I THE MUSIC AND DANCES OF BRUSSELS, KBR, MS. 9085

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INTRODUCTION

The enigmatic dance treatise, choreographies, and music contained in the *basse danse* manuscript of Margaret of Austria (Brussels, KBR, Ms. 9085, henceforth "Br9085") and the closely related incunabulum *Sensuit lart et instruction de bien dancer*, printed at Paris by Michel Toulouze sometime between about 1492 and 1496 (henceforth "Toulouze"—see Chapter 5 of this volume) have drawn the attention of scholars and performers of historical dance and music for over a century. Both sources preserve dance music in the form of monophonic tenor melodies, most of which appear as chains of isometric, blackened breves, while a few introduce void mensural notation. Both sources open with a treatise that provides cursory information about the execution of the dance, and their shared choreographies notate in tablature a highly codified series of steps.

Following the many studies devoted to the genre of the *basse danse*, the publication of a new facsimile edition of Br9085 offers the opportunity to consolidate decades of existing scholarship on this manuscript, to address conceptions and misconceptions about the relationship between the dance steps and their melodies, to trace the origins and traditions of each dance tenor, to explore historical performance practices that may inform modern recreations and research, and to provide a modern edition of the treatise and dances. The following chapter on the dance steps and music transmitted in the manuscript takes a multifaceted approach to foster a deeper understanding of the choreographies, the music, and

their performance practices. A new modern edition of the treatise and dances also invites modern performers to recreate these dances following historical practices and conventions.

This chapter brings together scholarship about music and about dance, disciplines often viewed as distinct. Re-examining the relationship between the rhythms of the dances and their music allows us to address conceptions and misconceptions about the relationship between the dance steps and their melodies. Importantly, we will distinguish here between the Franco-Burgundian *basse danse* and the Italian *bassadanza*, trace the rhythmic development of the *basse danse*, and establish a special place for Br9085 in the evolution of the genre. By tracing the origins and traditions of individual dance melodies, we shall see their relationship to contemporary song, including the melodic conventions and vocabulary shared by both repertories. By outlining the historical performance forces associated with the *basse danse*, we consider the occasions for which a particular instrument or group of instruments animated the dance. Furthermore, we examine the relationship between counterpoint and instrumental functions, pitch relationships between instruments, and the ways in which their players employed the melodic vocabulary and contrapuntal conventions described by contemporary practical music theory to realize the notation in performance. Considered together, this evidence tells a rich story of the development of the *basse danse* in the fifteenth century while painting a vivid picture of its performance.

FOUNDATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND PREVIOUS EDITIONS

Over the past century, scholars have revealed much about the provenance of the music transmitted in Br9085 and its relationship to surviving polyphonic settings, the interpretation of the choreographies and music in performance, the performing forces, and the relationship of the music to the dance steps. Ernest Closson's initial study (1912) of the manuscript attempted to trace the origins of some of the melodic dance tenors, to determine performance practices of these monophonic tunes, and to establish the "proper" rhythm of the mensural tenors.[1] Blume, Hertzmann, Ferand, and Kinkeldey searched further for possible models

1 Closson, *Le manuscrit dit des basses danses*. Riemann, "Die rhythmische Struktur der Basses dances", attempted to rhythmicize the tenors of Br9085, grouping them into various musical measures of three or four.

and derivatives of the tenors, finding new relationships in monophonic and polyphonic repertoire.[2] Sachs reassessed the rhythm of the isometric tenors.[3] These scholars also established that the monophonic tenors would have been adorned by improvised cantus and contratenor parts, an assessment that remains widely accepted. Landmark studies by Gombosi, Meyer-Baer, Bukofzer, Heartz, Crane, Meylan, and Southern between 1941 and 1963 marked a second generation of research of the Burgundian *basse danse*.[4] Their work established further melodic relationships between the tenors in Br9085, and identified polyphonic compositions derived from the tenors. They improved our rhythmic understanding of the tenors, defined the relationship between the dance steps and the music, and traced the development of the genre of Burgundian *basse danse* from the middle of the fifteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth. Subsequent studies by Polk, Duffin, Young, and Gilbert have explored techniques for realizing simultaneous ensemble improvisation related to dance tenors.[5] Brainard and Wilson have established the execution of the dance steps, both in their physical mechanics and in their temporal relationship to the music.[6]

The seven modern editions of Br9085—the latest of which appeared in 2015—offer a range of musical scores, facsimile prints, or some combination of both, as well as text transcriptions and/or translations.[7] The only true facsimile edition, published at Graz in 1987, provides no modern edition of the music. Closson provided a comparative edition comprising modern engravings followed by a non-photographic facsimile, though these contained omissions and errors. These different editions

2 Blume, *Studien zur Vorgeschichte der Orchestersuite*; Hertzmann, Studien zur *Basse danse*"; Ferand, *Die Improvisation in der Musik*; Kinkeldey, "Dance Tunes".

3 Sachs, "Der Rhythmus der Basse danse".

4 Gombosi, "About Dance and Dance Music", and idem, "The Cantus Firmus Dances"; Meyer-Baer, "Some Remarks"; Bukofzer, "A Polyphonic Basse Dance"; Heartz, "The Basse Dance"; Heartz, "*Hoftanz* and *Basse dance*"; Heartz, "A Fifteenth-Century Ballo"; Crane, "The Derivation of Some Fifteenth-Century Basse-Danse Tunes"; Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*; Meylan, "Recherche de parentés"; Meylan, *L'énigme de la musique des basses danses*; Southern, "Some Keyboard Basse Dances"; Southern, "Basse-Danse Music".

5 Polk, "Flemish Wind Bands"; Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, esp. 163–213; Polk, "From Oral to Written"; Polk, "Instrumentalists and Performance Practices"; Duffin, "*Simplex et Diminutus*"; Duffin, "Ensemble Improvisation"; Young, "The King of Spain"; Gilbert, "The Improvising *Alta capella*"; Gilbert, "Reverse Engineering Fifteenth-Century Counterpoint".

6 Brainard, *The Art of Courtly Dancing*; Wilson, "Theory and Practice"; Wilson, "The Development of French Basse Danse"; Wilson, "The *Basse danse* c. 1445–c. 1545"; Wilson, *The Basse Dance Handbook*.

7 Closson, *Le manuscrit dit des basses danses*; Jackman, *Fifteenth-Century Basse Dances*; Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*; *Les Basses Danses de Marguerite d'Autriche. Kommentarband*; Wilson, *The Basse Dance Handbook*, 74–112; Mullally (ed. and trans.), *The Brussels* Basse danse *Book*.

interpret the note values of the isometric tenors variously as void breves, blackened breves, and semibreves. None gives a time signature, and all give the music in modern treble or bass clefs. They give the mensural dances with different note-value reduction (between 2:1 and 4:1) and time signatures (3/4, 6/8, and 4/4), all with unique rhythmic interpretations, and varying levels of critical commentary.

Because it is difficult to use the manuscript in performance, we offer a new modern edition here which integrates the strengths of the existing editions, and which is intended to be used alongside the facsimile. ▶ p. 260 ▶ Appendix 4 presents a synoptic edition of the dance treatise at the start of Br9085 and Toulouze to promote a richer understanding of these complementary texts. This synoptic edition is accompanied by translations into English and Dutch. The original sequence of the leaves in Br9085 was disturbed in a rebinding undertaken over a century ago and had already been rearranged by 1829, as documented by Reiffenberg, prior to the rebinding (see Table 1 below); we give the folio numbers of the manuscript in their current order, but the treatise text has been rearranged to accord with that of Toulouze, which likely reflects the original organization of the leaves.[8] ▶ p. 270 ▶ Appendix 5 provides a modern edition of the music, titles, and choreographies. We give necessary corrections and alternative readings in square brackets, with explanatory footnotes. The tenors appear with original clefs, the original (implied) mensuration sign [⊙], and original note values, with blackened breves for the isometric tenors. In place of modern measures, tick marks indicate two perfections, occurring between each note of the isometric tenors, and enclosing six semibreves of the mensural tenors. The choreographies are underlaid with vertical lines between the choreographic *mesures* (see below). The resulting edition is intended to complement the use of the facsimile and to facilitate modern recreation of the dances.

8 See Reiffenberg, *Notices et extraits des manuscrits*, 1–8; Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 7–9; and Wilson, *The Basse Dance Handbook*, 77–79. If Toulouze provides a presumed original order, with the exception of any unica in the two sources, we immediately see the extent to which the leaves of Br9085 had been rearranged by 1829 and yet again by the twentieth century. The current order agrees with what Closson saw in 1912.

TABLE 1. A comparative ordering of the tenors of Br9085 at present, in 1829, and Toulouze. (For a comparison of the order of the opening treatise, see the transcriptions and translations in Appendix 4.)

BR9085: PRESENT	BR9085: REIFFENBERG, 1829	TOULOUZE
Fol. 7r	Fol. 7r	
1. Beaulte	1. La non pareille	1. Le petit Rouen
2. Ma mie	2. Vaten mon amoureux desir	2. Filles a marier
Fol. 7v	Fol. 7v	
3. Engoulesme	3. Joieusement	3. Ma maistresse
4. La belle	4. Passe rose	4. Le hault et bas
Fol. 8r	Fol. 8r	
5. La margarite	5. Le petit rouen	5. Le moys de may
6. Luises	6. Filles a marier	6. Triste playsir
Fol. 8v	Fol. 8v	
7. La franchoise	7. Maistresse	7. La poytevine
	8. Le hault et le bas	
Fol. 9r	Fol. 9r	
8. Le Rosin	9. La franchoise	8. Langueur en nul soit destresse [Languir en mille destresse]
9. La basse danse du roy despaingne		9. Le ioyeulx espoyr
Fol. 9v	Fol. 9v	
10. Avignon	10. La margarite	10. Castille la novele
11. Je languis	11. Luises	11. Vorin
Fol. 10r	Fol. 10r	
12. La tantaine	12. Ma mieulx ammee	12. Le grand roysin
13. Barbesieux	13. La danse de Ravestain	13. Avignon
Fol. 10v	Fol. 10v	
14. La Rochelle	14. Lyron	14. Je languis
15. Orleans	15. Le petit roysin	15. Le petit roysin
Fol. 11r	Fol. 11r	
16. Le petit rouen	16. Avignon	16. Ma myeux aymeye [Ma mieulx ammee]
17. Filles a marier	17. Je languis	17. Le grant thorin
Fol. 11v	Fol. 11v	
18. Maistresse	18. Le Rosin	18. Ma doulce amour
19. Le hault et le bas	19. La basse danse du roy despaingne	19. La beaulte de castille

BR9085: PRESENT	BR9085: REIFFENBERG, 1829	TOULOUZE
Fol. 12r	Fol. 12r	
20. Mamour	20. Le grant thorin	20. Roti bolli ioieulx
21. Alenchon	21. La doulce amour	21. Lesperance de bourbon
Fol. 12v	Fol. 12v	
22. La portingaloise	22. Venise	22. Aliot novelle
23. Sans faire de vous de-partie	23. La haulte bourgongne	23. La basse dance du roy
Fol. 13r	Fol. 13r	
24. Une fois auant que morir	24. Roti boully ioyeulx	24. Lespoyr [Le doulz espoir]
25. Beaulte de castille		25. Beaulte
Fol. 13v	Fol. 13v	
26. Le doulz espoir	25. Lesperance de bourbon	26. Ma mie
Fol. 14r	Fol. 14r	
27. Lyron	26. Aliot nouvella	27. La verdelete
28. Le petit roysin	27. La basse danse du roy	28. Le joyeulx de brucelles
Fol. 14v	Fol. 14v	
29. Ma mieulx ammee	28. Marchon la dureau	29. Engolesme
30. La danse de Ravestain/.	29. Je sui povere de leesse	30. La belle
Fol. 15r	Fol. 15r	
31. Triste Plaisir	30. Une fois auant que morir	31. Bayonne
32. Le grant rouen	31. Beaulte de castille	32. La navaroyse
Fol. 15v	Fol. 15v	
33. Mon leal desir	32. Le doulz espoir	33. Barcelone
34. Le mois de may		34. Florentine
Fol. 16r	Fol. 16r	
35. Bayonne	33. Mon leal desir	35. La tantayne
36. La navaroise	34. Le mois de may	36. Barbesieux
Fol. 16v	Fol. 16v	
37. Barcelonne	35. Triste plaisir	37. La rochele
38. Flourentine	36. Le grant rouen	38. Orlyans
Fol. 17r	Fol. 17r	
39. La potevine	37. Beaulte	39. Mamour
40. Languir en mille destres-se	38. Ma mie	40. Alenchon
Fol. 17v	Fol. 17v	
41. La verdelete	39. Engoulesme	41. La portingaloyse
42. Le ioieux de brucelles	40. La belle	42. Vaten mon amoureux desir

BR9085: PRESENT	BR9085: REIFFENBERG, 1829	TOULOUZE
Fol. 18r	Fol. 18r	
43. Aliot nouvella	41. Bayonne	43. Joyeusement
44. La basse danse du roy	42. La navaroise	44. Passe rose
Fol. 18v	Fol. 18v	
45. Marchon la dureau	43. Barcelonne	45. La basine
46. Je sui povere de leesse	44. Flourentine	46. Ma soverayne
Fol. 19r	Fol. 19r	
47. La non pareille	45. La tantaine	47. La marguerite
48. Vaten mon amoureux desire	46. Barbesieux	48. Vyses [Luises]
Fol. 19v	Fol. 19v	
49. Joieusement	47. La Rochelle	
50. Passe rose	48. Orleans	
Fol. 20r	Fol. 20r	
51. Le grant thorin	49. Mamour	
52. La doulce amour	50. Alenchon	
Fol. 20v	Fol. 20v	
53. Venise	51. La portingaloise	
54. La haulte bourgongne	52. Sans faire de vous departie	
Fol. 21r	Fol. 21r	
55. Roti boully ioyeulx	53. La potevine	
	54. Languir en mille destresse	
Fol. 21v	Fol. 21v	
56. Lesperance de bourbon	55. La verdelete	
	56. Le ioieux de brucelles	
Fols. 22r, 23r-v	Fol. 22r	
57. La danse de cleves	57. La franchoise nouvelle	
Fol. 22v	fols. 22v, 23r-v	
58. La franchoise nouvelle	58. La danse de cleves	

I.1 THE DANCES OF BR9085

THE DANCES AND THEIR STEPS

At European courts during the fifteenth century, dance held a particular importance, both as a pastime and as a gauge for measuring grace and social status. Of the dances admissible at court, none was as highly esteemed as the *basse danse* in France and Burgundy and the *bassadanza* in Italy, and the *baixa dansa* on the Iberian Peninsula. Having attained renown among the elite by the mid-fifteenth century, this dance type later became popular among the lower classes (sixteenth century), when both its music and choreography became more standardized, until it was superseded by the pavane. The *basse danse* and *bassadanza* comprised stately, elegant, gliding steps, from which the genre receives its name as the "low" dance. It contrasted with "high" dances, such as the *pas de Brabant* in Burgundy and France—called *passo brabante* or *saltarello* in Italy, and *alta danza* in Spain—as well as the *quadernaria* (*saltarello Tedescho*) and *piva* in Italy, all of which included more flamboyant steps and leaps. Italian dance masters referred to each of the four principal Italian dances as a *misura*—defined as "a measure, a rule, a proportion, a meane, a temper" in John Florio's 1611 Italian-English dictionary[9]—which "governs everything quick or slow according to the music", as the dance master Domenico da Piacenza explained in his treatise *De la arte di ballare et danzare* (c. 1445).[10] The idea of *misura* encompassed both musical metre and pulse within each dance, and helped define a relationship among them in time. Their metres and tempi related to one another in specific proportions, such that a tune could be adapted to the measure and steps of a *bassadanza*, *quadernaria*, *saltarello* or *piva* simply by modifying its rhythms and note values and changing the pulse, from the *bassadanza* as the slowest to the *piva* as the quickest (▶ Ex. I.1).[11]

▶ p. 182

Besides deriving four different dances from one melody, fifteenth-century dance masters strung together various combinations of

9 Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words*, 317.

10 Paris, BnF, fonds ital. 972 [henceforth "Pd"], fol. 1v; transcribed and translated, along with related sources, in Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 13.

11 Italian dance masters took pains to establish a proportional relationship among the *misure*, in imitation of the ratios between musical notes that formed the perfect consonances, and peppered the descriptions of dance with musical terms, even if their understanding of certain musical concepts was loose at best. Unlike music, their art did not rank among the seven liberal arts, thus their "musical" prose strove to legitimize and elevate dance in the eyes of the learned. See Nevile, *The Eloquent Body*, 104–18.

the four *misure* to form *balli* or *balletti*. These pastiches typically convey some sort of narrative, involving anywhere from two dancers to an entire assembly, who modulated their movements according to the shifting *misure*. Despite the transmutability of the music and movement from one *misura* to another, the dance masters placed them in a hierarchy in which the three "high" dances were governed by the *bassadanza*, the "queen of the *misure*".[12]

The fact that Br9085 and Toulouze—the two surviving Francophone dance manuals from the fifteenth century—exclusively preserve music and choreographies for the *basse danse* testifies to the importance of this genre in Franco-Burgundian circles. They cumulatively preserve sixty-three different *basse danse* tenor melodies and choreographies. These pivotal sources mark a unique chapter in the development of the genre, when the *basse danse* diverged from its Italian counterpart, the *bassadanza*, both musically—in the length of the tenor notes—and choreographically—in the execution of the dance steps and the way in which the steps are grouped together. Moreover, Br9085 contains three dances (N°s. 30, 57, and 58) that take the genre in yet another direction, bridging the fifteenth-century form of the dance with that of the sixteenth century. The brief treatise that opens both manuals, nearly identical in both sources, is the ideal point of departure to tell the story of the *basse danse* during these two centuries.

According to the treatise, the *basse danse* takes its name (fol. 4^{v}) from its musical metre—the mensuration of perfect *tempus* with major prolation (more on this below)—and from the overall peaceful character of the dance, in which dancers are to display the highest degree of grace.[13] For each note of the *basse danse* tenors—a blackened breve—the dancer executes one step-unit, which comprises either two *simples*, one *double*, one *branle*, or one *desmarche* or *reverence* (fols. 1^{v} and 4^{v}).[14]

The *pas simples*, or "single steps", appear as "*ss*" in the dance tablature and always occur as a pair. The first step involves lifting the body slightly and taking a forward step with the left foot (L). For the second, one lifts the body and steps forward with the right foot (R), passing the

12 Pd, fol. 4^{v}.
13 For the full text and translations, see Appendix 4.
14 The term "step-unit" designates the step or steps that fill one entire *tempus* (time), or musical "bar", of a dance.

▶ p. 183 left. Each step occurs on one beat (▶ Ex. I.2). However, when *pas simples* follow *pas doubles* ("double steps"), the dancer moves the right foot before the left, to prepare what follows (see Table 2). The *pas doubles* appear as "*d*" in the tablature and occur alone, in groups of three, or in groups of five. For each *d*, the dancer elevates their body and takes three light steps forward. Extrapolating from the description of the *passo doppio* given by the Italian dance master Antonio Cornazano, we suggest that the three steps were deployed in a pattern of long-short-long during the time of two perfections or beats in the music.[15] Both "long" steps fall on the beginning of a beat. The intervening "short" step "touches down in the middle of the one [perfection] and the next", acting as a pick-up to the second "long" step. The deployment of each of the three steps ▶ p. 183 within the *double* appears in ▶ Ex. I.3. Whether a choreography contains one, three, or five *pas doubles*, the odd ones comprise a step with the left foot (long), followed by a step with the right foot (short) and one again with the left (long). The even *doubles* comprise a step with the right foot (long), followed by the left (short) and again with the right (long).

The movement known as *branle*, notated as "*b*" in the dance tablature, always occurs singly. It begins with the left foot and ends with the right, the dancer swaying first to the left side then back to the right. Each pair of movements—swaying to one side then to the other—occurs on a per- ▶ p. 183 fection (▶ Ex. I.4).

The *desmarche* (or *reprise*), notated as "*r*" in the dance tablature, occurs alone or in a set of three. The dancer executes a solitary *r* by moving the right foot backwards, while rising, on one perfection, then moving the left foot backwards to join the right on the next perfection. The de- ▶ p. 260 scription for this step (▶ Appendix 4) leaves a lot open to interpretation, since the dancers are instructed to move the right foot backwards twice in a row, and since "reculer" could mean to move backwards while facing the same direction or to turn around and move in the opposite direction (e.g., this word is used to describe the movement of a retreating army). Véronique Daniels (personal communication, October 2022) interprets the step indications to mean that, after drawing the right foot backwards on the first perfection, the dancers again pull the right foot back, now to

15 Antonio Cornazano, *Libro dell'arte del danzare* [c. 1455–60], Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Cappon. 203 [henceforth "V"], fol. 4ᵛ, digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Cappon.203; trans. in Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 86–87.

meet the left (which has not moved), by executing a half-turn, resulting in an about-face.

If a second *r* follows, to form a group of three, it begins with the left foot moving backwards while the dancer rises and turns slightly towards their partner on the first perfection. During the next perfection, the dancer moves the right foot backwards to join the left. The third *r* is executed like the first, which culminates in the dancers completing a full turn and facing the original direction of the dance, if we adopt Daniels's interpretation. The steps are deployed over the music (▶ Ex. I.5). A *reverence* ("*R*") is made as the opening step of a *basse danse*, in place of a *desmarche*; the dancer moves the left foot backwards and bows slightly towards their partner.[16]

▶ p. 183

However, simply knowing the steps of the *basse danse* is not enough. As the instructional text transmitted by Br9085 and Toulouze explains, "to truly dance a *basse danse* two things are required: first, that one know the number of steps [or notes] for each dance; second, that one know how to execute the correct number of them [i.e., steps] according to the *mesure*" (fol. 2^{r}).[17] The steps were organized into codified groupings, serving as choreographic periods or phrases, called *mesures* (not to be confused with the Italian *misure*). Nine prescribed *mesures* were possible, although additional variants are found in surviving choreographies (summarized in Table 2). The *mesures* are classified into three principal types—*grande*, *moyenne*, and *petite*—according to the number of *pas double*(*s*) they contain (five, three, or one, respectively). These types were subsequently classified as (*très*) *parfaite*, *plus que parfaite*, or *imparfaite*, according to the occurrence or omission of a pair of *pas simples* following the *pas double*(*s*), and the number of *desmarches* (one or three), before the final *branle* step.[18] The opening of any *basse danse majeure* (see below) featured a *reverence* plus a *branle* step as a "prefix" to the first *mesure*.

16 The term "*honneur*" in *Beaulte de castille* (N° 25) indicates a *reverence* in the main body of this choreography.

17 The dance treatise that opens Jacques Moderne's *basse danse* book of c. 1529–38 (*Sensuyvuent plusieurs Basses dances*) updates those found in Br9085 and Toulouze for a sixteenth-century audience, and gives "notes" in places of "steps": "Item qui veult dancer basses dances deux choses y sont requises. Premierement quon sache le nombre des nottes de la basse dance. Secondement quon sache dancer par bonne mesure dont la maniere sensuyt"; *Sensuyvuent plusieurs Basses dances*, fol. A3^{v}.

18 Br9085 lists four sub-classifications of *mesure*, giving *très parfaite* and *parfaite* as two different possibilities, but only defines *très parfaite*. Toulouze only recognizes three sub-classifications of *mesure*: *parfaite*, *plus que parfaite*, and *imparfaite*. However, Toulouze defines *parfaite* with the same description used for *très parfaite* in Br9085. See Appendix 4.

TABLE 2. The nine choreographic *mesures*[19]

	"PREFIX"*	GRANDE MESURE	MOYENNE MESURE	PETITE MESURE
(très) parfaite	R b	ss ddddd ss rrr b	ss ddd ss rrr b	ss d ss rrr b
plus que parfaite	R b	ss ddddd ss r b	ss ddd ss r b	ss d ss r b
imparfaite	R b	ss ddddd rrr b	ss ddd rrr b	ss d rrr b

The choreography of any given *basse danse* regularly includes a symmetrical alternation of two types of *mesure*.[20] This is exemplified in *La margarite* (№ 5), perhaps included as a reference to the possible intended recipient and eventual owner of Br9085 (▶ p. 201 ▶ Fig. I.1).

The *basse danse* exists in two forms: *basse danse majeure* and *basse danse mineure* (fol. 4[r]). In the purer *basse danse majeure*, the choreography retains its serene affect throughout, from the initial *reverence* to the final *branle* step. By contrast, the *basse danse mineure* is preceded by a high dance, the *pas de Brabant* (or *saltarello*), followed by a shorter *basse danse* section which lacks the opening *reverence*.[21] Of the fifty-eight dances in Br9085, only *Roti boully ioyeulx* (№ 55) and *L'esperance de bourbon* (№ 56) are *basses danses mineures*.[22] Although no description of a *pas de Brabant* survives in French sources, Italian dance treatises explain that the basic step of the *saltarello* is a *passo doppio* (or *pas double*), integrating a hop or slight leap.[23] Accordingly, modern recreations of the *pas de Brabant* employ the Italian *saltarello* step.[24]

19 Miscellaneous variants found in the choreographies: "ss ddd r b": *moyenne imparfaite* in *Sensuyvuent plusieurs Basses dances*, fol. B1[v]. "ss d r b": *petite [im]parfaite* in *Sensuyvuent plusieurs Basses dances*, fol. B1[v], and is the final *mesure* of the sixteenth-century *basse danse commune* according to Antonius de Arena and Thoinot Arbeau; see Arena, "Rules of Dancing", 46, and Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, fol. 26[r]. NB: "rdr" is interchangeable with "rrr", thus "ss d rdr b" is a direct variant of *petite imparfaite*; see Nevile, "Dance and Identity", 234. "ss d r": found as another recurring prefix to the *mesures* in the body of a choreography. The choreographies of *Beaulte de castille* (N° 25), *La danse de Ravestain* (N° 30), and *L'esperance de bourbon* (N° 56) show further exceptions to the rule of the *mesures*. See Appendix 5.

20 Noted in Heartz, "The Basse Dance", 293.

21 By contrast, Cornazano asserts that the "*passo brabante* related to the *bassadanza* since the *saltarello* is always performed after it", not before. Perhaps his description suggests a divergent tradition between the two regions, or describes the manner in which the *basse danse majeure*, like the *bassadanza*, would have been paired with the *pas de Brabant* following it; [V], fol. 9[r]; trans. in Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 91.

22 The initial *pas de Brabant* sections of both dances behave metrically like the *piva*, where one *tempus* is divided into two groups of three.

23 Domenico explains, "the movement of the *saltarello* is a *doppio* with a *salteto*"; trans. in Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 25. Following this description, Brainard asserts, "In *saltarello* passages the middle step of each double can be taken lightly and turned into a very small leap, resulting in step-leap-step"; in Brainard, *The Art of Courtly Dancing*, vol. 2, 25.

24 Wilson, *The Basse Dance Handbook*, 278.

From the music and choreographies found in Br9085, three types of dance emerge:

(1) Most of the dances set their choreographies, arranged into *mesures*, to isometric, long-note (*Pfundnoten*) tenors (N°s. 1–24, 26–29, and 31–54), which proceed entirely by blackened breves. The manual assigns one step-unit (*ss, d, r,* or *b*) to each note of these *basse danse majeure* tenors.

(2) Three dances combine void mensural notation and filled isometric notation:

(A) The two *basses danses mineures* (N°s. 55 and 56, discussed above) give an initial *pas de Brabant* section, with choreographic movements described in prose set to rhythmic mensural notation, followed by its *basse danse* section, with quasi-*mesures* set to an isometric tenor in blackened breves.

(B) *Beaulte de castille* (№ 25) sets freely arranged *basse danse* steps to a combination of blackened breves and void mensural notation without any formal barrier. Its choreography relates more closely to the Italian *ballo* than to a *basse danse*: it does not follow the system of *mesures*, it specifies three dancers, and its tenor diverges significantly in rhythmic and melodic behaviour from the others.

(3) Three final dances (N°s. 30, 57, and 58) set choreographies that coalesce into some form of the *mesures* set to tenors written entirely in void mensural notation.

Unfortunately, the notation given in Br9085 and Toulouze is not entirely unambiguous. Although the manuscript states that each step-unit occupies "one entire note [i.e., a blackened breve] of *basse danse*" (fol. 4^{v}), it does not clarify how the steps align with the mensural dance sections. It does not show how to interpret the blackened breves, nor does it explain the relationship between the filled isometric notation and void mensural notation. An Italian source from the mid-fifteenth century, Cornazano's *Libro dell'arte del danzare* [V], offers some clarification. However, these two traditions are not equivalent, and must be distinguished carefully. While Br9085 and Toulouze give their *basse danse* tenors in isometric, blackened breves, V provides *bassadanza* tenors in isometric, void semibreves. In an attempt to determine how these divergent traditions relate to each other, the following section establishes a series of relationships

among the disparate notations of the *basse danse* and *bassadanza*, tracing their musical and choreographic development over the fifteenth century.

THE STEPS AND THE MUSIC: *BASSE DANSE* AND *BASSADANZA*

The most striking aesthetic feature of Br9085 is the filled-in silver breves that leap off the black parchment to define the contour of each melody. The unadorned beauty of these tenors is rooted in the isometric nature of the movement from one note to another: simple, steady, unyielding. They contrast with three examples (N°s. 25, 55, and 56) that combine void and filled notation, as discussed above, and three others (N°s. 30, 57, and 58) that present music entirely in void mensural notation. Comparing the different notational styles is crucial to understanding how to interpret the breves in each case, since the filling-in of the breves is more than merely decorative: the coloration (corresponding to blackening) directly affects their duration. Without understanding this, the dancers could not synchronize their movements with the musicians' measured sound—the two forces of time and rhythm bind and drive the music and the dance—since, remarkably, in the *basse danse*, cadential formulae that mark the ends of the musical phrases do not align with the choreographic *mesures*. "In most other dance types", explains David Wilson:

> sections of music and measures of dance closely correspond, but not in the *basse dance*. Instead, the music and the steps each have their own structure, which move in parallel but seldom exactly coincide except at the beginning and the end of the dance.[25]

Performers are then faced with the challenge of a disjunct relationship between music and choreography within the *basse danse*. Adding to the confusion, modern scholarship and performance practice tends to conflate the Franco-Burgundian *basse danse* and the Italian *bassadanza*. While historians and performers both acknowledge that the choreographies in each region were different, no such delineation exists for the

25 Wilson, "The *Basse danse* c. 1445–c. 1545", 169. Victor Gavenda has likened the misalignment of musical and choreographic phrase endings in the *basse danse* to the phased relationship between the *color* (pitch pattern) and *talea* (rhythmic pattern) of the isorhythmic motet, "a genre which was increasingly cultivated, like the basse danse, as a conscious archaism"; see Gavenda, "The Brussels *basses danses* manuscript", 65.

music. As a result, the terms *basse danse* and *bassadanza* have been conflated and confused. To further complicate the issue, modern interpretations and editions of *bassedanze* and *basses danses* present conflicting modes of transmission of the tenor and its note lengths.

In his 1955 study of "Cantus Firmus Dances", Otto Gombosi first asserted that in true "*bassadanza-bassedanse*" tenors, "the unit of step and of musical barring is the [imperfect] Long", since one *tempus* of both dances occupies two perfections.[26] He further equated the void semibreves of Cornazano's *bassadanza* tenors with the filled breves found in Br9085 and Toulouze, claiming that both were to be realized in polyphonic performance as an imperfect long, that is, as two perfections. While some modern editions honour Gombosi's notion that the main unit of the dances and duration of each tenor note is the imperfect long, others do not, making inconsistent distinctions between the two dances, conflating them (as Gombosi did), or applying the names interchangeably. We disagree with this equivalence: although surviving musical and choreographic traces indicate that the performance practices of the *basse danse* and *bassadanza* shared similar origins, especially in the treatment of the tenor, there is good evidence that they had diverged significantly by the end of the fifteenth century. It is time to disentangle these two dances and to acknowledge their individual evolutions. The following account of both the historical dance and modern scholarly traditions situates Br9085 as a bridge between the early period of the *basse danse* in the fifteenth century and its late period in the first third of the sixteenth century.

THE MID-FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The earliest extant examples of choreography, music, and instruction for the Franco-Burgundian *basse danse* and Italian *bassadanza* date roughly from the 1440s and 1450s. During this twenty-year period, the music and choreographies of the two dances suggest that they treated the relationship between musical measure and dance steps in the same way. The oldest *basse danse* choreographies are a chance survival on the flyleaf of Guillaume Cousinot's *Geste des Nobles Francoys*, most likely annotated

26 Gombosi, "The Cantus Firmus Dances", xxxvi; Gombosi, xxxviii, first coined the compound description "*bassadanza-bassedanse*".

by the original owner of the manuscript, Jean d'Orléans, brother of Charles, Duke of Orléans, upon his return to Nancy in 1445 from imprisonment in England (▶ p. 202 ▶ Fig. I.2).[27] The steps that comprise these succinct choreographies, recorded in a tablature notation very similar to the later manuals, are *sangle* (i.e., *simple*), *double*, *congie* (i.e., *branle*), and *reprise*, as well as leaps (*saulz*), lifts (*levees*), and directional and spatial indications: *avant, recule, a coste droit* ("forward", "backward", "to the right side"), and so on.[28] The steps of these Nancy choreographies prefigure the later *mesures* of Br9085 and Toulouze, though in the variety of movements they admit (including the occasional leap), they more closely resemble the contemporary *bassadanza* choreographies detailed by Domenico and Cornazano in their respective dance treatises than the later *basses danses*.[29]

Domenico and Cornazano describe *bassadanza* movements analogous to the steps of the *basse danse*: two *sempii* ("simple"), one *doppio* ("double"), two *continentie* (= one *congie* or *branle*), one *ripresa*, and one *riverentia* each form a step-unit corresponding to one *tempo*—that is, to one breve—of *bassadanza*.[30] The similar length of these contemporary *bassadanza* and *basse danse* choreographies, supplemented by the descriptions of dance steps in later *basse danse* manuals (as described above), reveal that the same relationship of steps to music existed in the mid-fifteenth century: two *sangles* (that is, *simples*), one *double*, one *congie* (that is, one *branle*), and one *reprise* (that is, one *desmarche*) were each danced during one *tempus* of *basse danse*, that is, in the time of one breve.

Although no music survives for any of these early French *basse danse* or Italian *bassadanza* choreographies, all those to be danced by

27 Guillaume Cousinot and Jean d'Orléans, *Geste des nobles francoys* (1445), Paris, BnF, fonds fr. 5699 [henceforth "Nancy"], flyleaf. For its history, see Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 21–23.

28 Heartz determined that the Nancy dances were not true *basses danses*, since they contain leaps, unlike their more sober counterparts from later in the century; see Heartz, "The Basse Dance", 292. This position was later rejected by Crane, Dixon, and Wilson, who defended the presence of leaps as minor variants in sequences that otherwise seem to form proto-*mesures*. See Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 22–23; Dixon, "Reflections on Basse Dance Source Material", 22–25; Wilson, "A Further Look at the Nancy Basse Dances"; and Wilson, *The Basse Dance Handbook*, 12–13.

29 Crane and Wilson note the affinities between the Nancy choreographies and those in Pd and V; see Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 22; Wilson, *The Basse Dance Handbook*, 12–13.

30 Pd, fol. 2v: "… a *doppio*, *ripresa*, and *riverentia* require a *tempo*. A *sempio*, *continentia*, *mezavolta*, *movimento*, or *salto* requires a half *tempo*. A *voltatonda* requires two *tempi*. These requirements are based on true bassadanza movement *misurado* major imperfect"; in Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 14–15. For a similar description by Cornazano, see Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 90.

a couple are comparatively short, with none exceeding thirty-one step-units.[31] As a result, they roughly correspond to the length of the three *bassadanza* tenors notated by Cornazano, including the famous *Il re di Spagna* ("La Spagna"), and contemporary polyphonic settings of dance tenors like the anonymous *Du pist mein hort*, a three-part setting of *Je sui povere de leesse* (№ 46) transmitted in Trent Codex 87 (henceforth "Tr87").[32] The tenors in Cornazano and Tr87 share a regular flow of semibreves in imperfect *tempus* with major prolation (𝅝), with occasional embellishments or coloration in cadential passages. A duple proportion (augmentation of the tenor) is also integral to the *basse danse* and *bassadanza*, as in *Du pist mein hort*, where a semibreve of the tenor equates a breve of cantus and contratenor in perfect *tempus* in diminution ("*per diminutionem*", equivalent to 𝅜).[33] This follows a practice common from the mid-fifteenth century: theorists such as Anonymous 11, Anonymous 12, and Ramos de Pareja show that augmentation was implicit when the sign 𝅝 was used in polyphony, especially when it appeared in one voice (usually the tenor) while the other voices proceeded under a different mensuration sign, creating a proportion.[34] Cornazano explains that "the imperial *bassadanza misura*" has the unique feature that "each note doubles, three is worth six, and six twelve".[35] The same treatment of the tenor exists in the earliest surviving polyphonic setting of *La Spagna*, M[agister] Guglielmus' *Falla con misuras*: the *Spagna* tenor advances in equal semibreves under 𝅝, which equate breves of the freely composed, florid cantus in 𝅜.[36]

In these examples of *basse danse* and *bassadanza* from the middle of the fifteenth century, one step-unit fills one *tempus* of tenor (that

31 Domenico's *bassadanza* "*Damnes*" for three dancers seems longer, but it is not always clear if certain steps are to be performed simultaneously be different people. This issue is encountered in many of the Italian choreographies for small groups greater than two. However, David Wilson determined a step-unit count of 37 for this dance, having painstakingly analyzed both Domenico's and Cornazano's choreographies bearing this same title; see Wilson, "*Damnes*", 3–8.

32 Trent, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Ms. 1374 [87] [henceforth "Tr87"], fol. 109^{r}. For a modern edition, see Appendix 6.

33 The two other so-called "*basse danse*" pieces in Tr87, *Auxce bon youre delebonestren* (fols. 117^{v}–118^{r}) and Tyling's *Tandernaken* (fols. 198^{v}–199^{r}), also equate semibreves in 𝅝 in the tenor with breves of the cantus and contratenor "*per diminutionem*". This augmentation of the tenor is further substantiated by the contrafact of *Du pist mein hort*, the motet *Qui latuit in virgine*, which opens MuEm (fol. 1^{r}) with all three voices in 𝅜 and with the tenor given in breves.

34 On the implied augmentation caused by 𝅝 and 𝅝, see DeFord, *Tactus, Mensuration, and Rhythm*, 121–25.

35 V, fol. 34^{v}; translation adapted from Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 106.

36 Perugia, Biblioteca Comunale Augusta, Ms. 431 [henceforth "Per431"], fols. 95^{v}–96^{r}. It appears with the title "La bassa castiglya" in Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, Ms. Q16 [henceforth "Q16"], fols. 59^{v}–60^{r}. For a modern edition, see Appendix 6. The appearance of breves signifies two repeated pitches in the original tune.

is, a breve) while the tenor proceeds at the rate of the semibreve; thus, dancers deploy one step-unit over two notes of tenor melody. Italian choreographies continued to reflect *bassedanze* of the same character and length into the sixteenth century, as attested by the choreographic descriptions of Giovanni Ambrosio (né Guglielmo Ebreo), another of Domenico's students.[37] Polyphonic renditions of *bassedanze* from after 1500, such as the two anonymous four-voice settings of *La Spagna* in Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, Ms. Q18 [henceforth "Q18"] (fols. 48^{v}–50^{r}), still present the same rhythmic treatment of the tenor, in which each note of tenor lasts for half of a *tempus* and is equal to three semibreves of the accompanying voices.

THE *BASSADANZA* AND THE *BASSE DANSE* DIVERGE

Franco-Burgundian sources from the late-fifteenth century, such as Br9085 and its companion Toulouze, bear witness to a new development in the *basse danse*, independent from the *bassadanza*. These two manuals explain that the tenors are to be played "according to the major perfect" (i.e., perfect *tempus* with major prolation, or ⊙), and that one step-unit occupies one note of *basse danse*.[38] In ⊙, normal (void) breves are perfect, each worth three perfect semibreves.[39] But Gombosi noted that the blackening or coloration of the breves (*color temporis*), more than merely ornamental, systematically rendered the breves imperfect, making each worth two (perfect) semibreves.[40] As a result of this perpetual coloration, these *basse danse* tenors effectively behave as a series of breves in ☉.[41] Thus, they last twice as long as the *bassadanza* tenors or *basse danse* tenors from earlier in the century: what had been

37 Giovanni Ambrosio da Pesaro, *Domini Johannis Ambrosii pisaurensis de pratica seu arte tripudii* (c. 1465–75), Paris, BnF, fonds ital. 476 [henceforth "Pa"]; Siena, Biblioteca Comunale, L.V.29 (c. 1474); Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Cod. Magliabecchiano XIX, 88 (c. 1477); Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Ital.82.a.J.94 (c. 1477); New York Public Library, Dance Collection MGZMBZ-Res. 72–254 (c. 1480); Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Cod. Antinori 13 (1510); see Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 109–205.

38 "*on la ioue selon maier parfait*", Br9085, fol. 4^{v}.

39 The rhythmic feel under this sign is akin to modern 9/8-time, that is, three groups of three per measure.

40 Gombosi, "The Cantus Firmus Dances", xxxvi–xxxviii.

41 This logic and metrical solution follows the notational system employed in the keyboard intabulations of Faenza, Biblioteca Comunale, Ms. 117 [henceforth "Faenza"] (fols. 2^{r}–5^{r}, 36^{r}–58^{r}, 68^{r}–83^{v}, 88^{r}–97^{v}). Here, blackened breves are equal to six minims, whether arranged into two groups of three or three groups of two; the music often plays upon this ambiguous interchange. Void breves indicate hemiola (3:2) in combination with void semibreves, or they equate four minims.

semibreves became breves.[42] Since the relationship of steps to music in these later *basses danses* is one step-unit per note, as opposed to one step-unit for every two notes of the *bassadanza* (and earlier *basse danse*), the choreographies of Br9085 and Toulouze, codified into the strict system of *mesures*, are on average twice the length of those from earlier in the century.[43]

To illustrate the difference between the Italian *bassadanza* (and the earlier French *basse danse*) and later French *basse danse*, we can artificially map the first *mesure* of Toulouze's *Castille la novele*, with his version of the music, onto Cornazano's version of the same tenor, *Il re di Spagna* (▶ Ex. I.6a and I.6b).[44] In the *bassadanza*, the same number of step-units is distributed over twice as many tenor notes as in the *basse danse*. When we apply dance steps to these tunes, the difference between the two dances becomes evident: in the *basse danse*, one step-unit corresponds to one note of the tenor, but in the *bassadanza*, one step-unit occupies two notes of tenor. For this reason, the choreographies given in the Italian dance manuals are shorter. This difference carried over to polyphonic settings of *basses danses*.

▶ p. 184

The tenors transmitted in Br9085 and Toulouze also underwent augmentation in polyphonic settings, implicit with their mensuration sign ⊙, and consistent with the statements of contemporary theorists.[45] The setting of *La Spagna* in Petrucci's *Canti C*, and those by Johannes Ghiselin and attributed to Josquin des Prez, corroborate the augmentation of the tenor's notes, where each imperfect breve of Toulouze's *Castille la novele* appears as an imperfect long in ⌽.[46] Thus, what had been breves in ⌽ in the polyphonic *bassadanza* and early *basse danse* became imperfect longs in the later *basse danse* (▶ Ex. I.6c and I.6d).

▶ p. 184

But even without looking beyond the *basse danse* tenors, Br9085 already contains the key to decoding the practical length of each isometric

42 The metric result most closely resembles our modern 6/8-time, that is, two groups of three (two perfections) per measure, rather than only one, as in 3/4-time. Some modern transcriptions of *basses danses* (and *bassedanze*) incorrectly employ 3/4-time, in a 8:1 reduction from the original notation.

43 Ambrosio attests to this difference in choreographic style (Pa, fol. 43^{v}), specifying a "*bassadanza francese*" where the steps coalesce to form two *mesures*.

44 Although absent from Br9085, this tune allows comparison, since it appears in both Italian and French sources.

45 See n. 34.

46 Anonymous, "La Spagna", in *Canti C* (Venice: Ottaviano Petrucci, 1504) [henceforth "*Canti C*"], fols. 147^{v}–149^{r}; Johannes Ghiselin, "La Spagna", in *Motetti A* (Venice: Ottaviano Petrucci, 1502) [henceforth "*Motetti A*"], fols. 31^{v}–34^{r}; the setting attributed to Josquin first appeared as a contrafact motet *Propter peccata quae peccastis*, in Hans Ott (ed.), *Novum et insigne opus musicum* (Nuremberg: Formschneider for Ott, 1537) [henceforth "Ott"], N° 14. For a full list of the settings of *La Spagna*, see Gombosi, "The Cantus Firmus Dances", xxxvi–lxiii.

breve. By comparing the step distribution of the isometric tenors (one step-unit per breve) to the three mensural *basses danses* found uniquely in Br9085, Heartz showed that each isometric breve equated to six semibreves.[47] Using *La franchoise nouvelle* (№ 58) as a model, he demonstrated that one step-unit occupied the time of six semibreves, or two perfections, the same number of perfections that comprise the imperfect breves (▶ Ex. I.7a for a comparison of the step distribution in the isometric and mensural tenors). Likewise, each breve of the *basse danse* section of *Roti boully ioyeulx* (№ 56) appears subdivided as six semibreves in its Italian version, *Rostiboli gioioso* or *El gioioso* (▶ Ex. I.7b).[48]

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▶ p. 185

In summary: the fundamental musical change in the *basse danse* in the second half of the fifteenth century was the doubling of the length of each note of the tenor, affording musicians a framework for richer contrapuntal possibilities. In the *bassadanza* and earlier *basse danse*, each note of the tenor appears as a semibreve in 𝅜, equating a breve in 𝅝 in the surviving polyphonic settings. According to the measure of the late fifteenth-century *basse danse*, one step-unit of the codified Franco-Burgundian system of *mesures* corresponds to one note and *tempus* of the tenor, that is, a long in 𝅝. The choreographies reflect this distinction: those for the later *basse danse* are generally twice as long as those for the *bassadanza* and mid-century *basse danse*. We can summarize these rhythmic and choreographic differences as follows:

early *basse danse* (Nancy) and *bassadanza*:
1 tenor note = 1 perfection = ½ *tempus* (𝅜𝅗𝅥 or 𝅝𝅜); 2 tenor notes = 1 step-unit

later *basse danse* (Br9085):
1 tenor note = 2 perfections = 1 *tempus* (𝅜𝅜 or 𝅝𝅗𝅥); 1 tenor note = 1 step-unit

In a third cultural parallel, the *Hoftanz* (the "court dance") was the Germanic equivalent to the *basse danse* and *bassadanza*. Scant surviving settings, including the only extant polyphonic setting of *Le petit rouen*

47 Heartz, "The Basse Dance", 320–21.
48 Heartz, "A Fifteenth-Century Ballo", 363–64.

(№ 16)—the anonymous "Hoftanz" in Munich, BSB, Ms. Mus. 1516, № 183—and settings of *La Spagna* by Johannes Kotter (*Spaniol Kochersperg*) and Hans Weck (*Spanyöler Tancz*), show that the *Hoftanz* demonstrated a tenor rhythm unique from that of the other two. It largely proceeded by two unequal tenor notes in the long-short arrangement 𝅜 + 𝅝 (4+2) in the time of two perfections, but at times could deviate into equal groupings of two perfect breves (3+3), as in the *bassadanza*.[49]

It remains unclear when the *basse danse* diverged from the *bassadanza*. Although the skeleton of what would become the choreographic *mesures* is visible in the earliest surviving *basse danse* choreographies (Nancy), their brevity, freer combinations in quantity and quality of steps, including leaps, resemble the contemporary Italian choreographies. Given that no music for the extant choreographies has survived, it is difficult to gauge the differences between the two traditions at this earlier stage. But surviving settings of dance tunes contemporary with the choreographies, such as those in Tr87, show that the tenors all received the same treatment, proceeding by semibreves in ☉, each equal to a breve of the cantus and contratenor "*per diminutionem*" (= 𝅗𝅥). The short choreographies and tenor motion combine to suggest that the *basse danse* and *bassadanza* indeed began as a single tradition.

Sometime between 1445 and the last decade of the fifteenth century, the *basse danse* had taken on a unique form in music and in movement, a middle stage in its development, in which the note values of the tenor and the choreographies both doubled in length. This musical form, however, seems relatively short-lived, for soon after we find the first traces of the longer isometric tenors transmitted in Toulouze and Br9085, we see a further development in the treatment of the tenor with the mensural *basses danses* (Br9085, Nºs. 30, 57, and 58). These melodic tenors migrated to the cantus voice in the *basses danses communes* of the sixteenth century, in which one basic choreography sufficed for every *basse danse* tune, all the same length and composed in four voices using common contrapuntal formulae.[50] The *basse danse commune* features a final rhythmic change, first explained in Antonius de Arena's *Ad suos compagnones* (Lyon, 1529) and preserved in Thoinot Arbeau's *Orchesographie*

49 For more on the *Hoftanz*, see Gombosi, "Der Hoftanz", and Heartz, "*Hoftanz* and *Basse dance*", 20–35.
50 For an excellent explanation of this development, see Heartz, "The Basse Dance", 287–340.

(Langres, 1588). In an amusing collection of "rules of dancing", written in neoclassical Latin verse, peppered with words in French, Italian, and Provençal, Arena prefaces his fifty-eight *basse danse* choreographies with a standard formula for *basses danses communes* "that, according to the music, must be danced in twenty longs". According to Arena, "each long is composed of four semibreves" and receives one step-unit.[51] The standard dance is then complemented by a *moitié* (or *residu* or *retour*) of twelve more longs.[52] According to Arbeau, these groups of four semibreves, or "quaternions", correspond to a musical phrase and one cycle of the accompanying drum beat, over which one step-unit is deployed.[53] While the main value of musical and choreographic measure remained the imperfect long, it was no longer subdivided into two perfect breves (six imperfect semibreves as two perfections, or 3 + 3), as in the mensural *basses danses* of Br9085, but rather two *imperfect* breves, each worth two *perfect* semibreves (▶ Ex. I.8a).[54] Sixteenth-century music printers and musicians largely seem to have misunderstood (or ignored) these rhythmic groupings, for the vast majority of *basses danses* printed in collections by Pierre Attaingnant and Tielman Susato are set in ¢ (▶ Ex. I.8b). For purposes of counting, ¢ mensuration would adequately get the musicians and dancers to the end of the musical phrase together in time, but any sense of groupings into perfections was lost. To show

▶ p. 186
▶ p. 186

51 Arena, "Rules of Dancing", 46. Wilson, *The Basse Dance Handbook*, 149–78, also gives a commentary and translation of Arena's text on dance.

52 According to Arena and Arbeau, there was "a usual pause" following the main part of the dance and before this supplemental section, during which the two dancers returned to the place they began while "the pipe-and-tabor player, a skilful master in his art, sounds once more the beginning of the dance just performed. Then he plays the *moitié* which you will perform well as my muse dictates" (quoted from Arena, "Rules of Dancing", 44; Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, fol. 26^{r}). According to the music for Arbeau's *basse danse*, *Jouyssance* (fols. 33^{v}–37^{r}), the *moitié* (which he calls "*retour de la basse-dance*" corresponds to the twelve final longs (or "quaternions") of the *basse danse* proper. Presumably the musician (or musicians) would repeat the first eight quaternions as an introduction to the *moitié*.

53 Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, fol. 28^{v}; on Arbeau's discussion of the *basse danse*, see Wilson, *The Basse Dance Handbook*, 225–51.

54 The two modes of subdividing the long equate at the level of the minim. One unit of the mensural *basses danses* of Br9085 consists of two groups of six minims, while that of the sixteenth-century *basses danses* consists of four groups of three minims. Although both ways of counting amount to twelve minims, the methods could not be more different. Furthermore, the four semibreves of the sixteenth-century dance fall as four equal beats (𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥), to which the steps of the *double*, for example, would evenly fall: "You must mark, while moving, four beats with your feet: one leg marks three beats, and the other one" (Arena, "Rules of Dancing", 16). This is quite a departure from the uneven lilt within one *tempus* of fifteenth-century *basse danse* and *bassadanza*. Although Cornazano explains that "each *tempo* of *bassadanza* is divisible into four parts" (Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 91), his remarks about the deployment of the steps in time of the *doppio* as "long-short-long" (see above) are telling of the "unequal" beat of the *bassadanza*. Domenico clarifies that "the beats of the tenor for the *quadernaria* go more equally in distance than those of the *bassadanza*" (Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 19). When synthesized and related to the fifteenth-century *basse danse*, we understand these remarks as implying that one *tempus* (as an imperfect long) of either dance is subdivided as 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥, the natural result of subdividing two perfections.

how the music of a typical *basse danse commune* behaved, regardless of printed mensuration sign, ▶ Example I.8c gives the same four quaternions of the "Basse danse" from ▶ Example I.8b grouped in perfect semibreves.[55]

▶ p. 187
▶ p. 186

Waning in popularity by the mid-sixteenth century, the *basse danse commune* scarcely resembled the mensural *basses danses* from the turn of the century, and they had nothing to do with the isometric tenors that dominated the dance halls and courts of the fifteenth century. The sweeping arc of the evolution of the *basse danse* from Nancy to Arbeau puts the importance of Br9085 into perspective: this manuscript documents the middle stage of the *basse danse,* as well as the transition into its final stage in the sixteenth century, making it an invaluable piece in the puzzle of the *basse danse* tradition.

55 The incongruence of musical rhythmic groupings of three against a duple mensuration is also prevalent in carnival songs and *frottole*, such as Marchetto Caro's *Io non compro piu speranza*. For a brief discussion of the occasional use of mensuration signs unsuited for the compositions they accompany, see DeFord, *Tactus, Mensuration, and Rhythm*, 464–67.

I.2 THE MUSIC OF BR9085

THE MUSIC OF THE DANCES

Description and categories of dances

Of the fifty-eight dances preserved in Br9085, the majority are notated as isometric, "sustained-note" tenors with blackened breves.[56] Crane distinguished between three types of isometric tenor according to their titles: 1) titles related to geography or noble families; 2) descriptive titles; and 3) titles derived from the incipits of French verse. Dances with titles linked to family or place names have led to conjectures about contemporary cultural and political relationships to the Burgundian court.[57] To date, polyphonic models have only been identified for those tenors with French verse incipits as their titles, raising questions about the origins of the remaining tenors and their possible links to pre-existing songs. Six dances are notated in void mensural notation, three of which also employ blackened breves. These include *pas de Brabant* dances, one of which was popular in Italy and Spain (№ 55), and the mensural *basse danse* tenors (N°s. 30, 57, and 58) unique to Br9085, which reflect later developments in the repertory.

Tenors with known polyphonic models or settings

Five of the eleven isometric tenors with known models, or previous polyphonic settings, can be traced directly to French *forme fixe* chansons. Recognizable as the tenor voices of *rondeaux* by Binchois are *Triste plaisir* (№ 31), from *Tristre* [*sic*] *plaisir et douleureuse joye*, and *Maistresse* (№ 18), the latter of which is derived from the tenor of *L'amy de ma dame est venis*.[58] The anonymous *rondeau, Une fois avant que morir* (№ 24), enjoyed a rich polyphonic tradition, with nine settings in keyboard tablature preserved in the Buxheimer Orgelbuch (henceforth "Bux") with corrupt titles (e.g., *En avois*, *Anna vasanna*) and with the German title

56 Closson separated the *pas de brabant* and subsequent *basse danse* (*mineure*) of *L'esperance de bourbon* (N° 56) into two distinct dances, resulting in a count of fifty-nine dances. Closson, *Le manuscrit dit des basses danses*, 43, 45.

57 See Chapter 2 in this volume, 93–94.

58 Binchois, "Tristre plaisir et douleureuse joye", in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Canon. misc. 213 [henceforth "Ox213"], fol. 56^{v}; Binchois, "L'amy de ma dame est venis," in Tr87, fol. 88^{r}.

Vil liber zit uff diser erde.[59] Most recently, David Fallows identified the anonymous fragmentary chanson *Se doulx espoir* as the model for the tenor *Le doulz espoir* (№ 26).[60] Of all these tenors, *Sans faire de vous departie* (№ 23) corresponds most closely to its model, Pierre Fontaine's eponymous *rondeau*.[61]

Four tenors can be linked to settings apparently a generation removed from their lost polyphonic model. The melody at the heart of *Je languis* (№ 11) and *Languir en mille destresse* (№ 40) appears as *Stüblin* in Bux (N°s. 135–136) and the Lochamer Liederbuch (henceforth "Loch") (p. 45).[62] The latter source sets the Latin text *Virginalis flos vernalis*, and its modified stroke notation preserves rhythms that hint at an earlier mensural version.[63] *La doulce amour* (№ 52) has also been linked to intabulations in Bux, particularly to the first half of *Modocomo Bystu die rechte* and *Modocomor* (N°s. 79 and 80), a corruption of the title as it appears in Toulouze, "Ma doulce amour" (№ 18). Crane suggests that the versions of these tenors in Bux adopt all three voices of the original chanson, while Fallows argues that they "seem to be Tenor settings, not intabulations of polyphony".[64] While there may be traces of older polyphony in the Bux settings, it is hard to distinguish between those and the conventional vocabulary of fifteenth-century organ counterpoint. Finally, the tenor of *Je sui povere de leesse* (№ 46) survives from the 1420s as "Je suy si povre de liesce" in modified stroke notation with phrase endings punctuated by coloration.[65] It also serves as the tenor

59 Munich, BSB, Mus. Ms. 3725 [henceforth "Bux"], "Vil lieber zit uff diser erde": N°s. 37, 51–52, 93, and 217; "Annavasanna": N°s. 89–92. The "Lochamer Liederbuch", Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. Mus. 40613 [henceforth "Loch"] preserves the tenor as "Tenor Anavois", p. 70. The earliest surviving three-voice version of this song is preserved in London, British Library, Cotton Ms. Titus A XXVI [henceforth "LoTit"], fols. 4^{v}–5^{r}. See Fallows, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs*, 393.

60 Fallows, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs*, 356–57.

61 Ox213, fols. 86^{v}–87^{r}.

62 Although both tenors are identical in melody, N° 40 is 10 notes longer with a final on *c*. The first two phrases of this shared tune appear on fol. 109^{r} of Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Ms. Lat. 3014 with the incipit "*Je languis*". Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 78–79; Fallows, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs*, 484–85; Carboni and Ziino, "Un elenco di composizioni musicali", 430.

63 This notation most closely resembles that used by Zorzi Trombetta, a Venetian galley trumpeter active in the middle of the fifteenth century. His notebook, LoTit, preserves the rhythms of Dunstable's *Puisque m'amour* (fols. 6^{r-v}, 7^{v}–8^{r}) subdivided into discrete semibreves to facilitate the addition of new contratenor voices. For editions and discussion of this work, see Welker, "Alta capella", 159–61; Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 158.

64 Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 84; Fallows, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs*, 267.

65 Noël and Jean de Fleurus, *Registres aux transports*, Namur, Archives de l'État, Haute cour de Namur 8, fol. 200^{v} [henceforth "Namur"]; a photograph appears in Schreurs, *An Anthology of Music Fragments*, 124. See Montellier, "Quatorze chansons du XVe siècle", 153–59, 170–71, 180–81. We will use the spelling "*Je sui povere de leesse*" to refer to the Br9085 tenor and "*Je suy si povre de liesce*" to refer to the Namur tenor and polyphonic settings.

of the florid polyphonic composition, *Du pist mein hort*, in Tr87, which appears with the Latin text *Qui latuit in Virgine* and a dubious attribution to Guillaume Du Fay in Munich, BSB, Clm 14274 (the St. Emmeram Codex, henceforth "MuEm").[66] Its appearance as *Io soy pobre de liesse* among a list of songs sung in the Spanish poem *En Avila por la A* further hints at its widespread popularity.[67]

In Br9085, *Je sui povere de leesse* is notated with a final on *c* (in mode or tone 5), although its earlier sources have a final on *d* (tone 1).[68] The melodic shape and overall simplicity of the isometric breves of the *basse danse* version most closely resemble the modified stroke notation in Namur, Archives de l'État, Haute cour de Namur 8, fol. 200^{v} (henceforth "Namur"). The same tenor in Tr87 and MuEm, slightly more embellished, is complemented by upper voices that present an added layer of florid counterpoint. Although not preserved with the same title as in Namur and Br9085, the tenor in Tr87 probably resembles the original polyphonic song tenor most closely. Notated in semibreves, it preserves the kind of cadential coloration found in Namur, adding the formal specificity one would expect in a song tenor from the early fifteenth-century chanson repertory. These characteristics identify it as the source probably closest to the original.

Along with two other settings of tenors in Tr87, *Du pist mein hort* stands apart from contemporary songs for the extremely florid nature of its upper voices.[69] With their shared motivic vocabulary and contrapuntal procedures, these three pieces hold a special place in the tradition of added polyphonic voices over existing song tenors associated with dance. They are notable for instances when the cantus and contratenor voices are each consonant with the tenor but dissonant with each other (*contradiscordantia*), probably the result of two voices simultaneously extemporizing counterpoint.[70] Such dissonance treatment, even if too

66 Munich, BSB, Clm 14274 [henceforth "MuEm"], fol. 1^{r}. On the attribution to Du Fay, see Fallows, *Dufay*, 130; and Welker, "Dufay Songs", 8–11.

67 Fallows, "A Glimpse of the Lost Years", 24.

68 These earlier versions (Namur and Tr87) also inform Crane's correction of the tenor notes 29–38 to read a third lower. Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 79–80. For our use of the term "tone" in place of "mode", see the section entitled "Tone" below.

69 *Auxce bon youre delabonestren* and Tyling's *Tandernaken* are so close in style that they have been routinely considered as a special group. See Duffin, "The *trompette de menestrels*", 399–400; Duffin, "Ensemble Improvisation", 207; Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 152–53; Gilbert, "Reverse Engineering Fifteenth-Century Counterpoint", 186–87.

70 Duffin, "Ensemble Improvisation", 197–98.

casual later in the century, would not have been out of place in compositions from the generation of composers such as Johannes Cesaris and Pierre Fontaine, a feature that they share with the songs on which they were originally based.[71] Yet the florid counterpoint in *Du pist mein hort* and its companions in Tr87 suggests that these voices were added to preexisting tenors that are the sole vestiges of original songs.

Barring the discovery of an original version of the chanson *Je suy si povre de liesce*, one can only speculate about its original polyphony. For a little help in that venture, one may turn to Cesaris' rondeau *Mon seul vouloir* (compared in ▶ Ex. I.9a and I.9b), a close contemporary.[72] ▶ p. 188 Its opening phrase shares enough with the tenor of *Je suy si povre de liesce* to offer a model for imagining how that song might have sounded (Ex. I.9c). The similarities between *Je suy si povre de liesce* and *Mon seul vouloir* do not end here. In the second half of both songs, short cadential phrases of four notes in the tenor precede the final phrase (▶ Ex. I.10). ▶ p. 189 *Je suy si povre de liesce* thus shares striking affinities with the compositional procedures of Cesaris, perhaps more than any other contemporary. Comparison to Cesaris' *Mon seul vouloir* leads to three immediate observations. First, the polyphonic voices of the setting of *Je suy si povre de liesce* in Tr87 do not represent an ornamented version of the original chanson; rather, they reflect a new layer of independent counterpoint. The original chanson probably sounded much more like works by Cesaris and Fontaine than any of the passages in the florid version copied in Tr87 and MuEm. Second, the first phrase of *Je suy si povre de liesce* might have been originally untexted, as in *Mon seul vouloir*, Fontaine's *Sans faire*, and the anonymous *Se doulx espoir*. In all these chansons, the opening phrase is notated without text underlay beyond the first syllable of the opening word; the text only begins with the anacrusis to the second musical phrase. The same situation occurs in the tenor *Je suy si povre de liesce* as transmitted in Tr87 and MuEm. We can probably thus infer that the first fully texted phrase of the chanson began on the final minim of b. 6. This leads to the third observation: because the setting in Namur does not show such a formal phrase structure, the tenor found in Tr87 and MuEm was likely close to that of the original song. Adding

71 Welker, "Dufay Songs", 10–11.
72 Kemp, "A Chanson for Two Voices", 47–56.

cantus and contratenor voices whose counterpoint resembles that found in the songs of Cesaris and Fontaine permits a conjectural polyphonic reconstruction of the opening of the original song (▶ Ex. I.9c).

▶ p. 188

Tenors linked to syllabic songs

The two remaining tenors with known polyphonic settings, *Filles a marier* (№ 17) and *Marchon la dureau* (№ 45), are traceable to monophonic songs with syllabic text. *Filles a marier* corresponds to an anonymous *chanson à refrain* and the a-b-a-b rhyme scheme of its text.[73] Although polyphonic, this setting of a dance tenor behaves differently from those models in which the cantus and contratenor are motivically independent from the tenor. The cantus presents the tenor's melodic material at the octave and with embellishments at each cadential arrival. The contratenor altus also imitates the beginning of each of the tenor's phrases at the fifth above. In *Filles a marier*, the melodic and rhythmic imitation between the cantus, contratenors, and tenor reflect the central nature of the monophonic song.

With minor variants, *Marchon la dureau* corresponds to the tenor and contratenor voices at the heart of the combinative chanson *Puis qu'aultrement/Marchiez la dureau* (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 517, henceforth "Dij", № 140) and the tenor in the second half of *Madame de nom/Sur la rive* (Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo del Escorial, Biblioteca y Archivo de Música, Ms. IV.a.24, henceforth "EscB", № 103).[74] The polyphonic adaptations of this tenor thus date considerably later than the other known models. In Br9085, this tenor melody ends before the return of the chanson refrain. By ending there, the final on *f* mirrors the first note, creating a tenor in tone 6, at odds with the tone 2 of the original song.[75] Although there may be no significance to this omission, one could speculate that the tenor in Br9085 perhaps reflects a source in which the missing refrain followed the middle section of the song.

This tenor also raises the possibility that independent dance traditions were associated with monophonic song, especially considering the similarities between other tenors of combinative chansons and later

73 Seville, Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina, Ms. 5-1-43 [henceforth "Sev"], fols. k9ᵛ–k10ʳ. This setting is musically independent from Binchois's setting of the same text. The melodies of only two other *basse danse* tenors, *Le hault et le bas* (№ 19) and *Flourentine* (№ 48), share this symmetrical ABAB musical form.

74 See Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Evans, 156.

75 See below, "Tone".

dance melodies or patterns.[76] Finally, the presence of the tenor *Marchiez la dureau* in Dij, copied around 1470, suggests that its melody and text were less distant in memory than the tenors composed decades earlier.

Isometric tenors without known models

Although no models have been identified for the other tenors of Br9085, a few offer tantalizing hints that they indeed originated as songs. Du Fay's *Or me veult bien esperance mentir* has been proposed as a possible model for *La portingaloise* (№ 22) for several reasons. First, it appears in MuEm and Stras with the incipit "Portugaler".[77] Second, two theatrical sources include a dance called "Ourfute" (likely a corruption of "*Or me veult*") among a group of dances with an apparent link to Portugal.[78] Third, Lorenz Welker observes that both have the same number of breves, suggesting a possible conceptual link.[79] Finally, its *prima pars* is used as a "square" in various English sources, linking it to a context of extemporized counterpoint, like the *basse danse*.[80] Despite such parallels between the first phrase of Du Fay's song and *La portingaloise* in Br9085, there is no melodic similarity between the tenor and its presumed model.[81] Were it considered as a model, it would be the only one in perfect *tempus*.[82]

Although *Ma mie* (№ 2) has no known model, its organization and melodic outline echo a feature of Binchois' chanson *Marguerite, fleur de valeur*, which for David Fallows exemplifies Binchois's way of playing with expectations one associates with any given tone.[83] Both *Marguerite* and *Ma mie* end on the note *a* at the middle of a range that descends to the more expected Dorian final of *d*, placing them in tone 2. Furthermore, both begin and end with a similar descending melodic fourth. Although it is possible that the tenors in Br9085 do not represent the complete form or tone of their presumed model, the outline of *Ma mie* nonetheless

76 One need only compare the melodies and rhythms of the *Veni, veni clerice* and *Elle a dit à la tripière* to *Bransle des lavandières* ("The Washerwomen's Bransle") in *Orchesographie* to discern an unbroken, interwoven tradition of song and dance patterns. See Maniates, "Combinative Chansons in the Escorial Chansonnier", 108–9, 112; Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, 83^{v}–84^{r}.

77 MuEm, fols. 65^{r}, 77^{r}, 92^{v}–93^{r}; and Strasbourg, *olim* Bibliothèque de la Ville, Ms. 222 C.22 [henceforth "Stras"], fol. 108^{r}. As an instrumental work in Stras, see Welker, "*Portugaler*", 132–33.

78 Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 87–88.

79 Welker, "*Portugaler*", 132.

80 Chisholm, "Upon the Square", 174–84.

81 This concordance was first proposed by van den Borren, *Guillaume Dufay*, 301–2.

82 See discussion below.

83 Fallows, "How to win the Binchois game", 371–74.

resonates with the kind of play that has earned attention in Binchois's chansons.

Vaten mon amoureux desir (№ 48) shares its title closely with an anonymous setting of Charles d'Orléans *rondeau*, *Va tost, mon amoureux desir*. The two bear no musical resemblance, but the *basse danse* tenor shares its opening phrase closely with Binchois' *Je me recommande*.[84] The title, *Vaten mon amoureux desir*, however, hints at the possibility of a lost poem and musical setting from within Charles' entourage.[85] Charles habitually wrote variant versions of his own poetry, and encouraged a tradition of poetic *débats*, in which poets in his circle took the opening line from one of the Duke's poems as an invitation to craft new poems, typically in *rondeau* form. One such event was the famous Concours de Blois. The poems written for this competition begin *Je meurs de soif au près de la fontaine*, a paraphrase of Psalm 42.[86] Another *débat* originated with a *ballade* Charles wrote on the death of his wife, Bonne of Armagnac, *En la forest de longue actente*. The text of the anonymous chanson *Dedans la mer* also originates in this poetic tradition, and the song *Gardes le trait de la fenestre* paraphrases another *rondeau* by Charles.[87] Perhaps the tenor of *Vaten mon amoureux desir* reflects a similar tradition of variant texts.

In searching for further song models, two salient issues arise: first is the prominence of song models notated in imperfect *tempus* with major prolation (𝅝); second is the absence of known models for tenors with titles not related to song incipits. In the first case, all the tenors in Br9085 with known models, except *Marchon la dureau*, can be traced to chansons notated explicitly or implicitly in 𝅝.[88] The most likely reason for the prevalence of 𝅝 among the models is that the rhythmic patterns in this mensuration (long-short, long-short as 𝅜 𝅗𝅥 𝅜 𝅗𝅥) correspond to the steps of the dance.[89] Theoretically, one could alter the notes of any song into the

84 Marix and Rehm both argue for Binchois's authorship. Marix, *Histoire de la musique et des musiciens*, 188; Rehm (ed.), *Die Chansons von Gilles Binchois*, 16. See also Fallows, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs*, 398; Southern, *Anonymous Pieces*, 34–35.

85 Claude Thiry argues that the variant spelling is symptomatic of a simple error of transmission. Thiry further links *Beaulte* (№ 1), *Ma mie* (№ 2), and *M'amour* (№ 20) to poems by Charles and Jean Vaillant; see Thiry, "Le *Livre des Basses Danses*", 9–10.

86 Fox et al. (eds.), *Poetry of Charles d'Orléans*, 186–87, 860–61.

87 Fox et al. (eds.), *Poetry of Charles d'Orléans*, 130–31; Gilbert, "Words and Music".

88 For more on this, see Crane, "The Derivation of Some Fifteenth-Century Basse-Danse Tunes", 186. Both settings of *Marchiez la dureau* are, however, in a duple metre.

89 See above, "The *bassadanza* and the *basse danse* diverge".

isometric breves of the *basse danse*. It is therefore possible that songs in other metres, for example perfect *tempus* (𝅝), were used to derive a *basse danse* tenor, but were altered to such an extent that they are no longer recognizable. But the choice of *tempus* for the melody of a *basse danse* was of immediate importance on a practical level for those dancing to a song in its original form, for whom songs in 𝅜 were most suitable. This consideration simultaneously addresses the age of the traceable tenors and the reason that later song tenors do not appear as *basse danse* tenors. Early fifteenth-century chansons appear in 𝅜 as commonly as in 𝅝; by the second half of the century, 𝅜 seldom set the metre for songs, having been superseded by 𝅜 and 𝅜. Because the known models date from the earliest decades of the fifteenth century, they were chosen as the basis for dances much earlier than their appearance in Br9085, bearing witness to their long history as *basse danse* tenors. One may even predict that, if a lost chanson related to a given tenor were to turn up, it would likely be notated in 𝅜.

Regarding the second issue, where models for the tenors in Br9085 have been identified, their titles echo incipits of French chansons, particularly those current in Burgundian circles. No models have yet been found for tenors with descriptive titles or those associated with regions or noble families. Several reasons may account for this. First, some models have evaded identification because the titles of the tenors do not correspond precisely to the incipits of the original songs.[90] Second, it is possible that song tenors in perfect *tempus* (𝅝) were derived differently than those in 𝅜. This hypothesis would assume that titles not derived from songs were only given to tenors derived from chansons notated in a mensuration sign other than 𝅜, though this seems unlikely. Third, it is possible that the tenors without French song incipits were adopted from a specific source or repertory since lost. However, none of these hypotheses accounts for the fact that no tenor with a descriptive title matches a surviving song tenor.

It seems most likely that tenors whose titles cannot be associated with known songs reflect a compositional layer one or more steps removed from known chanson models—that is, they are not based on a specific

90 Nevertheless, scholars have identified some models whose incipits do not match the titles of the corresponding *basse danse* tenor; see discussion above.

song model but reflect melodic traits of some early fifteenth-century song tenors. The tenor of *Le petit rouen* (№ 16), for example, illustrates the boundaries between tenors with geographical or nominal titles and those derived from specific songs. Distinguishing between these two types of tenors, Crane cites *Sans faire* as an exception: "Only the tenor of Fontaine's *Sans faire de vous departie*, with its mostly equal notes, and regular four-measure phrases, strongly resembles many of the *basse-danse* tunes that are not likely to have had their origin in chansons".[91] He singles out *Le petit rouen* as an exemplar of that instrumental style.

In fact, the tenor *Le petit rouen* shares more than passing melodic similarities with *Sans faire* and its original polyphonic model (compared in ▶ Ex. I.11). Besides two additional, untexted phrases in *Sans faire*—a setting of a five-line *rondeau* with seven musical phrases—the two tenors bear a striking resemblance. The two "extra" phrases outline the same number of pitches as the first phrase of *Le petit rouen* (shown in smaller note values when repeated for comparison), and both arrive on the same final pitch in similar motion.

▶ p. 190

These two works resemble one another so closely that we may conjecture that *Le petit rouen* could have been derived from *Sans faire*. Should this prove to be the case, we might perhaps find an explanation for the title in the fact that Pierre Fontaine came from Rouen. As pleasant as such a conjecture might be, the waters are muddied by the tenor of *Le doulz espoir* (№ 26). It also shares much in common with *Sans faire* (compared in ▶ Ex. I.12) but is actually derived from the anonymous chanson *Se doulx espoir,* surviving in fragmentary form.[92]

▶ p. 191

The close similarities among these three tenors, and their two surviving models, suggest that all three originated within a close circle and reflect a shared creative process that influenced the shape of those tenors without known models. It also illustrates that the dance tenors were crafted from a finite vocabulary of conventional melodic motives derived from the original songs, but sometimes diverging from them.

91 Crane, "The Derivation of Some Fifteenth-Century Basse-Danse Tunes", 184 and n. 37. Fallows observes that all of the *basse danse* tenors with traceable polyphonic models "are in fact rather less regular than [their] song tenors"; see Fallows, "More on the Basse danse and polyphony", 130.

92 For more on this, see Fallows, "More on the Basse danse and polyphony", 125–31.

Shared motivic vocabulary

The fifteenth-century song repertory contains a shared vocabulary of melodic motives, often comprised of four, five, and six notes, recurring in various combinations. This community of commonplace motives formed a pool from which musicians drew and arranged individual elements, just as a poet combines words into phrases or a painter composes a scene from separate components.[93] The music of Br9085 employs the same motivic vocabulary as the contemporary song repertory, although there exists a more complex interaction between structural and ornamental elements in the *basse danse* tenors.[94] Exploring the point of intersection between these two elements, where the boundaries separating them are blurred, offers insights into the structure of these tunes.

As in the song repertory, cadential motives play a central role in the melodic and formal composition of the dance tunes. The standard feature of cadential arrival within the *basse danse* tenors is the strong-weak pairing of two breves on a single pitch, often occurring at the end of a melodic descent or ascent.[95] The cadential punctuation in the *basse danse* tenors, however, almost never corresponds to the final step of the choreographic *mesures*, and only coincides routinely at the end of the dance.[96] Crane recognized that the typical cadential tenor formulae found in the song models, with or without coloration (hemiola), were systematically reduced to their most basic elements in the *basse danse* tenors. Simple cadences without coloration in the song models tend to appear unaltered in the dance tenors (▶ Ex. I.13a). Cadences with coloration in the models most often appear as a falling fourth (e.g., *fa-mi-re-ut*, *sol-fa-mi-re*, or *la-sol-fa-mi*) or as a rising and falling third (e.g., *ut-mi-re-ut, re-fa-mi-re*). The dance tenors simplify these cadences as one of two formulae consisting of two or three distinct pitches: an ascending and descending second (e.g., *ut-re-ut-ut*, *re-mi-re-re*, *mi-fa-mi-mi*, etc.) or a descending third (e.g., *mi-re-ut-ut*, *fa-mi-re-re*, *sol-fa-mi-mi*)

▶ p. 192

93 "Composition, however, is that procedure of depicting according to which the parts are arranged in a work of painting. A very great achievement of the painter is the *historia*; parts of the *historia* are the bodies, part of a body a member, part of a member the surface"; Alberti, *On Painting*, ed. and trans. Sinisgalli, 53.

94 The motives common in the earlier decades of the century, such as those found in the traceable models, appear in the isometric tenors of Br9085, despite the comparatively late date of the manuscript. The mensural *basses danses*, however, share their melodic vocabulary with music current around 1500 (see below).

95 Discussed in Crane, "The Derivation of Some Fifteenth-Century Basse-Danse Tunes", 185–86, and Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 32.

96 For specific commentary on the misalignment of musical phrases and choreographic *mesures*, see Heartz, "The Basse Dance", 295, and Wilson, "The *Basse danse* c. 1445–c. 1545", 169.

▶ p. 192 respectively (▶ Ex. I.13b). The cadential formulae in the *basse danse* tenors almost always exemplify the tenor function of a polyphonic cadence, where the final motion into the resolution is a descending second. The ▶ p. 193 third cadence of *Maistresse* (▶ Ex. I.13c) even alters ("tenorizes") the motion in the *basse danse* from the source, transforming an ascending cadence with the cantus function into a tenor cadence with descending motion. Finally, most cadences in the tenors end with a repeated breve, which serves as punctuation and corresponds to the phrase structure found in the models: often, when a void breve appears in the model, it is translated as two blackened breves in the dance tenor. This being the case, repeated breves do not necessarily indicate a cadence.[97]

The cadences of the dance tenors generally supply a basic version of cadential figuration. By contrast, isolated exceptions show that more florid cadential formulae common to the chanson repertory, such as cadences that use coloration, assume a structural role within the *basse danse*. The first cadence of *Triste plaisir* (№ 31) retains the pitches of the original cadence, having made structural the notes that formed the ▶ p. 193 rhythmic ornament of hemiola (▶ Ex. I.14a). The dance's final cadence adopts this same figure, as *ut-mi-re-ut-ut*, even where the source tenor shows a different, simpler cadential arrival. Such structuralization of the more florid chanson-tenor cadences also occurs in dance tenors with no traceable model. The first cadence of *Le Rosin* (№ 8), for example, ▶ p. 193 similarly outlines *re-fa-mi-re-re* (▶ Ex. I.14b).[98] Its final (fifth) cadence, an extension of the first as *re-ut-re-fa-mi-re-re*, is also the final cadence of Fontaine's chanson *Sans faire de vous departie* (although a third higher as *fa-mi-fa-la-sol-fa*), and the second cadence of *Du pist mein hort* ▶ p. 193 (▶ Ex. I.14c), and is found in numerous chansons by Binchois and contemporaries.

Beyond phrase endings, cadential motives pervade the song and dance repertory of the fifteenth century. Such motives are ubiquitous and unremarkable. For example, without the double-breve punctuation, motifs such as *re-fa-mi-re* or *re-fa-sol-la* remain as integral to the *basse danse* tenors as they do to the song repertory. However, the elision of

97 See, for example, the opening of certain tenors, such as *Je sui povere de leesse* (N° 46), and instances of double-breve sequences, as in *La basse danse du roy d'espaingne* (N° 9).

98 Remarkably, the entire first phrase of *Le Rosin* is identical to that of *Je suy si povre de liesce* (Namur) and *Du pist mein hort*.

these two as *re-fa-mi-re-fa-sol-la*, a motive found in *Beaulte* (№ 1, notes 11–17), *Castille la novele* in Toulouze (bridging phrases one and two) and others, stands out as forming the head motive of the anonymous *Meskin es hu* and the opening of the tenor of Hayne's *De tous biens plaine* (▶ Ex. I.15).[99] While this commonplace figure became a musical catch-phrase through its association with well-known songs, its occurrence in the *basse danse* melodies further shows that these were fully integrated into the Burgundian musical vocabulary, rather than on the periphery.

▶ p. 194

Nonetheless, the dance tenors also share motives uncommon in the song repertory. The final phrase of *Sans faire* (№ 23), *sol-mi-ut-fa-mi-re-ut-ut*, diverges from the more ordinary cadential passage found in its model (▶ Ex. I.16a). This same figure appears as the final phrase of *Le petit rouen* (№ 16) and *Vaten mon amoureux desir* (№ 48). Although these pitches resemble the tone 5 Credo intonation, the figure is otherwise rare in fifteenth-century song, reflecting a melodic pattern particular to the *basse danse* tenors.[100] It is notable, however, that this same final cadence is found in *Stüblein* of Loch (▶ Ex. I.16b), a melody directly related to *Je languis* (№ 11) and *Languir en mille destresse* (№ 40).[101]

▶ p. 195

▶ p. 195

While the melodic vocabulary of the *basses danses* resembles that of the contemporary song repertory, its derivation or application is inconsistent, such that certain motives, like *sol-mi-ut-fa-mi-re-ut-ut*, assume a more prominent role in the *basse danse* repertory.[102] Whether integral to song and dance music or unique to the *basse danse*, players could use the melodic vocabulary to memorize the dance tunes, helping them to differentiate one tune from another.

99 Anonymous, "Meskin es hu", *Harmonice musices odhecaton A* (Venice: Ottaviano Petrucci, 1501) [henceforth "OdhA"], fol. 103ᵛ.

100 Although much later, this figure also serves as the head motive of John Baldwin's *Coockow as I me walked* (c. 1600).

101 Neither of these two tenors share the same final cadence, however, since they do not progress through the end of the melody as given in Loch (see below, "Tone").

102 Another figure, *sol-fa-re/la-fa-re-mi-re* (*d'-c'-a-f-d-e-d*), identified as one of a group of "*formules mélodiques bizarres*" and likely more instrumental in character by Closson, *Le manuscrit dit des basses danses*, 52, defines the cadential arrival into two of the four cadences in *Luises* (N° 6). Recurring in many guises throughout the tenors of Br9085, it is integral to the melodic vocabulary of the *basse danse*. We have identified some form of this motive in *Ma mie* (N° 2, rising), *Engoulesme* (N° 3), *La belle* (N° 4), *La Rochelle* (N° 14), *Orleans* (N° 15), *Le hault et le bas* (N° 19), *Alenchon* (N° 21), *Mon leal desir* (N° 33), *Bayonne* (N° 35), *La navaroise* (N° 36), *Barcelonne* (N° 37), *Le ioieux de Brucelles* (N° 42), and *Venise* (N° 53). Nonetheless, *Une fois avant que morir* (N° 24), based on an anonymous chanson, opens with a retrograde variant of the *Luises* figure, *re-la/re-fa-sol*. Perhaps this group of figures is not as "instrumental" or foreign to the song repertory as Closson suggested.

Mensural dances

Br9085 contains six dances in mensural notation that can be divided into three smaller categories. Three of the dances—*La danse de cleves* (№ 57), *La franchoise nouvelle* (№ 58), and *La danse de Ravestain* (№ 30)—are notated entirely in void mensural notation, whose groupings of three semibreves imply perfect *tempus*, with each step-unit corresponding to two breves (six semibreves) of music.[103] Two of the dances—*Roti boully joyeulx* (№ 55) and *L'esperance de bourbon* (№ 56)—are *basses danses mineures*: they begin in an implied mensuration of imperfect *tempus* with major prolation ☾ set to *pas de Brabant*, succeeded by a shorter *basse danse* section. In the case of *Roti boully*, the *basse danse* corresponds to the form and pitches of the preceding mensural *pas de Brabant*. In *L'esperance de bourbon*, by contrast, the subsequent *basse danse* of the same name is sufficiently different that Closson divided it into two distinct dances.[104] Alone among these mensural dances, *Roti boully* appears notated as a *ballo, El gioioso,* in an Italian source.[105]

Beaulte de castille (№ 25) represents a hybrid between the blackened breves of the *basse danse* interspersed with three episodes of mensural notation, which function as cadential formulae. Although its choreography consists of *basse danse* steps over sustained pitches, it does not set the conventional *mesures*. It is also the only dance choreographed for three dancers.

Conventions shared with song

Several features distinguish the mensural dances from the isometric tenors in blackened breves and link them to conventions of texted dance songs. These include their use of open (*ouvert*) and closed (*clos*) endings echoing feminine and masculine rhyme schemes, their affinities to song forms, and their formal and melodic links to future ground-bass progressions, including their use of cadential formulae adopted as

103 *La danse de Ravestain*, the first of these dances to appear in Br9085, is apparently incomplete in the source. There are only five step-units notated, and the end of the music is followed by a custos on *g*, leading Ingrid Brainard to speculate that it was paired with the previous dance, *Ma mieulx ammee* (№ 29); Brainard, "Die Choreographie der Hoftänze", 6–7; Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 84.

104 This *basse danse mineure* is also listed under its own title in Br9085; see Closson, *Le manuscrit dit des basses danses*, 43.

105 *Roti boully ioyeulx* appears as *El gioioso* in Pa (fol. 59ᵛ), notated in articulated semibreves and a third higher with its final on *f*, proceeding from a *basse danse*, to a *saltarello*, and then a *piva*. *L'esperance de bourbon* shares aspects of its melodic outline with the dance *Prenez* of the Gresley manuscript, notably in the opening motives; see Fallows, "The Gresley Dance Collection", 18.

ostinato patterns toward the end of the fifteenth century. Though the term "ground bass" tends be associated with chord progressions of the sixteenth century, these dances reveal that the origins pre-date the concept of chordal harmonies.

Three dances reflect a convention common to both dance and song since at least the fourteenth century: the alternation of open and closed cadential endings between the final and one step higher or lower that emphasize the foundations of the tone. Found in *Roti boully*, *La danse de cleves*, and *Beaulte de castille*, these alternating endings are a hallmark of Machaut's *Douce dame jolie*, to cite a well-known example. This tendency—common to tones 1 and 2—continued well into the sixteenth century, informing the first two chords of the *passamezzo antico*.[106]

These alternating endings also adopt a feature in poetic verse of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In *Douce dame jolie*, the first three lines of the refrain end on a feminine ending ("jolie", "mye", "sye"), corresponding to a major second above the musical final. The last poetic line ends on a masculine ending ("humblement"), which corresponds to the musical final, thus completing the way in which the music mirrors the a-a-a-b rhyme scheme of the poetry. The feminine and masculine verse endings are inextricably tethered to the open and closed musical endings. In *L'Art de rhétorique*, Jean Molinet defines poetry as "rhythmic music", and distinguishes masculine (or "perfect") from feminine (or "imperfect") endings, which end on the weak "e" that Molinet defines as a "demi-voyelle" (semivowel). His implicit link to related musical terminology is clear: when treated as a rhythmic unit, a masculine rhyme corresponds to the perfection of a breve. By contrast, in a feminine rhyme, the final semivowel "e" is more than a mere schwa: it imperfects the rhythm of the last syllable, corresponding to the way in which a semibreve imperfects a preceding breve in mensural notation.[107]

Much as the lines in French verse alternate between masculine and feminine endings, so do the phrases of *La danse de cleves*. Here, the effect is both rhythmic and melodic. Imperfect endings occur when the final beat (*tactus*) of a phrase comprises a shift in pitch from the downbeat to the upbeat, as exemplified by the cadence of phrase one. Perfect endings,

106 Such alternating endings remain a staple of folk music.
107 Langlois, *Recueil d'arts de seconde rhétorique*, 216–17.

such as the cadence of phrase two, occur when the final *tactus* of a phrase comprises a single pitch. ▶ p. 195 Example I.17 indicates the alternating imperfect endings (marked by slurs) and perfect endings in *La danse de cleves* with a posited musical "rhyme scheme". The first and fourth cadences resolving to the final are labelled as "closed". The second and third cadences settling on a different pitch are labelled as "open". Similar patterns are found in tenor melodies of contemporary combinative chansons, including *Petite camusette*, *Marchiez la dureau*, and *Coquille bobille* in Dij, and *Elle a dit la tripière* and *Se je suis/Veni veni clerice* in EscB, both of whose textual patterns are in turn echoed in the *Bransle des lavandieres* ("Washerwomen's Bransle") in *Orchesographie*.[108]

Formes fixes and strophic song

These dances also share affinities with the three most common forms of late-medieval French verse: ballade, rondeau, and virelai, together known as the *formes fixes*. *La danse de cleves* resembles the form and conventions of a virelai setting. Its first section mirrors a refrain whose alternating feminine and masculine endings outline the melodic equivalent of an a-b-a-b rhyme scheme. Its second section, including repetition, can easily be interpreted as c-d-c-d. Although this dance lacks a text, it is pervaded by the conventions of *forme fixe* verse. Such conventions are less obvious in the other mensural dances, but we can consider them nonetheless as they occur.

La franchoise nouvelle outlines an AABBCC musical form. The A and B sections constitute a pair, and the resulting structure resembles *Chaminata*, an early example of the *passamezzo antico*, whose refrain of sixteen measures is followed by a second section of eight measures, acting as a couplet (see the following section). Since the rubric of *La franchoise nouvelle* instructs that the music "must be played twice" (in order to accommodate the steps), the AABB "refrain" and CC "couplet" all return. As a result, it has much in common with the strophic forms found in contemporary chansons, carnival songs, and laude.

108 Maniates, "Combinative Chansons in the Dijon Chansonnier", 260–61, 268; Maniates, "Combinative Chansons in the Escorial Chansonnier", 108–9, 112; Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, 83^{v}–84^{r}, and Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Evans, 156. This intimate link between French phrases and French verse continues throughout the early modern period.

Links to grounds and ostinato patterns

The mensural dances share features with ground-bass progressions of the sixteenth century. Interpreting ground-bass patterns by their chordal progressions led to the identification of works like *Chaminata* and *Pazienzia* as the first *passamezzi*.[109] However, the main conceptual difference between the *romanesca* and the melodic progression of *Roti boully* is its lack of obvious chordal harmony. The *passamezzo* is typically defined as a harmonic progression repetitive pattern, like the four-chord progression of the *romanesca* (minor: III-VII-i-V, III-VII-i-V-I) associated with tunes like *Greensleeves*, and the *moderno* (major: I-IV-I-V, I-IV-I-V-I) associated with dances like *Les Buffons*. The chords associated with the *passamezzo romanesca* are directly derived from the contrapuntal procedures of low contratenor voices and the root-position chords of *falsobordone*. With its underlying descending fourth (*la-sol-fa-mi*) and subsequent fifth (*la-sol-fa-mi-re*), *Roti boully* outlines the melodic progressions and cadential conventions of the *passamezzo* (▶ Ex. I.18). In fact, this dance is set to the chords of the *passamezzo antico* in Johannes Weck's *Hopper dancz*, and it has been associated with the Italian song *Pazienzia ognun me dice* and the later *passamezzo romanesca*.[110]

▶ p. 195

The first section of *La franchoise nouvelle* combines elements of the descending fourths associated with the *passacaglia* (*durus* as *fa-mi-re-ut*, and *mollis* as *la-sol-fa-mi*). Its second section outlines the refrain patterns of the *durus* progression preserved in *Chaminata* and in the *passamezzo moderno*. *L'esperance de bourbon*, especially in its closing phrase, outlines the associated I-IV-V progression that is also the basis of the sixteenth-century *canarios* (▶ Ex. I.19).[111]

▶ p. 196

Motives found in song

The mensural dances share motivic patterns with contemporary song repertory. Combined rhythmic and melodic formulae found in *L'esperance de bourbon* and *La franchoise nouvelle* also characterize contemporary chansons. The opening motive of *La franchoise nouvelle* shares its outline and function with the tenor subject of Isaac's *Par ung jour*

109 Banks, *The Instrumental Consort Repertory*, 240–44. For a critical edition, see Filocamo, *Florence, BNC, Panciatichi 27*, 604–9.
110 Heartz, "A Fifteenth-Century Ballo", 369–71, 374; Gilbert, "Thundering to the Tune of Greensleeves", 102–3.
111 Hudson, "The Ripresa, the Ritornello, and the Passacaglia".

matinee, and—in transposition—with the *ostinato* motive that pervades *Hor oires une chanson*. The same motive that informs *La franchoise nouvelle*, *Par ung jour*, and *Hor oires* can be traced to one that embellishes a descending fourth. This motive was popular in chansons from the generation of Busnois and Caron, and it was commonly used in the same places as these songs, as *fa-mi-ut-re-ut* or *la-sol-mi-fa-mi* (▶ Ex. I.20). ▶ p. 196

One of the motivic formulae in *L'esperance de bourbon* plays a starring role in a series of combinative chansons, including *Amor tu me non gabaste*, *Dieu quel marriage*, and *Vilana che sa tu far*. The motive at the heart of this group can be traced to the opening motive of the anonymous *Dedans la mer* and Caron's *Helas que pourra devenir* (▶ Ex. I.21). ▶ p. 196

Motives of the mensural dances—and the contemporary combinative songs built on *ostinato* figures—share an important trait with the isometric tenors: they adopt ornamental motives as structural building blocks. Just as the isometric tenors transform ornamental cadential material into structural patterns, the mensural dances—like combinative chansons—transform melodic embellishments into ostinato patterns. Such ostinatos were later associated with ground-bass progressions such as the *passacaglia*, hinted at in *Par ung jour* and *Hor oires*, and eventually became commonplaces in Renaissance song. The opening of *La franchoise nouvelle* shares its outline, for example, with opening of the second half of Psalm 113 in the Geneva Psalter (fourth edition, 1561). This similarity illustrates the degree to which metrical Psalms and chorale tunes of the sixteenth century reflect the melodic vocabulary of the previous century. Just like the isometric tenors, the mensural tenors thus use motivic commonplaces in both ornamental and structural ways, reflecting a larger interplay between ornament and structure across generations of compositional styles and procedures.

Contrapuntal formulae and polyphony

The mensural dances include classic cadential formulae associated with contrapuntal conventions especially common in Hartmann Schedel's songbook (Munich, BSB, Cgm 810, henceforth "Schedel") and Loch. Despite Schedel's deficiencies as a scribe and musician, his collection offers a thesaurus of such commonplace cadential formulae. Although Loch preserves mainly monophonic tenor melodies, their outlines invite obvious contrapuntal voices. The cadential formulae of *La franchoise nouvelle* could be set in a variety of ways common to chansons from the middle

of the fifteenth century, as shown in ▶ Example I.22 (bb. 1-6). The closed ending of the tenor of *La danse de cleves* outlines a cadential progression found in anonymous Florentine carnival songs (▶ Ex. I.22, bb. 7-12).[112]

▶ p. 197
▶ p. 197

Variants and performance

La danse de cleves raises special questions about the treatment of variants in performance. All of its repeated sections are notated, yet each one has variants on the basic melodic and rhythmic outline. Do these variants represent *varietas*, with each cadence treated in a different fashion to show the range of possibilities? Is this dance to be performed in precisely this manner, with variations serving as a memory device? Do the variants represent an authoritative version of the dance, a pedagogical presentation of conventional formulae, or does this represent how the scribe simply happened to copy this unique transmission? Those wishing to perform *Roti boully* face similar issues. The obscurity of the rhythms of the *pas de Brabant* section in Br9085 and the differences in other sources mean that there is not enough evidence for a confident interpretation, while the question of scribal intent remains open. Until other sources for these dances resurface, contrapuntal exploration presents some of the most fruitful means of research. In *La danse de cleves*, for example, it seems possible to establish a hierarchy between simple contrapuntal phrases and their more ornamented versions. In this sense, these dances exemplify the potential benefits of reverse-engineering historical counterpoint.

Tone

The *basse danse* tenors treat tone, particularly with respect to their models, in a flexible manner. (In the discussion that follows, we use the term "tone" to describe octave species and their associated melodic and cadential features, following most sources for practical music theory of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, rather than the term "mode", commonly used today.)[113] As a result, these tenors show how fluid tone can be in the transmitted variants of a tune. Source tenors and dance tenors seldom occupy the same musical space. For example, variant readings

112 For more on Isaac and carnival-song conventions, see Macey, *Bonfire Songs*, 32–49. For a polyphonic setting of *La danse de cleves*, see Duffin, "Ensemble Improvisation", 224–25.
113 Wiering, *The Language of the Modes*, esp. 1 and 49–54.

of melodies that are essentially the same in their general shape and melodic intervals sometimes end on different pitches. This mutability possibly relates to the ways in which performers wanted to portray a dance, where the music dictated the character. Italian dance master Giovanni Ambrosio admonished composers and performers of *bassedanze* and *balli* to note whether the "key" was *b-molle* (flat) or *b-quadro* (natural). This affected the character of the tune, to which the dancers responded.[114] Ambrosio's statement suggests that dancers moved differently to a tune of a *mollis* (minor) quality than to one of a *durus* (major) quality.

How one altered the tone of a particular melody seems to vary depending on its range and final. Certain dance tenors in transposed tone 5 with a final on c (hereafter, "tone 5(*c*)", etc.), such as *Languir en mille destresse* (№ 40) and *Sans faire de vous departie* (№ 23), derive from pieces surviving with in the regular range of that tone (5) with a final on *f*.[115] More exceptional, however, are the *mollis-durus* relationships exhibited by the mutability between tones 1 and 5, or tones 2 and 8. The shift from tone 1 to 5 occurs when we move down a step or up a third, the latter of which is akin to relative minor-major key relationships. In some models that end on *f*, their derived tenors have been "transposed" to tone 1(*d*). Certain models in tone 1(*d*), however, are transposed a step lower to yield tenors in tone 1(*c*). The change from tone 2 to 8, however, takes place if we add or remove the flat "key" on *b*, akin to parallel minor-major keys.[116] Examples of each type of pairing are found within the *basse danse* repertory, or when we trace the journey from a song to its derivative dance.

The transposition from tone 1 to 5 by step can be seen in the relationship between *La franchoise* (№ 7) and *Venise* (№ 53), which present the

114 Ebreo of Pesaro, *De practica seu arte tripudii*, ed. Sparti, 104–5; Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 137–38.

115 *Languir en mille destresse* (Nº 40) presents melodic material that is found precisely within *Je languis* (Nº 11), except for three extra notes (*e*-*c*-*c*) of Nº 40 inserted between notes 5 and 6 of Nº 11. Nearly identical in their pitch patterns and titular incipits, they were evidently cut from the same mould, which they share with *Stüblein* of Loch (p. 45) and two polyphonic intabulations of the same "Stüblin" tenor in Bux (Nºs. 135–36). Compared to the Germanic sources, both versions in Br9085 are incomplete, but each ends at a different place. The *Stüblein* in Loch provides a melody with clearly demarcated A and B sections, of which *Languir en mille destresse* only lasts the length of the A section. *Je languis* ends halfway into the B section and, as a result, exemplifies a different tone (8) from that of its counterpart (5).

116 For more on the tonal shift between *mollis* and *durus* by change of key signature, see Hudson, "The Ripresa, the Ritornello, and the Passacaglia", 364–94.

same melodic material with a *c*-final and *d*-final, respectively.[117] Crane noted the likeness among the tenors for the dances *Beaulte* (№ 1), *La verdelete* (№ 41), *La margarite* (№ 5), and *Joieusement* (№ 49). Tenors N°s. 1 and 41 are nearly identical and present their melodic material in tone 1(*d*). Although melodically and structurally similar, *La margarite* and *Joieusement* are a step lower, in tone 5(*c*).[118] *Je sui povere de leesse* (№ 46) appears in Br9085 in tone 5(*c*), while its monophonic predecessor (Namur) and surviving polyphonic setting (Tr87 and MuEm) preserve the same tenor in tone 1(*d*). We can observe the shift from tone 1 to 5 in the relationship between the dance tenor and song model of *Une fois avant que morir* (№ 24): the tenor in Br9085 is notated in tone 1(*d*), while the eponymous chanson survives in tone 5(*f*) in LoTit (fols. 4^{v}–5^{r}). Similarly, *Roti boully ioyeulx* (№ 56) appears in Br9085 in tone 1(*d*), but its Italian counterpart, *El gioioso* (Pa, fol. 59^{r}), is notated in tone 5(*f*).[119] A full comparison of all these tenors is presented in Appendix 5.

The two dance tenors based on songs by Binchois demonstrate the shift from tone 2 (*mollis*) to tone 8 (*durus*) through the removal of a flat on *b*. *Maistresse* (№ 18), from Binchois' *L'amy de ma dame est venis* (Tr87, fol. 88^{r}), and *Triste Plaisir* (№ 31; chanson in Ox213, fol. 56^{v}) both appear in Br9085 in tone 8(*g*) (▶ Appendix 5). The models survive with the same final, but the flat "key" on *b* in both song tenors indicates that Binchois conceived of them in tone 2 (transposed). Both versions of each tenor

▶ p. 270

117 Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 84–85, noted the similarity between these two tenors. Hartmann Schedel apparently heard the tune upon which these are based and recorded it in his musical notebook as one of the "*carmina ytalica pro coreis*" ("Italian songs for dancing", fol. 131'). The eight notes missing from *La franchoise* may easily be supplied from the analogous point in the melody of *Venise* and Schedel. Schedel notates a *c'*-clef on the highest staff line of the *carmina ytalica* after the first four notes, implying that his version, too, is in tone 1(*d*).

118 Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 72, 80, 86–87, 89. *Beaulte* and *La verdelete* differ by one note: the former has two *f*s at the end of phrase one (notes 7 and 8), but the latter has three. According to its incipit and accompanying choreography, however, the melody of *La verdelete* as transmitted in the manuscript lacks four notes. Crane also identified *Le ioyeulx espoyr* of Toulouze (N° 9) as being the tone 5(*c*) version of one half of *Flourentine* (N° 38), a tenor in tone 1(*d*) which consists of the same twenty-two notes repeated; see Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth-Century Basse Danse*, 78 and 91.

119 One further example in Br9085 of a tone relationship between finals on *d* and *f* occurs in *Marchon la dureau* (N° 48): the original monophonic tune begins on *f* and ends on *d* in tone 2, since its ABA form results in a return to the refrain. Like *Je languis* and *Languir en mille destresse*, the *basse danse* tenor does not proceed to the end of the song's form, but stops at the end of the verse, culminating on *f* in tone 6 (see the discussion of this tenor above.) In contemporary polyphonic repertoire, variant iterations of a single song in tones 1 and 5 (or 2 and 6) are rare or non-existent, but the shift from one to the other occurs in at least two compositions. The Credo of Johannes Pullois' *Missa sine nomine* is in tone 5(*f*) while the surrounding sections of the mass are in tone 1(*d*). Likewise, Estienne Grossin's *Missa trompetta* fully embodies tone 5(*f*) until the Sanctus, which is in tone 1(*d*); no Agnus survives. These two examples further demonstrate the affinity between the two tones and illustrate the tendency of tone 1 to transform to tone 5, and *vice versa*.

are viable. Following Ambrosio's advice, modern performers could play either dance tenor in tone 2 with *b*-flat to offer dancers the opportunity for a different interpretation.

Although Heartz attributed the change of tone 1 to tone 5 to scribal error, it is possible in the case of *Roti boully ioyeulx* and *El gioioso* that musicians could choose whether to play the *mollis* (tones 1 or 2) or *durus* (tones 5 or 8) version of a tune, as described by Ambrosio and observed in the examples described above.[120] The discrepancies in tone between a song and the dance tunes that derived from it, or between variant versions of the same dance melody, show that the quality of a tone as *mollis* or *durus* could change at the will of the scribe or the performer, depending on the affect they wished to convey. Although both fixed and relative place (*locus*) and intervallic structure were crucial to musical understanding and interpretation, this group of tenors and their models or counterparts demonstrates that a transfer of place, or a transmutability of tone, for any given song would not have shocked fifteenth-century musicians or listeners.[121]

Accidentals

Apart from a single flat appearing on *b* in *La danse de cleves* (№ 58), accidentals are conspicuously absent from the tenors of Br9085. Yet, the coexistence of *b-fa* (flat) and *b-mi* (natural) in tones 1(*d*), 2(*d*), 5(*f*), and 6(*f*), and the existence of variant *mollis* and *durus* versions of certain tenors, mean that musicians must choose whether to inflect specific notes. In tone 1, for example, one would flatten the *b*s in the first and final phrases of *Barbesieux* (№ 13, notes 4 and 32) or the third phrase of *La Rochelle* (№ 14, note 17), to avoid the melodic *mi-fa* tritone with *f*. This convention is expressed in the dictum *una nota super la semper est canendum fa* ("always sing the note above *la* as *fa*"). Similarly, when singing or playing the tenor *Le doulz espoir* (№ 26), cast in tone 6, one would flatten the *b*s (notes 12, 28, and 56) to avoid a melodic tritone with the *f*-final. In the

120 Heartz, "A Fifteenth-Century Ballo", 365, 369–70.

121 Johannes Ockeghem's *Missa cuiusvis toni* illustrates this concept: the basic intervallic structures (second, third, fourth, fifth, etc.) form the melodic and contrapuntal foundation of the mass, independent of tone, which may be chosen at will. Thus, the overall melodic shapes of each voice take precedence over tone. The choice of a given tone for a given performance produces a result drastically different from any other, since a shift in the placement of the semitones *mi-fa* from tone to tone, with respect to the final, alters the quality of the intervallic structures (major or minor; perfect, augmented, or diminished). For an edition of this mass that provides a solution in each tone, see Houle (ed.), *Ockeghem's* Missa cuiusvis toni.

context of a *basse danse*, however, in which the notes of the tenor are played very slowly, the dissonant interval between *b* and *f* could go unnoticed, since intervening notes (*a* or *a-g*) mean that the *f* follows the *b* only after three or five breves.[122] The ambiguity of *b* as "*mi*" or "*fa*" peaks in *Maistresse* and *Triste plaisir* (N°s. 18 and 31), where the original song tenors stipulate *b*-flat, yielding a tenor in tone 2(*g*), while the dance tenors, also with *g*-finals, have *b*-naturals (tone 8). Both versions are valid, but they generate contrasting affects.[123]

The application or omission of flats, however, is not the only performance-practice issue involving accidentals. Musicians must also decide when to apply accidentals to establish cadences. The larger, structural cadence points within the tenors, marked by a double breve, almost exclusively fulfil the tenor function ("tenorizans") of the cadence, that is, a descending second.[124] However, a few structural cadences perform the cantus function ("cantizans"), that is, an ascending second, where an accidental could be applied. At notes 26–27 of *Triste plaisir* (№ 31), for example, the *f* (note 26) could be ornamented in such a way that results in a rising semitone to the following *g* (▶ Ex. I.23a). Similar treatment of an ascending second (and one not necessarily in the context of a structural cadence) occurs in bb. 17–19, 31–33, and 69–71 of *Propter peccata quae peccastis* (*La Spagna*) (▶ Ex. I.23b).[125] These examples illustrate how a dance tenor can fulfil the cantus function of a cadence. Cadences may therefore occur in many places besides the structural markers of the double-breve cadences.

▶ p. 197

▶ p. 197

In a polyphonic context, the application of accidentals in a *basse danse* tenor will depend on two factors. Firstly, how do performers hear melodic *mi-fa* dissonances in the long-note tenor? In other words, where should they add a flat on *b*, when a melodic tritone against *f* looms? Secondly, where do performers establish cadence points, whether or not they are structural, in which the tenor fulfils the cantus function?

122 An exception would be the occurrence of a direct leap from *b* to *f*, or *vice versa*, where the *b* would be interpreted as *fa* (flat) in any case, as in notes 20–21 of *Une fois avant que morir* (N° 24) and notes 9–10 in the *basse danse* section of *L'esperance de bourbon* (N° 56). Additionally, the quick, buoyant melody of the measured *pas de Brabant* section of the latter, which sits squarely in tone 5(*f*), begs for *b*-flat throughout.

123 See "Tone" above.

124 See "Shared Motivic Vocabulary".

125 Similar cadential treatment—where the tenor performs the cantus function—but where the cadence is diatonic and requires no inflection occurs in bb. 15–17, 19–21, and 23–25. See Appendix 6.

PERFORMING FORCES AND PRACTICES

Musical sources, archival records, iconography, historical accounts, and literature attest that certain performing ensembles were associated with the *basse danse* repertory. Scholars have questioned how these groups performed for the dance. Because of the nature of the various types of ensemble, and because of their idiomatic vocabularies, it is difficult to separate discussions of these ensembles from their performance practices. The *basse danse* repertory clearly enjoyed a rich tradition of polyphonic performance, both extemporized and composed. Different ways of realising the same dances coexisted. Ambrosio suggests that the dance could be accompanied by "*pifari*, *organi*, lute, harp, or drum with flutes, or whatever instrument".[126] The colophon of Toulouze states that the dance tenors were "to be played on any instrument".[127] Arbeau even suggests performance by voices.[128] Different social functions called for different types of musical accompaniment. Among the multitude of possibilities, certain "loud" and "soft" instruments appear and reappear prominently to accompany the dance.

Groups of *haut* and *bas*

Musicians of the Middle Ages and Renaissance distinguished between types of instruments and their players, categorizing them as either *haut* or *bas*. This distinction went beyond the contrast between "high" or "loud" and "low" or "soft" sounds. These terms also encompassed the attributes of the instruments they described, the roles of their players, and their function in society. *Haut* instruments were loud and high-pitched, played to entertain the elite enjoying the high life at grand festivities. By contrast, *bas* instruments were soft and low-pitched, and were employed during intimate assemblies of the nobility and rising elite classes.[129] The principal ensemble associated with court dances was the so-called *alta*, consisting of shawms—the schalmei and bombard—and either slide trumpet or trombone, potentially joined by a pipe-and-tabor, played by a soloist. *Bas* ensembles consisting of some combination of plucked

126 Pa, fol. 32^{r}, trans. in Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 151.
127 Toulouze: "Cy finissent les regles de dancer toutes dances auecques celles regles sont notees pour Jouer a tous Instrumens …", fol. B6^{v}, cited in Polk, "Flemish Wind Bands", 166.
128 Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, fol. 33^{v}.
129 For more on the delineations of instrument groups in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and their functions, see Bowles, "*Haut* and *Bas*"; Heartz, "*Hoftanz* and *Basse dance*", 15; and McGowan, "A Chance Encounter".

instruments (lute, harp), bowed instruments (such as the vielle), and wind instruments (such as the recorder) accompanied smaller, more private gatherings of dancers. In addition, intabulations for keyboard and lute attest to a solo repertory of dance music. Documents also hint at ongoing traditions of vocal renditions of dance music.

Ensemble Polyphony

Alta

The polyphonic ensemble most closely associated with the *basse danse* is the "loud" band, which fifteenth-century theorist and musician Johannes Tinctoris calls the *alta* (▶ Fig. I.3).[130] Archival and iconographic evidence attests to the prominence of this ensemble in performing composed and extemporized florid counterpoint for dance music. A core duo of bombard and schalmei performed the tenor and cantus voices, respectively, joined by trumpet or trombone on contratenor for three-voice counterpoint, and with a second bombard serving as the contratenor altus voice for four-voice counterpoint. Their instrumental ranges and voice functions corresponded closely to those of fifteenth-century vocal polyphony.[131] Despite questions about the performers' musical literacy and the extent to which their improvised counterpoint resembled composed polyphony, the *alta* employed the same repertories and rules of counterpoint as singers.

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A shared understanding of the musical hand and gamut created a common musical language for singers and instrumentalists alike. However, the length of the *alta* instruments dictated that they sounded a fourth or fifth higher than singers and *bas* instruments when reading the same pitches. For example, the bombard, often labelled in modern terminology as an "*alto* shawm" with a fundamental note of *g-sol re ut* at *a'* equals approximately (hereafter "~") 465 Hz (based on surviving instruments, historical measurements, and iconographical evidence), visualized its lowest sounding note, like other contemporary *tenor* instruments, as *c-fa*

130 Baines, "Fifteenth-Century Instruments", 21 and 25 n. 4.

131 Gilbert, "The Improvising *Alta capella*", 109. Although the standard ranges of the reed instruments—an octave and a sixth, with fundamentals at the distance of a fifth apart—closely resemble the ranges of the vocal cantus and tenor, the wider range of the slide trumpet and trombone allowed for a contratenor voice that extended above and below the tenor.

ut, the lowest note of the *basse danse* tenors.[132] While this note sounded as *c-fa ut* on *bas* tenor instruments, such as the recorder or viol, the visualized *c* sounded a fifth higher on the bombard at *g-sol re ut*. Like other discant instruments, the schalmei visualized its lowest note as *g-sol re ut*, while in fact sounding a fifth higher on *d'-la sol re*. "However," as Tinctoris states, "for the lowest contratenor parts, and often for any contratenor part, to the shawm players one adds brass players".[133]

In the first half of the fifteenth century, when higher contratenor voices prevailed, the natural instrument to complete the *alta* was the slide trumpet: a folded or wrapped trumpet with a single telescopic slide on which a player moved the entire body of the instrument back and forth, the intermediate evolutionary step between the folded natural trumpet and the trombone (▶ Fig. I.4).[134] A player visualized the lowest practicable note in first position on the instrument as *Gamma-ut*, and could achieve one tone lower (*F-ut*) by drawing the instrument out over the slide mechanism. Those two notes sound a fifth higher than notated, however, on *d-sol re* and *c-fa ut*, respectively, at $a' \sim 465$ Hz.[135] The increasing tendency of the contratenor voice to drop below the tenor from the 1440s coincides with the emergence of the trombone. Its sounding second harmonic in first-position, *A-re*, as documented from c. 1600, would have been visualized by players a fifth lower as *D*. This was far below the bounds of the gamut, but the instrument's extended low range allowed for a true contratenor bassus in the *alta,* when tenors were notated in higher places.[136]

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Since the ambitus of the schalmei and bombard was limited to an octave plus a sixth, the *alta* would "transpose" compositions notated in

132 Agricola, *Musica instrumentalis deudsch*, ed. Eitner, 11–28 and 152–75. An exception to this rule is the transverse flute, with a lowest note of d-*sol re*, since it only has six topside holes.

133 Transcribed and translated in Baines, "Fifteenth-Century Instruments", 20–21.

134 The existence of the slide trumpet in the fifteenth century is controversial; see Sachs, "Chromatic Trumpets in the Renaissance", already mentioned in Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments*, 108. See also Besseler, "Die Enstehung der Posaune"; Downey, "The Renaissance Slide Trumpet"; Myers, "Slide Trumpet Madness"; Polk, "The Trombone, the Slide Trumpet and the Ensemble Tradition"; Duffin, "The *trompette de menestrels*", 397–402; Welker, "Bläserensembles der Renaissance"; Polk, "The Invention of the Slide Principle and the Earliest Trombone"; McGowan, "A Chance Encounter"; Tröster, "More about Renaissance Slide Trumpets"; Tröster, "Which Kind of Trumpet did the *Ménestrel de trompette* play"; Klaus, *Trumpets and other High Brass*, vol. 2, 1–8; Neumeier, *Der Pommer*, 53–54; Polk, "Trumpets, Shawms, and the Early Slide Instruments"; Gilbert, "The Shawm and the *Alta* Ensemble".

135 Based on the standard length of surviving Renaissance trumpets.

136 The final composition in Tr89 (fols. 424^{v}–425^{r}), a setting of Guillaume Du Fay's *Se la face ay pale*, notated with a *g*-final and a sharp on *f* in the key signature, makes the case for performance specifically by the *alta* due to its range. Furthermore, the descent of the low contratenor to *D* sits squarely in the first full octave of the trombone. See Kreitner, "*Se la face ay pale*", 4–5.

tone 5 with a final on *f*, or in tones 1 or 7 with a final on *g*, to ensure a comfortable range in which all the notes could be played on the instruments. Following the standard transposition places of the tones, the ensemble would "transpose" by mapping the entire range of their instruments to a higher overall place in the gamut. Thus, the *c-fa ut* of the bombard was visualized as *f-fa ut*, while the *g-sol re ut* of the schalmei became *c'-sol fa ut*. The low note in first position on the slide trumpet was now *c-fa ut* from *Gamma-ut*, and the low *D* of the trombone leapt up to *Gamma-ut*, which allowed the instrument to play down to an octave below the bombard's fundamental, while remaining within the gamut.

After more than a half-century of recreating the performance practices of the *alta*, modern performer-scholars continue to discover how the conventional scoring of the ensemble informs the roles and capabilities of each instrument at different points in time. The steps of early *basse-danze* and *basses danses* at court were often guided by the sounds of the schalmei (cantus), bombard (tenor), and slide trumpet (high contratenor). The ergonomics of the slide trumpet facilitated contratenor lines that moved by leaps of thirds, fourths, fifths, and octaves, outlining the lower segments of the harmonic series. In the later *basses danses* of Br9085, however, the function of low contratenor in the *alta* belonged exclusively to the trombone, capable of playing more florid, scalar passages.

Pipe-and-tabor

Along with the *alta*, no other instrumental combination is more closely associated with the *basse danse* than the pipe-and-tabor, a three-holed pipe and drum, played by one musician, called a *tabourin* (▶ Fig. I.5). Isabelle d'Este's plea to retain one specific pipe-and-tabor player in her fiancé's employment demonstrates how integral he was to courtly music-making, including the accompaniment of dance.[137] Beyond letters and court records, literature, and iconography, dance treatises mention the use of pipe-and-tabor to accompany dances, but none makes as a clear an argument for the instruments' importance—because a single musician could simultaneously play a tune and beat a steady pulse—as Arbeau's *Orchesographie*.[138] Arbeau gives a notated example of the com-

▶ p. 205

137 See Shaw, *Isabella d'Este*, 133, referring to Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes*, 169: Isabella d'Este to Francesco Gonzaga, 15 October 1489.

138 Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, fols. 24ᵛ–25ᵛ.

bined drum-beat for an ornamented melody of *Jouyssance vous donneray*.[139] The association of pipe-and-tabor with the *basse danse* in literary and iconographic sources has led Robert Mullally to suggest that this was the primary way to accompany this dance.[140] In the Germanic lands, however, a duo of a player of a "Swiss pipe" ("einer Schweitzer odder Querpfeiffen", that is, a transverse flute) and taborer may have been just as common, if not more, at court dances.[141] This practice warrants mention, because its greatest testimonial appears in the first of three autobiographical publications produced by Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor, and Margaret of Austria's father. Most dances depicted in his *Freydal* (1512–15), a book of chivalric tournaments, competitions, and masques, are accompanied by a flute and drum pair, although plate 12 indeed shows a dance animated by a *tabourin*.[142] (Further, see Chapter 2 by McDonald in the present volume.)

Dancers relied on the pipe-and-tabor player to keep time and remember the melody and form of each dance. In the chapter "On Pacts" of Guillaume Coquillart's satirical book of law, *Droitz nouveaulx* (c. 1482), an impish *tabourin* plays *Ma maistresse* in place of *Filles a marier*, as requested by a dancer who only knew the choreography for the latter.[143] The *tabourin* succeeds in making a fool of the dancer by finishing his tune while leaving the dancer hanging, mid-step, the laughingstock of the courtly gathering. Coquillart's description of this ridiculous episode echoes the order of Br9085, in which *Maistresse* (№ 18) directly follows *Filles a marier* (№ 17).[144] However, the music for *Maistresse* played by the *tabourin*, at forty-two notes, would have outlasted the thirty-two step-units of *Filles a marier*, making the situation described by Coquillart impossible unless the dancer requested *Maistresse* (forty-two steps), but the *tabourin* played *Filles a marier* (thirty-two notes). The humour of

139 Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, fols. 33^{v}–37^{r}.

140 Mullally argues that the dances were most often performed without polyphony, rejecting the concept of polyphonic improvisation outright. See Mullally, "The Polyphonic Theory of the *Basse danse*"; Mullally (ed. and trans.), *The Brussels* Basse danse *Book*, 23–24.

141 Agricola, *Musica instrumentalis deudsch*, ed. Eitner, 23 and 25.

142 Henning, *Musica Maximiliana*, 37–38; see 69–94 for reproductions of the illustrations. Plate 12 (original) appears on p. 71. Brainard cites *Freydal* as a rich source of Renaissance dance iconography, linking dance traditions of the Burgundian court to Vienna; see Brainard, "*Bassedanse*, *bassadanza*, and *ballo*", 64.

143 Heartz, "The Basse Dance", 307–10. The passage in question additionally cites *Le petit rouen* (N° 16) and *Le grant thorin* (N° 51). "*Maistresse*" of Br9085 appears with the title "*Ma maistresse*" as N° 3 of Toulouze; see also Thiry, "Le *Livre des Basses Danses* de Marguerite d'Autriche", 9.

144 In the original order of the manuscript, following Toulouze, these two tenors appeared on the first folio of music as N°s. 3 and 2, respectively.

this incident relies on a fundamental premise stated in the opening of Br9085, which explains that dancers only needed to know two things to perform a *basse danse*: the number of steps for the given dance, and how to execute those steps according to the *mesures*.[145] Familiarity with the music itself was perhaps less important than these two blunt facts. The long note values of the Br9085 *basse danse* tenors mean that one phrase could last half a minute. When that melody is adorned by surrounding contrapuntal voices, or is itself embellished, it can be more difficult to recognize.

It is easy to imagine the pipe-and-tabor, a single-line melody instrument, performing the rhythmic *pas de Brabant* and mensural *basses danses*. But how would a performer approach the long-note tenors of Br9085? One possibility would be simply to sustain each note of the tenor for its full duration, presumably adding rhythmic articulations. While such dogged adherence to the melody seems unlikely, the opening section of the *ballo El gioioso* (*Roti boully ioyeulx*) in Pa proves a plausible version of the melody (▶ Ex. I.1a and ▶ Appendix 5). Here, each note of tenor is subdivided into semibreves, ornamented with intervening minims and passing or neighbour tones.

▶ p. 182, ▶ p. 270

Closson and Mullally, citing Arena and Arbeau, suggested a second possibility for monophonic performance, in which players ornamented the tenor melodies.[146] Neither Br9085 nor any other contemporary source, however, preserves a *basse danse* tenor as a solo voice with diminutions.[147] Although the *basse danse* tenor *Jouyssance*, as presented in *Orchesographie*, provides a model for such types of monophonic diminutions, the main musical unit of *basse danse* by Arbeau's time was no longer subdivided in the same way as in the dances of Br9085.[148] The treatment of the melody in this *basse danse* shows the difficulty of retaining the melodic integrity of the long-note tenors, as does the melodic structure of the mensural *basses danses* of Br9085 (N°s. 30, 57, and 58).

145 Br9085, fol. 2ʳ; see Appendix 4.

146 Closson, *Le manuscrit dit des basses danses*, 38–41; Mullally (ed. and trans.), *The Brussels* Basse danse *Book*, 23–24.

147 The treatment of the tenor *La Spagna* in *Propter peccata quae peccastis* (attr. to Josquin) gives an example of long-short rhythmic subdivisions of the long notes, as well as cadential ornaments that assume accompaniment by at least one other voice; see Appendix 6.

148 In *Jouyssance*, one step-unit corresponds to four measures of 3/2 time, where the imperfect long is subdivided into two *imperfect* breves, each worth two perfect semibreves. Thus, while each long is still worth twelve minims, notes of the Br9085 tenors divide into six semibreves (3×2 + 3×2) while longs of *Jouyssance* divide into four semibreves (2×3 + 2×3); see "The steps and the music".

In both cases, clear changes in pitch occur on every breve (if not sooner), rather than every two breves. Nonetheless, the ornamental figures and flourishes in *Jouyssance* can guide the modern player of pipe-and-tabor. ▶ p. 198 Using *Le hault et le bas* (№ 19) as a model, ▶ Ex. I.24a shows the melody subdivided, with repeated notes on each pitch adorned by passing and ▶ p. 198 neighbour tones. ▶ Ex. I.24b follows with divisions over the same tune in the style of *Jouyssance*. The exercise of embellishing long-note tenors reveals their affinity to the more rhythmic dance melodies, like *La franchoise nouvelle*, thus suggesting a continuity between the mensural *basses danses* of Br9085 and their sixteenth-century counterparts.[149]

Although functional as a "one-man band", the pipe-and-tabor player also appears alongside the *alta* ensemble in iconographic sources. Arbeau explains that shawms obscured the sound of the tabor-pipe when a *tabourin* performed together with the *alta*, but their presence with the ensemble was beneficial, since the drum could be heard regardless and provided rhythmic stability for the dancers.[150] Though the sound of the three-holed pipe may not have been as sonorous as that of the instruments of the *alta*, its presence in the ensemble added a fresh timbral colour to the main melody (tenor) of a dance, since its full diatonic range of up to a twelfth (beginning in its second octave) mirrors the range of the bombard at the octave above.[151] Since the sustained notes of the tenor melody were assured by the bombard, the *tabourin* would have been free to ornament the tenor, adding yet another dimension to the process of polyphonic ornamentation of the *basse danse*.

Bagpipes or drone instruments

The bagpipe had been paired with schalmei since the Middle Ages, and enjoyed popularity at court during the 1470s. Based on surviving instruments, and on the premise that bagpipes played with the shawms, the bagpipe drone probably hovered around $a' \sim 465$ Hz, corresponding to

149 Moreover, such interplay between a simple tenor and mensural dance is also seen in *Roti boully*, whose melody is presented in both forms (*basse danse mineure*), first as a rhythmic *pas de Brabant*, then as a long-note *basse danse*.

150 Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, fol. 24^{r}. *Orchesographie* is the only source that recommends using percussion with a musical ensemble to keep a steady pulse in recreational dancing.

151 The tabor-pipe begins with four fundamental pitches, *ut re mi fa*, before skipping to its second octave. It is this second harmonic (*ut*) at which the instrument's full diatonic range begins. Like the bombard player, the pipe player would have visualized the fundamental pitch of this full diatonic range as *c-fa ut*, although it sounded an octave higher. The size of tabor-pipes in iconographical sources suggests an instrument with the same fundamental as the bombard.

the second note of the bombard, *d-sol re*. Visualizing that same place, the bagpipe's second note is also *d-sol re*, and most melodies in tone 1 with a final on *d* would fit the instrument.[152] However, some details of fifteenth-century bagpipes are not always clear, such as the relationship between drone and melody, or the quality (major or minor) of the instrument's fourth note, the third above the drone.

As with the *tabourin*, the bagpiper had to fit melodies into the instrument's range and modality. It is difficult to imagine a bagpipe—or any of the other solo instruments—playing only the written notes of a *basse danse* tenor, especially on an instrument that relies for articulation on changing notes and finger graces. But mensural dance tunes, like *La franchoise nouvelle* and *La danse de cleves*, work well on bagpipes, though the latter extends one note above the typical ambitus of western European instruments.

Pitch

A commonplace perception prevails that Renaissance pitch was relative, compared to later eras, to the point that we cannot determine a pitch standard in any one place or time. However, assembling the evidence from the above discussions of performance practices for the *alta*, pipe-and-tabor, and bagpipes, one can glean a surprisingly detailed picture of pitch for these instruments that were made to play together. The development of instruments across the Renaissance—with surviving shawms pitched in *d'* and *g*, bagpipes in *a*, and (tenor) sackbuts in *A*, all playing at about *a'* ~ 465 Hz—and the pitches of modern folk instruments suggest that the pitch standards of these instruments were more consistent than we often imagine.[153]

Court and civic accounts record the purchase of instruments made and played locally. One set of accounts from 1423, predating Br9085 by some decades, records that the Burgundian court treasury paid a maker in Bruges for a set of *alta* instruments: two bombards with a key, one "*contre*", and two schalmeien, plus a trumpet to be played with the

152 Baines, *Bagpipes*, 24; Podnos, *Bagpipes and Tunings*; Gilbert, "Bagpipe", 407–8.

153 A fuller account of the evolution of pitch standards from before the seventeenth century would be a welcome endeavour, but the standing reference for a survey of historical pitch is Haynes, *A History of Performing Pitch*.

shawms.[154] Well before consorts were expanded both higher and lower in the sixteenth-century, evidence such as the previous account attests that instruments were produced in consorts, presumably so that their sound quality, pitch, and tuning would accord. Examination of instruments and their pitches from the early fifteenth century reveals an underlying continuity even as pitch standards evolved into the seventeenth century.

Lute and Keyboard

The largest corpus of polyphonic dance settings survives as intabulations for solo lute and keyboard. The earliest source with possible examples of *basses danses* ("*danze*") is the Faenza Codex (Faenza, Biblioteca Comunale, Ms. 117).[155] *Bel fiore dança* (pp. 170–71) comprises a florid voice over a tenor in ☾, which probably originated as a French or Italian *forme fixe* song.[156]

The Buxheimer Orgelbuch, the principal source for keyboard settings of dance music, dating from the 1450s, preserves thirteen compositions linked to *basse danse* tenors, including *Une fois avant que morir* (Nos. 37, 51–52, 93, and 217 as "Vil lieber zit uff diser erde" and Nos. 89–92 as "Annavasanna"), *Je languis* and *Languir en mille destresse* (Nos. 135–36 as "Stüblin"), and *La franchoise* (Nos. 118–19 as "*Mi ut re ut e c d c*"). In this relatively early source, each tenor note occupies three subdivisions per pitch, corresponding to the rhythmic durations of the *bassadanza* and early *basse danse*.

Sources of lute music dating from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries transmit intabulations of the *La Spagna* tenor both in the form of the *basse danse*, with six subdivisions per note of tenor, and the *bassadanza*, with three subdivisions per note of tenor.[157] This attests to the familiarity of both traditions among instrumentalists.

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154 Marix, *Histoire de la musique et des musiciens*. Duffin suggests that the "*contre*" was a bombard (perhaps without a key) meant to play contratenor parts (Duffin, "The *trompette de menestrels*", 401–2) or, after Myers, possibly a barrel-bell shawm-instrument of the same range as the bombard; see Duffin, "Backward Bells and Barrel Bells", 118.

155 Artur Michel explained, "During the first half of the fifteenth century, at least in Italy, the more dignified dances, the '*Danze*', resolved themselves into a single dance-form [by mid-century], the so-called '*bassa danza*'"; Michel, "The Earliest Dance-Manuals", 117.

156 Although Memelsdorff suggests that the tenor is too long for a *rondeau*, it closely corresponds to the length and formal structure of French *rondeaux* tenors from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Memelsdorff, *The Codex Faenza 117*, vol. 1, 134–35, esp. n. 96.

157 Chicago, Newberry Library, Case Ms. VM 140 C.25 [henceforth "Capirola"], fols. 11^{r}, 43^{r}, and 61^{r}; Francesco Spinacino, *Intabulatura de lauto, libro secondo* (Venice, 1507) [henceforth "Spinacino"], fols. 31^{r}–33^{r}; Paris, BnF, Département de Musique, Rés. Vmd Ms. 27 [henceforth "Thibault"], fols. 15^{r}–16^{v}.

Surviving musical settings for lute and keyboard raise questions about whether certain of their musical features are idiomatic particularities of these instruments and their playing practices. They also prompt us to investigate whether the specific idioms of keyboard and lute music influenced ensemble improvisatory counterpoint, and vice versa. For example, these intabulations often begin with short intonations of two to four notes, which set the tempo and introduce the tenor. Although none of the surviving polyphonic settings of French *basses danses* indicates such flourishes, Italian dance masters suggest that such intonations were a common aspect of performance practice, and at least one polyphonic dance setting (a *saltarello*), de la Torre's *Alta* (*La Spagna*), gives a simple two-note pickup into the tenor.[158]

These works are also characterised by contrasting polyphonic textures. The earlier keyboard settings of Bux often lay slow, largely homophonic tenor and contratenor lines under a florid cantus in perpetual motion, not unlike de la Torre's *Alta*. But lute settings of *La Spagna* from the early sixteenth century show a wider variety of contrapuntal textures. Florid imitation between cantus and contratenor lines pervades the *Bassadanza* in Francesco Spinacino's *Intabulatura de lauto* (1507), but this is an intabulation of *La Spagna* from *Canti C*. No other dance-tenor setting for these instruments displays this type of close imitation. Rather, they use a single florid line against more stable voices. In some settings, this florid voice runs around the tenor, for example, in Capirola's second setting (№ 24). In others, it creates a diminution of the tenor, for example in the anonymous setting in the Thibault tablature (Paris, BnF Rés. Vmd Ms. 27). In yet others, the florid line scurries from part to part over the instrument's entire range, framed by square rhythmic punctuation in the other voices, such as Capirola's third setting (№ 37).[159] While Spinacino's intabulation shows the influence of ensemble music on solo instruments, it is unclear whether early settings of *La Spagna*, such as the *Alta* or M. Guglielmus' *Falla con misuras*, influenced lute and keyboard settings or were moulded by them. In any case, it is easy to imagine a *bas* ensemble with three or four contrapuntal functions beginning with a short intonation, followed by a dance-tenor setting with one

158 See the comments of Domenico and Ambrosio; Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, vol. 1, 16–19 and 129–30, respectively.

159 Numerical references to Capirola's settings are from Capirola, *Lute Book*, ed. Gombosi.

of the above textures, or an ensemble of two instruments playing a tenor and a florid discantus above, just as we find in keyboard intabulations.

Voice

Two historical accounts attesting to the vocal performance of music for the *basse danse* serve as bookends for the life of the genre, beginning with the *basse danse* being accompanied by popular songs and ending with vocal renditions of specific dance music.[160] While it is unclear in the latter whether the music would have been vocalized or whether text was added to specific dance music—Arbeau admits that music for the *basse danse* and *pavane* could be played on any instrument or could "even be sung with voices"[161]—the earliest reference to the *basse danse* attests to popular song becoming dance music.

At the turn of the fifteenth century, the following excerpt from Catalan poet Francesch de la Via's 1406 poem *La Senyora de valor* describes voices singing music for the *basse danse*. Although de la Via fancifully uses a trio of young birds ("they", in the following excerpt) learning to sing after their parents' model to supply music for the *basse danse*, the poem nonetheless attests to the origins of this dance in popular song, the mutability of that song into dance music, and that voices could provide music for dance:[162]

> And, in a few moments, they all
> began to sing,
> and then they began
> the measure of *baixa dansa*
> From a chanson from France
> most pleasing to hear;
> "Je l'am, je vulh servir",
> of most gracious sound;
> And then, with great reason,
> They made the second measure,
> In concord all together
> That no bird made a mistake.

160 For further examples of vocal accompaniment of dance, see Salmen, "Dances and Dance Music", 186–87.
161 "*Voires chanter avec les voix*"; Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, fol. 33ᵛ.
162 Quoted and translated in Mas i Garcia, "Baixa Dansa", 15; discussed in Wilson, *The Basse Dance Handbook*, 269.

The birds adopt a French chanson as the accompaniment for dance, first in the *tempus* (that is, measure) of a *basse danse*, then in a second *tempus*, likely that of a *pas de Brabant* (*saltarello*).[163] Tess Knighton suggests that Gilet Velut's *Je voel servir plus c'onques* (Ox213, fol. 89^{r}) could be the song "*Je l'am, je vulh servir*" cited by de la Via, despite its inexact textual concordance.[164] Beyond the similarity of incipits, this proposal is supported by the structural nature and rhythmic behaviour of Velut's tenor: except for a few passing minims, the tenor moves in steady breves and semibreves in ☾, with hemiola coloration at cadences, just as we find in the chanson tenors of *Sans faire*, *L'amy de ma dame*, and *Triste plaisir*.

Although few songs can be established with certainty as the models for *basse danse* tenors, the fantastical artifice of the singing birds in de la Via's poem further attests to the origins of music for the dance in popular polyphonic chansons. Songs in ☾, or in another duple *tempus,* with structural tenors, such as *Sans faire* and *Triste plaisir*, lend themselves easily to accompanying dance, with one step-unit to two semibreves of their tenor voice, moving in regular rhythmic motion. As a subsequent step in the development of the genre, surviving works, such as *Du pist mein hort* in Tr87, attest to the use of a song tenor as a foundation for added florid contrapuntal cantus and contratenor voices. While such counterpoint could certainly have been sung, the doubled length of the isometric tenor notes of Br9085, and any surrounding florid counterpoint, would have proven more difficult for text setting, as in the setting of *La Spagna* by Ghiselin and that in *Canti C*.[165] On the other hand, the forms and rhythms of the mensural *basse danse* and *pas de Brabant* tenors, which give way to the *basses danses communes*, could have accommodated a syllabic text setting neatly, and closely mimic songs associated with dances of sources from around 1500, such as *Chaminata*

163 Marfany, "Identificació de dues cançones franceses", 20–21. Marfany goes on to assert that the *basse danse* would have been monophonic "like the majority of *baixes danses*" but that the *saltarello* would have been polyphonic, following the description that "the second measure, [was] in concord all together". There is no indication in the poem, and, therefore, no reason to believe, that the *basse danse* measure would have been monophonic.

164 Knighton, "Isabel of Castile and her Music Books", 35.

165 *Propter peccata quae peccastis* is perhaps the obvious reference for a texted setting of a *basse danse* tenor, but it probably did not originally bear this text, since it appears as "La spagne tanz" in Copenhagen, Royal Library Ms. 1872-4˚, N° 2. Its appearance in the guise of a motet in printed collections from the 1530s to the 1550s coincides with the eclipse of the *basse danse* by the pavane; we would argue that this is one possible reason for its being underlaid with a sacred text. Jan Willem Bonda, however, argues in favour of singing the *Tandernaken* text to the florid cantus line of Tyling's setting (Tr87); see Bonda, "Tandernaken, between Bruges and Ferrara", 58–64 and 71–74.

and *Pazienzia*. The Gresley manuscript offers further evidence for the addition of texts to such songs, even if some fit better than others, such as *Esperans*, which bears the subtitle "Brestow is a mery town".[166]

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Arbeau substantiates his reference to voices accompanying dance with a *pavane* whose rhythm and measure easily accommodates the syllabic text of the chanson *Belle qui tiens ma vie*. As the predecessor to this stately dance, the *basse danse commune*, one basic choreography served for all these communal and common dances, for which the music comprised regular, eight-measure phrases. Its homophonic texture, in which the melody had migrated from the tenor to the cantus, could easily accommodate a text, unlike the *basse danse* music from the second half of the fifteenth century.

Tracing the Development of the *Basse danse*

The evidence marshalled here allows us to situate Br9085 in the context of the *basse danse* tradition and to offer an integrated account of the development of its melodies, rhythmic expressions, performance practices, and musical styles.

The ubiquitous marriage of song and dance predates historical records. Accounts of the *basse danse* from the early fifteenth century describe dancers choosing songs in imperfect *tempus* and major *prolatio*, with tenor voices moving in isometric semibreves. Chansons like *Sans faire* were particularly suitable for the earliest *basse danse* steps, where two perfect semibreves of tenor take the time of one step-unit. Accordingly, the earliest reference (1406) to the *basse danse*, mentioned above, cites a song, "Je l'am, je vulh servir". *Je voel servir plus c'onques* by Gilet Velut, suggested as the model, indeed behaves in just such a fashion.

The texting of these sources argues that the cantus voice was sung to instrumental accompaniment on the tenor and contratenor, but that a contratenor voice was not always present.[167] Such songs were commonly sung and danced simultaneously. The tenors with chanson incipits in Br9085 are likely remnants of a rich tradition of dance song. The intimate relationship between *forme fixe* verse, sung text, and dance, and the possibilities for simultaneous singing and dancing of these songs in

166 Fallows, "The Gresley Dance Collection", 19.

167 On contratenor voices, see Kemp, "A Chanson for Two Voices". On texting in sources, see Litterick, "Performing Franco-Netherlandish Secular Music"; and Litterick, "On Instrumental Ensemble Music".

performance offer a compelling avenue for the revival of late medieval human expression.

At some point, these chansons, particularly in Burgundian circles, inspired independent dance tenors, some closely related to the original texted songs. This explains, for example, the striking similarity between the texted polyphonic song, *Sans faire,* and the related, untexted tenor, *Le petit rouen*. It also accounts for the fact that none of the tenors with geographical, familial, or descriptive titles have yet been traced to song models. This new generation of tenors adopted and elaborated the motivic vocabulary of contemporary songs, blurring the lines between derived and newly composed melodies.

During the first half of the fifteenth century, instrumentalists performing these song tenors began to replace the cantus and contratenor with newly added, florid contrapuntal voices. Examples of this practice include the group of compositions in Tr87 linked to the *basse danse* and to related stroke-notation tenors (*Je suy si povre de liesce* and *Auxce bon youre delabonestren*), as well as similar polyphonic settings with no known links to the *basse danse* (Tyling's *Tandernaken*). As with the earliest polyphonic chansons associated with the *basse danse*, it is possible to execute the steps of the dance to these compositions if they are performed according to the choreographies in Nancy, in which each step-unit is deployed over two notes (one breve) of tenor.

Polyphonic settings show the structural duo of cantus and tenor, most often with a highly florid line over a simple tenor, such as in *Bel fiore dança* (Faenza), "Tenor *Anavois*" (i.e., *Une fois avant que morir*) in Loch (p. 70) for keyboard or lute, and Guglielmus' *Falla con misuras*, which fits the schalmei and bombard duo well. These settings treat each pitch of the tenor as having three subdivisions (as a semibreve in ☾ or a breve in ☽), where each dance step-unit occupies two notes of tenor.

Throughout this period, the cantus-tenor nucleus was joined by a contratenor, ranging from a fifth below to an octave above the tenor. At cadences, this part typically proceeds in parallel fourths below the cantus. It provides bridge motives across phrase endings while tenor and cantus rest or sustain pitches. During this period, iconography and descriptions indicate the rising role of the *alta* ensemble: two shawms pitched a fifth apart, performing cantus and tenor functions, joined by a slide trumpet functioning as the contratenor.

From the mid-fifteenth century, the contratenor voice increasingly dropped in range. At cadences, it typically proceeded in thirds and fifths below the tenor, but it continued to perform bridge material across phrase endings. Closely corresponding to this contrapuntal development, the slide trumpet gave way to the trombone, an instrument suited to the range and role of the low contratenor voice in the *alta* ensemble. This development is typified by Obrecht's *Tandernaken*, with a florid low contratenor voice, and De la Torre's *Alta*, with a simple low contratenor voice, both of which can only be played on the lower trombone. With the arrival of a fourth voice, the contratenor altus, a second bombard was added to the *alta*. Early hints of this style in the *basse danse* repertory are found in works like Guillaume Faugues' *Missa la bassadanza* and Isaac's *Missa la bassadanza*. In the latter, the section most associated with the *bassadanza* (one perfection per tenor note) is the three-voice second Agnus.[168]

Br9085 and Toulouze attest to a fundamental change in the performance practice of the French *basse danse*, one exemplified by only a few surviving polyphonic settings. The sustained imperfect breves and longer choreographies of their dances indicate that each note of the tenor was sustained for the length of a complete dance step-unit. This marks a development in the Franco-Burgundian *basse danse* tradition that distinguishes it from the Italian *bassadanza* and from the related German *Hoftanz*.[169] This development coincides chronologically with the prevalence of four-voice counterpoint in the *alta* and other ensembles.

Ironically, the few examples of surviving polyphony that correspond to this French tradition are settings of *La Spagna*, a tenor conspicuously absent from Br9085. These include the anonymous three-voice setting in *Canti C* and Ghiselin's four-voice setting. The many similarities between

168 The three-voice second Agnus of Isaac's *Missa la bassadanza* so closely resembles a *bassadanza* because he literally quotes the model of *La Spagna* in this section, a trademark of the second Agnus in his cantus-firmus masses; see Gilbert, "Elaboration in Heinrich Isaac's Three-Voice Mass Sections and Untexted Compositions", 60–62. Although this section captures the spirit of an instrumental *bassadanza*, the voices extend beyond the ranges of the instruments of the *alta*, and Isaac places the tune in the bassus, an unconventional practice with respect to the genre.

169 Musical examples, such as the two anonymous settings of *La Spagna* in Q18, as well as shorter choreographies from the sixteenth century attest to the constancy of the *bassadanza* tradition, in which each note of tenor received three beats. The *Hoftanz* tradition continued into the sixteenth century, as attested by the only polyphonic setting of *Le petit rouen*, the anonymous "Hoftanz" in Munich, BSB, Ms. Mus. 1516, Nº 183, and settings of *La Spagna* by Johannes Kotter (*Spaniol Kochersperg*) and Hans Weck (*Spanyöler Tancz*).

the anonymous setting and that by Ghiselin—from the identical presentation of the tenor to their close contrapuntal motives and procedures—as well as similarities with Ghiselin's setting of Binchois' *Je loe amours* ("Joli amours"), suggest that Ghiselin most likely composed the setting of *La Spagna* in *Canti C* as well. A single five-voice setting of *La Spagna* with the Latin text *Propter peccata quae peccastis*, certainly a contrafact, is attributed to Josquin, although the attribution has been rejected in favour of one to Petrus Alamire.[170] This setting, along with those in *Canti C* and by Ghiselin, can accompany the dance choreography of *La Spagna* as notated in Toulouze. These remain the only known polyphonic settings linked specifically to the peculiarities of the Franco-Burgundian *basse danse* tradition as preserved in Br9085 and Toulouze.

Br9085 shows evidence of another development of the *basse danse*: mensural dances such as *La danse de Ravestain*. These melodies resemble music for contemporary Italian *balli* in their rhythmic liveliness, including the way in which they subdivide long notes into repeated pitches, but without changes of metre or pulse. They arguably presage the construction of the later *basses danses communes,* as described by Arena and Arbeau and exemplified by the *basse danse Jouyssance*, itself linked to the chanson *Jouyssance vous donneray*. However, the structure of the dance's imperfect long had changed in the sixteenth century: having previously comprised six imperfect semibreves, it now divided into four perfect semibreves.

The story of the *basse danse* can be traced over nearly two centuries, with Br9085 representing the final flowering of a single branch of this dance tradition growing in the rarefied atmosphere of the Burgundian court. While the long-note, isometric tenors persist no further in the story, the three mensural *basses danses* of Br9085 usher in the next stage in the genre's development, while simultaneously providing a link back to the Italian *bassadanza* and the mensural music of the *ballo* tradition.

RECREATING THE MUSIC OF THE *BASSE DANSE*

Br9085 is a precious treasure as a material object. However, unless we revive its dances, the notes and steps on the page will remain fossils preserved in silver and gold. Recreating the choreographies and the

170 See n. 165 above and Fallows, "Alamire as a Composer", 256–58.

unwritten musical performance traditions brings these dances to life and serves as an invaluable tool for research. To aid in that endeavour, modern scholars and performers can refer to existing repertory, rules, and conventions of fifteenth-century music to create new polyphonic settings of the surviving monophonic tenors, and even to craft new *basse danse* tenors following the principles discussed above. Such experimentation and practice have the potential to provide answers to old questions, as well as raise thought-provoking new questions. For example, what are the boundaries between extemporized and composed music? What are the boundaries between shared convention and personal style? And to what extent can monophonic melodic and rhythmic patterns be used in polyphony? They also offer ways to explore the development of the *basse danse* and its musical traditions across its two-hundred-year existence.

Like choristers singing *super librum*, civic and court musicians used the *basse danse* tenors to provide a structure for polyphonic improvisation on secular tunes.[171] Moving beyond the few surviving composed examples, modern performers and scholars have followed a variety of approaches in adding counterpoint to *basse danse* tenors. In his groundbreaking article on the *alta*, Lorenz Welker included an experimental setting, with counterpoint, over four iterations of *Filles a marier*.[172] Ross Duffin has added voices to the mensural dances of the fifteenth century, including three-voice settings of *Beaulte de Castille* (№ 25), *La franchoise nouvelle* (№ 57), and *La danse de cleves* (№ 58).[173] Adam Gilbert provides possible solutions for counterpoint on the tenor *Cançon de pifari dco. el Ferrarese*, two of which can be heard on recordings, along with extemporized counterpoint over *La Spagna*.[174] Crawford Young is recognized for his modern recreations of counterpoint on lute.[175] Piet Stryckers has

171 On *cantare super librum*, see Ferand, "'Sodaine and Unexpected' Music"; Bent, "*Resfacta* and *Cantare Super Librum*"; Duffin, "*Simplex et Diminutus*"; Canguilhem, "Singing upon the Book"; Broude, "To Sing Upon the Book".

172 Welker, "Alta capella", 162–65.

173 Duffin, "Ensemble Improvisation", 211–12, 225–27.

174 Gilbert, "Reverse Engineering Fifteenth-Century Counterpoint", 185–91; *Music from the Court of Burgundy*, Ciaramella (CD, Yarlung Records, YAR 05785, 2011).

175 These may be heard on *Bassadanze, balli e canzoni "a la ferrarese": italienische Instrumentalmusik der Frührenaissance*, Alta Capella und Citharedi der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis dir. Crawford Young and Randall Cook (CD, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, GD 77243, 1984, reissued 1991), and *Forse che sí, forse che no: Dance Music in the Quattrocentro*, Ferrara Ensemble dir. Crawford Young (CD, Fonti Musicali, FMD182, 1996). Young, along with Markus Jans, supervised the counterpoint recreations on *De arte saltandi: Die Tänze des Domenico da Piacenza (ca. 1450)*, Basel Domenico Project dir. Véronique Daniels (CD, Terem-Music, EM-CD-001, 2015).

also crafted convincing modern recreations of polyphony over several Br9085 tenors.[176] Recent recordings by the ensembles Alta Bellezza, Per-Sonat, Tiburtina Ensemble, and Oltremontano Antwerpen have also set both the isometric tenors and mensural dances to counterpoint.[177] These raise compelling questions about how close we can come to historical recreations. For example, settings of *La danse de cleves,* with high contratenor voice, might arguably be considered anachronistic, even if convincing, since mensural dances are a later development in the *basse danse* tradition. In the same vein, how likely would one have heard high contratenor voices setting the longer sustained notes of the later French *basse danse* tenors? Where are the boundaries between settings that add counterpoint to unaltered tenor voices, and those that apply cadential formulae to the tenors themselves? To what extent did players employ simple "modal" sonorities, versus early harmonic progressions or more complex counterpoint? How might we inform choices about adding accidentals to the tenors in light of questions about tone characteristics, cadences, dissonant *mi-fa* sonorities, and their relationship to original models? Posing ourselves these very questions, ▶ in Appendix 7 we provide settings of some of the tenors from Br9085 that we have composed to illustrate possible examples of how one might treat the tenors based on historical counterpoint and surviving settings. We found that these questions, which await those who study and perform these dances, can all be better answered by learning and applying historical rules of practical theory.

▶ p. 364

Historical Models

When recreating music for fifteenth-century dance, it is important to recall guidelines for adorning the tenors with accompanying voices that are native to their style. Surviving compositions comprising the polyphonic dance repertory provide a wealth of settings that can be analysed and emulated. First, it is necessary to discern which works set their

176 Shared in a personal correspondence with Piet Stryckers, 20 November 2021. Stryckers' settings of *La danse de cleves* and *La franchoise nouvelle* may be heard on *Dulcis melancolia: Biographie musicale de Marguerite d'Autriche*, Capilla Flamenca dir. Dirk Snellings (CD, Musique en Wallonie, MEW0525, 2006).

177 Recordings include *Guillaume Dufay*, L'Alta Bellezza (CD, Arcana, A122, 2021); *Kaiser Maximilian I.: Lieder, Chansons, Tänze*, Per-Sonat (CD, Christophorus, CHR 7748, 2019); *Paradisi Porte: Hans Memling's Angelic Concert*, Tiburtina Ensemble and Oltremontano Antwerpen (CD, Accent, ACC 24373, 2021). A polyphonic setting of *La danse de cleves*, as well as several *balli*, may be heard on *Villon to Rabelais: 16th-Century Music of the Streets, Theatres, and Courts*, Newberry Consort dir. Mary Springfels (CD, Harmonia Mundi, HMU 907226, 1999).

tenors as Italian *bassedanze* or earlier French *basses danses* (where one step-unit aligns with every two notes of tenor), and which set their tenors as the later, more extended *basses danses* as transmitted in Br9085 and Toulouze (with one step-unit corresponding to each note of tenor).

Only three surviving polyphonic ensemble compositions fit the longer choreographies and note values notated in Br9085 and Toulouze: the aforementioned settings of *La Spagna* in *Canti C* (three voices), by Ghiselin (four voices), and dubiously attributed to Josquin (five voices). As stated above, the first two employ the same variant version of the *La Spagna* tenor. Furthermore, their compositional style resembles that of the anonymous *Canti C* version so closely that it too can probably be attributed to Ghiselin. This raises the question of just how much of our modern perception of this tradition is mediated through the work of just a few composers.

Modern attempts to recreate counterpoint over *basse danse* tenors are indebted to the compositional craft of Ghiselin, whose florid setting of Binchois' *Je loe amours* so closely corresponds to the polyphonic treatment of his *La Spagna* settings and exemplifies the instrumental ranges and functions of the *alta*. But they can also adopt the common florid vocabulary of contemporary composers such as Isaac, Obrecht, Pipelare, Brumel, or Agricola, which can inform the counterpoint of a later *basse danse* just as well as a *bassadanza*.[178] This may be complemented by the (danceable) *bassadanza* settings of *La Spagna* in Q18 and *Falla con misuras*, and by Faugues' *Missa La bassadanza*, which, although its tenors remain unidentified, offers clues to techniques of constructing four-voice counterpoint around a long-note tenor in the period between about 1460 and 1475. Parallel to these, de la Torre's *Alta*, although it sets the *Spagna* tenor as a *saltarello*, is the only polyphonic example with a simple low contratenor.

Consonances and Contrapuntal Rules

Modern musicians who add counterpoint to a *basse danse* share with their historical counterparts the same choice of consonant and dissonant intervals above or below an existing tenor voice (▶ Ex. I.25). Consonant

▶ p. 199

178 It must be remembered that Isaac's treatment of the *Spagna* tenor in his *Missa La bassadanza* exemplifies just that: a *bassadanza*; see n. 168 above.

intervals are divided into two categories: perfect and imperfect. The perfect consonances above and below a tenor are the unison, fifth, octave, twelfth, fifteenth, and so on. Fourths and their octaves were considered perfect in theory but unstable in counterpoint, and they were only admitted above the tenor when supported by a third or a fifth below. Perfect consonances were strongly associated with opening sonorities and those at cadential arrivals. Parallel perfect consonances were forbidden, except the parallel fourths of *faburden/fauxbourdon*, which are supported by a third or fifth below. Thirds, sixths, tenths, thirteenths, and so on were the imperfect consonances above a tenor, while thirds and their octave compounds were admitted as imperfect consonances below a tenor. Although not officially a consonance, a sixth below the tenor gained acceptance by the time of Br9085 as a neighbouring and passing tone, and it was an essential element of *decimae* (parallel tenths, usually around a sustained pitch or series of pitches), a compositional procedure ubiquitous in florid counterpoint at the end of the century.[179]

Composers placed perfect and imperfect consonant intervals in a delicate balance. This is unsurprising, since major thirds and sixths tend to resolve outwards to fifths and octaves, respectively. When in a series, imperfect consonances—such as a latticework of interwoven thirds and sixths—are complemented by intervening fifths. Meanwhile, strings of florid *decimae* usually resolve to an octave.

Dissonant intervals—seconds, fourths (if unsupported), sevenths, ninths, elevenths, fourteenths, and so on—are to be avoided on strong beats, that is, on down- and upbeats. However, they are allowed on unaccented passing or neighbouring tones, or on a strong beat when prepared appropriately, for example, a suspension. Diminished or augmented varieties of the perfect consonances should be altered to avoid occurrences of *mi contra fa*. Particularly around 1500, when Br9085 was copied, composers who broke this rule earned the reproach of the theorist Johannes Tinctoris.[180]

Extemporized counterpoint allowed for dissonances that resulted when two or more voices were consonant with the tenor, but dissonant

179 Gafurius, *The* Practica musicae, trans. and ed. Young, 154–55.

180 Tinctoris cites Firminus Caron's chanson *Helas que pourra devenir* in Tinctoris, *The Art of Counterpoint*, trans. and ed. Seay, 130. Composers tend to skirt around this rule, especially in florid compositions from the last two decades of the fifteenth century, as in Alexander Agricola's settings of *De tous biens plaine*. Bent discusses unavoidable instances of *mi contra fa* in Bent, "*Musica recta* and *musica ficta*", 94–95.

with each other. The most common examples of this phenomenon, which theorists called *contradiscordantia*, occur when the cantus sounds a third or a fifth above the tenor, while the contratenor sounds a fifth below. Although both voices are consonant with the tenor, the resulting interval between them is a seventh or a ninth, respectively.[181] We tend to avoid such dissonances in modern recreations of fifteenth-century music, but they were probably authentic to the historical soundscape.

Nonetheless, musicians well-trained in the uses of consonance and dissonance, and armed with the vocabulary of common consonant motives, could successfully navigate improvisation to a tenor. They followed some combination of the rules listed below.[182] These guidelines help structure modern recreations of the music for fifteenth-century dance.

- Begin and end with a perfect consonance (unison, fifth, octave, twelfth, fifteenth, and so on), unless in imitation.
- Ascend and descend in parallel motion with imperfect consonances (thirds, sixths, and so on), but never with perfect consonances.
- Place at least one imperfect consonance between two perfect consonances of the same size, unless the tenor remains in the same place, as in repeated pitches or intervals. Dissimilar perfect consonances may follow one another, and similar perfect consonances may follow each other in contrary motion.
- Move in contrary motion (to the tenor) as much as possible, unless in imitation.
- Approach cadences in contrary motion to the tenor, but never in the same manner subsequently. After a preparatory suspension, the tenor voice typically descends by step into the cadential resolution, while the cantus ascends by step. The aural result is movement from a (major) sixth to an octave or a (minor) third to a unison if the roles are inverted. In three parts, a high contratenor may move in parallel motion to the cantus at the fourth below. A low contratenor may leap from a fifth below the tenor to a third below, a unison, a third above, or a fifth above.

181 The three pieces from Tr87 discussed above (*Du pist mein hort*, *Auxce bon youre delabonestren*, and Tyling's *Tandernaken*) exemplify this type of dissonance; see nn. 34 and 68.

182 See, for example, Anonymous XI in Wingell, "Anonymous XI (CS III)", 313–22, including the "art of the discant" and the "art of the contratenor"; Gafurius, *The* Practica musicae, trans. and ed. Young, 131–37; Ramos de Pareja, *Musica practica*, trans. and ed. Miller, 115–23; and Tinctoris, *The Art of Counterpoint*, trans. and ed. Seay, 132–41.

Johannes Tinctoris concludes his set of rules with the idea of *varietas*:

> "any composer or improvisor of the greatest genius may achieve this diversity if he either composes or improvises now by one quantity, then by another, now by one perfection, then by another, now by one proportion, then by another, now by one conjunction [that is, by interval], then by another, now with syncopations, then without syncopations, now with *fugae*, then without *fugae*, now with pauses, now without pauses, now diminished, now as written."[183]

Tinctoris' description of *varietas* beckons musicians to infuse variety into their music-making, whether composed or improvised, to avoid monotony and strive for elegance. Just as a rhetorician methodically presents and develops clear ideas when building an argument, the *basse danse* settings of *La Spagna* illustrate how one can develop a musical motive or figure over an entire phrase or section, before changing to another for the following phrase. On a more rudimentary level, the tenor of *La danse de cleves* typifies different ways in which a simple musical idea may be expressed, and how the same underlying cadential passage may differ from one iteration to the next (see "Variants and Performance" above).

Motivic Vocabulary and Solmization

It has been a common misperception that instrumentalists (especially wind players) were less musically literate than their vocal counterparts, and only learned to read music by the end of the fifteenth century, albeit in a less refined way than singers. However, research has increasingly shown that instrumentalists were more literate and skilled in notated music than previously believed, and modern ideas of their capabilities and practices are changing.[184]

183 Tinctoris, *The Art of Counterpoint*, trans. and ed. Seay, 139. For a more in-depth discussion of Tinctoris' use of *varietas*, see Luko, "Tinctoris on *Varietas*", 99–136.

184 Although Zorzi Trombetta's notebook has been taken as evidence of less skilful musicianship, it conveys much about a musician logically working at his craft. If his added contratenor lines to Dunstable's tenor *Puisque m'amour* are rudimentary, however, his son, Alvise Trombone, claimed to have written two *si placet* contratenor voices, now unfortunately lost, to a motet by Busnois. See Baroncini, "'Se canta dalli cantori overo se sona dalli sonadori'".

Throughout the development of the fifteenth-century *basse danse*, vocalists and instrumentalists shared voice ranges and functions, common repertory, practical theory, contrapuntal paradigms, and melodic and rhythmic vocabulary. Their musical literacy went beyond the visible notes of the page: the language of the Guidonian hand. Vocalists and instrumentalists, including the members of the *alta* ensemble, visualized their pitches and relative ranges by employing the six *voces musicales*, the vocables of solmization.[185]

In his *Expositio manus*, Johannes Tinctoris enlists the musical hand as a useful tool for learning all the sounds of music. From the early sixteenth century, illustrations of instruments, like the schalmei and bombard, indicate fingerings through vocables, with the bottom note of each instrument given as "*ut*".[186] The range of the *alta* as an ensemble corresponds closely to the ambitus of the musical hand, or the gamut. The highest standard note of the schalmei and the lowest practicable first-position note of the slide trumpet correspond to the extremities of the gamut, *e-la* and *Gamma-ut*, respectively. *Gamma-ut* is also the lowest first-position note of the trombone for the lower transposition of the *alta*. In between, the lowest note of the bombard, and any tenor voice or instrument, is *c-fa ut*. Vocables also inform the historical tunings of surviving instruments, in which fingerings related to "*mi*" tend to be pitched lower, and those solmized as "*fa*" pitched higher. Thus, like the voice, wind instruments of the *alta* have their own musical compass, indicated by vocables, that also corresponds closely to their ranges, functions, and tuning systems.[187]

Treatises from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries reveal that musicians learned how to visualize the consonant intervals of counterpoint using solmization. The anonymous *Regulae cantandi contrapunctum* exemplifies this:[188]

185 Gilbert, "The Shawm and the *Alta* Ensemble", 3–9. Solmization has attracted increasing attention in the research of Renaissance music, both in the performance of composed polyphony and extemporized counterpoint. See Allaire, *The Theory of Hexachords*, 13–62, 91–153; and Smith, *The Performance of 16th-Century Music*, 20–54.

186 See, for example, Agricola, *Musica instrumentalis deudsch*, ed. Eitner, 11–30.

187 Gilbert, "The Shawm and the *Alta* Ensemble", 3–9.

188 Gilbert, "Iuxta artem conficiendi", 25–54. Although several theorists give similar lists of consonances around a given note in terms of solmization syllables, Ugolino of Orvieto gives exhaustive lists of intervals within and beyond the octave surrounding every note of the gamut. For his lists and those of other theorists, see Henderson, "Solmization Syllables in Music Theory", 180–222.

> Note that over every *ut*, the unison is *ut*, the third *mi*, the fifth *sol* or *ut*, the sixth *la* or *re*, the octave *fa* or *ut*, the tenth *la* or *re*, the twelfth *sol* or *ut*, the thirteenth *la* or *re*, and the fifteenth *fa*.
> Note that over every *re*, the unison *re*, the third *fa*, the fifth *la* or *re*, the sixth *mi*, the octave *sol* or *re*, the tenth *fa*, the twelfth *la* or *re*, the thirteenth *mi*, the fifteenth *sol*, etc.
> Note that over every *mi*, the unison is *mi*, the third is *sol* or *ut*, the fifth *mi*, the sixth *fa* or *ut*, the octave *la* or *mi*, the tenth *sol* or *ut*, the twelfth *mi*, the thirteenth *fa*, the fifteenth *la*.
> Note that over every *fa*, the unison is *fa*, the third *la* or *re*, the fifth *fa* or *ut*, the sixth *sol* or *re*, the octave *fa*, the tenth *la* or *re*, the twelfth *fa*, the thirteenth *sol*.
> Note that over every *sol* the unison is *sol* or *ut*, the third *mi*, the fifth *sol* or *re*, the sixth *la* or *mi*, the octave *sol* or *ut*, the tenth *mi*, the twelfth *sol*.
> Note that over every *la*, the unison is *la* or *re*, the third *fa* or *ut*, the fifth *la* or *mi*, the sixth *fa*, the octave *la* or *re*, the tenth *fa*, the twelfth *la*.
> The rule stated above is general and should serve the entire hand.[189]

The implications for those analysing and recreating historical counterpoint on the *basse danse* tenors of Br9085 are profound. Knowing the letter name of a pitch played a role in understanding its fixed place in the hand, and the vocables provided the most immediate means for visualizing melodic patterns and their intervallic relationships. For example, the vocables "*re-fa-mi-re*" outline a figure that may begin on pitches with the letter names *d*, *g*, or *a*, but its intervallic relationships are expressed with more immediacy through its vocables. On any instrument with a relatively narrow ambitus, transposition was necessary; the vocables guided players in navigating their instruments. Unlike the modern performer, who can shift anywhere with a change of clef and key signature, the historical player would read or visualize the pitches of the musical hand and staff in their fixed places, but they would reassign the pitches to different fingerings on the instrument. By mapping the entire range of the instrument from one set of note names (g to e″, for example) to

189 Translated from Meyer (ed.), *Tractatus de cantu figurativo et de contrapuncto*, 50–51.

another (c' to a''), they achieved transposition by imagining the instrument's range spanning one or other place on the hand or staff. In either case, the instrument's intervallic relationships remain constant: *ut* is the lowest note of the recorder, schalmei, and bombard, whether mapped to *g*, *c*, or *f*.

Solmization also informs the inflections of mutation and *musica ficta*. Because neither the tenors of Br9085 nor Toulouze indicate any accidentals, performers must sometimes choose whether to interpret a note as natural or flat. In *Le doulz espoir* (№ 26), for example, solmizing the tenor affects its sound and subsequent contrapuntal responses. By adding no flats to the tenor, the notes are solmized one way. Adding a flat to the *B* changes its solmization and affects its resulting counterpoint (▶ Ex. I.26). In isolation, either interpretation would be acceptable. But considering that the tenor voice of the original polyphonic version of the song has two flats in its signature, the interpretation of the tenor in which all *B*s are flattened adheres most closely to the original chanson. In either case, the decision players must make fundamentally affects the counterpoint, and solmization plays a crucial role in viewing these inflection points.

▶ p. 199

Solmization also offers essential tools for visualizing contrapuntal intervals over each of the six musical vocables, as contemporary treatises suggest, acting as a reference for the surrounding notes. While the consonances over any note are the unison, third, fifth, sixth, and octave, their quality (minor or major) can vary. For example, not all thirds are identical. Knowing that a third over *ut* is *mi* (major), and a third over *re* is *fa* (minor), etc., informs choices between a nearby point of mutation to another propriety or a case of "*fa* over *la*". It further aids in the subtleties of tuning those different qualities of intervals.

By the end of the fifteenth century, solmization played an important role in the practice and pedagogy of cadential formulae. Though Tinctoris makes no distinction between types of clausulae, by the second decade of the sixteenth century, Pietro Aron implies distinctions between them using solmization. While modern pedagogy distinguishes between "authentic" and "phrygian" cadences, the *basse danse* performer in the late fifteenth century faced more complex choices: cadences on "*ut*", on "*re*", and on "*mi*".[190] Moreover, players would conceive of octaves as pairs

190 Aron, *Libri tres de institutione harmonica*, fols. 49^{r}–50^{v}.

of complimentary vocables, as exemplified in practical theory by the notes framing the octave of each tone (see Glossary). Cadences on *ut* could be read as the octave *ut/fa* (tones 5 and 6) or *ut/sol* (tones 7 and 8); those on *re* as *re/sol* or *re/la* (tones 1 and 2); and those on *mi* as *mi/mi* or *mi/la* (tones 3 and 4).

Although cadences arriving on *ut* and *re* are both "authentic", they present different contrapuntal issues and require different solutions by the contratenor voice. In a cadence on *ut,* for example, the contratenor proceeds at different intervals below the tenor than in a cadence on *re*, and it must avoid *mi contra fa* with the tenor voice. By contrast, cadences on *mi*, although of a different aural quality, share a closer affinity with cadences on *re*. Both approach their final resolution in a similar contrapuntal fashion, the only difference is that the cadence on *re* proceeds a step further than that on *mi*.

▶ Example I.27 indicates different contrapuntal choices for common cadences in which the tenor arrives on *mi, re,* and *ut*. There is also differentiation between solmization at the octave. As in *Regulae cantandi*, a single pitch could be solmized with three different vocables simultaneously, an occurrence we rarely consider in modern solmization practice. Recreating counterpoint over the *basse danse* with solmization as a fundamental element invites more serious study and exploration.

▶ p. 200

CONCLUSION

Beyond providing the music for the *basse danse* as it might have sounded when Br9085 was copied, the act of recreating contrapuntal voices around the original tenor offers an invaluable tool for research. This practice exposes boundaries between what we can and cannot know. We may not know how any given composer or performer responded to these tenors in the fifteenth century, yet it is possible to learn about their potentials and limitations.[191] The mensural dances provide a defined formal structure for the addition of counterpoint, with active rhythms and clear cadential arrivals and phrase contours. While the long notes of the isometric tenors yield more freedom, this lack of strict boundaries can make it more difficult to create a lucid musical narrative. Although we cannot know precisely what choices musicians made five hundred years

191 Gilbert, "Reverse Engineering Fifteenth-Century Counterpoint", 173–94.

ago, the process of adding counterpoint reveals the moments where such decisions occurred.

Placing the music of Br9085 in the context of fifteenth-century dance raises questions which beckon to be explored and answered, and the opportunity to do so arises with each new step and note. Retracing the choreographies and counterpoints over the tenors of Br9085 offers valuable avenues for research, and it can inform modern performances of the dances and their music as they bring the silver notes and steps on golden staves back to life.