Jeanice Brooks

»New Music« in Late Renaissance France

The story of early monody, the emergence of new styles of accompanied solo song, and the birth of opera in the years around 1600 has traditionally been told something like this:

> Once upon a time, in the city of Florence, a group of musicians and scholars met to ponder the defects of the music of their age. Inspired by their humanist studies, and striving to match the marvellous effects of the music of classical antiquity, they succeeded in creating a new kind of solo song. This new music – by virtue of its marvellous expressivity and its ability to project text more clearly than traditional polyphony – enjoyed enormous success. Adapted to the needs of drama, their invention became a cornerstone in the creation of opera, launching a new era in the history of Western art music.

Though this is of course a caricature, the outlines of the tale should seem familiar; not so long ago, versions of it could be heard in most conservatories and university music departments. In recent years, many elements of this story have been demolished or at least significantly refined. We now have a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship of the Florentine »new« music to its precedents, and the print culture in which it was embedded has been receiving increasingly nuanced scrutiny.[1] We are less likely to consider developments in solo song to be solely or even primarily motivated by humanist impulses. We are more inclined to take the conditions of the print market into account when evaluating musicians' claims for novelty, priority or success in the new genres.

Yet one component of the story remains perfectly intact: the centrality of Italy in the discourse. The »new music« (however differently that might be defined today than it was thirty years ago) is almost invariably seen as a uniquely

1 Much of Tim Carter's work, for example, is concerned with critical scrutiny of Caccini's claims in the preface of *Le nuove musiche*, taken at face value by many earlier scholars and a primary source for the genealogy of monody I have described. Carter has convincingly shown that Caccini's songs represent a much less radical break with sixteenth-century styles than the composer would have us believe. See Tim Carter, »On the Composition and Performance of Caccini's *Le nuove musiche* (1602),« *Early Music* 12 (1984), pp. 208–17; Tim Carter, »Caccini's *Amarilli, mia bella*: Some Questions (and a Few Answers),« *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 113 (1988), pp. 250–73; Tim Carter, *Music in Late Renaissance and Early Baroque Italy* (London, 1992); and Tim Carter, »Printing the New Music,« *Music and the Cultures of Print*, ed. Kate van Orden (New York, 2000), pp. 3–37.

Italian phenomenon.[2] There has been some encouragement for this in the history of our discipline. The desire for a musicological equivalent to the prevailing Burkhardtian vision of art, coupled with a late 19th- and 20th-century obsession with the nation-state or some geographical-linguistic approximation thereof as a controlling concept, provided a strong impetus for a teleological construction in which Italian music was represented as the temporary leader in music's march towards the future. But it would be wrong to see this state of affairs as a product only of unthinking adherence to broad historiographical impulses. The musical sources themselves, according to the methods we have traditionally employed in dealing with them, have provided strong support for the notion of monody as an invention made in Italy. Italian musical sources first notate most clearly the distinctive qualities of the »new music.« And contemporary Italian writers most vociferously claim the *nuove musiche* as their own. French sources, in contrast, are tardy in reflecting the characteristic components of early Baroque singing style. With the exception of the precocious printed monodies in the *Balet comique de la Royne* of 1581, solo song did not exist as a print category in France until 1608, and continuo accompaniment appeared in print only decades later.[3] French sources rarely contain any comments from composers or printers indicating an awareness of or desire for novelty.

Another problem is that until relatively recently, the »new music« was understood as a compositional development, reflecting the bias of modern(ist), highly text-based scholarship and the tendency to conceive of the history of music as the history of composition. It was sometimes claimed that performers contributed to the emergence of the new style, but exactly how was usually left in the air. Again, studies of the past few decades have begun to redress this situation. With a few notable exceptions, though, performer/composers like Giulio Caccini still provide the main focus, in a holdover from the composer-centered approach of old.[4] Before the second decade of the seventeenth century,

2 See the article s.v. »Monody« by Tim Carter and Nigel Fortune in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second ed. (London, 2001; hereafter *NGD2*), vol. 17, pp. 5–6. Here monody is defined as referring only to Italian song; other countries are said to have adopted the new Baroque style monody represents only years later.

3 Though isolated pieces with full or partial continuo accompaniment were printed in France from 1612, the first complete volume of such works was not published until 1647. See Georgie Durosoir, *L'air de cour en France, 1571–1655* (Liège, 1991), pp. 195–7, and the article s.v. »Ballard, Robert (iii)« by Samuel F. Pogue and Jonathan Le Cocq in *NGD2*, vol. 2, p. 560.

4 Recent performer-centered studies of solo song practice and its relationship to print include Laurie Stras, »Recording Tarquinia: Imitation, Parody and Reportage in Ingegneri's *Hor che'l ciel e la terra e'l vento tace*,« *Early Music* 27 (1999), pp. 359–77; and Tim Carter, »Finding a Voice: Vittoria Archilei and the Florentine ›New Music‹,« *Feminism and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Lorna Hutson (Oxford, 1999), pp. 450–67.

virtually none of the French song repertory carries composer attributions; its anonymity, combined with the seeming »backwardness« of the notation in French prints, has contributed to its lack of prominence in musical research.[5]

In sum, our approach has been to see musical texts as providing unmediated access to musical style, a style still largely understood as compositional rather than performative in nature. Viewed in this way, French sources do in fact project a delayed adoption of new vocal styles in comparison to their southern neighbors. But when questions of performance and notation are placed at the center of the examination of French sources, some rather different possibilities start to emerge. It may be time to modify yet another element in our story of monody and to rethink our ideas about its geographical, historiographical, and musical locations.

Among the main sources for any investigation of French vocal practice around 1600 is a set of prints of songs for voice and lute in a seemingly new style. These are the *Airs de cour de differents autheurs*, published in Paris by Pierre Ballard starting in 1608 (details of the first six volumes in the series are supplied in the Appendix). The books are mainly made up of secular strophic *airs* in a variety of idioms. They include tuneful triple-time airs; dance-based songs; a very large number of declamatory pieces in metrically irregular settings; and some dramatic *récits* and dialogues. Most present a vocal line of moderate range with a fair amount of written-out ornamentation, though a significant number require a more extended vocal range or are very profusely ornamented. No composer attributions are included until the fifth book, when composers of a portion of the airs are named in the table of contents and running titles.[6]

Two years before the inception of the lute song series, Pierre Ballard had gained sole control of the family printing firm founded in the mid-sixteenth century by his father, Robert, and Adrian Le Roy. From 1553, when they were awarded the position of royal music printers, Le Roy & Ballard exercised an almost total monopoly on music publishing in France, a monopoly which their heirs would maintain for most of the next two centuries.[7] Robert Ballard died in

5 For a discussion of some of the issues surrounding anonymous publication of sixteenth-century music, see Martha Feldman, »Authors and Anonyms: Recovering the Anonymous Subject in *Cinquecento* Vernacular Objects,« *Music and the Cultures of Print* (cf. fn. 1), pp. 163–99.

6 On the books and their contents, see Durosoir, L'air de cour (cf. fn. 3), pp. 119–49, and Jonathan Le Cocq, *French Lute Song, 1529–1643* (Ph.D. diss. University of Oxford, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 121–32. Modern facsimile editions (Genève, 1980) exist for the first six volumes of the series.

7 On Le Roy & Ballard, see François Lesure and Geneviève Thibault, *Bibliographie des éditions d'Adrian Le Roy et Robert Ballard (1551-1598)* (Paris, 1955); the history of the Ballard firm is

1588; Le Roy continued printing in association with Robert's widow, Lucrèce Dugué, until his own death in 1598. At this point Robert's son Pierre took Le Roy's place, publishing in association with his mother. For the next decade, the firm continued to produce books of music in the same format and with the same type – books of polyphonic vocal music printed in separate partbooks using movable type and the single impression method – as they had done for the previous fifty years.

All this was to change soon after Pierre Ballard took sole control of the business in 1606. One of his first acts was to order a new set of music type, almost certainly the characters the firm would use for the lute song books that began to appear in print two years later.[8] The lute and voice format had been used only rarely by French printers before, as it caused considerable technical difficulty, particularly in aligning the vocal and instrumental parts. The new type neatly solved these problems. In addition it set new standards of elegance: the characters for both music and text were modelled after the humanist cursive script most fashionable among French elites, and each page of the lute song books includes beautiful decorated initials and other ornamental elements. That is, the books resemble the luxurious manuscripts of poetry compiled in this period for wealthy courtiers, disseminating courtly fashions to a wider public.

The stylish, courtly look of the prints is partly matched by the content. For the first six volumes, Ballard employed a collaborator, the young lutenist Gabriel Bataille.[9] Like Ballard himself (whose brother, Robert Ballard II, was a royal lutenist), Bataille had close connections with the musical world of the royal court. Amid the pieces he selected and arranged, there are a large number attributed here or elsewhere to Pierre Guédron, then *compositeur de la chambre* of Henri IV and the most celebrated court musician of the time.[10] A number of the

treated in Laurent Guillo's forthcoming catalogue (Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, in press). I am grateful to M. Guillo for allowing me to consult his work prior to publication.

8 For this description of Ballard's entrepreneurial actions after assuming control of the business, I am indebted to Jonathan Le Cocq, »Experimental Notation and Entrepreneurship in the Seventeenth Century: The *Air de cour* for Voice and Lute, 1608–1643,« *Revue de musicologie* 85 (1999), pp. 270–4.

9 On Bataille, see André Verchaly, »Gabriel Bataille et son œuvre personnelle pour chant et luth,« *Revue de musicologie* 26 (1947), pp. 1–24, and the article s.v. »Bataille, Gabriel« by Jonathan Le Cocq in *NGD2*, vol. 2, p. 900.

10 In addition to his authorship of a significant quantity of the *airs*, Guédron is the dedicatee of the first volume of the series. On his career, see Lionel de La Laurencie, »Un musicien dramatique du XVIIe siècle français: Pierre Guédron,« *Rivista Musicale Italiana* 29 (1922), pp. 445–72; Don Lee Royster, »Pierre Guédron and the *Air de cour* 1600–1620« (Ph.D. diss. Yale University, 1973); and the article s.v. »Guédron, Pierre« by Jonathan Le Cocq in *NGD2*, vol. 10,

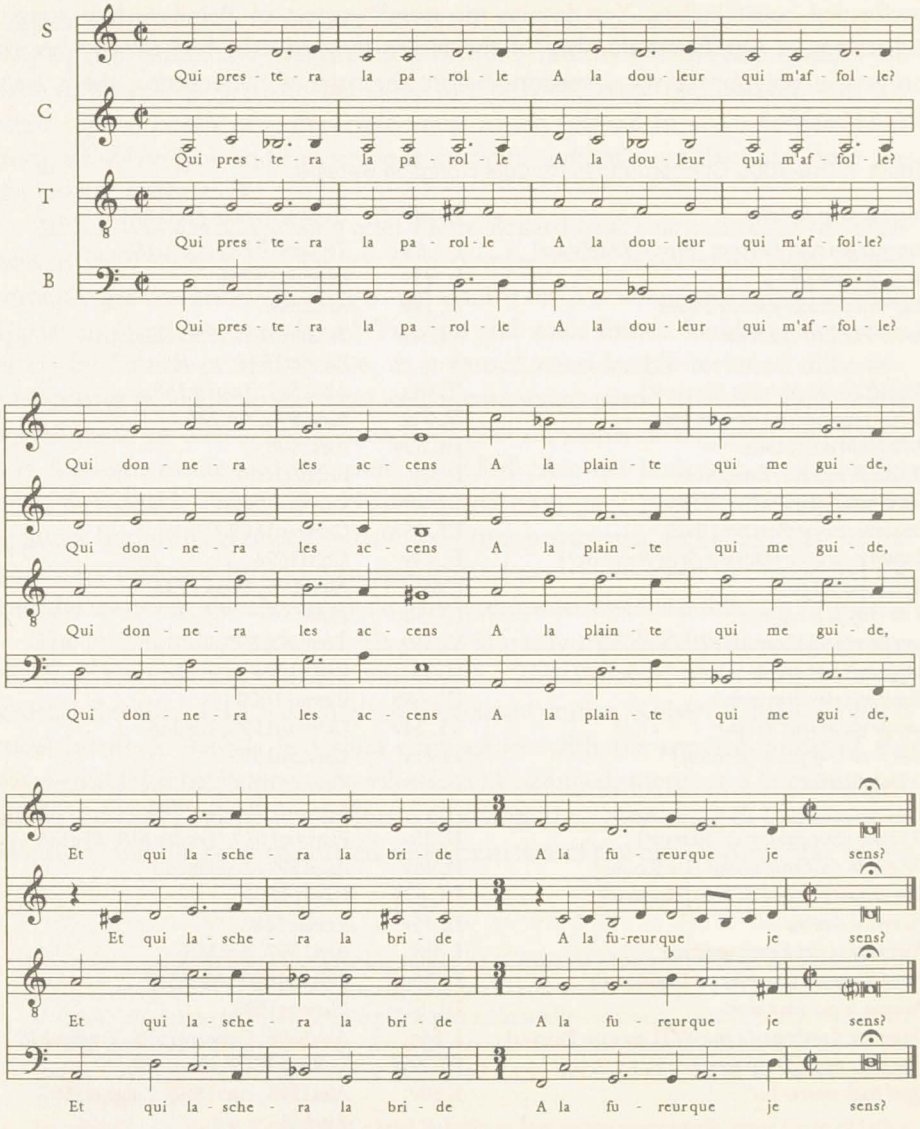
songs, particularly in the later volumes, are identified as coming from recently-performed court ballets. Yet despite the trendy aspect of Bataille's lute song collections, a significant number of the pieces they contain had already been printed in polyphonic vocal versions before the turn of the century; these are listed in table 1.

Table 1: Pre-1600 Concordances for Lute Songs in Bataille

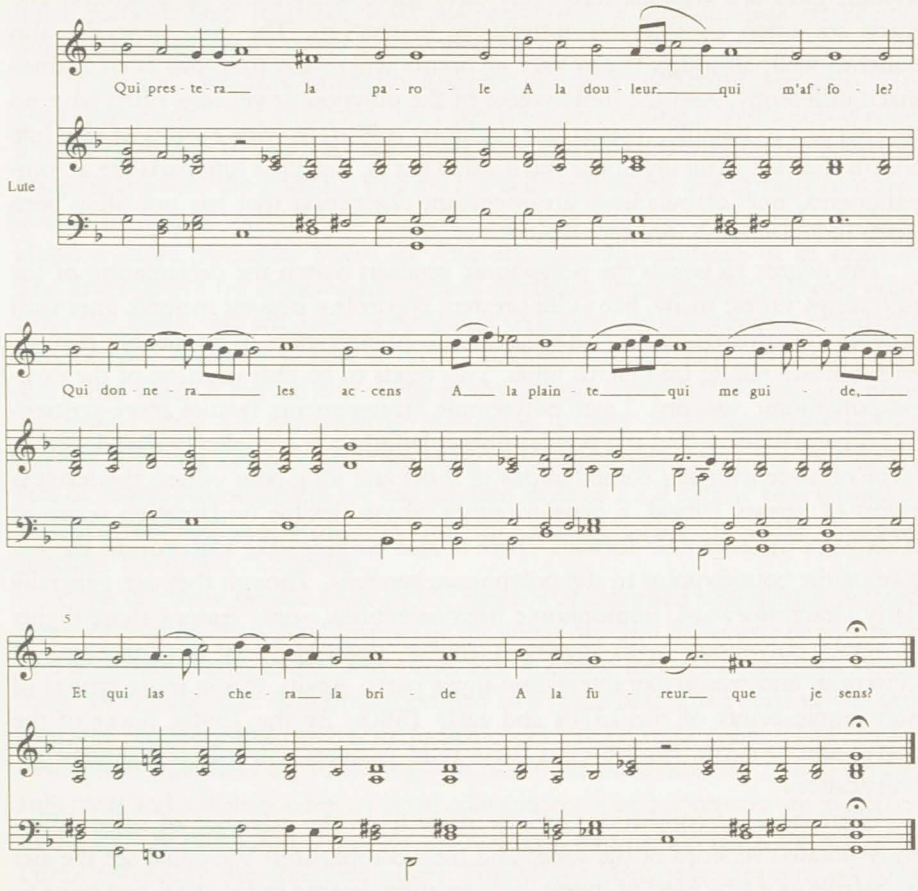
Incipit as in Bataille	**Bataille***	**Concordances pre-1600***
Amants qui vous plaignez [Bussy d'Amboise]	IV, 64v	TessierG 1582, Croy MS
Arrestés vous icy	II, 33v	LeBlanc1579b
Aupres des beaux yeux de Phillis	II, 18v	Airs1596
Baisés ô Déesses et Dieux	VI, 40v	24Livre1583 (attr. Salmon), Bonnet1585
Beautés vivans portraits [Bertaut]	V, 64v	Airs1597, Tessier MS
Beaux yeux lumiere de mon ame	II, 52v	Airs1596, Aix MS
Belle main dont Amour	III, 50v	Airs1596
De quelle ingrate récompense	I, 64v	Bonnet1600
Des maux si déplorables [Bertaut]	III, 25v	Cerveau1599
Eau vive source d'amour [Baïf]	III, 65v	Cerveau1599
Ennuis trop lents [Durant de la Bergerie?]	II, 44v	ChRi1594
Esprits qui soupirez	I, 65v	Airs1596, Tessier MS
Il est vray je le confesse	III, 50v	Airs1597
La plus miserable amante [La Roque]	II, 38v	TessierC1597
Las je suis tout en feu [Durant de la Bergerie?]	II, 25v	ChRi1594
Lieux que j'ay tant aymés	IV, 43v	Bonnet1600
Lorsqu'un amant de cour	VI, 34v	Cerveau1599, Aix MS
Non je ne croy point [Bertaut]	II, 32v	Cerveau1599
O beau laurier	I, 66v	TessierG1582, 24Livre1583 (attr. Salmon), Bonnet1585
O beaux yeux qui sçavés [Bertaut]	II, 55v	Planson1587, Tessier MS, Aix MS
Or que la nuit et le silence [La Roque]	II, 45v	Airs1597, Tessier MS
Pastoureau m'ayme tu bien [Passerat]	III, 67v	Castro1586
Pleurez ô demons	II, 35v	Tessier1582
Pourquoy le ciel à mon malheur	I, 68v	Airs1597, Aix MS
Pressé d'ennuis [Jacques de Constans]	II, 56v	Tessier1582, Airs1597
Puisque le ciel veut ainsi	III, 51v	Planson1587
Quand le flambeau du monde [Davy du Perron]	I, 54v	Airs1596, Cerveau1599, Tessier MS
Que ferez vous [Desportes]	III, 66v	LeBlanc1579, Croy MS
Quel fruit esperes-tu?	I, 60v	Airs1595, Airs1596, Caignet1597, Aix MS
Qui prestera la parole [Du Bellay]	IV, 57v	LeBlanc1579b
Un amant respandit un jour [Bertaut]	III, 41v	Airs1597

*For full bibliographical details of the sources abbreviated here, see the Appendix.

pp. 496–7. A critical edition of Guédron's complete songs is currently in preparation under the direction of Georgie Durosoir (Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, forthcoming).



Example 1a: »Qui prestera la parole,« arr. Didier Le Blanc (1579), after Jane A. Bernstein, ed., *The Sixteenth-Century Chanson*, vol. 3 (New York, 1995), p. 36 (first strophe only, original values restored)



Example 1b: »Qui prestera la parole,« arr. Gabrielle Bataille (1611), after André Verchaly, ed., *Airs de cour pour voix et luth (1603–1643)* (Paris, 1961), p. 46 (first strophe only)

There is a wide spectrum of relationships between these concordant versions of the songs, but there are some general tendencies that have emerged from their comparison. A typical case is »Qui prestera la parole« (examples 1a and 1b), a setting of a poem by Joachim Du Bellay published in a polyphonic arrangement by Didier Le Blanc in 1579, decades before the appearance of Bataille's lute song version of 1614. As this example demonstrates, the lute and voice versions in Bataille are both much more and much less than simple intabulations of existing polyphonic pieces. The outlines of the superius are usually very similar,

though Bataille's versions frequently have more written-out ornamention and there are often considerable differences in rhythm. The bass generally also matches well, although it can vary at points where the tune has been harmonized differently. And the inner voices of the polyphonic versions often have no counterpart in Bataille; instead, the harmony is filled in with a series of easy lute chords that fall naturally under the hand. That is, Bataille's lute parts are accompaniments, not intabulations, an important distinction that has not often been made in considering this repertory.[11]

The degree to which the polyphonic versions match the declamation of the solo songs varies: many, like »Qui prestera la parole,« present melodic lines with little or no ornamentation, and the metric organization is reasonably regular, with phrases falling into tactus units. This tends to be characteristic of the earliest polyphonic versions. Later polyphonic arrangements feature more written-out ornamentation, and the regular phrase lengths are completely abandoned in favor of more irregular combinations of short and long note values; the result is a sort of uneasy hybrid, a quasi-monody whose flexible declamation seems at odds with the ensemble format. There is also considerable variation in the nature of the counterpoint in the polyphonic versions. Though they are generally fairly straightforward, homophonic harmonizations, some feature short flights of »real« polyphony, with staggered entries, duetting, very brief passages of imitation, and reasonably interesting inner parts. Again, this is more typical of polyphonic prints of the 1570s and early 1580s. By the 1590s, fewer of the polyphonic versions feature even these mild gestures toward contrapuntal sophistication.

What kinds of conclusions can we draw from the existence of these differently-notated versions of the songs and their comparison? We could see the airs in Bataille as a new kind of music, only recently devised in the years just prior to its publication; and think of the »old« airs in the collections – those that have previously-published polyphonic counterparts – as examples of well-loved pieces adapted to this new style. Or, following a different logic, we could imagine that »old« airs in Bataille have been sung that way for a long time, and Bataille's format is a new way of representing this performance style in print. That is, presented with the polyphonic versions of these songs, some musicians in some circumstances might have produced a performance that more closely matches the way the songs were eventually notated in Bataille. Or we might even suppose that what we see in late sixteenth-century polyphonic versions is often an arrangement of something that circulated primarily as accompanied song, with

11 For a more detailed discussion of this point, see Le Cocq, French Lute Song (cf. fn. 6), vol. 1, pp. 88–9.

inner parts devised to make what was essentially a superius-bass framework publishable according to prevailing conventions.

Up to now, we have implicitly accepted the first possibility, and musicologists have constructed a history – as I remarked in opening – that traces a route directly from text to text, characterizing Bataille as a representative of a delayed progress towards the Baroque in music. I believe that this »progress,« however, is not in musical style but in printing, and that the second scenario I traced above is more plausible. There are four arguments to advance in its support. The first is based on archival documents. Accounts from the French royal court from the 1560s onward provide abundant testimony to the presence of particularly favored chamber singers, who increasingly received large payments, gifts and other signs of reward and status as the century wore on. In these and other documents, they are described as executants of solo songs, and they are frequently depicted as accompanying their own performances on the lute or the viol or lirone. Among them are the castrato Etienne Le Roy, the bass Girard de Beaulieu, the soprano Violante Doria, and the co-founder of Baïf's academy, Joachim Thibault de Courville.[12]

What did these people sing? In the absence of a printed solo song repertory, some kind of adapted performance of the songs we find in contemporary polyphonic prints seems more than probable. Support for this hypothesis comes from the unique case of monody printed in France before the turn of the century, the famous *Balet comique de la Royne* performed in October 1581. In the description published the following year, there are three notated monodies: two solo *récits* and a dialogue for a pair of solo singers. The performers are identified in the text: Beaulieu and Doria for the dialogue, and for the *récits*, the »sieur du Pont« (probably the chamber singer Thésée Du Port, who appears on royal records from 1577), and the »sieur de Savornin« (probably the »Savorny« who was in the entourage of the king's brother in 1578 and to whom Bataille attributes a handful of airs in the fifth and sixth books of the lute song series).[13] The techniques of accompaniment, ornamentation and expressive declamation necessary to perform these pieces were not learned and forgotten in a day; if French court singers knew how to use them in 1581 – and the *Balet comique* shows that

12 On these singers and the court structures within which they worked, see Jeanice Brooks, *Courtly Song in Late Sixteenth-Century France* (Chicago, 2000), especially chapter 2, pp. 72–116, and Appendix 2, pp. 413–536.

13 Balthazar de Beaujoyeulx, *Le balet comique de la Royne* (Paris, 1582), facsimile ed. Margaret M. McGowan (Binghamton, NY, 1982), fols. 16^{r}–21^{r}, 23^{v}, and 51^{v}; on Du Port and Savorny, see Brooks, ibid., pp. 473 and 528.

they did – they must have been employing them regularly from the end of the 1570s at the very latest.

My second argument is based on examination of the sixteenth-century polyphonic versions of the songs that later appear in Bataille. As I remarked above, from the 1580s onward sources for the *air de cour* increasingly present the songs ametrically, that is, without trying to fit them into regular tactus units. On the contrary, the declamation becomes more fluid and irregular, approaching the aesthetic we find in Bataille. The superius parts become more ornate, with at times a high degree of written-out ornamentation, and slurs start to appear regularly, especially in the upper line, as if the delivery of text was becoming a special concern. The polyphony becomes less and less carefully put together, and although bass and superius parts inevitably make a satisfying structure, the inner parts show signs of increasing neglect. In the collections of the 1590s, the inner parts are at times completely incompetent, and even in the 1580s we can find passages that no teacher of counterpoint would ever have countenanced. These changes appear unevenly in collections from the same period – for example, Guillaume Tessier always notates in tactus units, adding rests where necessary to make the phrases regular, whereas Pierre Bonnet's *airs* are generally unmetered. There is still much work to be done on the details, but a preliminary survey creates the impression of a struggle to make a notational format represent something it was not designed to convey.[14]

These aspects of the sixteenth-century sources suggest that one common way of using them might have been to sing and play from superius and bass parts, adding appropriate ornaments and other expressive devices to the vocal superius and filling in the inner voices with easy lute chords. When this is done, what comes out is something that sounds remarkably like what we see explicitly notated in Bataille. Putting together the evidence of the sources themselves with the information we have about singers active at court provides strong support for such a scenario, and suggests that these performers at least were employing the polyphonic music – when they used notated music at all – in this way. Conversely, I think the changes we see in the sources themselves are an effort to notate, to the degree that the typographical constraints allowed, the musical performances such singers were actually producing. Support for this idea comes

14 Isabelle His's observations about the notation of the *air de cour* (inseparable from the notation of *musique mesurée* in this period) are highly relevant here. His notes that the new declamatory freedom of the *air* posed serious notational problems which contemporary musicians solved in different and often confusing ways; see Isabelle His, »La notation de la musique mesurée à l'antique,« *Storia della notazione della polifonia vocale dalle origini al secolo XVII* (Cremona, forthcoming). I am grateful to Prof. His for allowing me to consult her work prior to publication.

from the handful of extant manuscript sources for lute song dating from the last third of the sixteenth century. The *Croy* (F–VAL, MS 429, copied in stages between 1586–1606), *Aix* (F–AIXm, 147(203)–R312, copied c. 1600) and *Tessier* (GB–Ob, Mus.Sch.d.237, copied c. 1597) manuscripts contain many of the same songs that were circulating in printed polyphonic settings, presented as pieces for voice and lute. The manuscript lute accompaniments follow the same principles – strong bass lines and loosely filled inner parts – as those later adopted by Bataille, suggesting that this was a common mode of performing the pieces well before they appeared in that format in print.[15]

If, as the manuscripts seem to confirm, singers *were* performing these songs in versions closer to what we find in Bataille than to what is contained in the sixteenth-century prints, why not publish them like that? If French musicians were already creating some kind of monody, why did it take until 1608 to print it, and why does it then appear in the form in which it does? These questions lead me to my third set of arguments, based in the history of the Ballard printing firm. In the final decades of the sixteenth century, Le Roy & Ballard had no reason to innovate. The partners were aging, and the country was economically and politically extremely unstable during the Wars of Religion; the apogee of the crisis occured in the late 1580s and early 1590s, with the assassinations of the Duke of Guise and then the monarch, Henri III himself, followed by the siege of Paris. At the same time, because the firm had a monopoly, it had no competition and thus no incentive to take risks. Court singers were accustomed to using polyphonic prints to generate many different kinds of performances, and had no need for the music to be printed otherwise. To produce music prints in a new way would have required an enormous outlay to purchase a new set of typographical material – the single biggest expense involved in setting up business as a music printer – and Le Roy & Ballard had absolutely no incentive to do so.

What was the impulse for suddenly printing the songs in a new way in 1608? Jonathan Le Cocq has argued convincingly that when Pierre Ballard took over the family firm in 1606, at a time of relative economic stability, he was looking for ways to relaunch the business, to renew the firm's prestige and to validate once more the royal privilege it exercised.[16] And there must have been a new public whose needs would be served by a different format to justify the expense of buying new type, a public large enough for Ballard to be reasonably confident that this initiative would succeed. And here I reach my final argu-

15 For a detailed examination of the manuscripts' relationships to contemporary print sources, see Le Cocq, French Lute Song (cf. fn. 6), vol. 1, pp. 88–92.

16 Le Cocq, Experimental Notation (cf. fn. 8), p. 272.

ment, based in contemporary social history; for precisely such a public did indeed exist.

Through the later sixteenth century, singing to the lute became a valued activity not only for professional court singers, but for the young gentlemen of good family who were increasingly obliged to reside more or less permanently at court in order to gain or maintain power and fortune.[17] In a 1604 treatise on noble education, Thomas Pelletier confirmed that many fathers felt their sons had learned nothing at school unless they had achieved some expertise at lute playing.[18] In Pierre de L'Estoile's journals, we have a description from 1575 – fairly early in the period I have been discussing – of the young Count of Noailles singing to his own lute accompaniment at a gathering of prominent courtiers.[19] And one of most important lute song manuscripts of the period was copied by Charles, prince of Chimay and later duke of Croy, among the most powerful nobles at the court of Henri IV. In the preface, which the duke dedicates to his wife, he wrote that he had been singing and playing the lute since his youth; and in fact, the earliest layer of the manuscript dates from 1586, when Charles was 26 years old.[20]

These young men were not professional musicians; they could not – or would not, for fear of confusion of status – easily engage in the »professional« practices involved in generating adapted performances from the basis of a polyphonic print. Nor could they be expected to play from a figured or unfigured bass. They needed music already notated in tablature and with ornamentation of some sort written out, and if the look of the books was sophisticated and fashionable to boot, so much the better. I think it was probably this market that Pierre Ballard had in mind when he started producing his books of songs for voice and lute. And his gambit was successful, to judge from the number of lute song prints he published up to the middle of the century. At the same time, he continued to print polyphonic versions of the same songs; and in another venture begun in 1608, he started publishing monophonic prints of the same music. Through the following decades, he regularly printed the same pieces – *airs* by Guédron, to take the most obvious and lucrative example – in three different formats, the polyphonic and monophonic versions sometimes preceding and

17 For a discussion of the increasing value of song to noble men, see Brooks, Courtly Song (cf. fn. 12), pp. 117–90.

18 Thomas Pelletier, *La nourriture de la noblesse* (Paris, 1604), fols. 88^{v}–89^{r}.

19 Pierre de L'Estoile, *Registre-journal du règne de Henri III*, ed. Madeleine Lazard and Gilbert Schrenck, vol. 1: *1574–75* (Paris, 1992), p. 165.

20 A detailed description of the manuscript's dating and provenance, with a transcription of the preface, appears in Günther Birkner, »La tablature de luth de Charles, Duc De Croy et d'Arschot (1560–1612),« *Revue de musicologie* 49 (1963), pp. 18–46.

sometimes following the publication of versions for voice and lute.[21] From 1608 the multivalence of contemporary performance practice is thus clearly represented in the printed sources, whereas in the 1580s and 1590s this diversity remains hidden.

If this line of reasoning is acceptable, it seems plausible that many of the late Renaissance solo vocal practices characteristic of the »new music« were French as well as Italian phenomena in practice, even if print sources do not reflect this clearly. In making this case for considering France as a locus for experimentation with new vocal idioms, I do not want to underplay the possibility of distinctive local traditions. It seems that different French and Italian singing styles existed or were developing; Mersenne is probably a reliable witness in this regard.[22] And I certainly do not want to propose a new version of the »Italy invents new music and everyone else follows« story which has dominated musical historiography up to now, by simply substituting France for Italy as the original home of new practices. That would be to miss the point, which is that new solo singing styles were no doubt regularly practiced in a variety of places, not just Italy but France as well – and probably Vienna, Munich, and Madrid too. I do want to suggest that geographies of song that try to account for style *entirely* in national terms may distort as much as they reveal, and that the geographies we have inherited are largely geographies of printing rather than song practice.

What the places I mentioned above have in common is that they are courts, a factor I think is probably more important than any putative national distinctions or claims to priority. The constant traffic between courts – ambassadors, brides, spies, servants, and of course, musicians – means that these places were more like each other than not. Recognizing that this is the case is the first step towards a more sophisticated understanding of late Renaissance vocal practice and of the differences in local economic and political structures that affected how such practices made their way into print. Approaching monody as a courtly art, practiced in a pan-European context, even if its survival in print sources reflects this only partially, allows us to continue telling the story of monody in new, and perhaps better, ways.

21 See Durosoir, L'air de cour (cf. fn. 3), pp. 78–9 and 199–208.

22 Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle, contenant la theorie et la pratique de la musique*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1636), facsimile ed. François Lesure (Paris, 1963), pp. 42–3 and 356–8; Mersenne suggests that Italian performers may have been more adept at dramatic singing, though he claims superior grace and sweetness for the French.

APPENDIX

Sources

1. Voice and lute

Bataille I	*Airs de differents autheurs, mis en tablature de luth par Gabriel Bataille.* Paris: Ballard, 1608. R/1612 [RISM 1608[10], 1612[7]]
Bataille II	*Airs de differents autheurs, mis en tablature de luth par Gabriel Bataille. Second livre.* Paris: Ballard, 1609. R/1614 [RISM 1609[13], 1614[8]]
Bataille III	*Airs de differents autheurs, mis en tablature de luth par Gabriel Bataille. Troisiesme livre.* Paris: Ballard, 1611. R/1614 [RISM 1611[10], 1614[9]]
Bataille IV	*Airs de differents autheurs, mis en tablature de luth par Gabriel Bataille. Quatriesme livre.* Paris: Ballard, 1613 [RISM 1613[9]]
Bataille V	*Airs de differents autheurs, mis en tablature de luth par Gabriel Bataille. Cinquiesme livre.* Paris: Ballard, 1614 [RISM 1614[10]]
Bataille VI	*Airs de differents autheurs, mis en tablature de luth par Gabriel Bataille. Sixiesme livre.* Paris: Ballard, 1615 [RISM 1615[11]]
Besard	Jean-Baptiste Besard, *Thesaurus harmonicus*. Cologne: Grevenbruch, 1603 [RISM 1603[15]]
Aix MS	*F-AIXm*, 147 (203) – R312 (c. 1600)
Croy MS	*F-VAL*, MS 429 (copied in stages 1586–1606)
Tessier MS	*GB-Ob*, Mus.Sch.d.237 (c. 1597)

2. Polyphony

Airs1595	*Airs mis en musique à quatre, et cinq, parties: de plusieurs autheurs.* Paris: Le Roy & Ballard, 1595 [RISM 1595[1]]
Airs1596	*Airs de court mis en musique à quatre et cinq parties de plusieurs autheurs.* Paris: Le Roy & veuve R. Ballard, 1596 [RISM 1596[6]]
Airs1597	*Airs de court mis en musique à 4. et 5. parties de plusieurs autheurs.* Paris: Le Roy & veuve R. Ballard, 1597 [RISM 1597[11]]
Bonnet1585	Pierre Bonnet, *Premier livre d'airs mis en musique à quatre cinq et six parties.* Paris: Le Roy & Ballard, 1585 [RISM B 3529] R/1586. Expanded 3rd ed. under title *Airs et villanelles mis en musique à 4. 5. & 6. parties, par Pierre Bonnet, chantre de la Royne mere du Roy*, 1588 [RISM 3530]
Bonnet1600	*Airs et villanelles mises en musique à 4. et 5. parties.* Paris: Veuve R. Ballard & Pierre Ballard, 1600 [RISM B 3532]
Caignet1597	*Airs de cour mis en musique à 4. 5. 6. et 8. parties.* Paris: Adrian Le Roy & Veuve R. Ballard, 1597 [RISM C33]
Castro1586	Jean de Castro, *Livre de chansons à cinq parties ... avec une Pastorelle à VII.* Antwerp: Phalèse and Bellère, 1586 [RISM C 1477]
Cerveau1599	Pierre Cerveau, *Airs mis en musique à quatre parties.* Paris: Veuve R. Ballard and Pierre Ballard, 1599 [RISM C 1719]
ChRi1594	*Chansonettes rimées mises en musique à quatre parties.* Paris: Le Roy & veuve R. Ballard, 1594 [not in RISM]

LeBlanc1579 Didier Le Blanc, *Airs de plusieurs musiciens, sur les poësies de Ph. Desportes et autres des plus excelants poëtes de nostre tems, reduiz à 4. parties*. Paris: Le Roy & Ballard, 1579. R/1582 [RISM L 1231]

LeBlanc1579b Didier Le Blanc, *Second livre d'airs des plus excelants musiciens de nostre tems reduiz à 4. parties*. Paris: Le Roy & Ballard, 1579 [RISM L 1232]

Planson1587 Jean Planson, *Airs mis en musique à quatre parties par Jean Planson Parisien tant de son invention que d'autres Musitiens*. Paris: Le Roy & Ballard, 1587. R/1588, 1593, 1595 [RISM P 2507]

TessierC1597 Charles Tessier, *Le premier livre de chansons et airs de court ... à quatre et cinq parties*. London: Este, 1597 [RISM T 594]

TessierG1582 Guillaume Tessier, *Premier livre d'airs tant François, Italien, qu'Espaignol, reduitz en musique à 4. et 5. parties*. Paris: Le Roy & Ballard, 1582. R/1585. [RISM T 597]

24Livre1583 *Vingtquatrieme livre d'airs et chansons à quatre et cinq parties, de plusieurs excelens autheurs* ... Paris: Le Roy & Ballard, 1583. Revised eds. 1585 and 1587 [RISM 1583[9]]