

On the Origins and Early History of the Term Motet

[138]

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I

Two essays have recently proposed new answers to the question of the origin of the term *motet*: Rolf Dammann's inquiry *Geschichte der Begriffsbestimmung Motette*¹ and Günter Birkner's study *Motetus und Motette*.² Dammann and Birkner agree on the linguistic development of the term, which follows the etymology given by Walther von Wartburg in his *Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*³ (FEW): Old French/Old Provençal *motet* is a derivation from Old French/Old Provençal *mot* "verse," "stanza," which in turn goes back to Latin *muttum* "muttering," "inarticulate sound"; *motetus* is the Latinized form of *motet*.

Yet there are also differences in interpretation. Dammann reads the suffix *-et* of *motet* as an instrumental suffix, and consequently understands *motet* as "that which has been provided with verses," namely, the originally textless clausula supplied with a poetic text, as found at the beginning of the motet's history.⁴ Birkner, on the other hand, was able to show with the help of the conceptual pairs *muttu* – *muttettu* (Sardinian), *motto* – *mottetto* (Old Italian), and *mottum* – *mottettum* (Middle Latin), that *motet* is a diminutive form: *muttu*, *motto*, and *mottum*, as technical terms, refer to larger single-strophe poems; *muttettu*, *mottetto*, and *mottettum*, on the other hand, refer to smaller poems which in general do not have more than two to four verses; at the same time *muttu*, *motto*, *mottum* were also overarching concepts that could be applied to smaller formations.⁵

[139]

This relationship between a noun and its diminutive is undoubtedly what we are witnessing in the French conceptual pair *mot* – *motet* as well. There is in fact additional evidence for the diminutive construction of *motet* in middle French. For example, FEW⁶ lists under the entry *motet* such meanings as: *petit renaissance*, *petit mot*, and *courte devise*. Moreover we can find in Old

¹ AfMw XVI (1959), pp. 337–377.

² AfMw XVIII (1961), pp. 183–194.

³ Article *muttum* in: FEW VI/3 (1969), pp. 303–305. – I am indebted to Dr Frank-Rutger Hausmann (Freiburg im Breisgau), for procuring a preprint of the article and for discussions on romance language questions.

⁴ DAMMANN, pp. 343–346.

⁵ BIRKNER, p. 184 ff.

⁶ Loc. cit., p. 304. The expanded spacing for "petit" and "courte" is mine.

French the unequivocally diminutive form *motel*, likewise a derivation from *mot*.⁷ This analogous formation must have enjoyed some currency in the thirteenth century, for its Latin form *motellus* appears quite frequently in treatises from this period.⁸

If the word *motet* is indeed a diminutive, then we need to find a new explanation to take the place of Dammann's reading. Yet a problem arises in the fact that thirteenth-century polyphonic motets generally exceed the normal length of poetic *motets* (that is, two to four lines). Birkner observes that polyphonic motet texts present "under the name of *motet(us)* a format which, according to the sharp distinction made earlier on, should have been designated *mot*," and concludes that the motet must originally have been much shorter, thus deserving the diminutive *motet*, but that it abandoned the characteristic feature of brevity already in the early stages of its development.⁹

[140] Yet this explanation is unsatisfactory. There are simply not enough examples of the motet type posited by Birkner to lend his hypothesis the necessary evidentiary weight.

Only very few motets of the requisite brevity have survived. The motet collections *R* and *N* include several examples of "short motets," of which seven (*R* 35–41) and nine (*N* 65–73),

⁷ For example in GACE DE LA BUIGNE (1373): "*Chanter motelz Et rondeaux*" (after FRÉDÉRIC GODEFROY, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française* V [Paris 1888], s. v. *motel*, p. 422). There may be an earlier attestation from the time around 1300 in the romance *Méliacin ou Conte du Cheval de Fust* by GIRARDIN D'AMIENS; more on this in FRIEDRICH LUDWIG, *Repertorium organorum recentioris et motetorum vetustissimi stili* I/1 (Halle 1910), second exp. edition (repr.), ed. L. A. DITTMER (Hildesheim 1964), p. 341 f.

⁸ For *motel* and *motellus*, see DAMMANN, p. 348. Dammann states that the form *motel* must be erroneous, and draws for this on von Wartburg; yet the latter's comment "The form *motel* given by Godefroy must be based on an error" (loc. cit., p. 306, n. 6) surely applies only Godefroy's negligence in quoting from Gac-de-la-Buigne – see above, n. 7. Godefroy also documents the form for a later period, in Du Bellay (cf. also VON WARTBURG, loc. cit., p. 304); a further example from the sixteenth century (Aneau, 1539) is given by EDMOND HUGUET, *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle* V (Paris 1961), p. 345, s.v. *motel*. – Some thirteenth-century authors use only the form *motellus*, for example, Johannes de Garlandia, Lambertus, Anonymous 7, and the Anonymous St Emmeram. In Johannes de Grocheio (*Der Musiktraktat des Johannes de Grocheio*, ed. ERNST ROHLOFF, in: *Media Latinitatis Musica* II [Leipzig 1943] – abbreviated hereafter as "Rohloff" – p. 53) and Jacques de Liège (CS II, 394b) one finds both *motellus* and *motetus*. A parallel to *motel* – *motet* can be found in the pair of terms *rondel* – *rondet*. According to FRIEDRICH GENNRICH, *Das altfranzösische Rondeau und Virelai im 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts*, in SMMAE X (Langen 1963), p. 3 f., we are not dealing here with dialect variations that are still current today: *rondet* is a North French diminutive form, and *rondel* a Central French one. For this, see also HANS HEINRICH EGGBRECHT and FRITZ RECKOW, *Das Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*, in: AfMW (XXV) 1968, p. 257 ff.

⁹ P. 190.

respectively, are copied in clusters.¹⁰ However, these compositions cannot represent the early stages of motet development, as we can tell from the tenor's compositional treatment: this voice is rhythmicized mostly in irregular fashion, and occasionally even departs from the pitch sequence of the chant model – characteristics that are found typically in late thirteenth-century motets.

The earliest motets that were created through the texting of clausulas also generally exceed the length of four poetic lines. This is apparent from the length of those motets whose clausulas have survived, and also from the length of discant settings that survive only as clausulas.

So there probably never was an early stage of motets that were “short like a [poetic] *motet*.” The discrepancy noted by Birkner, between the length of the polyphonic motet and the brevity of the poetic *motet*, seems to have been there from the beginning; certainly it was the rule by the time that has left us the earliest secure attestations of *motet(us)* as a term for polyphony, that is, the middle third of the thirteenth century. At that point the genre could scarcely have been older than a few decades. Could the term have lost its apparent connection to the original meaning so soon? That seems unlikely, given that the word *motet* did remain in use as a designation for short poems until the end of the thirteenth century. Surely it is not the element of brevity that connects the equation *motet* = SHORT POEM with the equation *motet* = POLYPHONIC MOTET.

Moreover, it seems remarkable that the word *motet* represents an unprecedented incursion of a vernacular term into the realm of polyphony. Birkner was surely right to connect this phenomenon with the rising status of the French motet and the trend towards increasing literariness within the musical realm.¹¹ In this connection it is worth bearing in mind that other terms, such as the Latin voice designations *tenor*, *triplum*, and *quadruplum*, were not replaced by neologisms, but were retained and at most frenchified.¹² Perhaps there is a more important reason for this “intrusion” of a vernacular term: the need for a terminological distinction between the new French motet and the conventional Latin discant setting, since the differences between these two types are not just linguistic, but concern form and layout as well.

In his attempt to solve these problems and to discover a more precise meaning for *motet*, Birkner supposed that the term originally referred to the French texts “which already existed as a genre under the name *motet*, whether as purely literary creations or also perhaps as short songs supplied with tunes.”¹³

[141]

¹⁰ For this, see LUDWIG, *Repertorium I/1*, p. 294 f. and 298.

¹¹ Especially p. 189, 191 f. and 194.

¹² Cf. the examples from the second part of the *Roman de la Rose* and from the *Roman de Fauvel* given by Dammann, p. 347. The vernacular designation *quadruple* occurs in the *Quadruplum* [798].

¹³ P. 194.

This observation draws attention to one of those “roots” of the thirteenth-century vernacular motet whose significance has so often been overlooked: the French monophonic song. The influence of this genre is most clearly apparent in one peculiarity of the vernacular motet: the custom of placing song fragments, so-called refrains, as quotations in the top parts of motets at prominent points, usually the beginning and the end. Friedrich Gennrich’s bibliography of motets¹⁴ (which does not even include all the refrains found in the genre) shows the very frequent occurrence of such “citations” in thirteenth-century French motets. It is clear from the comparison of motet refrains with concordances elsewhere, and also from the analysis of motet design, that refrains are normally “quoted” along with their original melodies.

This has considerable consequences for our understanding of compositional technique. The refrain is evidently not just brought in “casually,” but serves as the genuine starting-point for the musico-poetic conception of the whole setting. Once the refrain has been selected, in other words, it determines the subject matter of the text and its formal details, as well as other essential features of motet design, such as the rhythmicization of tenor melodies – which have to be arranged in such a way that the tenor and the refrain tune combine to make a correct setting from the point of view of vertical simultaneities – or certain peculiarities of the melodic and rhythmic elaboration in the top voice. Numerous motets whose refrains are not attested elsewhere manifest the typical technical problems involved in combining refrain and tenor, as well as the characteristic aphoristic refrain turns of the text: evidently, every French motet until the end of the thirteenth century normally includes a refrain¹⁵.

Now, unlike the motets themselves, their refrains do match, without exception, the criterion of brevity in the poetic designation *motet*: in most cases we are in fact dealing with units of only two verses.

This raises the intriguing possibility that the term *motet* originally referred to these short aphoristic or motto-like refrains,¹⁶ and, given that such refrains are a typical characteristic of the French motet, that it was eventually applied to the setting as a whole.

Numerous pieces of evidence support that possibility.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Bibliographie der ältesten französischen und lateinischen Motetten*, in: SMMAE II (Darmstadt 1957). Manuscript sigla and motet numbers in the present article are cited after Gennrich’s bibliography.

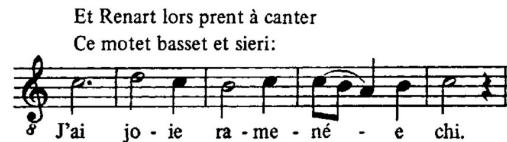
¹⁵ It is not possible here to focus more deeply on the refrain technique in early vernacular motets. I have provided an extensive overview in my dissertation *Untersuchungen zur Kompositionstechnik der Motette im 13. Jahrhundert, durchgeführt an den Motetten mit dem Tenor IN SECULUM* (Freiburg im Breisgau 1968). This work is projected to appear in print in 1971.

¹⁶ A similar point was made already by DAMMANN, p. 349.

¹⁷ Most of the evidence cited in what follows was pointed out already in FRIEDRICH LUDWIG, *Repertorium I/1*, p. 331. Ludwig, following K. Bartsch (1884), notes that refrains are occasionally designated *motet*. However, he seems to have assumed, along with Bartsch, that this is to be

For example, in the *Roman du Renart le Nouvel*, written towards 1290,¹⁸ there are five passages where the author cites refrains and specifically designates them as *motets* – as in v. 2444 ff.:¹⁹

[142]



The other four “quoted” refrains that are designated *motets* are: v. 6828 (refrain 780), 6838 (refrain 652), 6874 (refrain 997), and 7078 (refrain 1127 in one manuscript, and refrain 86 in three others). Apart from nos. 653 and 1127, all these refrains are also transmitted elsewhere, some even with the same melody.

Two further examples are found in the *Salus d’Amours* copied in the thirteenth-century manuscript Paris, B. N. frç. 837.²⁰ In stanza 28 (fol. 269) we read:²¹

Com cele qui chanta cest **motet** en present:
Qui me rendroit mon aignel et mon damage,
A li me rent.²²

The two lines that are designated *motet* in this passage return as a genuine refrain in the song *Agniaus dous*, no. 4 of the manuscript Paris B. N. frç. 12483.²³ In addition, the aforementioned *Salus d’Amours* also designates the refrain in stanza 17, *Se j’avoie a fere ami, Je le feroie brunet* (not attested elsewhere)²⁴ as a *motet*.²⁵

The manuscript Paris B. N. frç. 12483, mentioned a moment ago, is a fourteenth-century volume which contains musical interpolations that are probably older,²⁶ and it provides an example as well: In no. 15, the first stanza begins with a monophonic song that has the refrain *Vierge Marie douce et piteuse*²⁷:

explained “by the frequent appearance of refrains in motets, and that the refrains are often actually called motets in quotations in works of poetry.”

¹⁸ *Renart le Nouvel*, Le Roman de Renart, IV, ed. MÉON (Paris 1826).

¹⁹ Refrain 667. Reproduced after FR. GENNRICH, *Rondeaux, Virelais und Balladen aus dem Ende des 12., dem 13. und dem ersten Drittel des 14. Jahrhunderts mit den überlieferten Melodien*, tome II: *Materialien, Literaturnachweise, Refrainverzeichnis* (Göttingen 1927), p. 156.

²⁰ LUDWIG, *Repertorium I/1*, p. 331.

²¹ After LUDWIG, loc. cit., p. 331, and FR. GENNRICH, *Rondeaux, Virelais und Balladen . . . II*, p. 184.

²² Refrain 432

²³ LUDWIG, loc. cit., p. 331. The motet was printed in FR. GENNRICH, *Rondeaux, Virelais und Balladen . . .*, tome I: *Texte* (Dresden 1921), pp. 254–256.

²⁴ Refrain 584.

²⁵ LUDWIG, loc. cit., p. 331.

²⁶ LUDWIG, loc. cit., p. 342.

²⁷ Unnumbered refrain.

its title is *Un motet vous voudrai chanter*.²⁸ Since the work in question cannot be a polyphonic motet, as Ludwig explains,²⁹ it stands to reason that here, too, *motet* must mean refrain.

[143]

In the text-only manuscript *D*, which according to Ludwig was written “at the beginning of the fourteenth century”³⁰ yet whose contents partly belong to “the oldest French motet repertory,”³¹ we find two more examples. For example, refrain 802 – which is found also elsewhere³² – is called *motet* in *Ballate* no. 16:³³

Et por ceu aloit dixant
Cest **motet** par anradie:
Ne me batés mie,
Maleuroz maris,
Vos ne m’aveis pas norrie!

And in *Pastourelle* no. 57, the same designation is used for refrain 1729:³⁴

Celle qui par anvoixeure
Aloit chantant cest **motet**:
Robin tureleure
Robinet!

The following passage from Rutebeufs poem *Charlot et le Barbier*, cited already by Dammann,³⁵ is relevant here as well: “. . . se Rustebués . . . Voloit dire deus *motés nués* . . .”³⁶ Here, *motés* are undoubtedly not to be understood as polyphonic motets, but are presumably short poems after the manner of refrains.³⁷

The motet, in short, takes its name from these short song sections, the refrains. This, evidently, is the point made by Walter Odington when he explains: “*motetus* . . ., *id est motus brevis cantilene*”³⁸ – “*motetus*, that is: the short

²⁸ LUDWIG, loc. cit., p. 342.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Loc. cit., p. 307.

³¹ P. 308.

³² For this, see: GENNRICH, *Rondeaux* II, p. 111.

³³ LUDWIG, *Repertorium* I/1, p. 331; GENNRICH, *Rondeaux* II, pp. 111 and 264 f. The text was printed in: *Altfranzösischen Romanzen und Pastourelle*, ed. KARL BARTSCH (Leipzig 1870, repr. Darmstadt 1967), p. 46.

³⁴ LUDWIG, *ibid.* – Text: BARTSCH, loc. cit., p. 175.

³⁵ P. 345.

³⁶ *Oeuvres complètes de Rutebeuf*, ed. EDMOND FARAL and JULIA BASTIN, II (Paris 1960), p. 264 (vv. 81–83).

³⁷ FARAL and BASTIN (*ibid.*) comment on the term *motés*: “It does not appear that this term is to be taken here in its technical sense.”

³⁸ CS I, 246a.

mot of a *cantilena*.”³⁹ The principal meaning of *cantilena* is refrain song,⁴⁰ and the *motus brevis* of a *cantilena* is undoubtedly the refrain itself.⁴¹

From the description of *motetus* as a *motus brevis* it is apparent that Odington understands *motet(us)* as the diminutive of *mot(us)*; *mot(us)* is used here as a comprehensive term that includes, as already noted, smaller poems mostly of two to four lines. This confirms the parallels with the conceptual pairs *muttu – muttettu*, *motto – mottetto* and *mottum – mottettum* cited by Birkner. There are indications that even at the end of the thirteenth century, *mot* as a comprehensive term could refer to refrains: in the *Roman du Renart le Nouvel*; for example, refrains 50 and 99 are called *mot* in vv. 2832 and 7022, respectively.⁴²

[144]

Evidently, then, the original meaning of the conceptual pair *mot – motet* was still current around 1300. Accordingly, the fact that *motet* refers at this time not just to smaller poetic forms but also to larger ones, that is, the *motetus* voice and the polyphonic motet, can be explained by the special role and significance of the refrain to the motet. It is even conceivable that whenever the word *motet* refers specifically to “*motetus* voice,” we are dealing with a *totum pro parte* derived from fuller designations such as “duplum with *motet*” or “discantus with *motet*.” Yet there is no evidence to confirm this.

II

It is unlikely that we can still find the exact answer to the question when the designation *motet* was first used. The examples cited above must probably be regarded as comparatively late. The “earliest attestation” of the French term (according to Dammann⁴³), in Rutebeuf’s poem *Charlot et le Barbier*, dates from

³⁹ DAMMANN, p. 349, and BIRKNER, p. 186, offer different interpretations. Birkner already interprets the word *motus* as a Latin form of Old French *mot*, but applies *brevis* to *cantilena*. The word *motus* in this sense is not attested elsewhere. I am grateful to Dr Frits Oomes and Dr Hans Smid in Munich for kindly supplying information on the archival material of the *Thesaurus linguae latinae* and the *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch*.

⁴⁰ Johannes de Grocheo, who distinguishes sharply between *cantus* and *cantilena*, reserves the name *cantilena* exclusively for those forms that include a refrain (cf. Rohloff, 50–52). Significantly, he defines refrain with reference to the *cantilena*: “*Responsorium vero est, quo omnis cantilena incipit et terminatur*” (Rohloff 51).

⁴¹ For this, see DAMMANN, p. 349, n. 2.

⁴² Both refrains are also transmitted elsewhere: no. 99 as, amongst others, the refrain of the *motet enté* [1074] and also in the tenor of motet [880/81] which is structured as a refrain cento.

⁴³ P. 342.

the middle third of the thirteenth century at the earliest.⁴⁴ Even the late twelfth-century appearance of the family name *Motet(us)*, noted by Dammann,⁴⁵ does not allow us to draw conclusions of much consequence.⁴⁶ Still, it seems reasonable to assume that the term originated around the turn of the century in the context of the use of refrain techniques in monophonic song.

Neither is it possible to pinpoint the term's transfer, first, to the duplum of the French motet, then to the motet itself, and finally to Latin and multi-language compositions – for this is the order in which the terminological development probably evolved.

Literary attestations of the word *motet* in the sense of “motetus voice” or “polyphonic motet” can only be documented in the final third of the century, for example in some of the sources cited by Dammann, the *Chronique de Saint-Denis* from the year 1274, and the second part of the *Roman de la Rose*, written around 1270.⁴⁷ By this time the terminological development must already have reached a late stage. In the *Roman de la Rose*, the word *motet* refers both to the duplum and to the motet as a whole⁴⁸ – even though it cannot be ruled out that poet had only vernacular compositions in mind.⁴⁹ The complete unselfconsciousness with which he mentions the motet in one breath with “*fableaus*,” “*rondiaus*,” “*conduiz*,” and “*chançonetes*” is characteristic also of the 1288 *Jeu du Pèlerin*, the anonymous prologue to Adam de la Halle's *Robin et Marion*, where the more specific term *motet enté* appears in direct connection with “*canchons*,” “*partures*,” and “*balades*.”⁵⁰

[145]

Motet enté refers to that especially artful form of the vernacular motet that opens with the beginning of a refrain and concludes with its continuation. The fact that this type was granted the distinction of having a name of its own, and that *motets entés* were gathered in special

⁴⁴ The poet's chief period of activity was 1249–1285. DAMMANN, p. 345, n. 2, inadvertently dates the poem in the twelfth century.

⁴⁵ P. 342.

⁴⁶ It is unlikely that there is a more than merely superficial connection between the proper names *motetus* and the identically sounding term. The family name more probably goes back to Old French *mote* “mound” – diminutive: *motete*.

⁴⁷ DAMMANN, pp. 345–347.

⁴⁸ Cf. the examples cited by DAMMANN, p. 346 f.

⁴⁹ DAMMANN comments on the third example (p. 347; vv. 21,037–21,041), whose verses depict the performance of a motet: “Evidently it is French (= secular) motets that are performed here.” (p. 346).

⁵⁰ In v. 91. *Adam le Bossu. Le Jeu de Robin et Marion suivi du Jeu du Pèlerin*, ed. ERNEST LANGLOIS (Paris 1924), p. 73.

collections,⁵¹ confirms the importance that was attached to the refrain and to refrain techniques in the motet art of the thirteenth century.

Thirteenth-century musical sources frequently use the term *motetus* to designate French motets. Unfortunately those sources can be dated only very approximately. In Paris B. N. frç. 845, which according to Friedrich Ludwig dates from the thirteenth century,⁵² the following inscription heads a section that contains fifteen *motets entés*: “*Ci commencent li motet ente*” (fol. 184).⁵³ A similar inscription is found in the manuscript R, which was probably copied toward the end of the century: “*Ci commencent li motet*” (fol. 205);⁵⁴ the index of this chansonnier gives the designation “*Les motes*” (fol. E’).⁵⁵ Similarly, in the Adam de la Halle codex *Ha*, which dates from the second half of the century, we find the inscription “*Li motet Adan*” on fol. 34’.

The supposition that the term *motet(us)* initially referred only to French-texted motetus voices or motets⁵⁶ gains support from the fact that the term is never used, or at least extremely rarely, for Latin motets.

Counterexamples, and uncertain ones at that, are to be found only in two peripheral sources. The manuscript *LoHa* preserves the index of a lost codex that contained organa, conductus and Latin motets of English provenance. Here the term is used three times (– in the plural in the abbreviated form *mot –*)⁵⁷ and it refers, in the sense of “polyphonic motet,” to compositions with Latin texts. The motet repertory listed in the index points to the second half of the thirteenth century.⁵⁸ Whether the codex itself was copied during that period is uncertain. – According to W. Meyer (1882), the Latin motet [451] is found as “*motetus episcopi Wilhelmi Parisiensis*” in “a fragment in Munich.”⁵⁹ The fragment in question was untraceable already for Friedrich Ludwig (1910);⁶⁰ here, too, then, it must remain an open question whether the example still dates from the thirteenth century.

[146]

It would appear that the new term *motetus* had to assert itself as a distinctive term against older designations for Latin motets: In *MuC* Latin motets are still called *tropi* (fol. 72, at the beginning of motet [175] *Hodie natus in Israhel – IN SECVLVM: “Incipiunt tropi”*). In *ORawl* the text of motet [228] *Latex silice – LATVS*

⁵¹ The manuscript Paris B. N. frç. 845 contains a fragmentary *motet enté* collection (LUDWIG, *Repertorium*, I/1, p. 306). According to LUDWIG, *Repertorium* I/1, p. 307, the 64 motet texts in *D* are “almost exclusively” *motets entés*.

⁵² Loc. cit., p. 306.

⁵³ After LUDWIG, *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Cf. LUDWIG, loc. cit., p. 285.

⁵⁵ Cf. LUDWIG, loc. cit., p. 286.

⁵⁶ BIRKNER, p. 193.

⁵⁷ LUDWIG, loc. cit., p. 274 f.

⁵⁸ LUDWIG, loc. cit., p. 276.

⁵⁹ LUDWIG, loc. cit., p. 253.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

(fol. 11') is called a "prosa."⁶¹ The same designation is found also in *Da 521* for the text of motet [141] *In serena facie* – IN SECULUM (fol. 58).

The earliest known attestations of the term *motet* are found in thirteenth-century music treatises. These attestations cannot be dated with much precision either. Naturally we are always dealing here with the Latin form of the word. In treatises we also frequently encounter the form *motellus* side by side with *motetus*.

The date of Franco's *Ars cantus mensurabilis* can be established with a certain degree of precision.⁶² The text was at any event compiled before 1267,⁶³ quite possibly even one or two decades before that date. Franco uses the designation *motetus* only once, when he deals with "discant with different texts." According to Franco, both three-part and two-part motets belong to this type, since the tenor counts as a voice that carries text:

Cum diversis litteris fit discantus ut in mothetis, qui habent triplum vel tenorem, quia tenor cuidam litterae aequipollet.⁶⁴

Discant with different texts is found in motets that have a triplum and tenor, since the tenor counts as a certain text.

Here, then, the word *motetus* applies to the whole setting, the "motet." It is unclear from the context whether Franco was thinking exclusively of French motets or whether he also included Latin or multi-lingual pieces.

In Johannes de Garlandia's *De musica mensurabili positio*,⁶⁵ which is only a little older than Franco, the term is likewise rarely used. Garlandia persistently uses the form "*motellus*." In the Vatican version of his treatise,⁶⁶ which is presumably the most authoritative one, the term occurs three times: CS I, 177b, 179b, and – not edited by Coussemaker – fol. 24. The first two examples are also found in the Bruges version.⁶⁷ The third, on fol. 24 of the Vatican version, appears also in the version transmitted by Hieronymus de Moravia (Cserba 212 = CS I, 107a). At this point of his text, Garlandia deals with the optional use of consonances in place of

[147]

⁶¹ LUDWIG, loc. cit., p. 324.

⁶² SIMON M. CSERBA, *Hieronymus de Moravia O. P., Tractatus de Musica*, Freiburger Studien zur Musikwissenschaft, 2nd series of the Veröffentlichungen des Musikwissenschaftliches Instituts der Universität Freiburg in der Schweiz, fasc. 2 (Regensburg 1935) – hereafter abbreviated "Cserba"–, pp. 230–259 = CS I, 117–136.

⁶³ HEINRICH BESSELER, s.v. *Franco von Köln*, in: MGG IV (1955), col. 693.

⁶⁴ Cserba 252 = CS I, 130a.

⁶⁵ Cserba 194–229 = CS I. 175–182. A new edition of the treatise is now available in manuscript: ERICH REIMER, *Johannes de Garlandia: De mensurabili musica. Kritische Edition mit Kommentar und Interpretation der Notationslehre* (Ph.D. diss., Freiburg im Breisgau 1969). I would like to thank Dr Reimer most cordially for his help with questions concerning Johannes de Garlandia.

⁶⁶ Ms. Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. lat. 5325, fol. 12'–30' (incomplete edition in CS I, 175–182).

⁶⁷ Ms. Bruges, Stadsbibliotheek, Boek 528, fol. 54'–59'.

dissonances, as is done “*praecipue in motellis*” (“chiefly in motets”). Possibly the word *motellus* applies here specifically to the French motet, where problematic vertical simultaneities, imposed by the combination of refrain tunes with tenors, occur especially often.⁶⁸ – However, this interpretation is not supported by the passages CS I, 177b and 179b: here, *motellus* is used in a sense so general that Latin motets could easily have been included as well. What remains to be emphasized is that throughout Garlandia’s treatise – just as in Franco’s – the term is used as a genre designation.

These attestations are probably the earliest we have. Whether the two treatises mentioned by Dammann,⁶⁹ *Discantus positio vulgaris*⁷⁰ and *De musica libellus* of Anonymus⁷¹ date from the beginning of the thirteenth century,⁷² seems doubtful. In the versions that we have today, these two texts do not seem to go back further than the middle of the century.

This is apparent, amongst others, from the motets to which the treatises refer. In the case of the *Discantus positio vulgaris* we are dealing with motets [583], [448], [197], [266], [599], and [224], and in the case of *De musica libellus* with [91] and [317] – except for [91], these are exclusively Latin-texted compositions. All these motets appear in some form in the later manuscripts *Mo* and *Ba* (and also, amongst others, in *Cl*, *Bes*, *Da*), and belong to the central motet repertory of the second half of the century. We can tell this from the fact that other treatises regularly refer to them as well.⁷³ Most of the motets admittedly turn up also in older transmission, above all in *W*₂ and *F*. But there are at least three exceptions: [583], [197], and [91] are transmitted only in later manuscripts, none of which predates the manuscript *Boul* of 1265.⁷⁴ Since it is reasonable to assume that thirteenth-century theorists would normally have invoked settings from the most current motet repertory, and that the copying of those settings can be taken as an indication of their currency, their treatises, or at least the versions we have, would appear to date from the second half of the thirteenth century.⁷⁵

⁶⁸ See above, p. 141.

⁶⁹ P. 347 f.

⁷⁰ Cserba 189–194 = CS I, 94–97.

⁷¹ CS I, 378–383.

⁷² Thus DAMMANN, p. 348 (p. 348 on the *Discantus positio vulgaris*: “late twelfth century”) following HEINRICH HÜSCHEN, s.v. *Anonymi*, in: MGG I (1949), coll. 494 and 495.

⁷³ Documented in: FR. GENNRICH, *Bibliographie der . . . Motetten*.

⁷⁴ [91] *Bone compaignie* – MANERE is transmitted with the duplum text [94] *Virgne glorieuse* in *Boul*; originally, however, the beginning of the text read *Bone compaignie*, according to FR. LUDWIG, *Die Quellen der Motetten ältesten Stils*, in: AfMw V (1923), p. 210, n. 2.

⁷⁵ Further indications for a late redaction of the *Discantus positio vulgaris* are mentioned by FRITZ RECKOW, *Proprietates und perfectio*, in: AMI XXXIX (1967), p. 137, n. 81. According to Reckow, Hieronymus’s statement that the *Discantus positio vulgaris* is older than the other treatises transmitted by him (“*antiquior . . . omnibus*,” Cserba 194 = CS I, 97a), may apply “at best to some sections” of the treatise.

[148]

In the *Discantus positio vulgaris*, as Dammann has already pointed out, the term “*mothetus*” applies to both the duplum and the motet setting as a whole;⁷⁶ the examples cited by the anonymous author are without exception dupla and motets with Latin texts. The situation is different in *De musica libellus*: here, the designation *motellus* seems to apply only to the top voices of motets,⁷⁷ Latin as well as French:

Notandum est quod motellus, cujuscunque modi sit, debet judicari de eodem modo de quo est tenor. Et ratio est, quia tenor est fundamentum motelli et dignior pars . . . Si ergo motellus est de primo modo sicut: *Bone compaignie* et *O quam sancta* et multi alii, et tenor est de quinto modo, motellus dicitur judicari de quinto, quia una longa et una brevis in motello equipollent uni longe in tenore . . .⁷⁸

It is to be noted that the *motellus*, in whatever mode it may be, should be judged according to the same mode as that of the tenor. The reason is that the tenor is the foundation of the *motellus* and its worthier part . . . If, therefore, the *motellus* is in the first mode, as in *Bone compaignie* et *O quam sancta* and many others, and the tenor is in the fifth mode, then the *motellus* is said to be judged according to the fifth, because one longa and one brevis in the *motellus* are equivalent to one longa in the tenor . . .

The lack of consistency among thirteenth-century theorists is not easy to explain. Still, the examples do confirm that the term had become broad enough to include “motet” settings by the middle of the century, even though it must remain open in some cases whether those settings were Latin-texted as well as French-texted.

Remarkably, it is precisely the most authoritative texts from the middle third of the century, Franco’s *Ars cantus mensurabilis* and Garlandia’s *De musica mensurabili positio*, that use the new term so rarely. Even treatises from the 1270s use the designation *motetus* or *motellus* only occasionally. Anonymus 4 speaks only once of *motellus*, and this only in a borrowing from Garlandia.⁷⁹ In the treatise by Lambertus⁸⁰ the form *motellus* occurs three times – CS I, 269b,⁸¹ 272b, 281a – and is consistently used as a genre designation. It is only the verbose polemic response to Lambertus, compiled by the Anonymus St Emmeram in 1279,⁸² that cites the term more often. The word *motellus* (as the Anonymus

⁷⁶ P. 347 f.

⁷⁷ Cf. DAMMANN, p. 348.

⁷⁸ CS I, 379b.

⁷⁹ FRITZ RECKOW, *Der Musiktraktat des Anonymus 4*, in: BzAfMw IV (Wiesbaden 1967), Part I: *Edition*, p. 55 = CS I, 347a; cf. CS I, 179b.

⁸⁰ CS I, 251–281.

⁸¹ Following Johannes de Garlandia (cf. CS I, 177b).

⁸² HEINRICH SOWA, *Ein anonymes glossierter Mensuraltraktat 1279*, Königsberger Studien zur Musikwissenschaft IX (Kassel 1930).

persistently writes it) serves here as a genre designation – though its precise meaning cannot be inferred from the context.

The fact that the more authoritative theorists appear to avoid the term is readily explained: there is no need for it in their conceptual system. For the polyphonic motet is really a *discantus*; and the voice above – or rather “after” – the tenor is in any case the “second voice,” the *duplum*. Yet it seems that the terminological usage of everyday musical practice ran ahead of theory. This might explain the somewhat more liberal use of the term in less “learned” treatises. And it would also explain why thirteenth-century writings on music do not appear to testify to a continuous terminological development.

[149]

The last important treatise from the thirteenth century, that by Johannes de Grocheo, represents the end point of the terminological development, at least for the time being. Johannes de Grocheo departs from the framework of the “classic” doctrine by describing musical practices current among the “*moderni*” in Paris. “The ancients,” he writes with reference to “*cantus praecise mensuratus*,” “used to divide such songs into several categories, namely, *motetus*, *organum* and the truncated song which is called *hoquetus*.”⁸³ Both the motet and its *duplum* are designated *motetus*. The voices of the motet are listed as “*tenor*, *motetus*, *triplum*, *quadruplum*,”⁸⁴ and *motetus* in particular is described as “that song which is lined up directly over the *tenor*.”⁸⁵

Here, at the end of the century, the genre and voice designation *motetus* is used completely unselfconsciously, one might almost say unreflexively. At a time when there was still an awareness elsewhere of the original connection between the term and its referent, Johannes de Grocheo dispenses with any explanation of the word *motetus*. No reason is given for the fact that the second motet voice is now no longer called *duplum* – this in contradistinction, for example, to the *hoquetus*. And there is no hint of any literary connotation, nor of erstwhile connections with vernacular song and the refrain techniques of the early motet. From this time onwards, it seems, every kind of motet and every *duplum* is to be called *motetus*, without qualification. Indeed the term now refers to the very things from which the *motet* had once sought to distinguish itself: the *duplum* with Latin text and the motet with one or more non-vernacular texts in its top voices.

It is not just the significance and application of the term that have changed: the motet itself has undergone a transformation over the course of the thirteenth century and has gained ground in both practice and theory. The *motetus*, which

⁸³ Rohloff 84 (cf. 53).

⁸⁴ Rohloff 57.

⁸⁵ Rohloff 88 (cf. 57).

in Franco was still a subsidiary form of discant mentioned only in passing, has now become the epitome of Grocheo's *cantus praecise mensuratus*, reflecting the dominant role which the motet played among the "moderni" in the city of Paris, the center of contemporary musical life. In the place of the mid-century motet – which was still tied to vernacular song, and was still mostly in two parts – has come the extended, highly artful structure of the Petronian type. The motet develops more and more into that esoteric compositional genre which will become, within only a few years, the cradle of the Ars nova. Refrain technique has been firmly pushed in the background by newly-developed formal principles. And thus it seems that Johannes de Grocheo's omission to explain the origin and the original significance of the term does not – or at least not yet – indicate lack of knowledge, but rather that it is no longer needed for the definition of *motet(us)*. Shortly before the end of the very century in which it originated, the term begins to free itself from its original semantic range, and emancipates as a technical term which in subsequent centuries will continually call for new definitions and will remain susceptible to new interpretations.