

cosa” is one of these. It does not have a refrain, but instead each verse has a long melisma on the penultimate syllable of the final word.

### III

This set of pieces, Bernard de Ventadorn’s “Quan vei la lauzeta mover” and Philip the Chancellor’s “Quisquis cordis et oculi,” provides an example of contrafacture where the secular, vernacular song melody is adopted for sacred or moralistic use. “Quisquis cordis et oculi” reproduces Bernard’s melody fairly faithfully, but uses it to debate the causes of sin—either the Heart, who desires to act, or the Eye, who allows into the body images that may cause the Heart’s desires. Bernard’s poem contains an interesting resonance with Philip’s text—Bernard’s third stanza references the eyes as the portal through which he fell in love, but he describes the beloved’s eyes as a mirror in which he sees himself. The subsequent reference to Narcissus alludes to the possibility that Bernard is not in love with his beloved, but instead with himself in the role of a lover. In Philip’s text, the Eye is a “glassy window” that ostensibly reports faithfully all it sees to the Heart. However, reading these two poems alongside one another suggests that the Eye’s faithful reproduction is open for interpretation by the Heart, distorting that which the Eye claims to see.

### IV

The bottom voice of Peter of Blois’ polyphonic conductus “Vite perdit me legi” appears as the melody of both an Occitan troubadour song and an Old French trouvère chanson. Scholarship is divided on the question of which song came first—some have argued that the troubadour Peirol’s “Per dan qui d’amor m’avegna” is the original instance of the melody, while others have argued that it is impossible to tell which piece appeared first. In any case, the relationships between the three iterations of this melody are clearly apparent, especially in the opening melodic

lines. Trouvère Huc de Saint Quentin’s “A l’entrant du tans sauvage” differs somewhat in the melody’s second half from Peirol’s melody, but there are enough points of similarity in the overall melodic contour to hear that these melodies are similar. Textually, the three poems cover widely different material. Peter of Blois’ poem is a moralistic pledge to reform his life and renounce his former sinful ways, while Peirol’s poem laments the lack of love and attention he receives from his beloved. Huc de Saint Quentin’s poem is a pastourelle, a description of an amorous encounter between a knight (the “I” of the poem) and a shepherd girl. While the texts of contrafacta often seem related or reference related concepts, they are not always linked by a clear theme, as is the case with these three pieces.

Our final piece this evening is another anonymous Aquitanian versus, this time with a refrain. The stanzas of the text describe the order of the world as imposed by God, a concept referenced both in the opening stanza and in the refrain. The refrain’s text relates the order of the world to the sound of the decachord, a ten-string stringed instrument described in Psalm 33:2. Medieval writers such as St. Augustine used the decachord as a metaphor for other Biblical groups of ten: the Commandments, or the songs of the Old Testament. Here, the decachord represents the order of God’s plan, and its sound the way in which he absolves man of sin through Christ. Intriguingly, all but the last iteration of the refrain are sung to the same text and end on the interval of a minor third, which was considered an imperfectly consonant interval at this time. Although it is not notated in the manuscript sources, it is possible that the final refrain would be altered to conclude on a perfect interval (either a fifth or an octave), in conjunction with the new text (verse 12 in the TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS). We have chosen to observe this possibility this evening.

## SACRED MUSIC AT COLUMBIA

### SONGS FROM MEDIEVAL OCCITANIA AND FRANCE

Anne Levitsky, soprano and hurdy-gurdy  
Kathleen Cantrell, soprano

Tuesday, October 15, 2019: 6pm

St. Paul’s Chapel, Columbia University

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY + EARL HALL CENTER

I	
“Reis Glorios” (ca. 1150) .....	Guiraut de Bornelh
“Ave maris stella” (9th c.)	
“O maria deu maire” (ca. 1090)	
“Ave maris stella, virgo decus virginum” (13th c.)	
II	
“Beata viscera” (ca. 1220) .....	Perotinus
“Beata viscera” second line	
“Entendez tuit ensemble” (ca. 1236) .....	Gautier de Coinci
“Res iocosa” (12th c.)	
III	
“Can vei la lauzeta mover” (ca. 1150) .....	Bernart de Ventadorn
“Quisquis cordis et oculi” (13th c.) .....	text attr. Philip the Chancellor
IV	
“Per dan que d’amor” (ca. 1200) .....	Peiro
“Vite perдите me legi” (13th c.) .....	text attr. Peter of Blois
“A l’entrant du tens salvage” (13th c.) .....	Huc de St. Quentin
“Mira lege miro modo” (12th c.)	

PROGRAM NOTES: ANNE LEVITSKY

This evening’s program is built around medieval contrafacts (pl. *contrafacta*), songs that share the same melody but have different texts. In particular, we present contrafacts that originated in both northern France and in Occitania (also called the Languedoc or Provence), what is now southern France. There does not seem to be a standard order in which *contrafacta* were made; in some cases, later works in the vernacular (and some on secular themes) borrow the melodies of plainchant, while in other situations, secular vernacular melodies are used with moralizing or sacred texts.

Many of tonight’s pieces are also songs in praise of the Virgin Mary. Marian worship (also called the cult of the Virgin Mary) grew rapidly in popularity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, inspiring songs in both Latin and vernacular languages alike.

I

There are numerous examples throughout the medieval period of the technique of *contrafacture*: the practice of re-texting an extant, familiar melody to convey a new message. By our modern standards, of course, this amounts to little more than plagiarism, but for the composer-poets of the Middle Ages, this musical borrowing was both essential and expressive, putting authors, traditions, and meanings in dialogue with one another. The trio of monophonic songs presented this evening—Guiraut de Bornelh’s alba “Reis Glorios,” and the two Marian hymns “Ave maris stella” and “O Maria, Deu maire”—is an exemplar of the practice of creating referential meaning via *contrafacture*. All three share fundamental melodic features (listen, for instance, for the large leap of a perfect fifth with which each begins), but are separated by centuries, lan-

guage, musical style, and message.

“Ave maris stella,” dating from the 9th century, was a popular plainchant hymn in the Roman Catholic church. Simple yet beautiful in both language and gracefully arched melody, it praises the Virgin Mary in Latin, and appeals to her in her traditional role as intercessor. It acts as the model for the ensuing songs. “O Maria, Deu maire” (ca. 11th century) closely resembles its predecessor both in tune and message; it further develops the same textual themes, such as the juxtaposition of Mary with Eve, and expands upon the original musical features. Written in Occitan, the vernacular language of Southern France, this hymn departs from the liturgical purpose of its forebear, towards the more informal, personalized devotional practices of the laity. Guiraut’s 12th century contribution, “Reis Glorios,” moves even further afield, amalgamating the secular traditions of the troubadours (and particularly those of the *alba*, a type of song typically depicting lovers parting at daybreak), with sacred symbols and sonic markers. Despite its courtly trappings—the very premise of the song, for instance, or the threat of the “jealous one,” a typical trope of troubadour poetry—Guiraut’s *canso* nevertheless assumes the appearance of a prayer, aurally evoking the earlier Marian hymns, and overtly referencing appeals to God. Taken together, this set of songs demonstrates the tenuous boundary between the secular and sacred traditions during this period, and aptly shows how composer-poets utilized musical allusion and appropriation to create enhanced meaning.

—ANYA WILKENING

The upper voice of the two-voice conductus “Ave maris stella, ave singularis” is a possible contrafact for the Marian Latin hymn as well. It opens with four musical phrases that seem related in terms of melodic contour and intervallic context to the hymn, before moving to a newly-composed melody. The bottom voice inverts the contour and some of the pitches of the upper melody, and the two voices create a texture where they cross each other repeatedly. Tex-

tually, the first line of each poetic stanza matches the first line of each of the hymn’s stanzas, creating a further link between the two pieces.

II

Trouvère Gautier de Coinci’s *chanson* “Entendez tuit ensemble” borrows the melody of “Beata viscera,” a monophonic conductus (a musical setting of rhymed Latin poetry, often with a refrain, that appears around Paris in the early thirteenth century) attributed to Perotin. Gautier also adopts the verse-refrain structure of Perotin’s conductus in his *chanson*. Both pieces are settings of poetry honoring the Virgin Mary—Gautier’s *chanson* appears in his *Miracles de Nostre Dame*, a collection of Marian praise and miracle songs. Collections of Marian miracle and praise songs were very popular in the thirteenth century, owing to the popularity of the cult of the Virgin Mary (thirteenth-century ruler Alfonso X el Sabio of Aragon and Castile also commissioned and oversaw the completion of the *Cantigas de Santa María*, a collection of over 400 Marian songs in Galician-Portuguese). Gautier’s piece is not an exact replication of Perotin’s melody—the two pieces differ most notably in the refrains, where Gautier repeats material from the melody of the verse in the refrain’s final two lines instead of repeating the first line of the refrain’s melody in the third line, as Perotin does. Gautier’s text also references another Marian hymn, the popular Latin prayer “Ave Maria, gratis plena.” Scattered throughout the Old French text are the opening lines of the prayer: “Ave Maria, gratis plena. Dominus tecum, virgo... In mulieribus...fructus ventris tui,” creating an intertextual connection to Marian songs as well as a musical one.

It is possible that the Aquitanian *versus*, which appeared in Aquitaine in the middle of the twelfth century, is the precursor to its northern French counterpart the conductus. Like the conductus, the *versus* is a setting of sacred rhymed poetry, and it can be either monophonic (containing a single melody) or polyphonic (containing multiple melodies). Many *versus* are Marian, and “Res iocosa”