

Zeitschrift: Basler Beiträge zur Historischen Musikpraxis : Veröffentlichungen der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis
Herausgeber: Schola Cantorum Basiliensis
Band: 40 (2020)

Artikel: The performance of devotion : multi-lingual networks of songs and sermons in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries
Autor: Deeming, Helen
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-961739>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 26.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

The Performance of Devotion

Multi-lingual Networks of Songs and Sermons in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

Helen Deeming

Among the songs of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century France, England and Ireland, the phenomenon of contrafactum was seemingly widespread. Song-texts were commonly substituted for other ones, either in the same language (most typically, one Latin text for another), or in a different language, whether Latin, English or French. The networks of song-relationships are complex and heterogeneous, but close scrutiny of particular examples can be illuminating. This article explores three such networks of songs, tracing their circulation through both musical and apparently non-musical contexts. Exploring the theme of song migration, I seek to investigate what these networks of songs in different languages, textual guises, and contextual situations may reveal about the utility of musical and poetic materials in spiritual education and both private and communal devotion.

***Refrains* in Rondeaux, Sermons and Songs**

In Nico van den Boogaard's catalogue of *refrains*, numbers 1861 and 1862 are a pair of related texts, one a single line attested in only one source, the other variously a couplet or a tercet traceable in four.¹ The *refrain* vdB 1861

¹ Nico H. J. van den Boogaard, *Rondeaux et refrains du xiiie siècle au début du xive: collationnement, introduction, et notes*, Paris: Éditions Klincksieck 1969 (Bibliothèque française et romane, D:3); the contents of van den Boogaard's catalogue – amplified by further work by Friedrich Gennrich and Anne Ibos-Augé – are now searchable at <http://refrain.ac.uk> (15.11.19). Hereafter, vdB refers to a *refrain*'s number in van den Boogaard's catalogue; vdBR refers to rondeaux, which are given their own numbers in the same work. Other trouvère songs are referred to with their RS (Raynaud-Spanke) number, from Hans Spanke, *G. Raynauds Bibliographie des altfranzösischen Liedes*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1955. Latin songs are given their volume and page number in *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi* (hereafter *AH*), ed. Guido Maria Dreves and Clemens Blume, 55 vols, Leipzig:

(“Uous n’alez pas ioliement si *com ie fas*”) occurs, without musical notation, in one manuscript of *Le Tournoi de Chauvency*.² The *refrain* vdB 1862 is cited in three of the four sources of *Renart le nouvel*, two of them with (different) musical notation and with divergences of text and versification between them.³ The fourth source of vdB 1862 finds the *refrain* incorporated within a song, rather than in a narrative context, in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fonds français 12786 (Trouvère manuscript *k*), a manuscript containing a substantial collection of songs, mainly rondeaux, laid out for three-part polyphonic music which – along with the intended initials throughout the manuscript – was never supplied.⁴

In this source, vdB 1862 forms the *refrain* of a rondeau on fol. 80v: “[V]os nalez pas si *com ie faz* / ne uos ne uos *ni sauez aler* / ne uos ni sauez aler” (vdBR185).⁵ The text of these lines seems to have caused the scribe of fr. 12786 some difficulty.⁶ Here they form a tercet, whose third line is a parti-

Riesland, 1886–1922. English songs are listed in the *Digital Index of Middle English Verse* (hereafter DIMEV), ed. Linne R. Mooney et al., <http://www.dimev.net/> (15.11.19).

² See http://refrain.ac.uk/view/abstract_item/1861.html (15.11.19); the *refrain* is found in the *Chauvency* copy now in Mons, not that in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 308.

³ See http://refrain.ac.uk/view/abstract_item/1862.html (15.11.19).

⁴ A recent comprehensive study of this manuscript can be found here: Frieda van der Heijden, *Or ai ge trop dormi: A Study of the Unfinished F-Pn fr. 12786*, PhD Dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London 2018. A digital facsimile is available at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60003511> (15.11.19).

⁵ Throughout this article, I am distinguishing typographically between (italic) *refrains* – meaning the migrating chunks of text and music that are cited in a range of different contexts – and (Roman) refrains, meaning the internally repeating passages of songs in song-forms like the rondeau or virelai. The two senses of the term need to be distinguished in a song like this – and many others – that has both *refrains* and a refrain.

⁶ Fol. 80v may be found at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60003511/f168.item> (15.11.19). At this point, the scribe’s usual layout had to be abandoned: most of the rondeaux have their refrain lines laid out across most of the width of the page, with a large space above for three-part notation in score, and the residuum text, which will be sung to the same music already supplied for the refrain, in a narrow column on the right-hand side of the page, spanning the height of the space left for the notation of the refrain. This procedure was well suited to *rondeaux simples*, whose two-line refrains could fit neatly on a single long line of writing, but for longer refrains, one line proved insufficient. Here,

al repetition of its second; repetition (of “ne uos, ne uos”) is also built in within the second line. After writing “ne uos, ne uos, ni sauez aler”, the scribe thought better of it and deleted “ni”, thus rendering the second line octosyllabic, to match the first one. The scribe’s hesitation is understandable: the inbuilt repetition is inherently confusing, and the sense of the lines offers little clarification – we might translate them as “You do not go as I do / nor do you, nor do you, know how to go / nor do you know how to go”. It might be tentatively suggested that such meandering lines are peculiarly well-fitted to be the *refrain* of a rondeau, a musico-poetic form whose circularity confounds a straightforward sense of direction and whose *refrain* lines could be read as especially aimless, since the first may be followed either by the second, or by its own music again, now set to an alternative line of text.⁷

In the *refrain* transmission of these lines, the versification is quite different: only one version has a tercet, and its lines have 11, 9, and 9 syllables; the other two witnesses have couplets, one with 11 and 9 syllables, the other with 11 and 13. Under the influence of the *refrain* transmission, both Friedrich Gennrich and Hans Tischler emended the text of the rondeau in their editions and fitted it to the music (likewise manipulated) of one of the *refrain* versions, thereby being able to extrapolate a complete musical setting of the rondeau (albeit a monophonic one, not the three-part setting for which the text was laid out in fr. 12786).⁸

having used up the entire width of the page and still not having finished the refrain, the scribe continued on the right-hand side of the line below, adding a rough-drawn vertical to separate its final words from those of the refrain of the next song. The residual text, rather unhelpfully connected (by this scribe or a later user) to the end of line 1 (which is not in fact the end of the refrain), then appears in a column on the right of this second line. The text of both the refrain and the residuum of the next song (a *rondeau simple*) has been stretched out to fill up another whole line, in order that the following song can revert to the typical layout.

7 The inbuilt circularity and self-reflexive nature of rondeaux was taken up more explicitly by certain fourteenth-century composers, for example in Machaut’s R14 *Ma fin est mon commencement* and Baude Cordier’s *Tout par compas*.

8 Hans Tischler (ed.), *Trouvère Lyrics with Melodies: Complete Comparative Edition*, 15 vols, Rome: American Institute of Musicology 1997 (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 107), vol. XIV, no. R44; Friedrich Gennrich (ed.), *Rondeaux, Virelais und Balladen aus*

However, the text as originally written in the rondeau in fr. 12786 (before the deletion of “ni”) is internally consistent: the *refrain* lines have 8, 9, and 7 syllables respectively, and the residual lines match that, with those intended to be sung to the ‘a’ music having 8 syllables and those to be sung to the ‘b’ music having 9 and 7. The first pair of residual lines (the octosyllables to be sung to the ‘a’ music: “Bele aliz par main se leua ... biau se uesti miex se para”) also have a life outside this rondeau. A couplet beginning “Bele Aelis main se leva” (or more frequently inverted as “Main se leva la bele Aelis”) is cited five different times in the romance *Guillaume de Dole*, each time with a different versification; versions of the same couplet also occur as *refrains* in a number of motets, and more fleeting references to the stock character “bele Aelis” are found in still more contexts.⁹ A *chanson avec des refrains* (RS 1509) by Baude de la Quarière opens each stanza with a line from “Bele Aelis main se leva”: from this heavily interpolated version, a five-line “original” song can be back-projected.¹⁰ But in only one other context does the “Bele Aelis” reference go beyond the initial couplet, and this context is a somewhat surprising one. A Latin sermon surviving in seven manuscripts – and in two of them attributed to Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1207 to 1228 – opens with a full stanza beginning “Bele Aelis matin se leva”.¹¹ In this version, the fair Alice rises, dresses and prepares herself (“se leva, sun cors vesti et appara”), then enters a garden (“en un verger s’en entra”); finding five flowers she makes herself a garland of

dem Ende des XII., dem XIII. und dem ersten Drittel des XIV. Jahrhunderts, mit den überlieferten Melodien, Bd. 1, *Texte*, Dresden: Niemeyer 1921, no. 107.

⁹ The fullest study of the transmission of these “Bele Aelis” lines is Gaston Paris, “Bele Aaliz”, in: Mario Roques (ed.), *Gaston Paris: Mélanges de littérature française du moyen âge*, Paris: Honoré Champion 1912, 616–624 (reprinted from *Mélanges Wahlund*, 1896, 1–12). See also Maurice Delbouille, “Sur les traces de ‘Bele Aëlis’”, in: Irénée Cluzel and François Pirot (eds.), *Mélanges de philologie romane dédiés à la mémoire de Jean Boutière* (1899–1967), Liège: Soledis 1971, vol. 1, 199–218.

¹⁰ Rudolf Meyer, Joseph Bédier and Pierre Aubry, *La chanson de Bele Aelis par le trouvère Baude de la Quarière: Étude métrique par R. Meyer, Essai d’interprétation par J. Bédier, Étude musicale par P. Aubry*, Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils 1904.

¹¹ The seven sources of the sermon are listed at http://refrain.ac.uk/view/abstract_item/R42.html (15.11.19).

blossoming roses (“cync florettes i trova, une chapelette fait en ha, de rose flurie”); the stanza in the sermon concludes with the *refrain* vdB 1506: “Pour Dieu, trahez vus en la vus qui n’amez mie” (“For God’s sake, be gone from hence, you who do not love”).¹²

We cannot know if the lines after the first couplet (those concerning the garden and the garland of flowers) also formed part of an earlier song, or if they were the preacher’s own creative continuation of the “Bele Aeliz” theme, because no witnesses to them outside the sermon exist. Certainly they offered the sermon-writer ample material for his purpose: in the sermon, Alice is figured as an allegory of the Virgin Mary, with the sermon concluding: “per predicta ergo patet quod ista belle Aliz est mater misericordie et regina iusticie que portavit regem celorum et Dominum” (“through the preceding therefore it is clear that this ‘Fair Alice’ is the mother of mercy and the queen of justice who bore the King of heaven and the Lord”). After quoting the stanza in full at the start, the sermon continues, glossing it line by line, Alice’s name itself inviting Marian interpretation when read (in French) as “a liz” (“from the lily”, a common title for the Virgin Mary), and (in Latin) as “a lis”, meaning “without dispute”, or – at a stretch – “without sin”. From the sermon we receive confirmation that “Bele Aeliz” was well known as a dance-song, something that was also strongly implied by its appearances, referred to as a “carole”, in *Guillaume de Dole*. The preacher states: “When I say ‘Fair Alis’, you know that dancing was first devised for vanity; yet in dancing three things are necessary, namely: a sonorous voice, the entwining of arms, and stamping of feet (*vox sonora, nexus brachiorum, strepitus pedum*)”. He goes on to explain that these same three things may be turned to the praise of God, a sonorous voice preaching holy wisdom, the entwining of arms repre-

12 On the sermon, see John Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986, 162, 177–178; Karl Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung im Englischen Hochmittelalter*, Munich: Wilhelm Fink 1973, 379–88; Tony Hunt, “De la chanson au sermon: *Bele Aalis* and *Sur la rive de la mer*”, in: *Romania* 104/416 (1983), 433–456; Robert A. Taylor, Wendy Pfeffer, Randall A. Rosenfeld, and Lys Ann [Shore] Weiss, “The Bele Alis Sermon: Homiletic Song and Dance”, in: *Florilegium* 24 (2007), 173–191. Several of the contexts (songs and sermons) featuring “Bele Aelis” are explored in Sylvia Huot, *Allegorical Play in the Old French Motet: The Sacred and the Profane in Thirteenth-Century Polyphony*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1997, 57–63.

senting acts of charity and kindness, and the stamping of feet being good works that harmonise with one's words.¹³

The network of literary and musical material that I have sketched out so far is already dizzying in its complexity and would defy any attempt to map out a chronological or geographical diagram of chansons and their relatives. I have mentioned several *refrains* cited in literary narratives whose origins are unclear, though the “Bele Aeliz” couplet may be presumed to have come from a dance song before the first evidence of its written transmission. We have seen several trouvère reworkings of these materials, in a *chanson avec des refrains* and in a polyphonic rondeau, and they also passed into the hands of motet composers. Via the sermon, which is found in both French and English manuscript witnesses, the chanson materials crossed the Channel and are found in the English miscellany Cambridge, Trinity College, B. 14. 39, a preacher's manual of diverse and – from the point of view of songs and their relatives – very interesting contents to which I will return later.

Another English preacher's manual of diverse contents, London, British Library, Arundel 248, includes a gathering of fourteen songs with notated music: it is in fact the largest group of songs notated together in a single manuscript from thirteenth-century England. Nestled among the sermons, theological treatises, and extracts compiled in the late thirteenth century, the songs are in Latin, French, and English and include no fewer than five contrafacta.¹⁴ One, *Bien deust chanter ky eust leale amie* (fol. 155r) is an unsignalled Marian contrafact of Blondel de Nesle's chanson *Bien doit chanter qui fine amours adrece* (RS 482).¹⁵ Another song, *Magdalene laudes plene*

13 Another sermon also quoting the “Bele Aelis” lyric takes a more negative stance, regarding her as a symbol of frivolity and worldliness; see Huot, *Allegorical Play* (see n. 12), 60, and Hunt, “De la chanson au sermon” (see n. 12), 435–436.

14 All of the Arundel 248 songs are edited in Helen Deeming (ed.), *Songs in British Sources, c.1150–1300*, London: Stainer & Bell 2013 (*Musica Britannica*, vol. 95), nos 67–77; the contrafacta are nos 68, 69 (a and b), 70 (a and b), 75 (a and b), and 76. Further references to catalogues, concordances, and other editions may be found in the commentary to that edition.

15 Deeming, *Songs in British Sources* (see n. 14), no. 76: edition 106, commentary 202–203.

(fol. 153v), is prefaced with a rubric, “Sequentia de *Magdalena* post notam *Letabundus*” (“sequence of the Magdalen, after the tune of *Letabundus*”), referring to a widely transmitted (and widely contrafacted) Easter sequence *Letabundus exultet fidelis chorus*.¹⁶ Three other contrafacta are preserved in Arundel 248 as pairs, with both alternative texts provided: for *Angelus ad virginum* and its English contrafact *Gabriel fram evene king* (fol. 154r), the scribe wrote out all five stanzas of the Latin text, followed by all five of the English, underlaid to the melody.¹⁷ Perhaps doubting the success of this approach to layout, for the next contrafact pair the scribe wrote out the music separately (but immediately adjacent) for each text, the Latin *Salve virgo virginum* and the French *Veine pleine de duçur* (fol. 155r).¹⁸ The other contrafact pair copied here is in the form of a lai, and the scribe has used a double underlay to supply both Latin and French texts beneath a single copying of the melody. But *Flos pudicitie* and *Flur de virginité* (fol. 153v) are a double contrafact, because they are prefaced with a rubric referring to another song as the origin of their melody: “Cantus de *domina* post cantum *Aaliz*” (“a song of our Lady, after the song *Alice*”).¹⁹

The extraordinary coincidence of the allusion to the Alice song in two thirteenth-century English preachers’ miscellanies invites further investigation. There are some textual resonances between the Arundel 248 song and the sermon: both employ floral language, allegorising the rose and the lily as Marian symbols; both draw attention to the similarity of “virga” (“branch”) and “virgo” (“virgin”); but these allusions are relatively commonplace and cannot be read as evidence of a concrete connection between the sermon and the Arundel 248 song. Tempting as it is to posit a musical glue binding together all these references to the fair Alice, it seems unlikely that the melodic model for *Flos pudicitie* and *Flur de virginité* was any of the “Bele Aeliz” songs whose convoluted history I have touched upon so far. Whereas the forms of “Bele Aeliz” found in the sermon, the narrative texts and the rondeau either imply a strophic dance-type song with short lines and

¹⁶ Ibid., no. 68: edition 93, commentary 198.

¹⁷ Ibid., nos 70a and 70b: edition 96–7, commentary 199.

¹⁸ Ibid., nos 75a and 75b: edition 104–105, commentary 202.

¹⁹ Ibid., nos 69a and 69b: edition 94–95, commentary 198–199.

regular patterns, or else consist of too short a snippet to make any conclusion about the song's original form, the "Cantus de *domina* post cantum Aaliz" in Arundel 248 is a long lai, irregular in line length and pattern of repetition. A more promising possibility for the musical source of *Flos pudicitie* is the *Lai d'Aelis* (RS 1921, inc. "En sospirant de trop parfont"), a lyric lai preserved with music in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fonds français 12615 (the *Chansonnier de Noailles*), but comparison of the two songs reveals little in common in terms of melody or poetic construction.²⁰ A "lai d'Aelis" is also alluded to by the anonymous author of the narrative *Lai de l'Espine*,²¹ who describes a king, after a day of hunting, settling down to an evening of entertainment by minstrels, one of whom – an Irishman – performed a "lai d'Aelis", accompanying himself on a vielle:

La nuit quant vint après souper,
 Li Rois s'asist por déporter,
 Sor un tapis devant le dois.
 Ot lui maint Chevalier cortois,
 Et ensamble o lui ses fis.
 Le Lais escoutent d'Aielis,
 Que uns Yrois doucement note
 Mout le sonne ens sa rote.
 (*Lai de l'Espine*, vv.171–78).

This – presumably – was another narrative lai, rather than a lyric one similar in form to *Flos pudicitie*, but nevertheless the idea of an Irish "lai d'Aelis" is a particularly intriguing one, in the light of song-relationships between England and Ireland that I will examine below.

²⁰ See Paris, "Bele Aaliz" (see n. 9), 623, n. 4; idem, "Lais inédits", in: *Romania* 29 (1879), 35–36, n. 6.

²¹ Prudence Mary O'Hara Tobin (ed.), *Les lais anonymes des XIIe et XIIIe siècles. Édition critique de quelques lais bretons*, Geneva: Droz 1976 (Publications romanes et françaises 143), 255–288.

Sermons in Song

If the network of Alice songs seems to reach the end of a blind alley at this point, another pathway into networks of song opens up through the manuscript Trinity B. 14. 39, one of the English sources of the “Bele Aeliz” sermon mentioned earlier. Like Arundel 248, the book contains a plethora of texts, including sermons, exempla, sentences, and verses in Latin, French and English; its most likely function is as a resource for those charged with preaching and other forms of religious instruction.²² No musical notation is found in Trinity B. 14. 39, and it has therefore been largely ignored by musicologists, but I would contend that music in fact haunts the entire manuscript. Some of the verse-texts reference singing or declare themselves to be songs: for example, two songs on fol. 81v (both described by their rubrics as “exempla”) use the language of singing in their opening lines:²³

Exemplum de beata virgine *et gaudiis eius*:
 Nu þis fules singet hand maket hure blis,
 And þat gres up þringet and leued þe ris
Of on ic wille singen þat is makeles
 þe king of halle kinges to moder he hire ches.
 ...

Aliud exemplum de eodem:
 On hire is al mi lif ylong
of vam ic wille singen
 and herien him þer among
 þad gon us bote bringen
 ...

The latter song shares its unusual poetic construction with the song *Man mei longe*, of which there is a notated copy in another source, and which is also quoted in three sermons; in two other sources, *On hire is al mi lif ylong* and *Man mei longe* are copied adjacently and it is not unreasonable to assume

²² A comprehensive study of this manuscript and edition of its texts is Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung* (see n. 12).

²³ *Nu þis fules singet*: DIMEV (see n. 1) 3806; *On hire is al mi lif ylong*: DIMEV 4270.

that both were meant to be sung to the same melody.²⁴ Several other verses in Trinity B. 14. 39 have melodies in other sources (including *Veni sancte spiritus* [fol. 56v], sometimes ascribed to Stephen Langton or to Pope Innocent III).

The practice of contrafactum is also alluded to in the Trinity manuscript by the many multi-lingual text-pairs, in which a Latin verse is followed by or interleaved with a French or English translation in the same verse form (as with *Veni sancte spiritus*, which appears with a French translation *Seint espiriz vus venez*). Though no notated music is present, it seems overwhelmingly likely that a musical inspiration lay behind these matching verse translations: the translator must surely have had the melody of the first text in mind when preparing the translation.

One particular multi-lingual pair – *Gaude virgo mater Christi* and its English translation *Glad us maiden, moder milde* – demonstrates a number of concrete links to music. This Latin text was frequently set by composers in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance: one especially noteworthy setting is that by Josquin.²⁵ *Gaude virgo mater Christi* formed the basis and inspiration for many other poems on the Joys of the Virgin Mary (*Analecta Hymnica* lists fourteen different poems with this incipit): its five Joys were increased to seven and even twelve in other poems, some of which re-use just the opening lines of this one, but others of which take the entire poem and insert additional stanzas at the end or interleaved.²⁶ It appeared as a sequence in a litur-

24 Eric J. Dobson and Frank Ll. Harrison, *Medieval English Songs*, London: Faber & Faber 1979, 123. *Man mei longe*: DIMEV 3370 and Deeming, *Songs in British Sources* (see n. 14), no. 41: edition, 60; commentary, 186–187.

25 For a discussion of the many versions, see Marco Gozzi, “Sequence Texts in Transmission (ca. 1200 – ca. 1500)”, in: Daniele V. Filippi and Agnese Pavanello (eds.), *Motet Cycles between Devotion and Liturgy*, Basel: Schwabe 2019 (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis Scripta 7), 157–187, at 182–186. For the Josquin setting, see *Josquin des Prez: Motets on Non-biblical Texts, De Beata Maria Virgine 2*, ed. Willem Elders, Utrecht: Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis 2007 (New Josquin Edition 24).

26 For references to the fourteen poems with this incipit, see *AH, Register Band I, Erster Halbband A–J*, ed. Max Lütolf, Bern and Munich: Francke Verlag 1978, 389–390. These poems with shared incipits are not all necessarily related, though in many of these

gical rhymed office of the Virgin Mary in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fonds latin 1343, whose compilation is attributed to Charles II of Anjou, King of Sicily.²⁷ But the poem was evidently widespread (the adapted versions come from all over western and central Europe), so it could have circulated with other tunes too. Its poetic form is Victorine stanzas (double versicles, each comprising two 8-syllable lines followed by a 7-syllable one, and rhyming aab/ccb), and as this was one of the most common constructions for late sequences, there were many tunes in circulation to which it could fit.²⁸

Glade us maiden, moder milde, on the other hand, is unique to this manuscript.²⁹ Beginning towards the foot of fol. 28v and continuing for the first ten lines of fol. 29r (Figure 1), the two poems are interleaved, stanza by stanza, although the English lines are laid out differently. Each versicle of the Latin poem occupies a single line of writing, whereas the English versicles are laid out more expansively, the two 8-syllable lines written one above the other, with the 7-syllable line written between them on the right-hand side, connected to the preceding lines with red wavy lines. Though at first glance, this layout makes the English stanzas appear longer than the Latin, the English version in fact matches its verse structure almost identically, varying from it only occasionally by substituting some rhymes with stress on the last, rather than the penultimate, syllable in later stanzas. For example, the third stanza opens in the Latin with “*Gaude quo post Christum scandis*”, where the equivalent English line is “*Glade us marie to joye ibrout*” (stressed syllable underlined in both cases), but this variation seems not to have been a matter of concern to the poet or scribe, since there is similar variability even within the English stanzas. In the second stanza, the first line of the first versicle is “*Glade us of iesu pi sone*”; the parallel line in the second versicle – which

cases, the resemblances go well beyond the first line and extend throughout the poems’ lengths.

²⁷ AH, vol. 24, 56–61.

²⁸ Victorine stanzas are named after the canon-poets of St Victor in Paris who created a virtual library of such pieces in the twelfth century; see Margot Fassler, *Gothic Song: Victorine Sequences and Augustinian Reform in Twelfth-Century Paris*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1993.

²⁹ Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung* (see n. 12), 332–333, 96–99. DIMEV (see n. 1) 1516.

would be sung to the same musical phrase – is “Glade us maiden *crist* up *stey*”. Evidence for how thirteenth-century musicians handled such variability is abundant in the notated sources of English song: wherever a repeated melody was written out twice for two text-lines of slightly varying length or stress, the melody is lightly adapted (through omission of repetition of notes) as required to fit the altered textual structure.³⁰

The opening couplet of the Latin song, “*Gaude virgo mater Christi que per aurem concepisti*”, is also found within the sequence *Celum Deus inclinavit*, whose earliest witness is the Dublin Troper (Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 710, fols. 106v-107r), a liturgical book from the second half of the fourteenth century that was used at the cathedral of St Patrick’s in Dublin and contains various liturgical materials as well as a collection of additional Latin songs not assigned to any particular liturgical occasion.³¹ *Celum Deus* is itself a contrafactum of the English *Salve virgo singularis*, which – like *Gaude virgo mater Christi* – seems to have been the inspiration for at least one more later text.³² Example 1 shows the first stanzas of the two compared: the double-underlay is editorial, as in both manuscripts both the a and b versicles are written out in full, hence the ossia staves show the written-out variants between the two versicles.

The network of musical links surrounding *Gaude virgo mater Christi* extends into polyphonic settings. These include a fragmentary fourteenth-century English three-part setting of *Celum Deus inclinavit* – only this third stanza, “*Gaude virgo mater Christi*”, is preserved, and it uses the mono-

³⁰ See Deeming, *Songs in British Sources* (see n. 14), xl–xli (and the commentary to individual English songs in the edition); Ardis Butterfield and Helen Deeming, “Editing Insular Song across the Disciplines: *Worldes blis*”, in: Vincent Gillespie and Anne Hudson (eds.), *Probable Truth: Editing Medieval Texts from Britain in the Twenty-First Century*, Turnhout: Brepols 2013, 151–166.

³¹ René-Jean Hesbert, *Le tropaire-prosaire de Dublin: Manuscrit add. 710 de l’université de Cambridge (vers 1360)*, Rouen: Imprimerie Rouennaise 1966; Helen Deeming and Samantha Blickhan, “Songs in Circulation, Texts in Transmission: English Sources and the Dublin Troper”, in: *Early Music* 45/1 (2017), 11–25.

³² Deeming, *Songs in British Sources* (see n. 14), no. 28: edition 48, commentary 180.

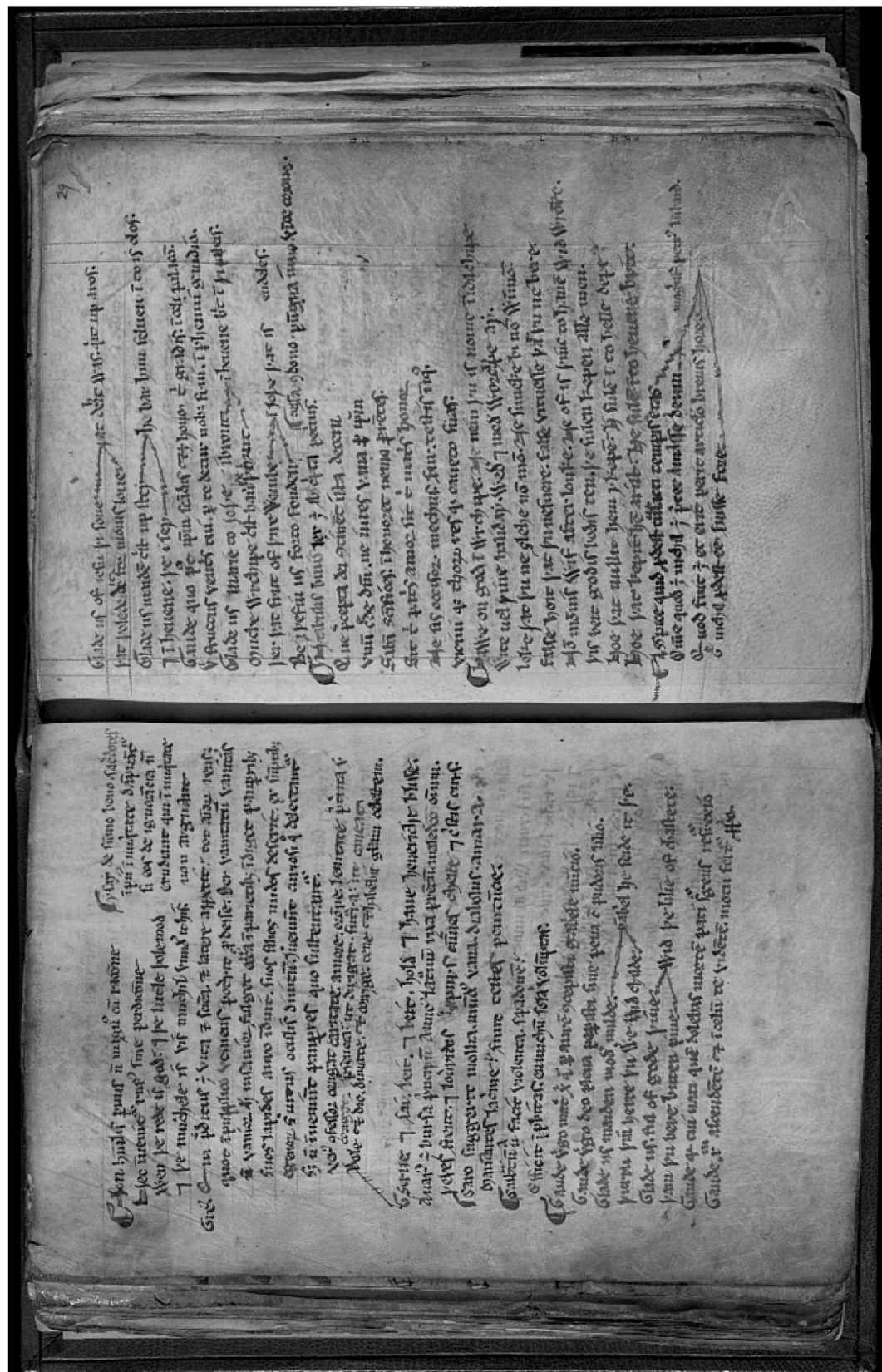


Fig. 1: Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 14. 39, fols. 28v–29r. Reproduced with the permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Salve virgo singularis - first stanza

GB-Lbl Cotton Titus A. xxi, f.91r

1a. Sal - ve vir - go sin - gu - la - ris, sal - ve pa - rens ex - pers pa - ris,
 1b. Et te com - pa - ra - vit ro - se, dum pro no - bis et non pro se

1b: cu - ius men - tem sin - gu - la - ris per - tran - si - vit gla - di - us:
 mor - ti ig - no - mi - ni - o - se damp - na - re - tur fi - li - us.

Celum Deus inclinavit - first stanza

GB-Cur Add. 710, ff.106v-107r

1a. Ce - lum De - us in - cli - na - vit, et des - cen - dit et in - tra - vit
 1b. Et quod ver - bo ma - ri - ta - vit car - nem, cu - i sub - iu - ga - vit

1b: vas c - lec - tum stir - pis Da - vid, quod an - te pro - mi - se - rat:
 ce - lum, ad quod re - por - ta - vit o - vem, quem per - i - e - rat.

EX. 1: The first stanzas of *Salve virgo singularis* and *Celum Deus inclinavit* compared.

phonic melody found in the Dublin Troper as its lowest voice.³³ Another text poetically related to *Celum Deus* and *Salve virgo singularis*, sharing the same stanza form and some textual resonances, is *Verbum bonum et suave*. This was extremely widely transmitted in dozens of manuscripts (liturgical and non-liturgical) from as early as the eleventh century right through to the end of the Middle Ages.³⁴ It too had several polyphonic settings, including one in the St Andrew's manuscript of Notre Dame polyphony (Wolfenbüttel, Her-

³³ Margaret Bent, *Five Sequences for the Virgin Mary*, London: Oxford University Press 1973, 6–8.

³⁴ *AH*, vol. 54, 343–345. See also Gozzi, “Sequence Texts in Transmission” (see n. 25), 157–176.

zog August Bibliothek, Guelf.628 Helmst.), and a related one in some very badly damaged early thirteenth-century English fragments now in Dorchester in Dorset.³⁵ As with the trouvère materials with which I began this article, we are dealing with an intricate web of interrelations between songs, but in this case it is striking that the links in the network revolve heavily around contrafact relationships and polyphonic settings of monophonic songs, crossing between England and Ireland.

Gaude virgo mater Christi relates the Five Joys of the Virgin: each Joy line begins with the word “Gaude” (matched in the English translation with “Glade us”) and thus it sits alongside other verses employing anaphora and similar techniques to relate the Five Joys: one such verse, also found in the Dublin Troper, is *Ave spes angelico* (GB-Cul Add. 710, fols. 118v–119r). This is – like *Celum Deus inclinavit* – a contrafactum of an English song, *Salve celi ianua*, but unlike its model, which has some sophisticated and unusual imagery, *Ave spes angelico* seems poetically conventional.³⁶ Its versicles each repeat one of the five salutation words “Ave”, “Eya”, “Gaude”, “Salve” and “Vale”, before a closing petition. Hence what the three Five Joys songs – *Gaude virgo*, *Glade us maiden*, and *Ave spes angelico* – have in common is a straightforward structure, relating each Joy in turn, a repetitive poetic pattern of anaphora, and employment of a melody that has repetition built in (the double versicle construction) and that was used with at least one other text. All these features seem to lend themselves particularly well to memorisation, and it is not difficult to imagine scenarios in which preachers or confessors taught these songs to those in their care to aid their recall of doctrine and

35 Deeming, *Songs in British Sources* (see n. 14), no. 26: edition 45, commentary 179; Ian D. Bent, “A New Polyphonic ‘Verbum bonum et suave’”, in: *Music & Letters* 51 (1970), 227–241.

36 One example of striking imagery in *Salve celi ianua* comes in versicle 2a: “Vitri non integritas sole violatur, nec tua virginitas partu defloratur” (“the integrity of glass is not compromised by the sun, neither is your virginity damaged by childbirth”). This image of the sunbeam through glass as an analogy for Mary’s intact virginity is one that also occurs in Middle English poetry a little later: Andrew Breeze, “The Blessed Virgin and the Sunbeam through Glass”, in: *Bells: Barcelona English Language and Literature Studies* 1 (1988), 53–64. *Salve celi ianua* is edited in Deeming, *Songs in British Sources* (see n. 14), no. 52: edition 72, commentary 191.

perhaps even to give structure to their personal devotions. In support of this suggestion, a legend retold in a fifteenth-century English manuscript mentions that no less a figure than Thomas Becket “was accustomed to meditate upon the Five Joys of the Virgin with the poem *Gaude virgo mater Christi*”.³⁷ The same arguments could extend to many of the lyrics in Trinity B. 14. 39, especially those pairs which consist of a Latin poem and a matching verse translation, whereby the two texts’ mutual poetic construction and presumed shared melody helped to anchor each more strongly in the memories of preachers and of those who listened to their instruction.

Substituting and Supplementing Songs

In the examples so far mentioned, we have seen contrafacta – or perhaps it would be better to talk of “song-relationships” – signalled in a variety of ways. Some scribes used double underlay to show unambiguously that two texts belonged to the same melody; others cued the relationship of a notated song to another by means of a rubric that refers to it, without giving its text or music in full. Elsewhere, scribes laid out both songs adjacently, either with their shared music copied twice, or – as in the Trinity B. 14. 39 bilingual song-pairs – with no notated music, and with the stanzas of the two texts interleaved to make their connection to one another unmissable. Other song-relationships might very easily be missed, because there is no written indication of them, the new text being copied with its melody and no reference to any other text. Some scribes – like the one responsible for Arundel 248 – wrote down contrafacted songs in all four of these different ways, and we can only guess why they deemed it important in some cases to expose the song-relationship more or less transparently, and in others saw fit to hide or ignore it.

A further mechanism for signalling a song-relationship is found in another late thirteenth-century compilation of religious texts and extracts, which contains verse texts throughout and a gathering of notated songs at the start. Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 240/126 has a number

³⁷ Christopher Page, “Marian Texts and Themes in an English Manuscript: A Miscellany in Two Parts”, in: *Plainsong & Medieval Music* 5 (1996), 23–44, at 33.

of texts linked to the Franciscan Order of friars, and indeed the very first item in the book is a sequence in honour of St Francis: *Absit nobis gloriari*.³⁸ The text is written without musical notation, and a rubric announces the subject matter of the song and its relationship to another: “Hec prosa de beato Francisco et concordat in nota cum prosa sequenti” (“Here is a sequence concerning St Francis, and it corresponds in its music with the following sequence”). The “prosa sequenti” is on the next folio: *Stella maris singularis* matches the poetic structure of *Absit nobis gloriari*, and hence its music is suitable for both texts.³⁹ In terms of poetic technique, *Stella maris singularis* and *Absit nobis gloriari* are quite different: as can be seen in its first stanza, *Stella maris singularis* is dense in verbal patterning, with rhymes both at line-ends and mid-line, as well as plentiful alliteration and puns on similar-sounding words.

1a. Stella maris singularis,
claustris claris castilaris,
fecundaris nec fedaris,
feta sine semine;

1b. Expers paris predicaris,
exsors maris marem paris,
gravidaris nec gravaris,
sancto fulta flamine.

These techniques are largely absent from *Absit nobis gloriari*, which would be understandable if the text were composed afterwards to fit the pre-existing

³⁸ Deeming, *Songs in British Sources* (see n. 14), no. 60a: edition 80, commentary 194.

³⁹ Ibid., no. 60b: edition 81, commentary 194. The poetic structure of these songs is not unique and is in fact the same as that of *Celum Deus inclinavit*, *Salve virgo singularis* and *Verbum bonum et suave*, all mentioned earlier. This is probably not evidence of a direct link between all these texts, since the form is reasonably widespread, but it is worth noting that there are resonances of vocabulary, especially between *Salve virgo singularis* and *Stella maris singularis* that suggest their poets were drawing on a common stock of imagery. The editors of *Analecta Hymnica* suggested the link between *Salve virgo singularis* and *Verbum bonum et suave* merely on the grounds of this shared poetic form (AH, vol. 39, 47), although they did not register the link with *Stella maris singularis* and *Absit nobis gloriari*.

melody. But this is certainly not proof of the Marian text's compositional priority: the poet of the St Francis song, in which the saint's deeds are compared to those of Biblical heroes, surely had fewer models on which to draw than did the writer of *Stella maris singularis*, who tapped into a vast wealth of Marian poetic phrases and images. Despite their differences, both texts are preserved in the Caius manuscript, the new one supplementing rather than replacing the (presumably) older one, and it is noteworthy that the scribe chose to open the gathering of song with an unnotated text, albeit one whose subject-matter was – we might imagine – close to his heart.

The connection between the Franciscan friars, preaching, and song has long been recognised, with the tradition of vernacular *laude* in Italy stretching back to the Order's founder himself.⁴⁰ Though providing devotional musical material for laypeople was one strong impulse behind the friars' songmaking, a striking example from fourteenth-century Ireland indicates that some Franciscans also perceived a need for new devotional songs for clerics. The Red Book of Ossory, compiled in the 1320s by the Bishop of Ossory, Richard de Ledrede (who was an English Franciscan), contains a gathering of sixty Latin devotional lyrics.⁴¹ According to the book's preface, the bishop's intention in composing the lyrics was as follows:

[I have] made these songs for the vicars of the cathedral church, in order that their throats and mouths, consecrated to God, may not be polluted by songs which are associated with revelry, lewd and worldly (*cantilene teatrales, turpes et seculares*), and since they are trained singers, let them provide themselves with suitable tunes according to what these sets of words require.⁴²

In common with most injunctions, Richard de Ledrede's prohibition of clerics singing worldly songs strongly suggests that this practice was indeed going on and that the songs he provided were intended to substitute for other forms of musical pastime. In providing substitute songs but no music for them, Richard de Ledrede's collection invited the singers either to invent or to re-use melodies to fit the words. Notes in the margins adjacent to the

⁴⁰ Peter V. Loewen, *Music in Early Franciscan Thought*, Leiden: Brill 2013.

⁴¹ Richard L. Greene, *The Lyrics of the Red Book of Ossory*, Oxford: Blackwell 1974.

⁴² *Ibid.*, iii–iv.

songs show that the singers resorted to contrafactum for at least some of these songs, and to judge from the vernacular and secular songs named, it may well be that they used the melodies of the very songs that these new Latin texts were designed to replace. One example, first remarked on by Richard L. Greene, is de Ledrede's lyric *Peperit virgo*, a song recounting the nativity story, whose marginal rubric names as its tune the Middle English lyric *Mayde yn the moore lay*.⁴³ The English lyric is found in full in another manuscript, and its poetic form corresponds – but not precisely – to the Latin contrafact. It was the philologist and literary scholar Eric J. Dobson who observed, when preparing his 1979 edition of *Medieval English Songs* with the musicologist Frank Harrison, that *Mayde yn the moore lay* shared a similar poetic structure with the love-song *Bryd one brere*, preserved with music on the back of a papal bull in King's College, Cambridge.⁴⁴ Accordingly, Dobson and Harrison fitted both *Mayde yn the moore lay* and *Peperit virgo* to the music of *Bryd on brere*, an act of modern contrafaction that necessitated a heavily interventionist approach to both text and music editing.⁴⁵ Yet while the editorial stance adopted by Dobson and Harrison is now ripe for re-assessment, their instinct to match up lyrics surviving without musical notation with suitable melodies, wherever possible, seems fully in keeping with the practices of medieval musicians explored in this article. Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century scribes and singers have bequeathed us ample evidence of the flexibility of their songs, which could adopt and adapt pre-existing music while also being transformed in versification, tone, subject-matter and context as they moved from place to place – even across the English Channel and the Irish Sea.

⁴³ Richard L. Greene, “‘The Maid of the Moor’ in the Red Book of Ossory”, in: *Speculum* 27 (1952), 504–506.

⁴⁴ Cambridge, King's College Archives, KCAR/6/2/137/01/1 SJP/50. Dobson and Harrison, *Medieval English Songs* (see n. 23), 190–191.

⁴⁵ Ibid., no. 16b (i) and (ii); text 188–189, music 269–270.

Conclusion

The networks of song described here are complex and varied. We have seen how a French dance song, *Bele Aeliz*, was drawn upon by a thirteenth-century English preacher, apparently because its appealing and memorable verse (perhaps aided by music which is lost to us, but may have been familiar to him and his audiences) struck him as a useful resource for instructing his listeners in the qualities of the Mother of God. Another song from the same group of related songs on “la bele Aeliz” was excerpted and cited as a *refrain* in both narrative and lyrical French works, including a polyphonic rondeau and a *chanson avec des refrains*, where its story becomes intertwined with that of other migrating *refrains* and their networks. Another Alice song, as yet unidentified, but perhaps related in some way to the Irish “lai d’Aelis” mentioned in the *Lai de l’Espine*, provided the melody for the “double contrafactum” *Flos pudicitie / Flur de virginité*, once again substituting the Virgin Mary in place of Alice, and once again found alongside sermons and other preaching materials in a thirteenth-century English manuscript. *Gaude virgo mater Christi* appears first in the same preacher’s manuscript that contains the “Bele Aeliz” sermon, without notated music but with an interleaved English translation which is surely a contrafactum; the Latin poem is found slightly later in a liturgical context and then very widely transmitted and adapted into many new Latin texts, some of which had liturgical uses and/or musical settings. Its opening line is found in a different song, *Celum Deus*, itself a contrafactum of *Salve virgo singularis*. And the links in this network go further still, to other Latin songs in both English and Irish manuscripts, some with liturgical designations and others without, and some with thirteenth- or fourteenth-century polyphonic settings. We find *Gaude virgo* being mentioned, in the fifteenth century, as a resource for private devotion, and it is not hard to imagine a similar practical function in acts of devotion for other songs in this network, especially those whose poetic and musical construction draws upon techniques of repetition that lent themselves to memorisation and meditative recall. In the Franciscan examples mentioned here, there is evidence both of a desire to expurge inappropriate songs by substituting them with new devotional ones (in the Red Book of Ossory), and also, conversely, an urge to supplement – rather than replace – an exist-

ing song with a new text (*Absit nobis gloriari*) set to its music, enhancing the song by expanding the textual materials with which it was associated.

Some of my examples test the limits of the term “contrafactum”, either because a musical relationship cannot be securely proven, or because the borrowing consists only of a fragment of a song, rather than an entire piece. But in broadening the scope of the enquiry to include these less narrowly-defined song-relationships, I hope to have shown that in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century England and Ireland, multi-lingual networks of song permeated the discourse and practice of preaching and of both communal and private devotion, and sometimes all that was needed to ignite the spark of memory of a song was a snippet of its text. Just as in the contemporary tradition of *refrain* citation, authors and audiences colluded in a game of recognition, in which the re-use of pre-existing material was sometimes very open and at other times more hidden, but when the citation was recognised, it could bring with it textual associations that enriched the reading of the new text.

Lastly, the role of memory is clearly crucial to these networks of song-relationships in three ways. As the author of a thirteenth-century treatise on measured music wrote:

metrice compilata memoriali cellulae levius quam prosaice commendantur, et impressa leviter ad memoriam citius reducuntur, etiam metra favorabilius quam prosa mentes excitant auditorum.

Things composed in verse are received more easily in the store-house of memory than things composed in prose, and since they are impressed easily on the memory they are more quickly recalled. Also verses arouse the minds of the listeners more favorably than prose.⁴⁶

These mnemonic (and arousing) effects of poetry were further enhanced by musical settings, and hence songs could be effectively used to aid memorisation of teachings and to assist in their recall as part of liturgical or private

⁴⁶ Jeremy Yudkin (ed.), *De musica mensurata, The Anonymous of St. Emmeram: Complete Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 1990, 74–75.

devotion.⁴⁷ The memory of melodies (and their pre-existing texts) enabled the creation of contrafacta: the poet who set out to make *Glade us maiden, moder milde*, the English translation of *Gaude virgo mater Christi*, surely had the melody of that Latin song resounding in his mind as he wrote. And in performance, the memory of one song-text could – and can – still pervade another, even as its contrafactum is sung; and for both the singer and the listener, such associative recall would increase the more often the songs were repeated.

⁴⁷ Marco Gozzi considers the use of hymns and sequences for the memorisation of teachings in church schools, noting that “their peculiarly rhythmic and tuneful musical settings contributed to this and set them apart from the stock liturgical repertory”; “Sequence Texts in Transmission” (see n. 25), 186.