known examples is the three-voice *conductus Veris ad imperia* (By the power of spring), the tenor of which is a transposed version of a troubadour dance song, *A l'entrada del tens clar* (At the entry of fair weather), which also

3. Strunk, *SR*, p. 155.
4. For a transcription with melodic variants from several sources, see *NOHM*, 2, p. 330. A two-voice version from the Madrid manuscript (*Ma*) may be found in Parish, *NMM*, Pl. XXIX.

celebrates the return of spring.⁵ Other uses of borrowed material involve the quotation of plainchant fragments and even of complete clausulae in some of the longer conducti.⁶ The full extent of such borrowings has yet to be investigated, but at the very least they show that complete originality was not an essential feature of the conductus. Moreover, the established relationships of conducti with secular song, with plainchant, and with organum are, in Bukofzer's words, "eloquent and vigorous evidence for the amazing inner consistency and stylistic unity in the music of the 13th century."⁷

THE TWO CLASSES OF CONDUCTI

On the basis of musical style, thirteenth-century theorists recognized and described two distinct classes of conducti. In the first class, known as *conductus simplex* or *simple conductus*, the tenor melody is syllabic or nearly so, and the added voices proceed in the note-against-note or neume-against-neume counterpoint characteristic of discant style. Many such conducti have strophic texts, and the music is repeated for each stanza. Thus, in both their musical form and the melodic style of their tenors, simple conducti resemble hymns as well as contemporary secular songs. The second, more elaborate class of conducti is the *embellished conductus*, sometimes called *conductus with caudae*. The term *cauda* (tail) is more familiar to us in the Italian form of the word, *coda*, which designates a terminal section; but the thirteenth-century cauda is a melismatic passage—sometimes of astonishing length—that may appear anywhere in a conductus. Although some pieces have a short melismatic extension only at the close, the typical embellished conductus has caudae at the beginning and in the middle as well as at the end. As a rule, the melismas occur on the first and either the penultimate or last syllables of poetic lines. In the most extreme cases, caudae produce a predominantly melismatic style that subordinates the text to the musical development in sharp contrast to the hymnlike character of simple conducti. Yet the setting of a text as a simple or embellished conductus seems to have been determined independently of either its subject matter or its poetic form. Perhaps the intended function, now uncertain, was the determining factor. One clue to that function would then be the degree of simplicity or embellishment in the setting of a particular text.

5. For the conductus, see J. Knapp, *Thirty-five Conductus for Two and Three Voices*, p. 36. The troubadour song is printed in NOHM, 2, p. 241. See also Gleason, EM, pp. 12 and 41.

6. See M. Bukofzer, "Interrelations between Conductus and Clausula," *AnM*, 1 (1953), pp. 65-103.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

PERFORMANCE PRACTICE AND RHYTHMIC INTERPRETATION

Before we turn to a more detailed study of the two classes of conducti, we must deal briefly with the general problems of performance practice and rhythmic interpretation. Polyphonic conducti were normally written in score with the text beneath the lowest voice. This disposition has led some scholars to assume that the upper voices were sung as melismas or played by instruments. Instrumental performance of the caudae in embellished conducti has also been assumed. Although conducti might have been performed in these ways, the assumptions do not rest on very solid ground. With two, three, or even four voices in score there was surely no need to write the text beneath each voice to indicate that it was to be sung by all. Moreover, the scribes took care to make clear which notes in the different voices go with each syllable of the text. As to the caudae, there seems to be no reason why they might not have been sung in an age when the vocal performance of melismatic organum was commonplace. We must admit, however, that both the style and the function of a particular conductus might affect the manner of its performance. The more elaborate conducti with caudae were surely intended for soloists, but simple conducti might have been sung by larger groups. Pieces that served as additions to the liturgy would naturally have been performed without instrumental participation, except possibly by an organ, the only instrument sanctioned for use in the services of the Church. Other instruments, of course, were commonly used for secular entertainment, and they might well have doubled or even replaced voices in the performance of conducti unconnected with the liturgy. Performance practices in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were much more flexible than we are accustomed to in the music of later times, and we may therefore sing or play conducti—as their contemporaries undoubtedly did—with any available combination of appropriate voices or instruments.

The rhythmic interpretation of conducti raises more controversial problems. Modal notation, with its characteristic patterns of ligatures, can be used only in melismatic passages. In conducti, therefore, only the caudae are written in a notation that can be transcribed with reasonable certainty as to the intended rhythm. Simple conducti and the syllabic sections of conducti with caudae are notated with a single neume—either one note or a ligature—for each syllable. These neumes use the normal forms of plainchant notation and give no indication of mensural values. Two possible solutions have been proposed: one is to give each syllable the same time value, which is divided into smaller values when ligatures of two or more notes occur; the other is to transcribe syllabic sections in one of the rhythmic modes. In the latter solution, the text normally maintains the modal pattern while ligatures introduce fractio

modi. Current opinion seems to favor the second solution but often stops short of agreement on which rhythmic mode to use. In embellished conducti, the prevailing mode of the caudae often proves suitable for the syllabic sections as well, and some caudae even begin by repeating part or all of the music that has just been sung with the text. Such instances have been taken as proof that the syllabic section must have the same modal rhythm as the cauda. This argument is somewhat weakened by the phenomenon known as *modal transmutation*—the repetition of caudae in different rhythmic modes—which is an established technique in the conductus.⁸ There seems to be no reason to assume, then, that a syllabic passage, say in the fifth mode, could not have been repeated immediately in the first or second. Moreover, the caudae themselves are not always notated with sufficient clarity to prevent differing opinions as to the correct rhythmic mode.

With simple conducti, of course, it becomes even more difficult to determine which rhythmic mode should be used, if any. Details of the notation sometimes indicate the position of long values, but decisions usually rest on considerations of both textual and musical characteristics. The length of the poetic lines and their predominant metrical patterns may make one mode more appropriate than another. The alternation of single notes and ligatures, or the consistent appearance of ligatures on odd- or even-numbered syllables may suggest a recurrent pattern of long and short values. For melodies with many ligatures irregularly placed, only the fifth rhythmic mode may prove to be suitable. Transcriptions in the fifth mode, incidentally, produce nearly the same result as the system that rejects the use of modes entirely and gives each syllable the same time value. Finally, combinations of details may indicate an irregular rhythm that is comparable to the use of *extensio modi*. In a prevailing first mode, for example, some syllables might require longs of triple rather than duple value.

In the historical development of conducti, it is probable that the earliest examples employed equal values for each syllable. With the development of the rhythmic modes, these equal values would have become triple in the fifth mode to provide a more consistent organization of the smaller values introduced by ligatures. Later conducti would then have applied the rhythmic patterns of other modes to settings of the texts themselves as well as to the melismatic caudae. Unfortunately, the steps in this probable development are difficult to trace. Few conducti can be dated with precision, and all have the same unmeasured notation in their sections with text. Even the occasional appearance of conducti in later sources in mensural notation cannot be taken as proof of their original rhythmic organization. Modern transcriptions follow the same procedure of imposing definite time values that are not indicated in the earlier

notation. Strong as our conviction may be that the procedure is necessary, we can never be completely sure that we have recaptured either the composers' intent or the practice of medieval performers.⁹

FORMS AND STYLE OF SIMPLE CONDUCTI

Closely related to the contrasting styles of simple and embellished conducti are the different bases of their formal organization. Even in the relatively few conducti available for study, a wide variety of procedures makes generalization hazardous; but the two classes of conducti are sufficiently divergent, at least in their extreme manifestations, to require separate discussion. We shall therefore consider the characteristic relationships of form and style in simple conducti before proceeding to the more complex organizational procedures in extended examples of conducti with caudae.

We have noted that simple conducti are hymnlike in both their melodic style and their use of the same music for each stanza of a strophic poem. Now we find that conducti and hymns also have the same musical forms. One of these, the so-called hymn form, a continuous series of different musical phrases, is perhaps the most common.¹⁰ Many conducti, however, repeat phrases to produce patterns such as *aabc*, *abab*, or *aabb*. Because the stanzas of conducti are usually longer than the normal four-line stanzas of hymns, each section of these forms may include two or more phrases, yet they are obviously nothing more than expanded versions of already familiar patterns (see Chapter IV). The same forms occur in secular songs, both in Latin and in the vernacular, and the presence of refrains in a number of conducti establishes an even closer relationship with contemporary secular song (see Chapters XI–XIII). These further proofs of the homogeneity of all medieval music are fascinating, but they make it impossible to disentangle mutual influences and to associate the introduction of particular forms and styles with a specific musical genre.

The tenors in polyphonic settings of simple conducti naturally have the same structural patterns as the monophonic songs. The added voices, on the other hand, may or may not reflect those forms. They normally cannot introduce exact repetitions of phrases above a continuous tenor, but they may themselves be continuous above a tenor's clear pattern of phrase repetitions. The first eight measures of *Sol sub nube latuit* illustrate this rather common procedure (Example X-1).¹¹ It is in-

9. For three rhythmic interpretations of *Hac in anni janua* (At the beginning of the year), see HAM, No. 39 (even time values); Gleason, EM, p. 49 (the 5th rhythmic mode); and Knapp, *Conductus*, p. 38 (the 2nd mode). See also Apel, NPM, p. 260 ff.

10. An example is *Veri floris*, NOHM, 2, pp. 330–32.

11. For a facsimile of this conductus as it appears in *W*₁, see Parrish, NMM, Pl. XXVIII. A complete transcription of the version in *F* is available in Knapp, *Conductus*, p. 122.

8. See M. Bukofzer, "Interrelations between Conductus and Clausula," p. 90 ff.

teresting to note also that the repeated four-measure unit in the tenor consists of two similar phrases with open and closed endings. In cases such as this it almost seems that the composer made a deliberate effort to show his skill in writing different counterpoints to the same melody.

Example X-1: *Varied Counterpoint above a Repeated Melody*
(*F*, fol. 354v)

**These two notes are *d-c* in *W*₁.

The sun was hidden under a cloud but not eclipsed when the Son of the highest Father became flesh.

Instead of combining repetitive and continuous forms in different voices, composers sometimes chose to emphasize the structure of the tenor by reproducing it in the other voices. They often repeated sections exactly, but they might also take advantage of successive statements of a tenor phrase to introduce voice exchange in the duplum and triplum. *Veris ad imperia* presents a characteristic example in which, above four statements of the tenor's opening phrase, the upper voices exchange parts at each successive repetition.¹² Another simple conductus, *Procurans odium* (Earning hatred), includes the tenor in an unusually complex exchange of parts among all three voices (see AMM, No. 36).

FORMAL ORGANIZATION IN EMBELLISHED CONDUCTI

Procurans odium is perhaps an extreme example of the constructivist tendency already noted in the later works from St. Martial and in Notre Dame organum. The normal process of composition would account for the rarity of such a tour de force in simple conducti, but the caudae of

12. For modern editions, see above, fn. 5.

embellished conducti provided more opportunities for systematic integration of voices and organization of large-scale musical forms. Pieces with a melismatic extension only at the close—a true coda—differ in no other respect from simple conducti and follow similar methods of formal construction. Characteristic examples already cited are *Hac in anni janua* and *Sol sub nube latuit*. The latter is interesting for several reasons. The eight-line stanzas have a musical setting in *aabb* form; a four-line refrain with a continuous setting returns after each stanza; and the single cauda at the close begins by repeating the final phrase of the refrain. The monophonic conductus *Beata viscera* (Blessed offspring), attributed to Perotin by Anonymous IV, also uses caudae in connection with a refrain, but in a different manner. Here again we have an eight-line stanza with a four-line refrain. This time, the stanza has a musical setting in *abcd* form. The refrain then begins with a melisma that is repeated on the first word of the final line. The two appearances of the same cauda thus distinguish the refrain from the stanzas in the style of simple conducti.¹³

Some embellished conducti have a melismatic introduction as well as conclusion, with the complete text set in simple style. More characteristic forms introduce melismas within the setting of the text itself. Typical examples of moderate length are the monophonic *Sol oritur* (The sun rises) and the two-voice *Roma gaudens* (Rome rejoicing).¹⁴ In these pieces, the caudae again function as introductions and conclusions, but now to segments rather than to the whole of the text. A syllabic or slightly neumatic style is still the predominant feature, and the caudae remain ornamental appendages. This situation is nearly reversed in more extended examples of embellished conducti. Now, caudae predominate, and short phrases with text give an impression of being slightly incongruous interpolations. To illustrate this reversal of function we may cite a two-voice setting of *Ave Maria* from the Florence manuscript.¹⁵ The total length of the conductus is 162 measures in 6/8 meter, and the opening and closing caudae consist of 35 and 30 measures respectively. Of the intervening 97 measures, only 27 are used in setting the text. The remaining 70 are divided among five caudae that range from eleven to eighteen measures in length. Melismas thus account for more than three-quarters of the total composition and overwhelm the setting of the text with a multiplicity of tails.

In part, at least, we must regard the size of some conducti with caudae as a reflection of the composers' delight in a newly acquired freedom. With no preexistent chant to determine the shape of their compositions,

13. This function of the caudae is obscured in transcriptions that give only one stanza of text, as HAM, No. 17c, and Gleason, EM, p. 7.

14. See HAM, Nos. 17d and 38. For another transcription of *Roma gaudens*, see Reese, MMA, p. 309. Both transcriptions are based on the version in *W*₁. Reese, MMA, Pl. VI (facing p. 300) includes a facsimile of the version in *F*.

15. Transcription in Knapp, *Conductus*, p. 81.

they now indulged—sometimes to excess—their inclination to develop complex integrative and structural devices. And they could use these devices in conducti for two, as well as for three and four voices. Long as some conducti are, no single composition can give an adequate picture of the variety and ingenuity displayed in hundreds of different caudae.¹⁶ To give some idea of those characteristic procedures, however, we may examine *Soli nitorem . . . addo* (I add brilliance to the sun), an embellished conductus of moderate length from the Florence manuscript (AMM, No. 37).

A later manuscript of Spanish origin also preserves *Soli nitorem*, but in mensural notation that clearly indicates rhythmic values—primarily the first mode—for all passages with text.¹⁷ The first cauda introduces this mode and firmly establishes G as the tonal center. It also presents an example of canonic writing, with the tenor following the duplum at a distance of one measure. The relation of such writing to voice exchange is evident in the alternate appearances of the motive G-F-G in the two voices. The second cauda further emphasizes the tonal center by repetition of two-measure phrases with open and closed endings. The second section with text might be called a variation of the first, and both end with the same two-measure unit but with the voices interchanged. (Measures 16–17 equal 34–35.) The third cauda makes the relationship of these two sections unmistakable by bringing together the last four measures of each, so that measures 36–43 equal measures 14–17 plus 32–35. The setting of the last six lines of text proceeds without melismatic interruption, but several cadences on C provide a measure of tonal contrast before the final extended cauda. This, we find, is nothing more nor less than a slightly varied recapitulation of the third, followed by the second cauda, both of which are transmuted into the fifth rhythmic mode. (Measures 65–80 correspond to 36–45, and measures 81–96 to 18–25.) New but related melodies in the final ten measures lead to the same cadential flourish that completed the second cauda. Throughout the composition, indeed, recurrent rhythmic and melodic figures add to the effectiveness of a formal organization that unifies both syllabic and melismatic sections to an extraordinary degree.

Conducti with such highly organized forms force us to modify our views about the successive composition of voices, just as we did because of similar structural procedures in some examples of organum. Quite obviously, no composer could have completed the tenor of *Soli nitorem* before he had created some sections of the duplum, at least in his mind. The tenor could scarcely reproduce a preceding duplum melody before

that melody had been composed, and complete voice exchange cannot occur until both melodies exist. In canonic writing, moreover, both voices must have been conceived together rather than successively. From these and other bits of evidence in the music itself, it is apparent that composers did not always follow the procedures recommended by Franco of Cologne. Perhaps he intended them primarily for beginners in the art of writing simple conducti. They can have been of little use, certainly, to the finished artists who used the embellished conductus as a vehicle for the display of their highest technical achievements.

Rational organization and technical achievements are by no means the sole reasons for our interest in embellished conducti. The caudae in particular furnish some of the most attractive music of the Middle Ages, music that, as Dom Anselm Hughes has said, “only needs to be known and interpreted to be widely appreciated.”¹⁸ Much of this attractiveness derives from the lively rhythms and the frequent use of two- and four-measure phrases with open and closed endings, an organizational procedure that music of later times has made familiar and comprehensible. In all probability, it is these characteristics that led Hughes to suggest that some caudae may incorporate older dance and song tunes. Such quotations would certainly not be foreign to the practices of medieval musicians, but we have no proof as yet that they did use this kind of preexistent material. Indeed, the structural ingenuity of most caudae would seem to deny the presence of contemporary dances or popular songs. Artless music of this type may have influenced the style and phrase structure of caudae, but it is also possible that our judgments are influenced by later concepts of what constitutes popular song and dance. Conducti, after all, were written by highly sophisticated composers for equally sophisticated audiences. We can only marvel that such composers could pursue their interest in formal constructivism and at the same time produce music so fresh and direct in its appeal.

By the middle of the thirteenth century, however, interest in constructive devices and in the conductus itself had begun to wane. Originating as an offshoot of liturgical organum, a new form—the motet—first developed within the shadow of the conductus and then replaced it as the chief type of nonliturgical polyphony. Much longer lived than the conductus, the motet remained one of the most important musical types of the later Middle Ages and the entire Renaissance. Nevertheless, we may join Jacques de Liège, a reactionary theorist of the early fourteenth century, when he said, in referring to the conductus, that he regretted that songs “so beautiful, so charming, and so full of art” should have disappeared.¹⁹

16. Knapp, *Conductus* contains numerous other examples of conducti with caudae.

17. H. Anglès, *El Còdex musical de Las Huelgas* (Barcelona, 1931), Vol. 2, facsimile, fol. 138; Vol. 3, transcription, p. 324.

18. NOHM, 2, p. 333.

19. CS, 1, p. 429a.

CREATION OF THE MOTET

It should be evident that the medieval attitude toward music differed considerably from ours. Neither theorists, nor composers, nor performers regarded a piece of music as fixed and unchangeable, something to be preserved and always presented in exactly the form given it by its first creator. To this attitude we owe even more than the differences—from minor variants to major changes—that occur in different manuscript versions of the same composition. Most of the major changes observed thus far have been purely musical: the addition or subtraction of voices in conducti; the abbreviation and “improvement” of organa by means of substitute clausulae. Poets collaborated in the modification of conducti only to the extent of writing a small number of contrafacta for pieces that had been composed to other texts. They made a much more significant contribution when, in a continuation of the old practice of troping, they added words to the upper voice or voices of organum. It is to this activity, literary rather than musical, that we owe the creation of a new musical genre, the motet. The name itself comes from the French for *word* (*mot*), and the term *motetus* came to signify both the composition as a whole and the voice above the tenor—the duplum—to which a text had been added. One or more additional voices, when present, were still called triplum and quadruplum.

The addition of texts to melismatic organum need occasion no surprise. Textual and musical embellishment of the liturgy had already produced both monophonic tropes and polyphony itself. Responsorial chants in particular had often been extended by musical tropes in the form of lengthy melismas, to which words—textual tropes—were added later (see Chapter VI). Nothing, then, could have been more natural than to provide the melismatic upper voice of an organum with words that troped the text of its plainchant tenor. Two of the oldest examples of this procedure occur in the St. Martial repertory. These pieces are different settings in sustained-note style of the same *Benedicamus Domino* melody. In one, the trope appears only above the word “Domino.” In the other, *Stirps Jesse* (The lineage of Jesse), the upper voice has text throughout, a complete poem of five four-line stanzas. Above the sustained tenor, this upper voice with text looks very much like a piece in discant style. The setting of some lines is completely syllabic, others are neumatic, and several end with rather extensive melismas.²⁰ From the musical point of view, as we shall see, this trope of *Benedicamus Domino* resembles the later motet scarcely at all. It does, however, introduce one of the chief features of the form—two different texts sung together.

A few tropes of organa in sustained-note style also turn up in the Notre Dame repertory, the most notable being a series of texts that

were added to Perotin’s four-voice organa *Viderunt* and *Sederunt*. The four-voice settings of these tropes in *Ma* are of particular interest because modifications of the triplum and quadruplum permit all three upper voices to sing the text. As a result, the three upper voices move together as in a simple conductus. Motets of this type, in fact, are known as *conductus motets*, although they differ from true conducti in having tenors with a different text and a different rhythmic organization. In the motets we have been discussing, all the added texts unmistakably betray their ancestry. The text of the tenor, be it one word or several, almost invariably appears somewhere in the trope. With equal consistency, moreover, the poetic rhymes of the trope are assonant with the syllable being sung concurrently by the tenor. The lengthy texts added above the words *Viderunt* and *Sederunt* make extended use of very few rhymes.

The recurrence in motets of these characteristic aspects of texts added to melismas is sufficient proof that well-known and long-established principles of troping lay behind the creation of the new musical form. In the process of that creation, however, motets with tenors in sustained notes must be regarded as an unsuccessful, or at least unfruitful, experiment. The real development of the motet as an independent form begins with the addition of tropes not to complete organa, but only to discant clausulae. This limitation relieved poets of the necessity of writing inordinately long texts and at the same time opened the door for the later creation of texts unrelated to a specific liturgical occasion. It also meant that composers could now participate in the production of motets by setting new texts in the style of substitute clausulae. In this way, the typical motet of the early thirteenth century became a relatively short composition based on a plainchant melisma arranged in repeated rhythmic patterns in the tenor, with a nearly syllabic setting of a related text or texts in the upper voices. In some instances, we do not know whether a motet is completely original or whether it is the result of adding words to a preexistent clausula. Many clausulae, however, including those that form part of complete organa, do reappear as motets that trope the text of the plainchant tenor.

To illustrate the creation of motets from preexisting clausulae we may return to Perotin’s setting of *Alleluia: Nativitas* and the clausula on the words “Ex semine.” In AMM, No. 38, the various texts that were added to this clausula have been brought together with the musical version that most nearly reproduces the original form of the setting in the three-voice organum. Minor variants of both melodic and rhythmic details have not been recorded because they rarely affect the way the words fit the music. The older of the two Latin tropes begins with the complete phrase of the chant *Ex semine Abrahe* (From the seed of Abraham) and returns to the word “semine” at the close. Within the text, rhymes

20. The beginning of *Stirps Jesse—Benedicamus Domino* is printed in Gleason, EM, p. 33.

on “-ine” and assonance with the vowel sound of the tenor melisma (E) continue the old tradition of trope composition.²¹ Motets using the text *Ex semine Abrahe* occur in three different forms. In *F*, a setting for tenor and motetus corresponds with the clausula that was substituted in the two-voice setting of *Alleluia: Nativitas* in the same manuscript. The second form is a three-voice conductus motet in which both duplum and triplum sing the text. This version, curiously, functions as a substitute clausula in a three-voice setting of *Alleluia: Nativitas* that is otherwise newly composed and appears to be of English origin.²² The third form, found in motet collections of the later thirteenth century, still has the text *Ex semine Abrahe* in the duplum but adds a new trope, *Ex semine rosa*, to the triplum. This new text follows the older one in its return to the word “semine” at the close and in its use of rhymes with “-ine” and assonance with the tenor vowel.

The intended function of motets that trope the plainchant text remains uncertain. As they did with discant clausulae, the Notre Dame manuscripts group motets together in separate collections. Now, however, the arrangement is by alphabetical order of the added texts instead of the liturgical order of the tenors. Such an arrangement suggests that motets has become independent pieces with no assigned place in the liturgy. It seems probable, nevertheless, that motet-tropes were originally written for use in the liturgical performance of a complete organum; the *Ex semine* motet in the English source offers proof that the practice was not unknown. Another possible function is the one that has also been proposed for clausulae. Both they and motets with sacred texts, whether tropes or not, would provide independent pieces appropriate for the services of particular feasts. This may well have become their chief function, but we must remember that both types originated as musical improvements or textual expansions of already existing liturgical polyphony.

The Latin tropes of *Ex semine* are not the only texts that were added to Perotin's clausula. Very early in the history of the motet, apparently, poets began writing secular French texts to fit already existing clausulae. The second Notre Dame manuscript now in Wolfenbüttel (*W*₂) contains a large collection of early French motets, among which the music of *Ex semine* appears three times with two different texts. In a version reduced to two voices—tenor and duplum—the upper voice has the text *Hier mein trespensis erroie* (Yesterday morning, pensive, I wandered). The second French text, *Se j'ai amé* (If I have loved), occurs twice: once with the duplum of the two-voice reduction, and once as a conductus motet

21. Similar procedures may be seen in the motets on the tenor *Domino* in HAM, Nos. 28f and 28g.

22. L. Dittmer, *The Worcester Fragments* (MSU, 2, 1957), p. 155.

with both duplum and triplum of the complete three-voice clausula.²³ Neither of these texts has anything to do with the liturgical function of the clausula or with the words “Ex semine” in the tenor. *Hier mein* is a miniature pastourelle of the type cultivated by the troubadours and trouvères (see Chapters XI and XII). *Se j'ai amé* is a love song couched in such vague terms, characteristically, that it might express devotion either to an earthly lady or to the Virgin Mary. It is obvious, in any case, that the two French texts have no connection with tropes beyond the fact that they were written to fit a preexisting melisma.

We should probably relate the appearance of motets with French texts to the medieval penchant for making contrafacta rather than to the process of troping. In the present instance, French contrafacta gave the motet a new social function as a secular amusement and established a close relationship between it and contemporary forms of secular song. We must therefore turn back to investigate the rise of monophonic songs in both Latin and the vernacular. Armed with knowledge of earlier literary and musical activity, we can better understand the sudden emergence of secular polyphony in the thirteenth century and better follow the development of the motet into an independent musical form.

23. For these motets, see the facsimile edition of *W*₂, fols. 233v, 247, and 136.