**Music and Late Medieval European Court Cultures:**

**REWRITING THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF LATE MEDIEVAL EUROPE**

Late medieval cultural history in Europe has traditionally been studied from a monodisciplinary and national perspective. For musicologists researching the period 1350–1450, this meant a strong focus on sources and on notation, leading to well-established distinctions between ‘English’, ‘French’ or ‘Italian’ music and styles. Musicology’s sister disciplines developed along similar lines: we speak of an ‘English’ or ‘French’ Gothic, a ‘northern’ and a ‘southern’ ‘English’ or ‘French’ or ‘Italian’ music and styles. Distinctions between ‘English’, ‘French’ or ‘Italian’ music and styles lead to well-established disciplinary critical mass that the project requires to achieve its objectives. Three post-doctoral researchers, Drs Christophe Masson (History), David Murray (Literary History) and Laura Slater (Art History) are my scholarly collaborators on the project. Martha Buckley (Literary History) and Laura Slater (Art History) are my scholarly collaborators on the project. Martha Buckley (Literary History) and Laura Slater (Art History) are my scholarly collaborators on the project. Martha Buckley (Literary History) and Laura Slater (Art History) are my scholarly collaborators on the project.

Each MALMECC scholar will pursue their own research project. The various sub-projects within MALMECC were selected to converge along interdisciplinary research themes, generating synergies that can only be achieved through our work together. For my own research, for example, I focus on the court culture of late medieval Savoy during the reign of Duke Amadeus VIII (1393–1455), later (anti-) Pope Felix V (1429–49), his influential successor Louis of Savoy (1413–69), and Duchess Anne of Savoy (1418–62), better known under her maiden name Anne of Austria. She was the daughter of King Janus of Cyprus and French royal princess Charlotte of Bourbon and, among other things, was responsible for the acquisition of the Shroud of Turin. Laura Slater, our art historian, in turn researches cultural and dynamic networks linking late medieval England, the Low Countries and France. The court of English Queen Philippa of Hainaut (1311–69) is her primary point of entry. Philippa was the daughter of another French princess, Jeanne of Valois, and her husband William, Count of Hainaut, Holland and Zealand – a group of territories nowadays divided among France, Belgium and The Netherlands. Our two projects share an interest in the role of females as cultural patronesses and codec of power at court, but also deal with territories that have been relegated to the periphery of the modern nation states that they now belong to (in the case of Savoy: France, Italy and Switzerland).

Literary historian David Murray and historian Christophe Masson pursue a complementary focus on the dynamics of ecclesiastical courts. David examines the musico-poetic production of the Monk of Salzburg against the background of the considerable political ambitions of prince-archbishop Pilgrim II von Puchheim (1330–96) at Salzburg. For an ecclesiastic ruler such as Pilgrim, available power networks would have extended deeply into the Austrian-German aristocracy through his familial lineages, alongside the transnational coterie of churchmen that extended all the way to the cardinals and, with a bit of luck, the one cardinal who served as Pope at any given time. Princes of the Church during the later Middle Ages were typically brothers, nephews and uncles of secular rulers and their wives. They played important roles as advisers, educators, intellectual and administrative advisors and rulers in their own right, and formed a network of their own that will be examined by Christophe Masson.

Needless to say, visual and musical performances were essential for the cultural display at all these courtly communities. Courtiers secular and ecclesiastic often grew up together and were connected through dynamic and educational ties. This makes it easy to understand how a transnational courtly habitus came about that the MALMECC team aims to reconstruct.

Music, sounds and listening played a vital role in courtly life, from the daily prayers and mass to making, exchanging, discussing hearing and performing courtly song and poetry, to dancing and acoustic signals performed at courtly ceremonies. Much remains to be recovered about music’s Sitz im Leben from romances, chronicles, educational texts and archival records as well as architectural, visual and material artefacts. Translating this evidence against that of the notated sources and archives already explored, and assembling our findings into a coherent picture, is an exciting challenge and the main objective of the MALMECC team in the upcoming years. For further information please go to the project website malmecc.eu, which features regular updates and blogs by team members.

How can we rectify the distortions generated by such traditional historiographies? How did words, sounds, visual, gestural, material, and spatial components interact and form culture, and specifically court culture? Can we rewrite the narrative of late medieval European courtly life, from the daily prayers and mass to making, exchanging, discussing hearing and performing courtly song and poetry, to dancing and acoustic signals performed at courtly ceremonies. Much remains to be recovered about music’s Sitz im Leben from romances, chronicles, educational texts and archival records as well as architectural, visual and material artefacts. Translating this evidence against that of the notated sources and archives already explored, and assembling our findings into a coherent picture, is an exciting challenge and the main objective of the MALMECC team in the upcoming years. For further information please go to the project website malmecc.eu, which features regular updates and blogs by team members.

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