

# EARLY MUSIC HISTORY 37

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## STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN MUSIC

Edited by

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THE PRODUCTION OF POLYPHONIC  
MANUSCRIPTS IN THIRTEENTH-  
CENTURY PARIS: NEW EVIDENCE FOR  
STANDARDISED PROCEDURES\*

*Modern understanding of the production and dissemination of thirteenth-century polyphony is constrained by the paucity of manuscript sources that have been preserved in their entirety; the panorama of sources of medieval polyphony is essentially fragmentary. Some of the surviving fragments, however, were torn from lost books of polyphony that were to some extent comparable to well-known extant codices. The fragment of polyphony preserved in the binding of manuscript 6528 of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid is illustrative in this respect. This fragment displays a number of codicological and musical features that are strikingly similar to those of the Florence manuscript (F). Both sources share format and mise-en-page, make use of similar*

\*The online version of this article has been updated since original publication. A notice detailing the changes has also been published at <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261127918000104>.

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The following library sigla are used:

CH-SGs Sankt Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek  
D-GI Giessen, Universitätsbibliothek  
E-Mn Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España  
F-Pn Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France  
GB-Lbl London, British Library

In addition, the *Ars antiqua* manuscripts mentioned in this article are indicated by their familiar sigla:

F Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pluteus 29.1  
LoA London, British Library, Egerton 2615  
Ma Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, 20486  
W<sub>1</sub> Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 628 Helmst.

Conducti are identified in brackets with their standard catalogue numbers as given respectively in R. Falck, *The Notre Dame Conductus: A Study of the Repertoire* (Henryville, Ottawa and Binningen, 1981) and G. A. Anderson, 'Notre Dame and Related Conductus: A Catalogue Raisonné', *Miscellanea Musicologica*, 6 (1972), pp. 153–229; 7 (1975), pp. 1–81.

## The Production of Polyphonic Manuscripts in Thirteenth-Century Paris

king also sent a book of Parisian polyphony to his daughter's father-in-law, a very fitting gift for a music lover like Alfonso X the Wise.<sup>88</sup> This would be in agreement with the highly regarded status of a manuscript like F.<sup>89</sup> Another possibility left to speculation is whether the *Ars antiqua* manuscript from which the Madrid fragment was torn belonged to the private chapel of Louis IX's daughter, Blanche of France, whose possessions passed through different hands after her hasty flight from Castile in 1278.<sup>90</sup>

Be that as it may, the *Ars antiqua* fragment E-Mn 6528 sheds new light on the context of the production the largest, principal extant source of Notre-Dame polyphony, F. The sources of thirteenth-century polyphony that have survived practically untouched by the merciless vicissitudes of time have done so because of 'historical caprice', to borrow Craig Wright's words.<sup>91</sup> As a matter of fact, whereas F remained nearly undamaged in the hands of the Medici family, even escaping the iconoclastic fury of Giacomo Savonarola and his followers in the late fifteenth century,<sup>92</sup> its 'sister' codex, now witnessed by the fragments in E-Mn 6528, was dispersed, leaving only a small trace of its existence.

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<sup>88</sup> Alfonso simply mentions 'other books' from his own chapel. For a discussion of Alfonso's personal interest in polyphonic music and other sources of French polyphony that can be related to his Royal Chapel, see Catalunya, 'Music, Space and Ritual', pp. 32, 34, 63–84; Catalunya, 'Polyphonic Music at the Court of Alfonso X the Wise' (forthcoming).

<sup>89</sup> Haggh and Huglo ('*Magnus liber – Maius munus*', p. 202) suggested that F may have been offered to Piero de' Medici as a 'diplomatic gift', perhaps by Louis XI, who even granted the Florentine rulers the right to use the Capetian fleur-de-lys in their coat of arms. A possible indication of the presence of F among the personal books of the French kings, before it was sent to Florence, is found in Charles V's inventory of 1373–1424, where an entry provides the description of a book that might well have been F. Interestingly, this inventory mentions two other books transmitting *Ars antiqua* repertory, and it is reasonable to assume that Charles V's predecessor may have owned even more. See *ibid.*, pp. 227–8, and Appendix I, available online at: <http://www.music.umd.edu/sites/music.umd.edu/files/Magnus%20Liber-%20-%20Maius%20Munus%20AppendiceAppendix%20I.pdf>. See also Baltzer, 'Notre Dame Manuscripts and their Owners', pp. 396–7.

<sup>90</sup> The premature death of her husband in 1275, heir to the crown of Castile, caused a crisis of succession that gave rise to a civil war in Castile. Hernández suggests that, rather than a gift, Alfonso X might have taken possession of the 'Bible of Saint Louis' from his daughter-in-law's chapel or from that of Alfonso de la Cerdá – whose funerary chapel stood in Las Huelgas of Burgos. See Hernández, 'The Bible of Saint Louis', pp. 31 and 33.

<sup>91</sup> Wright, *Music and Ceremony at Notre Dame of Paris*, p. 268.

<sup>92</sup> Masani Ricci, *Il Codice Pluteo 29.I*, p. 25.