

“Mensural Rhythm and Misaligned Lovers in Machaut’s Motet 5”
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Additional Questions:

Liam Hynes-Tawa: You mention how Leech-Wilkinson et al. seem not to have a problem with the first triplum F in your Ex. 1, whereas the second is marked as a mistake. Rather than a meter/mensuration-related concern, could that be because the first one looks just like what we'd call a passing tone, whereas the second F is leapt away from in a way that Fux wouldn't allow?

Henry Burnam: That’s an interesting alternative hypothesis, albeit one Leech-Wilkinson seems to reject! (see the remark on these sonorities in fn. 32 on p. 100 of his dissertation: “These are not to be confused with the scribal errors, nor with simple passing dissonances allowed for by the theorists.”)

Sheryll Blaschak: What could you say about the relation of these privileged pulses with language patterns of stress (as, for example, seen in poetry)?

Jann Cosart: Thank you for your paper and observations. Could you please say something about how poetic meter and rhyme fit into these layers of hearing or performing?

Henry Burnam: Henry Burnam: These are both great questions, and I think it makes most sense to answer them together. The possibility that local details of prosody might inform metric interpretations of this music is certainly intriguing, especially in light of the polytextual character of the *ars nova* motet. Unfortunately, my sense is that the framework of verse feet and qualitative meter with which English speakers are likely to be familiar doesn’t apply very well to late-medieval French poetry. Syllable counts and rhyme schemes appear to be more important in both practice and in contemporary theory. Graeme Boone offers an extended treatment of many of these issues, albeit in the context of a different genre and a somewhat later repertory in *Patterns in Play: A Model For Text Setting in the Early French Songs of Guillaume Dufay*.

As for the interaction between rhythm and rhyme, my sense is that Machaut’s text-setting is driven more by global concerns (e.g. alignment between musical and textual structure in the upper voices) than by the more local sorts of regularity that would point towards an alignment between text-setting and musical meter. When note values and the rate of declamation are slow, Machaut seems to have a preference for aligning the ends of poetic lines with musical phrase ends, and for this to happen in alignment with the breve or *longa* pulse. This means that the motetus in M5, which has -ure and -ie rhymes, tends to have the terminal e of these rhymes in a metrically prominent position—that is, there is regularity, but in the opposite direction I'd be hoping for in order to make claims about alignment of textual and musical meter. Text-setting in the triplum, by contrast, is less regular, probably to accommodate its very long poem, and its rate of declamation varies considerably over the course of the motet—indeed, typesetting the last two passes through the *talea* in the diminution section is quite challenging because there’s so much text to cram in! Initially, the motetus and triplum poems are declaimed in phase (albeit with two triplum lines happening in the span of a shorter motetus line), but they quickly diverge, and

Machaut doesn't really seem to be playing with vowel-matching between the upper voices. All of these details seem fairly discouraging from the point of view of analyzing musical meter—which isn't to say that text-music relations aren't a topic of significant theoretical interest in this repertory, just that their most interesting aspects happen at a more “zoomed out” scale.