

Douceur fine a mon goust amere

Sweetness in Machaut's polyphonic works

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BA Thesis Musicology

10064 words

Utrecht University

2015-2016, block 3-4 (15 ECTS)

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Manuscript Sigla

The Machaut music manuscripts:

- A** Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, fonds français, MS 1584
- B** Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, fonds français, MS 1585
- C** Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, fonds français, MS 1586
- E** Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, fonds français, MS 9221
- F-G** Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, fonds français, MS 22545-6
- Vg** Ferrell-Vogüé MS, on loan to the Parker Library, Corpus Christi, Cambridge (olim New York, Wildenstrein Collection)

Pitches

In this thesis I use pitch names as in the Guidonian gamut to avoid confusion with the modern concept of pitch-classes. The Guidonian gamut is divided into three registers, the *graves* (*G, A B C D E F G*), the *acutae* (*a b-fa b-mi c d e f g*) and the *superacutae* (*aa bb cc dd ee*). These pitches represent *musica recta*. Any pitches outside this system were considered *musica ficta*.¹

¹ Karol Berger, “The Guidonian Hand,” in *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, eds. Mary Carruthers and Jan M. Ziolkowski (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 76.

Introduction

In the fourteenth century, the change in musical style meant that the semitone became the fundamental contrapuntal resource, in which *musica ficta* played a central role. Modern scholars explained this new musical practice as “the directed progression,” in which two voices in dyadic relationship proceed from an imperfect sonority (major or minor thirds, major or minor sixths and their compounds) to a perfect sonority (unison, perfect fifths, perfect octaves and their compounds), but one of the voices must move by a semitone.² This creates a tension-resolution pattern that drives the music forward and in which the melodic movement by a semitone occupies a key position. The tension-resolution moment was perceived aurally as the satisfaction of desire and led to varied responses in the texts of late-medieval music theorists.

From Antiquity onwards the semitone had been associated with femininity and lasciviousness, concepts that were regarded as negative in the homosocial community of music theory.³ The increased use of semitones and *musica ficta* in plainchant and in counterpoint determined the late medieval music theorists to reflect more and more on the musical practices of their time. Some attempted to legitimize the use of the semitone through music theory. Others considered music rich in semitones “effeminate, effeminizing and, by extrapolation, of a morally dubious nature,” but they were always vague as to when too many semitones were too many.

A concept frequently linked to femininity and small intervals in medieval texts was “sweetness.” Sweetness was a common term used for anything pleasurable. However, many medieval authors were aware that excessive sweetness turns into its opposite: something that is too sweet turns bitter.⁴ Like something that tastes too sweet can become unpleasant, music that is too sweet, for instance rich in smaller intervals than a tone, can become ethically questionable and undesirable. When some medieval music theorists described the semitone, and specifically

² Sarah Fuller, “Tendencies and Resolutions: The Directed Progression in ‘Ars Nova’ Music,” *Journal of Music Theory* 36 (1992): 229-258. In the Middle Ages the directed progression was defined as “cadentia,” however this did not refer to the way cadences are understood today. The medieval “cadentia” is not only associated with endings, but can open or connect phrases, contrary to the mainly closural quality we associate with the cadence today. For this reason, I follow what Fuller proposed and use the modern term “directed progression” instead of the medieval term “cadentia”.

³ For this summary, I rely on Elizabeth Eva Leach, “Gendering the Semitone, Sexing the Leading Tone: Fourteenth-Century Music Theory and the Directed Progression,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 28 (2006): 2. For Sarah Fuller’s reaction to this article, see Sarah Fuller, “Concerning Gendered Discourse in Medieval Music Theory: Was the Semitone ‘Gendered Feminine?’” *Music Theory Spectrum* 33 (2011): 65-89. For the purpose of this thesis it is not necessary to elaborate on this.

⁴ Mary Carruthers, “Taking the Bitter with the Sweet,” in *The Experience of Beauty in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 104.

the status of the *b-molle* in the Guidonian scale (b-flat in modern notation), as sweet, it meant that it acquired a questionable status.⁵

Considering the discussions on femininity, sweetness, lasciviousness, and the semitone in late medieval music theory, the question arises as to how these concepts were addressed in late medieval polyphonic music. The fourteenth century was a period when the semitone became central to French polyphonic music, for instance, in the compositions by Guillaume de Machaut (ca. 1300-1377). His songs often portray a man expressing his love for a beautiful lady, who rejects him or is far away, and the lady is frequently described with the word *douce* (“sweet”) or its derivatives. In this thesis, I explore how the concept of sweetness as discussed in late medieval music theory, is present in Machaut’s polyphonic works that speak about sweetness and bitterness in relation to a lady.

Chapter 1 presents how music theorists in Antiquity and the Middle Ages associated small intervals with femininity and lasciviousness. Further, I explain how late-medieval theorists reacted to the increased use of semitones in practice. Chapter 2 deals with the concept of sweetness as used by music theorists in relation to the semitone and *b-molle* in particular. It addresses how and why medieval authors found that sweet music was dangerous, and how sweet music was associated in many cases with the dangerous sirens. This chapter considers also how the ambiguity of sweetness and the deceptiveness of women is reflected in Machaut’s poetry. Chapter 3 treats four polyphonic compositions as case studies: *Biauté qui toutes autre pere* (B4), *Quant en moy/ Amour et biauté/ Amara valde* (M1), *Rose, liz, printemps* (R10) and *Tant doucement me sens imprisonnés* (R9).⁶ Based on the theoretical links between femininity, sweetness, *musica ficta* and *b-molle*, I explore how the ideas of sweetness and bitterness are realised musically by Machaut. While medieval music theorists sometimes spoke of sexual desire in relation to the semitone and *musica ficta*, the case studies show that the concept of desire was more complex than pure lust in the case of Machaut.

For the analysis of the case studies I rely on the analytical method proposed by Elizabeth Eva Leach.⁷ She advocates the use of the fourteenth-century counterpoint teaching as a “historically appropriate” way for analyzing fourteenth-century secular songs. In saying this, Leach adopts Sarah Fuller’s concept of “directed progression” and applies it to Machaut’s ballades for two, three and four voices by analyzing the pairs of voices that are in dyadic

⁵ See Bonnie Blackburn, “The Lascivious Career of B-Flat,” in *Eroticism in Early Modern Music*, eds. Bonnie Blackburn and Laurie Stras (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2015), 19-42.

⁶ For the information of manuscript sources and the structure of each composition I rely on Lawrence Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research*, (New York: Garland, 1995).

⁷ Elizabeth Eva Leach, “Counterpoint and Analysis in Fourteenth-Century Song,” *Journal of Music Theory* 44 (2000): 45-79.

relationship and how the directed progressions occur. This means that this method supplies the semitone inflections which were not always notated in the manuscripts, but the medieval singers did supply them in performance based on the counterpoint teaching rules of the time. This method sheds new light on the use of tension-resolution patterns in this song repertoire.

This is in line with what Margaret Bent stated earlier that medieval notation should not be taken at face value and that an understanding of the grammar of early music is crucial before performing any further analysis, as for instance the placement of semitones in directed progressions.⁸ Although other methods of analysis are possible, this is the most suitable research method for my study given that this was part of a medieval singer's training and that it reveals how medieval composers may depart from the counterpoint rules in some situations in relation to the text settings.

Finally, based on the evidence found in the case studies, I propose that the associations of sweetness with the semitone, and with *b-molle* in particular, as discussed in music theory texts, were not confined to the abstract theoretical world; on the contrary, they found their way in contemporary musical practice. Several such examples can be found in Machaut's polyphonic works where the ideas of sweetness and bitterness in relation to the love for a beautiful lady are emphasized musically.

⁸ Margaret Bent, "The Grammar of Early Music: Preconditions for Analysis," in *Tonal Structures in Early Music*, ed. Cristle Collins Judd, *Criticism and Analysis of Early Music*, vol. 1, (New York: Garland, 1998; reprint New York: Routledge, 2014), 28.

1. Femininity and the Semitone in Ancient and Medieval Music Theory

1.1 Femininity and lasciviousness

Some late-medieval music theorists responded critically to the increased use of semitones in the fourteenth century. For instance, Johannes Boen commented that “the moderns, like dwarves on the shoulders of giants seeing further than the ancients, make this subtle fictive placement of semitones both because they are bored by the everyday position of the notes, and because they are led by greater wantonness (*lascivia*).”⁹ This concern about the ethics of the semitone was based on a long history of gendered discourse in music theory, dating back to Antiquity, and the general negative attitude towards women and their association with sexual desire throughout the Middle Ages.¹⁰

In ancient Greek music theory the chromatic genus, which consisted of two semitones and a trihemitone (an interval of three semitones), was commonly associated with softness and femininity in contrast to the “hard” and “dull” enharmonic genus, which had two quartertones and a ditone (a major third in modern terminology).¹¹ The diatonic genus, that consisted of semitones and tones, was considered an Aristotelian virtue and was viewed as the middle between the two extreme genera, the chromatic and the enharmonic. In medieval music theory the Greek genera were adopted as a pure theoretical construction and of all three, as many medieval theorists remarked, only the diatonic genus entered the musical practice. Nevertheless, all three genera continued to be theorized and commented upon by making use of the same gendered vocabulary associated with them in the ancient texts, which the following example from a thirteenth-century treatise illustrates: “But the chromatic genus, since its softness made many men effeminate, was condemned by former generations; the enharmonic, owing to its difficulty and human laziness, retired from the court long ago, and only the diatonic just about remained in

⁹ “Moderni maiori ducti lascivia, quasi nani super humeros gygantum plus longe respicientes quam veteres, tamquam cotidiana positione clavium fastiditi, ad subtiliores positiones dictas litteras bfa[^{sqb}]mi etiam in aliis clavibus statuendo, se rationabiliter profundarunt.” Johannes Boen, *Ars (Musicae)*, ed. F. Alberto Gallo, *Corpus scriptorum de musica*, vol. 19, (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1972), 35. Translation by Leofranc Holford-Strevens in Leach, “Gendering the Semitone,” 11.

¹⁰ The summary of the links between late medieval music theory and femininity in this chapter relies mainly on the comprehensive study Leach, “Gendering the Semitone,” 1-21.

¹¹ Leach, “Gendering the Semitone,” 7. For an explanation of the three Greek genera, see Thomas J. Mathiesen, “Greece,” *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/11694pg1>, accessed on June 15, 2016. The modern reader should be aware that the ancient terms enharmonic and chromatic do not refer to the same aspects as our modern understanding of enharmonic and chromatic tones.

use.”¹² Likewise, a mid-fourteenth-century text described the chromatic genus as “excessively soft” and that it “leads to wantonness (*lasciviam*) through corrupting good morals.”¹³ The feminine quality of the chromatic genus and its relation to sexual behaviour was further emphasized in a text in the tradition of Johannes Hollandrinus (fifteenth century), in a retelling of the Boethian story about the expulsion of Timotheus of Miletus from Lacedaemonia: “The inventor of this music is said to have been a Milesian, who by his wonderful and sweet-sounding singing made young men effeminate, and thus induced them into sexual activities [*dulcisono iuvenes effeminabat, et ita ad actus venerios deducebat*], for which reason he was thrown out of and expelled from Athens.”¹⁴

Boethius also organized music in gendered terms. He considered music of the highest character “temperate, simple, and masculine (*modesta, simplex, masculata*), rather than effeminate, violent, or fickle (*effeminata, fera, varia*).”¹⁵ In addition to these terms he applied the terms *durus* (hard) and *mollis* (soft) to masculine and feminine music, respectively. These Greek derived terms referred in ancient music theory to both musical character and intervals. *Mollis* described music that is “soft, tender, and effeminate” and *durus* described music that is “firm, austere and masculine.”¹⁶ More technically, *mollis* referred to music with small intervals, such as semitones and intervals smaller than a semitone, whereas *durus* referred to music that is made up of tones and larger intervals. In short, feminine music was described as soft and made up of small intervals such as semitones, whereas masculine music was described as hard and more expansive, because it consisted of tones and larger intervals.

The Latin term *lascivia* in the citations above was often used by medieval music theorists to designate music as feminine, as opposed to masculine music which was defined as *modesta*. Although *lascivia* initially had a neutral connotation as it referred to something out of the ordinary, its negative meaning of lasciviousness quickly became more important. Many music theorists used this term as a tool to express moral judgment and employed it for any music of which they did not approve. The moral concern about music was partly based on the idea that

¹² “Sed chromaticum genus, quia eius mollities multos effeminavit, ab antiquioribus est damnatum. Enharmonium vero propter eius difficultatem et hominum desidiam iam dudum ab aula recessit, vixque diatonicum in usu remansit.” The text is the Tractatulus de musica in Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, 29.9, fols. 143v–145r, on fol. 143v, in Krakow, Biblioteka Jagiellonska, 754, fols. 43v, 42r–v, and 44r, on fol. 43v, and in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 28186, fols. 258r–259v on fol. 258v, available through the Thesaurus Musicarum Latinarum, <http://boethius.music.indiana.edu/tml/13th/ANOTRDM>, accessed on June 15, 2016. Translation by Holford-Strevens in Leach, “Gendering the Semitone,” 9.

¹³ Leach, “Gendering the Semitone,” 8.

¹⁴ “Huius autem musicae inventor dicitur fuisse Millesius, qui suo canto mirifico et dulcisono iuvenes effeminabat, et ita ad actus venerios deducebat, propter quod fuit ab Athenis eiectus et expulsus.” Fritz Feldmann, ed., *Musik und Musikpflege im mittelalterlichen Schlesien*, Darstellungen und Quellen zur schlesischen Geschichte, vol. 37 (Breslau: Trewendt und Granier, 1938), 161. Translation by Holford-Strevens in Leach, “Gendering the Semitone,” 7.

¹⁵ Leach, “Gendering the Semitone,” 5.

¹⁶ Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, eds. Calvin M. Bower and Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 3n7.

music had the power to influence human rationality. Boethius presented two ideas about this effect of music. “First, those who are already of a particular disposition will take pleasure in music that accords with their own character. Second, music has an involuntary effect on animals caused by the living body’s own innate proportions becoming congruent with those of the concords in the song.”¹⁷ From this follows that “lascivious modes bring something immodest into the dispositions of the people.”¹⁸

In the fourteenth century, the term *lascivia* was applied to the new style of music in general, but it was also used for more specific musical elements, such as the hoquet, falsetto singing, and the semitone.¹⁹ Pseudo-Odo of Cluny (early eleventh century) specifically used *lascivia* when he criticized the use of too many semitones: “Faulty, extremely lascivious and delicate music sometimes strives to employ a greater number of semitones than we have indicated. One must avoid this practice rather than imitate it.”²⁰ However, he was vague about what this “greater number” exactly meant.

1.2 *B-molle* and *Musica Ficta*

As Blackburn explains, many early-medieval theorists had a negative attitude towards one semitone in particular: between *a* and *b-molle* (Latin for “soft” *b*). Before *b-molle* was accepted as part of *musica recta*, the semitone *a-b-fa* had a suspicious status. For instance, Guido’s Commentator (eleventh century) explained that *b-molle* was “so called because of the lasciviousness and softness of the sweet semitone” it created.²¹ Since softness had a strong connection with femininity, *b-fa* acquired also the negative traits associated with women in the Middle Ages: weak, unstable and likely to inspire sexual desire.²² As a soft, feminine and lascivious tones, *b-fa* should have been avoided in plainchant. Even though the moral criticism lessened with time and *b-fa* was eventually present in plainchant, the gendered associations

¹⁷ Leach, *Sung Birds*, 254.

¹⁸ Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, 3.

¹⁹ Blackburn, “The Lascivious Career of B-Flat,” 31.

²⁰ “Praeterea aliquando vitiosa et maxime lasciviens et nimium delicata harmonia plura, quam diximus, semitonia quaerit, et quae nos posuimus, renuit: quod magis corrigi, quam imitari oportet.” Martin Gerbert ed., *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica sacra potissimum*, vol. 3 (St. Blaise: Typis San-Blasianis, 1784; reprint Hildesheim: Olms, 1963), 272. Translation taken from Vladimir Barsky, *Chromaticism*, trans. Romela Kohanovskaya (New York: Routledge, 2014), 14.

²¹ “...etiam .b. molle dici volunt propter lasciviam et mollitiem dulcis semitonii.” Anonymous, “Commentarius in Micrologum,” ed. Jos Smits van Waesberghe, in *Expositiones in Micrologum Guidonis Aretini*, Musicologica Medii Aevi, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company, 1957), 137. Translation taken from Blackburn, “The Lascivious Career of B-Flat,” 27.

²² Blackburn, “The Lascivious Career of B-Flat,” 26.

within the system of the Guidonian gamut, then the singers were supposed to add a *ficta* note for creating the semitone movement in one of the voices. Therefore, the semitone was the key interval that defined a directed progression and implicitly the tension-resolution pattern. The demand for resolution could be satisfied immediately, but sometimes the resolution was delayed to stress the longing.

Johannes Boen used the term *lascivia* specifically for these inflections outside the Guidonian hand. His use of the term in this context shows that the use of *musica ficta* was morally questionable.

[...] it must be noted more subtly that modern usage admits the said letters in *claves* outside the nature of the manual monochord only or consonances or the wantonness of the song itself [*lasciviam ipsius cantus*] – for men did not formerly pant after so many wantonnesses [*lasciviis*] in the practical performance of a song as they do now; and so that this wanton merriment [*hec lasciva iocunditas*] may be marked in written works without any kind of construction of a new monochord, as has to happen in the case of pitches, so that the sign may correspond to the thing signed, usage has rationally admitted those letters and their effects in different *claves*.²⁷

The early fourteenth-century theorist Marchetto of Padua wrote more positively about this new musical practice. He introduced a third semitone to the original Pythagorean minor and major semitone, which he called “chromatic,” which, in turn, brings to mind the gendered nature of the Greek chromatic genus.²⁸ Furthermore, he divided the tone equally into five parts, making the new semitone four-fifths of a tone. His ascending *ficta* notes were oversharpened so that they were even closer to the note they resolve to, because “a dissonance compatible to the ear must lie at the smallest distance from the consonance.”²⁹ This made the directed progressions even more striking aurally to medieval audiences than they appear to our modern ears.

²⁷ “Sed ne dicta conclusio lateat indiscussa, est subtilius advertendum, quod modernus usus dictas litteras in clavibus extra naturam monocordi manualis admittit solum propter consonantias vel lasciviam ipsius cantus-non enim tantis olim quantis nunc in prolatione practica alicuius cantilene lasciviis hominis [recte: homines? H–S] inhyarunt-; et ut hec lasciva iocunditas absque omnimoda novi monocordi compositione signari possit in scriptis, sicut habet fieri in sonis, ut signum signato respondeat, rationabiliter eas litteras et earum effectus in diversis clavibus usus admisit.” Wolf Frobenius, *Johannes Boens Musica und seine Konsonanzlehre*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, *Freiburger Schriften zur Musikwissenschaft*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Musikwissenschaftliche Verlags-Gesellschaft, 1971), 63. Translation by Holford-Strevens in Leach, “Gendering the Semitone,” 12.

²⁸ Leach, “Gendering the Semitone,” 14. Modern readers should be aware that the semitone is the smallest interval in medieval music practice, but it was not divided into equal parts as it is nowadays.

²⁹ Jan Herlinger, “Marchetto’s Division of the Whole Tone,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 34: 207. Cited in Leach, “Gendering the Semitone,” 13.

The *ficta* notes were not always notated in the manuscripts, but the medieval singers were expected to be able to supply them in performance based on the counterpoint teaching rules of the time. Since the directed progression was fundamental to fourteenth-century counterpoint as a way of notating semitones, recent musicology has claimed that for analyzing these polyphonic compositions, one should first consider the counterpoint between the voices in dyadic relationship and identify the semitone inflections according to the rules of counterpoint before performing any musico-textual analysis.³⁰ The strong tendency for resolution of these semitones was primarily relevant in polyphony because of their contrapuntal necessity, but recent research on the melodic role of semitone inflections in monophony showed convincingly that such inflections in polyphonic compositions were not always derived strictly from counterpoint: rather they may be the result of specific melodic behaviour.³¹

Example 3: bars 1-2 of *Amours me fait desirer* (B19)

To illustrate the forward-leading force of the directed progression, I present a music example from Machaut’s ballade *Amours me fait desirer* (B19), which speaks about the intense desire of a lover (see example 3). It opens with an unusual tritone leap (*G–c–mi*) in the cantus on the word *amours*, while the tenor progresses from *b–fa* to *a*.³² Leaving aside the voice crossing on the first pitches *b–fa/G*, the *c–mi* in the cantus strongly demands resolution to *d*, and indeed the major third *a/c–mi* resolves in to a perfect fifth (*G/d*). Nowhere in other Machaut songs the tritone is heard in

³⁰ This position is advocated in Bent, “The Grammar of Early Music: Preconditions for Analysis,” 15-59; and in Leach, “Counterpoint and Analysis in Fourteenth-Century Song,” 45-79. For a different opinion, see Thomas Brothers, *Chromatic Beauty in the Late Medieval Chansons: An Interpretation of Manuscript Accidentals*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), in which he claims that we should consider only what is notated. Cf. Leach, review of *Chromatic Beauty in the Late Medieval Chanson: An Interpretation of Manuscript Accidentals*, by Thomas Brothers, *Music & Letters* 80 (1999): 274–81.

³¹ Jennifer Bain, “Tonal Structure and the Melodic Role of Chromatic Inflections in the Music of Machaut,” *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 14 (2005): 59-88.

³² B19 is transmitted in MSS **A** (fol. 463v), **B** (fol. 304r), **C** (fol. 186v), **E** (fol. 155r), **F-G** (fol. 140v) and **Vg** (fol. 306r). For a music edition, see Leo Schrade, ed., *The Works of Guillaume de Machaut, Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century*, vol. 3, (Les Remparts, Monaco: L’Oiseau-Lyre, 1956), 92-93.

such a prominent place.³³ The drive of the directed progression and the strong tension of the *c-mi* is a striking example of the aural desire-satisfaction pattern which fits with the longing expressed in the text of the first line: *amours me fait desirer* (“love makes me desire”).

The theoretical writings discussed above show that gendered and morally loaded language continued to be used for describing musical practices from Antiquity to late-medieval music theory. Throughout the Middle Ages musico-theoretical texts used the concepts of femininity, softness and lasciviousness describing music that made use of semitones. To interpret these musico-theoretical writings, it is necessary to understand their word choices in the context of time, place and social structure. The male-female binary described by Boethius served as a tool for later theorists to organize music in moral categories.³⁴ Above all, this was present in homosocial communities of the music theorists, given that femininity equalled imperfect masculinity and referred to traits unnatural and undesirable for men.³⁵ However, once these associations were established, they were not constrained to music theory alone, but gradually passed down to the musical repertoire. Before turning to how the semitone is treated in Machaut’s music in Chapter 3, I elaborate on another extremely important although ambiguous concept connected to the semitone: sweetness.

³³ Jacques Boogaart, “Thought-Provoking Dissonances: Remarks about Machaut’s Compositional Licences in Relation to his Texts,” *Dutch Journal of Music Theory* 12 (2007): 277.

³⁴ Elizabeth Eva Leach, “Music and Masculinity in the Middle Ages,” in *Masculinity and Western Musical Practice*, ed. Ian D. Biddle and Kirsten Gibson (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 24.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

2. Sweetness in Late-Medieval Music Theory

2.1 Sweetness versus bitterness

“Sweet” was, and still is, a standard term for describing anything pleasurable or beautiful. For example, a thirteenth-century English lyric compares a lady with all kinds of food and spices that taste and smell sweet, such as cinnamon and cumin.³⁶ However, sweetness is ambiguous: flavours that are excessively sweet taste the opposite, bitter. This concept has received some attention in the field of literary studies, but it has hardly been addressed by musicologists. This chapter addresses the concept of sweetness and how it was coupled to bitterness in relation to music in music theory texts, but also in texts outside music theory that were influential in the late Middle Ages.

In a study on how beauty in general was perceived in the Middle Ages, Mary Carruthers traced the etymological origins and usage of the Latin terms *dulcis* and *suavis* (in English commonly translated as “sweet” and “pleasant” respectively).³⁷ *Dulcis* and *suavis* were first used as positive characteristics of a rhetorical style that was pleasant and persuasive.³⁸ However, early on writers were also aware of the ambiguity of sweetness. For example, Cicero commented in his *De Oratore*: “Taste is the most voluptuous of all the senses and more sensitive to sweetness than the rest, yet how quickly even it dislikes and rejects anything extremely sweet. . . . [I]n all things the greatest pleasures are only narrowly separated from disgust.”³⁹ That sweetness is not always good also becomes apparent in the biblical story of Adam and Eve. The apple that Eve picked from the tree in the garden of Eden tasted sweet (*ad vescendum suave*), but nothing good came of that. So, although sweetness may seem a simple concept at first sight, it has a good and a bad side, and it can be both at the same time.

Medieval music theorists usually described and aesthetically valued music and relations between tones as the sensory experience of tasting and touching. They described tones as “soft” and “hard” or “harsh” tones, or as “sweet” and “sour.”⁴⁰ In music theory, sweetness was a standard term for consonance and aesthetic approval. However, some theorists commented that music could be too sweet and therefore harmful. This idea arose in Antiquity, when it was

³⁶ For the text and translation of this poem *Annot and John*, see Carruthers, “Taking the Bitter with the Sweet,” 104–105.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 80–107.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

³⁹ Carruthers, “Sweetness,” *Speculum* 81 (2006): 1010.

⁴⁰ Elzbieta Witkowska-Zaremba, “The Medieval Concept of Music Perception: Hearing, Calculating and Contemplating,” *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis* 16 (2014): 373.

commonly believed that the mind could be captivated by sweet music and this had its dangers, and continued to be referred to in the Middle Ages. For example, Boethius wrote that music's cosmic proportions could influence the proportions of the human body.⁴¹ As such, sweet music was viewed as extremely powerful and pleasurable but at the same time dangerous. The typical medieval example cited from Homer's text was that of the sirens, lustful woman-bird hybrids, who bewitch the listener (always a man) with their sweet voices, draw him to them to eventually kill him.

Another example of the power of sweet music is found in the writings of the fifteenth-century Italian scholar Giovanni Gherardi, who praised Francesco Landini playing the organ: "Francesco, who was full of joy, requested a small organ and began so sweetly to play his songs of love that there was no one present who did not feel that his heart wished to escape from his chest for very joy, so sweet was that sweet music," and on the next day "he took it, and began to play it so sweetly and with such sweet harmony that all were amazed. And thus he played for a laudable length of time; inebriating us all with this infinite sweetness."⁴² Apart from praising Landini's performing and compositional skills, Gherardi also hinted at the power of sweet music to dull the senses.

Medieval music theorists often used sweetness to describe one semitone in particular, namely between *a* and *b-fa*. For example, the early fourteenth-century theorist Johannes de Garlandia emphasized the sense of tasting and called this semitone "the sweetness and spice of all song, and without it song would be gnawn away, transformed, and torn to pieces."⁴³ Although *b-fa* had a suspicious status with early theorists, when it had not yet been fully accepted as *musica recta*, this example shows that the semitone created by *b-fa* was later seen in a more positive light, because it softened the harsh melodic tritone that arose between *f* and *b-mi* in the *molle* hexachord.

I turn again to the description of *b-molle* by Guido's Commentator from the eleventh century, which links sweetness to lasciviousness and glosses that "they claim that b-molle is so called because of the lasciviousness and softness of the sweet semitone."⁴⁴ As explained in Chapter 1, lasciviousness and softness were considered female qualities, which bring to mind the

⁴¹ Leach, *Sung Birds: Music, Nature and Poetry in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 254.

⁴² F. Alberto Gallo, *Music of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 134-135. Francesco Landini is a name given to him in later centuries; in his own time he was known as Francesco degli Organi, Francesco cecus or Francesco da Firenze. See Lauren McGuire Jennings, *Senza Vestimenta: The Literary Tradition of Trecento Song* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 1.

⁴³ "Semitonium, ut dicit, Bernardus, est dulcedo et condimentum tocius cantus et sine ipso cantus esset corrosus, transformatus et dilaceratus." Christian Meyer, ed., *Musica Plana Jobannis de Garlandia*, Collection d'Etudes Musicologiques/Sammlungen musikwissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen (Baden-Baden: Éditions Valentin Koerner, 1998), 91. Translation in Blackburn, "The Lascivious Career of B-Flat," 27.

⁴⁴ "...etiam .b. molle dici volunt propter lasciviam et mollitiem dulcis semitonii." Anonymous, "Commentarius in Micrologum," 137. Translation in Blackburn, "The Lascivious Career of B-flat," 27.

chromatic genus. The connection between *b-molle* and the chromatic genus continued to be explained in the later centuries, for instance in the *Musica Manualis* copied by Johannes Wylde in the fifteenth century, but the treatise itself was written in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century: “Soft B, which takes its name from the object, since it softened the chant, appears to allude to the chromatic genus, which itself, because of its infamous softness and lascivious progressions, is rejected from use in the church.”⁴⁵

The danger of sweet music appeared in other contexts too, for instance, in the tale of Timotheus of Miletus, in which it was his sweet (*dulcisono*) chromatic singing in that made young men effeminate. Another connection between sweetness and femininity is found in a thirteenth-century gloss on Guido’s *Micrologus*: “For the lustful and impudent person is softened and made effeminate by sweet modes.”⁴⁶ Here we are reminded of Boethius, who claimed that someone’s character will align with music of the same character.⁴⁷

2.2 Sweetness and the semitone

Apart from these texts that explain and warn about the dangers of sweet music, Johannes Boen (fourteenth century) was the first to link the idea of sweetness to the directed progression: “It is established thus insofar as a cantus that is judged imperfect through thirds and sixths, despite its inharmonious quality, attracts [*trahat*] and allures the ears toward the following fifth and octave. This is so that thirds and sixths who are their heralds and maidservants may announce the perfection of the cantus in fifth or octave, a perfection the sweeter [*dulciorem*] for being long expected.”⁴⁸ The tension and resolution of the imperfect and perfect sonorities are clearly linked to desire and satisfaction, and here the sweetness lies in the long expected satisfaction of the desire. The verb *trahere* used by Boen can be explained as the Latin translation of the Greek word for “siren,” meaning “to drag.” In this context, the semitone is the key element that “drags” the ear (just as sirens did with their male targest before killing them) from the imperfect to the

⁴⁵ “B mollis, quae nomen ex re trahit, quia cantum mollificat, cromatico generi videtur alludere, quod et ipsum, propter infamem mollitiem lascivosque progressus ab usu recessit ecclesiastico.” John Wylde, *Musica Manualis cum Tonale*, ed. Cecily Sweeney, *Corpus Scriptorum de Musica*, vol. 28 (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: American Institute of Musicology – Hänssler Verlag, 1982), 69. Translation in Blackburn, “The Lascivious Career of B-flat,” 27.

⁴⁶ “Nam quisque lascivius ac petulans dulcibus modis emollitur atque effeminatur.” Wolfgang Hirschmann, “Accessus und Glosse: Die *Micrologus*-Version der Handschrift Oxford, St John’s College 188,” in *Quellen und Studien zur Musiktheorie des Mittelalters*, ed. Michael Bernhard (Munich: C. H. Beck for the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2001), 167. Translation from Leach, “Gendering the Semitone,” 10n51.

⁴⁷ Leach, *Sung Birds*, 254.

⁴⁸ “hoc ideo statuentes, ut cantus ille, qui per tertias et sextas imperfectus censetur, non tamen discors aures trahat et alliciat, ut perfectionem cantus, qui per quintam sequetur vel octavam, quarum tertie et sexte sunt nuntie et ancille, expectatam diutius indicent dulciorem.” Frobenius, *Johannes Boens Musica*, 70. Translation in Sarah Fuller, “Tendencies and Resolutions,” 229–30.

perfect sonority and its quality is explained as sweet. Leach suggests that Boen, in using the verb *trahere*, hinted at the analogical equivalence of two enchanting but dangerous types of feminine song – the ancient song of the sirens and the use of the semitones outside the Guidonian gamut.⁴⁹ I find this conclusion based on the word *trahat* alone a little far-fetched, because the Latin verb *trahere* has many neutral meanings and does not necessarily refer to the sirens. However, the sirens were certainly a symbol for dangerous sweetness that everyone in the Middle Ages would have known.

Shortly before 1400, Arnulf of St-Ghislain associated sirens with the ability to subdivide tones into semitones and semitones into indivisible microtones with a “sweet-sounding throat.”⁵⁰ Arnulf praised these women singers and their natural ability to sing microtonal intervals, yet depicted them as dangerous sirens to warn against the aural enchantment of sweet singing.

All the examples above show that sweetness was not a simple concept but a strong mixture of opposing qualities and it was perceived as such in Antiquity and throughout the Middle Ages. Its ambivalence is fundamental in courtly love texts. For example, the *Roman de la Rose* describes how lovers sometimes experience sweetness and sometimes bitterness in loving.⁵¹ The wordplay between the French verb *amer* (to love) and the adjective *amer* (bitter) was commonly used in trouvère texts and is also found in Machaut poetry.⁵² The ambiguity of sweetness was often connected to the deceptiveness of women. At first a lady may seem sweet, while actually she is not at all.

Karen Desmond points out examples of this deceptiveness in the references to a lady’s look in Machaut’s musical ballades.⁵³ Although Machaut often referred to the lady’s look as pleasing, it turns out that her sweetness is dangerous for her lover. For example, her look in *Helas! tant ay dolour* (B2) is painful for the lover: “The great sweetness of your sweet laughing look that wounds me with its arrow of love” (*Quant la grant douceur m’est lonteinne de vostre dous riant regart qui navre d’un amoureux dart*).⁵⁴ The lady in *Biauté qui toutes autre pere* (B4) has a fatal look, too: “Gentle face with a heart of steel / A look to kill a lover” (*Simple vis a cuer d’aymant/ Regart pour tuer un amant*), where the term *simple* opposes the term *aymant* as gentle versus steel in the sense of hard.⁵⁵ In *Une vipere en cuer* (B27) a basilisk resides in her sweet look (*Un basilique a en son doulz*

⁴⁹ Leach, “Gendering the Semitone,” 15.

⁵⁰ Bruce, W. Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire in Medieval Culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 137.

⁵¹ Example discussed in Boogaart, “O series summe rata,” 218.

⁵² Peter Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 25-6.

⁵³ Karen Desmond, “Refusal, the Look of Love and the Bestly Woman of Machaut’s Balades 27 and 38” *Early Music History* 32: 92n48.

⁵⁴ Translation taken from *ibid.*, 93.

⁵⁵ Translation taken from *ibid.*, 93.

regart) and kills the lover. This brings to mind the snake in the garden of Eden that deceptively presents the sweet apple to Eve with his sweet, seducing words with bitter results. Another snake is found in the second stanza of Machaut's only complainte set to music *Tels rit* (RF2). Here, sweetness opposes bitterness to show precisely the same idea, that of the deceptiveness of the lady: "And when you think she's aimiable, then she's bitter, for even though she appears a friend, sweet as honey, true as a mother, the viper's bite which is incurable is nothing compared to her."⁵⁶ In *O livoris feritas/Fons totius superbie/Fera pessima* (M9) sweetness is associated with the lady's speech, which deceives: "While your unceasing speech speaks to us the more sweetly, it stings the more savagely from behind like the scorpion with its poison."⁵⁷

The music theory and the literary texts presented in this chapter show that sweetness was pleasurable and very often paired with danger. The connection between femininity and lasciviousness in music theory makes sweetness an even more morally difficult concept. The four case studies in Chapter 3 illustrate how the ideas of femininity and sweetness, explained in the abstract world of music theory, entered Machaut's musical works. As the examples from theoretical writings show, sweetness was associated with the *molle* hexachord, with its sweet semitone between *a* and *b-fa*, and so it was particularly appropriate for the musical illustration of sweetness. Machaut often use these associations of harsh and sweet of the *durum* and *molle* hexachords to musically express the feelings of bitterness and sweetness.

⁵⁶ "Et quant on la cuide amiable, lors est amere car ja soit ce qu'amie appere douce com miel, vraie com mere la pointure d'une vipere qu'est incurable en riens a li ne se compere."

⁵⁷ "Tua cum garrulitas nos affatur dulcius, retro pungit seivus ut veneno scorpius." Translation taken from Desmond, "Refusal, the Look of Love," 105.

3. Four Case Studies: *Biauté* (B4), *Quant en moy* (M1), *Rose, liz* (R10) and *Tant doucement* (R9)

There are countless examples in Machaut's courtly love poetry that mention sweetness, commonly used as a positive attribute for a lady's appearance and qualities. However, there are a few instances in which sweetness is prominent or where sweetness is paired with its opposite in several ways. In these cases the idea of sweetness is fundamental to our understanding of that text. This chapter treats those extraordinary situations of sweetness mentioned in Machaut's polyphonic compositions and explores, based on the theoretical links between femininity, sweetness, the semitone and *musica ficta*, how those ideas are realised musically. For this, I consider four main case studies of different genres (a motet, a ballade and two rondeaux) in which sweetness is the main theme. The case studies focus on the following aspects: deceptive sweetness, sweetness in opposition to bitterness, excessive sweetness, and sweetness versus harshness. The selected case studies represent a moment in which music theoretical ideas (typically defined separately from the musical practice) found resonance in the musical practice and not just in several isolated music examples. This opens the field for further research on how late medieval theoretical discussions of the treatment of semitones and other smaller intervals than a tone and their moral attributes were connected to the musical practice in the fourteenth century and specifically to Machaut's compositions. In what follows, I focus generally on melodic inflections and counterpoint design between the voices in dyadic relationship and how they relate to the concept of sweetness mentioned in the text.

3.1 *Biauté qui toutes autre pere* (B4)

Machaut's two-voice ballade *Biauté qui toutes autre pere* (B4) describes a lady of unmatched beauty.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, her beauty is fatal for the lover: the lady's refusal of his love has brought him to the point of dying for love. The notion of love as a mix of negative and positive aspects is a recurring theme in this ballade, as all of the lady's praiseworthy qualities have their negative effect on the lover. Each stanza of B4 enumerates a list of those aspects that have brought the lover to the point of death, which is heard in the refrain: *pour amer morray* ("I shall die of loving"). The long list includes, for example, that the lady's beauty is now "strange" towards him and that her

⁵⁸ B4 is transmitted for two voices in MSS **A** (fol. 455v), **B** (fol. 296r), **C** (fols.159r-159v), **F-G** (fol. 135r) and **Vg** (fol. 298r), and for three voices in MS **E** (fols. 152v-153r). For a music edition, see Leo Schrade, ed., *The Works of Guillaume de Machaut*, Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century, vol. 3 (Les Remparts, Monaco: L'Oiseau-Lyre, 1956), 74-75.

look is fatal. In short, the lover sees everything he considers wonderful turn into its opposite, which includes that the lady's sweetness turns bitter to him: *douceur fine a mon goust amere* ("exquisite sweetness bitter to my taste"). The text of the first stanza is as follows:

Biauté qui toutes autres pere	Beauty, the peer of all others,
Envers moy diverse et estrange,	towards me inconstant and strange,
Douceur fine a mon goust amere,	fine sweetness, to my taste bitter,
Corps digne de toute loange,	a body worthy of all praise,
Simple vis a cuer d'aymant,	a soft face with an adamant heart,
Regart pur tuer un amant,	a look perfectly suited to kill a lover,
Samblant de joie et response d'esmay	an appearance of joy and a response of discouragement
<i>M'ont a ce mis que pour amer murray.</i>	<i>have brought me to such a point that I will die for love.</i> ⁵⁹

The key word in the first stanza, *estrange* ("strange"), is highlighted by an unusual melisma in the cantus that lasts nine perfections (see example 4).

Example 4: bars 6-21 of B4 (A-section)

⁵⁹ Translation taken from Elizabeth Eva Leach, "Death of a Lover and the Birth of the Polyphonic Ballade: Machaut's Notated Ballades 1-5," *Journal of Musicology* 19 (2002): 501. For the text and translation of the other two stanzas, see the appendix.

The image displays a musical score for a vocal piece, likely a ballade, with three systems of music. The first system shows the vocal parts (Cantus, Tenor, and Contratenor) and piano accompaniment for bars 10-15. The lyrics are: "En - vers / Corps di - / moy / gne / di - verse / de tou - / et es - / te lo - / tran - / an -". The second system shows bars 15-20, with three red boxes highlighting specific melodic motifs in the cantus part. The lyrics are: "ge, / - ge, / Sim - ple vis / a cuer d'a - y - / mant,". The third system shows bars 20-25, with two first endings marked with '1' and '2' above the staff. The lyrics are: "ge, / - ge, / Sim - ple vis / a cuer d'a - y - / mant,".

Example 5: bars 27-38 of B4 (refrain)

In my analysis below I focus on the counterpoint between the cantus and tenor only (the contratenor is a later addition and present only in the later manuscript **E**). The melisma with the melodic sequence in the cantus is heard three times per stanza, two times in the A-section with ouvert and clos endings (example 4), and a third time in the refrain (example 5). It consists of an extensive sequence of a descending seven-note motif in the cantus in bars 10-15 and 31-37 (indicated by red brackets in examples 4 and 5). The first time this motif begins on *e* (bars 10-11 and 32-33), is then repeated on *c* (bars 12-13 and 34-35) and the last time it starts on *a* (bars 14-15 and 36-37). The tenor does not follow the sequence pattern in the cantus. As this ballade has three stanzas, this section is heard nine times in performance. This sequence contains striking dissonances and, resembling the effect the lady's beauty has on the lover, the melisma has a strange aural effect on the listener emphasized by the obsessive repetition of the melodic sequence. On three prominent moments in this melisma, several melodic semitones are present in the cantus, namely at the end of the every descending motif (marked by red boxes in examples 4 and 5).

While the cantus and the tenor both begin in perfect time, during the melisma (bars 9-14 and 31-36), the tenor changes to imperfect time, which is indicated as such in all manuscripts.⁶⁰ This results in syncopation with the cantus, which continues in perfect time throughout. In modern notation the time signature turns from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{2}{4}$ in the tenor and runs against $\frac{3}{4}$ in the cantus. Together with the unusual melodic semitones in the cantus the melody of the tenor and its syncopation result in a long delay of the directed progression initiated at the beginning of the melisma with the *a/c-mi* sonority of the cantus and tenor in bar 11. The imperfect sonority *a/c-mi* asks for resolution to *D/d*, but because of the syncopation its resolution is denied contrapuntally and the *c-mi* in the cantus is resolved into a *d* only melodically. The tenor progresses later to the expected *D* when the cantus has a minim rest. In the second realization of the motif the melodic semitone the melodic semitone in the cantus occurs between *a* and *b-fa* (bar 13). This time the tenor acts differently and there is no directed progression. The third time (bars 14-15) the descending motif in the cantus starts on *a* and ends one note earlier on *F-mi*, which demands resolution to *G*, but this does not happen immediately as it happened in the previous two instances. Instead, the cantus has a semibreve rest and the melody is picked up by the tenor, before the cantus continues to a minim *G* and is then abandoned. The melodic semitones are placed on strong moments and receive extra weight through their long duration of an imperfect breve followed by a semibreve. The exception is in bars 15 where *F-mi* is not a breve but a semibreve, followed by a rest of a semibreve, and *G* is not a semibreve but a minim. In other words, the third and last rendition of this section leaves the impression of acceleration and this is realized by reducing the length of the last notes and by melodic ornamentation in the tenor where the melody circles around *G* (bar 15).

The resolution of the directed progression initiated in bar 11 is denied three times until the built up tension is resolved at the ouvert of section A (bars 16-17) by a new directed progression between *G/b-fa* and *D/a*. The clos ending of section A (bar 17) does not resolve with a directed progression: the sonority *G/b-fa* progresses to *D/d* without any semitone motion in any of the two voices. In the refrain *m'ont a ce mis que pour amer morray* ("have brought me to such a pass that I shall die of loving") (bars 29-38), the melisma occurs on the conjunction *que*, creating a pause in the text which leaves the listener with an uncertain feeling as to what happens next.⁶¹ Only when the melisma blends into a syllabic setting of the last phrase (*pour amer morray*), it becomes clear that the lover will die (bar 36-38). Also this time the tension started at the

⁶⁰ The change in mensuration is represented visually by the red coloration in the versions transmitted in MSS **A**, **C**, **F-G** and **Vg**. MS **B** has void note heads. MS **E** indicates time signatures instead of red notes.

⁶¹ Leach, "Death of a Lover," 492.

beginning of the sequence is unresolved. In bars 37-38 it is the same progression (from *G/b-fa* to *D/d*) as in the closing of section A, which leaves the song without any strong feeling of closure. This may be interpreted as a musical rendition of the text that speaks of how the lover is left unsatisfied due to the refusal of the lady.

The opposition between sweetness and bitterness is central to the lady's deceptive appearance in this ballade. Besides the strangeness that the melisma emphasizes musically, I argue that the underlying feeling of refusal, and as a result the impossibility of satisfying the lover's desire, are represented musically in this song. This occurs through the delay of the directed progression in the melisma caused by the change of mensuration in the tenor which creates rhythmic displacement, and that the melodic semitones deliberately placed on long note values in the cantus express the feeling of longing. This has an extraordinary aural effect of obsessive insistence since the melisma is heard no less than nine times in performance.

3.2 *Quant en moy/Amour et biauté/Amara valde* (M1)

The same opposition between sweetness and bitterness is present in Machaut's three-voice motet *Quant en moy/Amour et biauté/Amara valde* (M1).⁶² The motet can be read as a musical representation of the notion of sweet against bitter. In a motet there are more opportunities to develop this opposition through the dialogue between the different texts of the voices in contrast to the songs, which are – with a few exceptions – all monotextual. The interaction between the different texts creates the possibility for stronger and at the same time subtler expressions of the opposing qualities. In what follows I explain how the underlying tension-resolution structure of the motet is connected to the way sweetness and bitterness are represented musically in this motet.

Besides the sweetness and bitterness of love, this motet speaks of love's perfection. The triplum describes the beginning of love: how Love came to the lover and how the lover does not dare to confess his love to the lady. The motetus text speaks of the ideal of courtly love, which lies in perfect beauty and the perfect behaviour of the lover ("a true lover should never speak out his love directly or beseech his lady openly for her grace"); however, the lover goes against this ideal and in contrast to the triplum confesses his love.⁶³ Both texts mention the lover's hope and longing. They refer to the waiting in joy for the expectancy of love and in fear for refusal at the

⁶² M1 is transmitted in MSS **A** (fols. 414v-415r), **B** (fols. 258v-259r), **C** (fols. 206v-207r), **F-G** (fols. 102v-103r), **E** (fols. 131v-132r) and **Vg** (fols. 260v-261r). For a music edition, see Schrade, *The Works of Guillaume de Machaut*, vol. 2, 108-111.

⁶³ Boogaart, "Thought-Provoking Dissonances," 276. For the complete translation of this motet, see the appendix.

same time. The texts lead to the conclusion that fulfilment of love is impossible and that the perfection of love lies essentially in imperfection: in striving for, but not reaching fulfilment. The idea of perfection is reflected musically in the perfection of all mensural levels (the motet is written in perfect mode, perfect time and major prolation).

The triplum concludes with the familiar notion that love is very sweet and at the same time very bitter: *Grant folie est de tant amer / Que de son dous face on amer* (“It is great folly to love so much that one makes a bitter thing of that which is most sweet to him.”) In this phrase the grammatically ambivalent meaning of *amer* becomes apparent. The wordplay between the adjective *amer* (bitter) and the verb *amer* (to love) was a traditional theme used by the thirteenth-century trouvères.⁶⁴ The last phrase of the triplum makes clear that “one’s sweetness” (*son dous*) is made bitter (*face on amer*). At the same time it can mean that a sweet sound/song (*son dous*) becomes bitter. Finally, the Latin tenor, which reads “*Amara valde*” also alludes to the *amer-amer* wordplay since *amara* (bitter) is very close in sound to *amare* (to love). This wordplay refers to love as a combination of both sweetness and bitterness.⁶⁵

Love itself can then be considered ambiguous because it invokes opposite feelings. Its perfection lies in longing for, but not reaching fulfillment of desire. That feeling of longing is reflected rhythmically through diminution sections that create a feeling of acceleration towards the end.⁶⁶ It is also reflected in the counterpoint. According to Jacques Boogaart, the counterpoint can be reduced to two fundamental poles: pitches *G* and *F*.⁶⁷ This opposition can be traced back to the hexachords *durum* and *molle* in the tenor, that are based on *G* and *F* respectively (see example 6).

The image shows three systems of mensural notation for the tenor of M1. Each system consists of a single staff with a C-clef (soprano clef) and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notation uses square neumes on a four-line staff. Brackets above the neumes indicate rhythmic groupings. The text is written below the staff, and hexachord labels are placed below the text.

- System 1:** The text is "re DURUM" followed by a double bar line and "ut = re (molle) ut". The hexachord labels are "Ia" and "Ib".
- System 2:** The text is "re MOLLE" followed by a double bar line and "sol = fa DURUM" followed by "ut = re (molle)". The hexachord labels are "IIa" and "IIb".
- System 3:** The text is "ut MOLLE" followed by a double bar line and "ut = re (molle)". The hexachord labels are "IIIa" and "IIIb".

Example 6: the tenor of M1⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Jacques Boogaart, “O series summe rata,” 218.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 218.

⁶⁶ For a detailed explanation of the diminution in this motet, see *ibid.*, 223-224.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 229.

⁶⁸ Example taken from *ibid.*, 673.

While the motetus creates almost no contrapuntal problems with the tenor, the triplum creates many moments of tension with the tenor: in many instances, *f-mi* confirms *G* as a central tone, which works against the final sonority *F/c/f* towards which the motet aims.⁶⁹ The triplum has many progressions to *g*, while it rests only two times on *f*.⁷⁰ This creates a conflict in the piece because the *f-mi* signals a central tone *G* instead of the final *F*, therefore it implies a *durum* hexachord as opposed to a *molle* hexachord.

The places in the tenor where the *b-mi* and *b-fa* mutations take place are the places with the strongest contrapuntal tension. One of these instances is in bar 119 where the *f-mi* in the triplum sounds simultaneously with an *F* in the tenor (see example 7). This creates a strong dissonance of *mi* against *fa* which would be unacceptable. Therefore the tenor must adapt to the triplum and mutate from *F-fa* to *F-mi*, but this goes against the fact that the tenor melody acts as a framework for the whole piece and is usually not changed.⁷¹

Example 7: bars 116-120 of M1

When *b-fa* becomes *b-mi* this represents a negative change of mood in this motet. Boogaart cites a remarkable passage from the *Confort d'ami* in which Machaut uses the concept of musical mutation metaphorically and invokes a musical image to invigorate his statement.

Et encor ont mi anemi,	And above all, my enemies,
Que j'ay moult doubté et cremi	who I have dreaded and feared
Et a qui j'ay tant escremi	and with whom I have fought so much,
Que le cuer en ay entumi.	that my heart has hardened,
Mon b mol de be fa be mi	have made my b-molle from b-fa b-mi
Mis en b dur. ⁷²	into b dur.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 230.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 229.

⁷¹ For more instances of tension between the tenor and triplum, see *ibid.*, 237-238.

⁷² Cited in Boogaart, "Series summe rata," 236. Translation mine.

This passage speaks of a heart that is hardened and proves that the change of *b-fa* into *b-mi* indicates a change into the negative. The opposition between the soft and hard hexachords can therefore be interpreted as the musical representation of the opposition between sweetness and bitterness that the texts of the three voices in M1 speak about, since many times the soft hexachord and specifically the *b-fa* was linked to the concept of sweetness as I discussed in Chapter 1.

Boogaart has some reservations with this interpretation in the case of M1 since the *b-mi* in the tenor is not indicated in all manuscripts that transmit this motet, thus making this mutation from *b-fa* to *b-mi* optional. This is complicated by the fact that, at the end, the cantus that sings the word *amer* (“bitter”) coincides with the “sweet” note *f* of the soft hexachord and not with a pitch that would have been identified as hard or at least possible in the hard hexachord.⁷³ Taking into account the internal paradox of sweetness and the playfulness of sweetness versus bitterness in this motet, I suggest that this is not necessarily a problem. Boogaart suggests that this paradox of singing about bitterness on a “sweet” pitch is echoed in the mensuration as well, as the tenor ends with an imperfect longa, the only one in the entire tenor, and not with a perfect longa. By its inclusion in a ligature that is perfect, this moment is a rhythmic analogue of the idea that perfection contains in itself imperfection, which is similar to the ambivalence of sweetness.⁷⁴ Boogaart’s interpretation is plausible since his argument is not only based on the mutation in the tenor alone, but also on the counterpoint with the triplum, which both clearly point to the polarity of the two hexachords. The association of sweetness that *b-fa* had acquired in music theory treatises and the fact that Machaut used the concept of mutation metaphorically indicate that the polarity is not a coincidence, but meant to represent musically the contrast between sweetness and bitterness.

In short, the contrast between *dous* and *amer* and the ambiguity of sweetness reflected in the wordplay of *amer* are central to the interpretation of Machaut’s first motet. The opposition between bitter and sweet in the texts can be read in the contrapuntal framework of the mutation of the tenor from the soft to the hard hexachord, with the soft, sweet *b-fa* and harsh *b-mi* as turning points. Such textual-musical correspondances as these that lie at a deeper contrapuntal level are not as easily heard as those that are present at the surface, for example in the form of word-painting. Alice Clark remarked about M1 that “they cannot be heard, at least not by ear alone, on first hearing. Nor can they be easily read, since they involve the combination of voices

⁷³ Boogaart, “O series summe rata,” 238.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 238.

[...] It is only in the rumination that comes from both reading and hearing that complete meaning can be found.”⁷⁵

Another important example that presents the opposition sweet-bitter is the three-voice virelai *Foy porter* (V22).⁷⁶ Even though this opposition is not linked to the musical setting, this example sheds light on those compositions that do. In this case more emphasis is laid on the positive quality of sweetness: it is the lady’s sweetness that surpasses everything else and softens his bitterness. In the second stanza three cases of wordplay are found: *joie/joir* (joy/pleasure), *douceur/adoucir* (sweetness/softens) and *amer/amer* (bitter/to love). The grammatical ambiguity is present in the phrase *quant vo douceur adoucir vuet mon amer*, translated as “when your sweetness wants to sweeten my bitterness.” Although it is likely that the meaning of bitterness of the word *amer* is intended here, the grammar does not specify whether “your [the lady’s] sweetness” (*vo douceur*) or “my [the lover’s] bitterness” (*mon amer*) wants to soften the other, since both can be subject of *adoucir vuet* (“wants to sweeten”).⁷⁷ This grammatical ambiguity suggests the simultaneity of sweetness and bitterness for lovers.

3.3 *Rose, liz, printemps* (R10)

The four-voice rondeau *Rose, liz, printemps* (R10) praises a lady through the metaphor of a garden.⁷⁸ It begins with an enumeration of the wonders of spring: “Rose, lily, springtime, greenery, flower, balm and very sweet odour” (lines 1-2). At this point we have no notion of the beloved lady. She follows in line 3: “Beauty (*belle*), you surpass in sweetness.” Anne Stone remarked that the list of garden terms gives the impression that the excessiveness of the lady’s sweetness results in the lover becoming overwhelmed, so that “he can do no more than stutter a list of the natural things that she resembles but ultimately surpasses.”⁷⁹ The fact that the listener only finds out after the list ends that the lady surpasses the sweetness of flowers contributes to the excitement.

⁷⁵ Alice Clark, “The Motets Read and Heard,” in *Companion to Guillaume de Machaut*, ed. Deborah McGrady, 198.

⁷⁶ V22 is transmitted in MSS **A** (fol. 489v), **B** (fol. 328r), **C** (fols. 197v), **F-G** (fol. 160r), **E** (fol. 162r-162v) and **Vg** (fol. 330r). For a music edition, see Schrade, *The Works of Guillaume de Machaut*, vol. 3, 181.

⁷⁷ Phyllis Brown and William Mahrt, “The Interplay of Language and Music in Machaut’s Virelai ‘Foy Porter,’” in *Tradition and Ecstasy: The Agony of the 14th Century*, ed. Nancy van Deusen (Ottawa: The Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1997), 247.

⁷⁸ R10 is transmitted in MSS **A** (fol. 478r), **B** (fol. 318r), **C** (fols. 205v-206r, without triplum), **F-G** (fol. 151v), **E** (fol. 132r) and **Vg** (fol. 319r). For a music edition, see Schrade, *The Works of Guillaume de Machaut*, vol. 3, 152-153.

⁷⁹ Anne Stone, “Music Notation, Metaphor, and the Reification of Late-Medieval Song,” in *Technologies of Medieval Song*, ed. Emma Dillon and Lynn Ransom (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012), 60.

Rose, liz, printemps, verdure,
Fleur, baume et tres douce odour,
Belle, passes en doucour.
 Et touz les biens de nature,
 Avez dont je vous aour.
Rose, liz, printemps, verdure...
 Et quant toute creature
 Seurmonte vostre valour,
 Bien puis dire et par honnour:
Rose, liz printemps, verdure...

Rose, lily, springtime, greenery,
Flower, balm and very sweet odour,
Beauty, you surpass in sweetness.
 And all the worth of nature
 You have, for which I adore you.
Rose, lily, spring, verdure...
 And since every creature
 Your value surpasses,
 I can well say with honour:
*Rose, lily, spring, verdure...*⁸⁰

David Rothenberg claimed that the lady in this rondeau refers to Virgin Mary, based on the similarities between the text of this rondeau and that of a responsory sung during Assumption matins, as they both compare a woman to the flowers and springtime.⁸¹ The comparison of a lady with the beauty of nature was certainly a common theme in courtly love poetry.⁸² Since Rothenberg's claim is based on textual similarities alone, I consider this interpretation should not be fully ruled out, but it needs further evidence.

In this rondeau, the mensuration of the triplum and the cantus continually switches back and forth between imperfect time and major prolation, and perfect time and minor prolation. Some fourteenth-century music theorists described mensural music making use of garden terminology similar to the list in *Rose, liz*. For example, Petrus dictus de Palma Ocioso explained that “just as we see the tree in summertime adorned and decorated with flowers [...] so is all discant decorated and adorned with the flowers of measured music.”⁸³ Anne Stone suggests that Machaut, in combining two mensurations in this piece, creates a “mensural garden,” to reflect the text of the rondeau, which in turn reminds of the association of mensuration and gardening found in theoretical treatises.⁸⁴ This is another example of how a theoretical idea is incorporated into a polyphonic context.

⁸⁰ Translation taken from Stone, “Music Notation,” 55.

⁸¹ David Rothenberg, *The Flower of Paradise: Marian Devotion and Secular Song in Medieval and Renaissance Music*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 89-90.

⁸² Stone, “Music Notation,” 59.

⁸³ Translation by Daniel Leech-Wilkinson in *ibid.*, 66. For more examples of music theorists referring to mensuration in floral language, see *ibid.*, 65-67.

⁸⁴ For further explanation of Stone's statement, see *ibid.*, 65-72.

Example 8: bars 25-37 of R10

A striking moment in the rondeau appears in the B section (bars 26-37) when the lady is introduced (example 8). In the A section the listener was introduced to the garden and the tonal organization was oriented towards *b-fa*. The B section introduces the lady and opens with the word *belle* on an unexpected *b-mi* in the cantus, which is indicated in all manuscripts (bar 26). With a D in the tenor this creates an imperfect sonority demanding resolution but denied. The cantus then continually alternates between *b-mi* and *c* for the durations of five perfections (bars 27-31) with one exception when it reaches an *a* in bar 29. While the cantus hints at resolution through its repeated alternation between *b-mi* and *c*, this does not happen until bar 30 on the sonority *C/c*. The melodic shift to the “harsh” *b-mi* in the cantus in bar 26 does not concord with the idea of sweetness implied by the use of *b-fa*. Nevertheless, this *b-mi* marks a moment in the song when the texts says that something new and extraordinary is happening, namely that the lady is even sweeter than the flowers. The desire is associated with the lady through the long directed progression on *belle*.

Another passage that stands out appears in bars 32-37 where *e-fa* is introduced in the cantus, on the words *passes en doucour* (“you surpass in sweetness”). The same occurs earlier in

bars 12-25: *fleur baume et tres douce odour* (“flower, balm and very sweet odour”). Anne Stone explains these detours to *e-fa* as another reference to excessiveness and the diversity of a garden. As *b-fa* would be the *ut* of the hexachord, music theory would have understood it as the creation of a hexachord on a pitch outside the Guidonian gamut. This was called a *coniuncta* (“joining together”) by the author of the Berkeley manuscript. Stone sees in this as an analogue of the mixture of mensurations: “a joining of two different things.”⁸⁵ When *b-fa* was accepted as *musica recta*, *e-fa* was the next pitch that musical theorists associated with sweetness, through its association with *b-fa* that represents the *ut* in a ficta hexachord on *b-fa*. Although it is not clear if Machaut intended this meaning here to represent the sweetness, it is striking that *e-fa* appears precisely in the passages that mention the sweet fragrance of the flowers (*fleur baume et tres douce odour*) and the sweetness of the lady (*passes en doucour*). The role of sweetness in this rondeau plays in a different way than in the other case studies. Here the sweetness is marked musically perhaps not by *b-fa* but by a *ficta* pitch, namely *e-fa*.

3.4 *Tant doucement me sens emprisonnés* (R9)

The rondeau *Tant doucement me sens emprisonnés* (R9) contains an opposition very similar to the one of the pair sweet-bitter, namely sweetness-harshness, where harshness is represented in an oxymoron by the term *prison* (“prison”).⁸⁶ Interestingly, this is mentioned precisely in the refrain, so it is heard three times in performance. The text is as follows:

<i>Tant doucement me sens emprisonnés</i>	<i>So sweetly I feel myself imprisoned</i>
Qu'onques amans n'ot si douce prison	that never has a lover had such a sweet prison.
Jamais ne quier estre desprisonnes,	Never do I seek to be released,
<i>Tant doucement me sens emprisonnés</i>	<i>so sweetly I feel myself imprisoned,</i>
Car tous biens m'est en ceste prison néz	because all the good things that a lady can give
Que dame puet donner sans mesprison.	without debasement have been born to me in that
<i>Tant doucement me sens emprisonnés</i>	<i>prison. So sweetly I feel myself imprisoned</i>
Qu'onques amans n'ot si douce prison.	that never has a lover had such a sweet prison. ⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Ibid., 72.

⁸⁶ R9 is transmitted in MSS **A** (fols. 475r-415r and fol. 477v, only cantus and tenor), **B** (fol. 318v), **C** (fols. 202v-203r), **G** (fols. 151r-151v), **E** (fol. 134r) and **Vg** (fol. 318v). For a music edition, see Schrade, *The Works of Guillaume de Machaut*, vol. 3, 150-151.

⁸⁷ Translation taken from Tamsyn Rose-Steel, “French Ars Nova Motets and their Manuscripts: Citational Play and Material Context” (PhD diss., University of Exeter, 2011), 256.

Contrary to the expectation, the lover wants to stay imprisoned and restricted to act upon his love. This theme is very similar to the third stanza of the triplum of M1, in which the lover neither can or wishes to escape from the “cruel bonds” (*ses las si durement*) because he wants to “endure humbly all these sorrows” (*je vueil humblement toutes ces dolours endurer*). This refers to the ideal of courtly love where the perfect love lies in the torment of unfulfillment and the impossibility to act on the desire.

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is labeled 'Triplum' and contains a melodic line with a fermata over the final note. The second staff is labeled '[Cantus]' and contains the lyrics: '1. 4. 7. Tant dou - ce - ment me sens em - 3. Ja mais - ne quier es - tre des - 5. Car tous biens m'est en ces - te'. The third staff is labeled 'Contratenor' and contains a melodic line. The bottom staff is labeled 'Tenor' and contains a melodic line. The score is in 3/4 time and features various musical notations including notes, rests, and a fermata.

Example 9: bars 1-14 of R9

The rondeau starts in a “soft” manner with an *F* in the tenor and the words *tant doucement* (see example 9). Although the tenor introduces an *F-mi* in bar 3, still on the word *doucement*, the poem begins with the pleasing notion of sweetness, when the pitiful surprise follows in bar 8 on *emprisonnés*. The syllable “pri” occurs on a *b-mi* in the cantus, which is indicated in all manuscripts. As illustrated by the example cited from the *Confort d’ami* above, a change from “fa” to “mi” resembles a switch from a neutral/happy to a darker mood. At this point in the poem on the word “imprisoned,” the listener realises that the initial sweetness is not without restrictions. A long melisma on *emprisonnés* follows (bars 9-32), until we come to know that the lover does not want to be released from the prison that restricts his actions. The *b-mi* is not only paired with *emprisonnés* in the refrain (lines 1, 4 and 7), but also in lines 3 and 5 that have the same music

setting as the refrain line, precisely on the words *prison* (“prison”) and *desprisonnés* (“to be released”). So, of the eight lines in this rondeau, five emphasize musically the idea of imprisonment with the melisma that opens with the sudden *b-mi* on every ‘*pri*’ of *prison*, *desprisonnés* and *emprisonnés*.

There is a resemblance between this rondeau and the rondeau *Amour me tient en sa douce prison* by an anonymous composer from the Manuscript Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale J.II.9, which was likely modeled after Machaut’s rondeau. It uses extremely similar vocabulary as *Tant doucement* and inverts the first two rhyme words, which indicates deliberate reworking of Machaut’s text.⁸⁸ I shall not discuss this further here as it goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is important to note that this rondeau demonstrates that the treatment of sweetness in the fourteenth century was not constrained to isolated pieces, but was a theme used also by other composers.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have illustrated how the ideas of sweetness and bitterness and even harshness in relation to a lady are represented in Machaut’s polyphonic music. The four case studies discussed above show that the use of *b-fa* and the mutation from a hard hexachord to a soft hexachord and vice versa, the use of *musica ficta*, and the delay of a directed progression were musical means for highlighting a specific mood or feature linked to the idea of sweetness. For instance, the sweetness associated with *b-fa* as opposed to the harshness of *b-mi* acts as a musical representation of the opposition between sweet and bitter, as seen in M1 and B4. In the melismas of B4 and R10 is also present the desire-satisfaction pattern typically associated with the directed progression in the fourteenth century. The denial and delay of resolution in a directed progression is illustrative of the lady’s refusal of the lover and his eternal longing for her. The opposition sweetness-harshness presented by the oxymoron *douce prison* in R9 alludes to the associations of *b-mi* with harshness.

Daniel Leech-Wilkinson argued that the progression “from desire to fulfilment, is fundamental not only to the music, but also to the poetry and to the whole tradition of Courtly Love, the Lover seeking endlessly for rest from his desire which only his Lady can provide.”⁸⁹ The case studies I investigated here prove that this element of desire is firmly connected to the concept of sweetness in Machaut’s polyphonic works. Machaut’s concept of desire is, however,

⁸⁸ Ibid., 256.

⁸⁹ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, “Machaut’s ‘Rose, Lis’ and the Problem of Early Music Analysis,” *Music Analysis* 3 (1984): 19.

not as crude as in the writings of some music theorists. His desire is not about pure sexual lust, or as Douglas Kelly described it: “Machaut avoids writing about bar-room loves.”⁹⁰ Although there are exceptions, desire in Machaut’s works is centered around the perfect behaviour of the lover that leads him into the impasse of the inability to express his love for a lady.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Douglas Kelly, *Machaut and the Medieval Apprenticeship Tradition: Truth, Fiction and Poetic Craft*, (Cambridge: Brewer, 2014), 120.

⁹¹ For the exceptions, see *ibid.*, 120.

Conclusion

In this thesis I explored how the concept of sweetness, as discussed in late medieval music theory, is reflected in Machaut's musical presentation of the ideas of sweetness and bitterness in relation to a lady. The idea of sweetness was commonly used as a positive attribute medieval courtly love poetry and is not always fundamental to our understanding of a text. However, when sweetness on its own or together with bitterness occupies a central position in the text, it is likely that it is represented musically as well.

The selected case studies indicate that the associations used in explaining the rules of counterpoint and of using *musica ficta* in late-medieval music theory, were not confined to music theory alone, but they found resonance in musical practice. One significant example is the treatment of sweetness and bitterness in Machaut's polyphonic music. These associations function on a surface level, for example, in the form of word-painting, or are related to the structure of a composition, for instance, when sweetness is associated with the mutation between hexachords in one of the voices.

Bonnie Blackburn discussed several music examples that show the link between b-flat, sweetness and eroticism in the polyphonic music from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. She demonstrates convincingly that the musical terminology of mutating and solmization enters other vernacular contexts as a metaphor well understood by audiences in the late fifteenth century. My thesis shows that these ideas that blossomed in the sixteenth century were already present in the fourteenth century in Machaut's polyphonic music as well as cited in his non-musical poetry. The case studies show that Machaut was aware of the practical but also associative functions of certain musical progressions that he used to highlight a specific mood or word or phrase.

My study opens the path for further musicological research on how late-medieval music relates to a text that presents a mixture of opposites, and specifically the very rich concept of sweetness and its opposites. For instance, future scholarship should look at a broader picture of how sweetness is expressed musically in other compositions from the fourteenth century through the fifteenth century, to how it came to blossom in the sixteenth-century madrigals. An interesting area of investigation represents Machaut's monophonic compositions, his *lais* and *virelais*, and other French polyphonic works from the late fourteenth century, such as those transmitted in the manuscripts Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 564 and Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale J.II.9.

Appendix: Texts and Translations

Quant en moy / Amour et biauté / Amara valde (M1)

Triplum

Quant en moy vint premierement
Amours, si tres doucetterment
Me vost mon cuer enamourer
Que d'un regart me fist present,
Et tres amoureux sentement
Me donna avec dous penser,
Espoir d'avoir mercy sans refuser.
Mais onques en tout mon vivant
Hardement ne me vost donner;
Et si me fait en desirant
Penser si amouusement
Que, par force de desirer,
Ma joie convient en tourment
Muer, se je n'ay hardement.
Las! Et je n'en puis recouvrer,
Qu'amour secours
Ne me vuet nul prester,
Qui en ses las si durement
Me tient que n'en puis eschaper;
Ne je ne vueil, qu'en attendant
Sa grace je vueil humblement
Toutes ces dolours endurer.
Et s'Amours loyal se consent
Que ma douce dame au corps gent
Me vueille son ami clamer,
Je sçai de vray
Que j'arai, sans finer,
Joie qu'Amour à fin amant
Doit pour ses maus guerredonner.
Mais elle atent trop longuement
Et j'aimme si folettement
Que je n'ose merci rouver,
Car j'aim miex vivre en esperant
D'avoir merci procheinement
Que refus me veingne tuer.
Et pour ce di en souspirant:
Grant folie est de tant amer
Que de son dous face on amer.

Motetus

Amour et biauté parfaite
Doubter, celer
Me font parfaitement
Et vrais desirs, qui m'afaite
De vous, cuers dous,
Amer sans finement.
Et quant j'aim si finement,
Merci vous pri,

When Love first came to me,
so very sweetly did he wish
to make my heart,
love that he gave me the gift of a look,
along with very strong feelings of
love and sweet thought,
the hope of receiving mercy rather than refusal.
But never in all my life
did he wish to give me courage;
and he causes me, full of desire,
to think such loving thoughts
that my joy must turn to torment from
so much desiring if I lack courage.

Alas! Love does not wish to lend me
any aid,
and I can do nothing about it,
for he holds me in such cruel bonds
that I cannot escape;
nor do I wish to, for as I await
his grace I wish to endure
humbly all these sorrows.
And if faithful Love consents
that my sweetlady, who is so fair of body,
may wish to call me her friend,
I know for certain
that I shall have without end the joy
that Love must grant as reward to a
true lover for the ills he has suffered.
But how long she delays,
and I love so very fondly
that I dare not ask for mercy,
for I prefer to live in the hope of
soon receiving mercy
than to be slain by refusal.
And therefore, sighing, I declare
that it is great folly to love so much that one
makes a bitter thing of that which is most sweet to
him.

Love and perfect beauty
cause me to fear
and to conceal perfectly,
as does true desire, which teaches me
to love you, sweet-hearted lady,
without end.
And because I love so nobly,
I beg mercy of you,

Car elle me soit faite,
Sans vostre honneur amenrir,
Car j'aim miex ainsi languir
Et morir, s'il vous agrée,
Que par moy fust empirée
Vostre honneur, que tant desir,
Ne de fait ne de pensée.

Tenor

Amara valde.

but that it be granted to me
with no harm to your honor,
for I prefer thus to languish
and to die, if it pleases you,
rather than that through me, by any thought or
deed, there by harm to your honor,
which I so deeply desire.

Immensely bitter.⁹²

⁹² Text and translation by Colleen Donagher from Anne Walters Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims: Context and Meaning in his Musical Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 294-295.

Biauté qui toutes autres pere (B4)

Biauté qui toutes autres pere
Envers moy diverse et estrange,
Douceur fine a mon goust amere,
Corps digne de toute loange,
Simple vis a cuer d'aïmant,
Regart pur tuer un amant,
Samblant de joie et response d'esmay
M'ont a ce mis que pour amer murray.

Detri d'ottri que moult compere,
Bel Accueil qui de moy se vange,
Amour marrastre et nompas mere.
Espoir qui de joie m'estrange,
Povre secours, desir ardent,
Triste penser, cuer souspirant,
Durté, desdaing, dangier et refus qu'ay
M'ont a ce mis que pour amer murray.

Si vueil bien qu'a ma dame appere
Qu'elle ma joie en douleur change
Et que sa belle face clere
Me destruit, tant de meschief sen je,
Et que gieu n'ay, revel ne chant,
N'einsi com je sueil plus ne chant,
Pour ce qu'Amour, mi oueil et son corps
gay
M'ont a ce mis que pour amer murray.

Beauty, the peer of all others,
Towards me inconstant and strange,
Fine sweetness, to my taste bitter,
A body worthy of all praise,
A soft face with an adamant heart,
A look perfectly suited to kill a lover,
An appearance of joy and a response of discouragement
Have brought me to such a point that I will die for love

A delay in saying "yes" for which I pay dearly,
Fair Welcome who avenges himself on me,
Love a stepmother and not a [true] mother,
Hope who estranges joy from me,
Lack of help, burning desire,
Sad thoughts, sighing heart,
Harshness, disdain, rebuff and the refusal that I have
received *have brought me to such a point that I will die for love.*

So I want it to be clear to my lady
That she transforms my joy into pain,
And that her beautiful clear face destroys me.
So much misfortune do I feel
That I have no sport, revel nor song,
Nor can I sing any more,
Because Love, my eyes and her fair body
*Have brought me to such a point that I will die for love.*⁹³

⁹³ Translation taken from Leach, "Death of a Lover," 501.

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Biauté qui toutes autre pere (B4)

A (fol. 455v, 2 voices) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84490444/f932.item>

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C (fols. 159r-159v, 2 voices) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q/f324.item>

E (fols. 152v-153r, 3 voices) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000795k/f328.image>

F-G (fol. 135r, 2 voices) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000793r/f277.item>

Vg (fol. 298r, 2 voices) <http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=3774>

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C (fols. 205v-206r, without triplum) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q/f418.item>

E (fol. 132r) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000795k/f287.item>

F-G (fol. 151v) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000793r/f310.item>

Vg (fol. 319r) <http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=3774#imageList>

Tant doucement me sens imprisonnes (R9)

A (fols. 475r-415r and fol. 477v, only cantus and tenor)

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84490444/f971.item>

B (fol. 318v) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449032x/f643.item>

C (fols. 202v-203r) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q/f411.item>

E (fol. 134r) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000795k/f291.item>

F-G (fols. 151r-151v) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000793r/f309.item>

Vg (fol. 318r) <http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=3774#imageList>

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