

Chapter 2

Fat Allan in the Black Forest or Tackling Flies

*Cinderella, Cinderella, Cinderella
All she wanted was a white knight,
(With a Big Lebowski)*

We visited the vineyards of the Mosel region of Germany two years ago on a trip to Frankfurt. They are situated mostly on extremely steep and (apart from the vines), completely denuded hillsides. Rather than using a trellis and row arrangement as is more common here in the Northeast US, each vine is individually trained to a post but with no rows in between. There are no rows because the degree of the slope makes it virtually impossible to get any machinery in there at all once the vineyard has been established anyway. Consequently, it is likely that most, if not all of the work done on these vines is hand-work accomplished by the smiling local *arbeiten männer und frauen..*⁹⁰

The slopes along the west side of river are much steeper than those on the east and for my part I cannot imagine standing, much less working on that grade of a slope all day long. The people who do it must have phenomenal calf and foot muscles, I have concluded, hence the otherwise inexplicable local preference for Lederhosen which shows these particular muscles to advantage. (I have seen pictures of these people and their legs,-but they are in black and white). What I do know is that, working, even for a couple of hours on the few rows of the Cabernet Franc in my vineyard, where the elevation is comparatively much less steep, tires me out and causes the old tennis injury in my ankle to start throbbing enthusiastically. Since there is little or no possibility of maneuvering a tractor in there, consequently I must assume that any spraying on this steep grade must be done using either a backpack sprayer or a helicopter (which apparently has already been tried and found to be not practical).⁹¹ In reality, this work is probably now mostly handled mostly by contract labor from Turkey rather than the Arbeiter Manner und Frauleins or the Cistercian monks as it was in centuries past. The more modern pictures of vineyard workers are probably in color and not as easy to find, at least so I have concluded after many years of looking unsuccessfully for pictures of colored Turks in Lederhosen.

Herman Weimer, the upstate German from whom I bought my vines, hailed originally from this region, from the little town of Bernkastel-Kues on the Eastern bank of the river about twenty eight miles west of Trier. As you drive the twists of the Moselle⁹² river it is one of the larger of the small towns that dot each bank between the towering backdrop of the vineyards. It was apparent to us driving through the town that it had a vibrant tourist trade and also a position of

90 Though I have not seen it, the few books I have read on the subject tend to bear this out.

91 “Applikationstechnik im Weinbau - Teil 1: Wirkstoffbilanzen bei verschiedenen Pflanzenschutzgeräten. Teil 2: Helikopter im Vergleich zu Axialsprayer und Überzeilengeräten” Siegfried, W.;Holliger, E.;Viret, O;Crettenend, Y.;Mittaz, C.;Antonin, P, Forschungsanstalt für Obst-, Wein- und Gartenbau, CH-8820 Wädenswil, Switzerland 2000

92 This is the French spelling. The German spelling is Mosel. (I pronounce it closer to the French Mo’selle, accented second syllable (like Rochelle, Rochelle, whereas the correct pronunciation in German is Mosel accent on the first, like Rosalie, without the ‘lie’),

some commercial importance within the economy of the region, even though it was then somewhat off-season. In fact we were correct as it serves as a point for the negociant wine merchants coming from the nearby cities of Trier, Koblenz and Frankfurt-am-Main and even from further away to contract for bulk wine purchases behind the quaint leaded glass windows and hand painted signs. What is striking is that just as soon as you get to the edge of the town, every square meter is indecorously and unapologetically converted to vineyard. There is no transition area demarcating the boundary between town and agriculture, no hiatus between commerce and agriculture, -it just goes abruptly from 'Town':'Vineyard', just like that, or alternatively in some cases, Town-Castle-Vineyard. In portions of the hillsides where it ordinarily would be too steep to grow vines, terraces of stone have been carved like balustrades in the hillside so that all the arable land can be utilized. This holds true all the way up the Mosel valley until you get to Trier where the Moselle meets the Saar river and overworked hills become once again, thankfully, just scenery. The reason for this intensive cultivation is the eight to ten degree bump in temperature you get near the river which lengthens the growing season long enough for the golden Riesling and tangerine hued Gewürztraminer bunches to ripen.

That March of 2002 Bernkastel was sporting a new coat of paint, getting ready for the influx of babbling tourists and a relatively new coat of arms as well, this having been granted in 1949 and which incorporated a bunch of grapes along with the cross of the Bishopric of Trier and a lobster. The lobster was adopted from the arms of Cusanus, (Nicholas von Kues), the cleric who was born in 1401 here in Bernkastel, hence the Kues of Bernkastel-Kues. Von Kues is most noted for authoring the philosophic work " De docta ignorantia" in which he proposed a departure from the middle ages' geocentric view of the universe based on dogma, suggesting therein such naturalistic questions might be better determined by the use of, for want of a better description, reason or perhaps even mathematical calculation rather than dogma. Von Kues also put in a case not only for a heliocentric universe but for an almost infinite universe, this latter concept being somewhat revolutionary for the time and still the subject of debate even today. He was also one of few ordained Cardinals who preached religious tolerance not based solely on confidence in implicit superiority of Catholic dogma, but also on finding a common ground for all religions in the truth, the so called Areopagatica. He also was the author of free deserts for members of the Overboard Club at the Bernkastel Red Lobster.

Considering how well the Church responded to Giordano Bruno's similar suggestion about the relation of the earth and the universe and the fact that Von Kues made it to Cardinal says a lot, it says he must have had, as Samuel Jackson's character in pulp fiction would say about the apocryphal pig, 'one helluva personality'. He was also noted for having built a hospital (complete with vineyard) in Bernkastel and for having invented a game played with a non-round ball. Pictures of Kues often show him in a kind of forward crouch apparently cradling something under his Cardinal's robes; classic 'quarterback sneak' position. Based on this, it may not be far off the mark to call Nicholas von Kues, not only a noted philosopher and humanitarian, but also possibly the father of the modern NFL or, alternatively, 'the throwing quarterback of Bernkastel'. Football was then, in the Middle Ages, evidently played without equipment and without a regular field, hence the need for the hospital and the vineyard. The Cusanus society which operates today from Western Michigan is composed mostly of ex-Green Bay Packer fans, suggesting why perhaps they were not eager to have this added to his list of accomplishments. Oh say, Cusanus-- , but who wouldn't have sneaked in under the bleachers to get a look at that?

Von Kues, as he was also known, for a mediaeval philosopher had quite a run, (apart from the obvious pun), --Joyce mentions von Kues in *Finnegan's Wake* "thus we cannot escape our likes and dislikes, exiles or am-busheers, beggar and neighbour and—this is where the dime-show advertisers advance the temporal relief plea—let us be tolerant of antipathies. *Nex quovis burro num fit mercaseus?* I am not hereby giving my final endorsement to the learned ignorants of the Cusanus philosophism in which old Nicholas pegs it down that the smarter the spin of the top the sounder the span of the bottom."⁹³ Which as far as I can tell means either he is not giving his final endorsement to the Cusanus' philosophy in *De Docta Ignorantia*, his major work, or, 'go to hell on a burro'-- but he certainly implies he was certainly on the right track when it came to smart top-spinning.

Nicholas' family name was actually originally Krebs, not Kues, *Kreb* meaning Crab or Crawfish for which he substituted a lobster on the crest, lobsters being a traditional symbol of temperance and crabs being a traditional symbol of, well, crabs.⁹⁴ A lecture was given on his works very recently at the pointedly modern sounding; "Info-Video-Center of Luxembourg which, was also featuring at the time, perhaps not coincidentally, a retrospective look at the teletubbies. (*Crabwalk*).⁵⁹

If we can move (temporarily) from the philosophy of the spheres to the sphere of mediaeval music, just as it would seem we might bid fond farewell to Nicolaus von Kues, as progenitor par excellence of the Renaissance in the area of philosophic and scientific rationalism, --ushering him gracefully past the green Gatorade drenched sidelines of our Latinate pre-Renaissance consciousness, we are abruptly brought round to face him again via a rather intriguing series of coincidences that return us once again, (like a crab) to his doorstep, the von Kuesian threshold.

Just as Cusanus prefigured the Renaissance in Science, Guillaume DuFay, the famed mediaeval composer was considered to be a central prefigure to the development of well organized methodical musical style in the Renaissance and was a major composer in what would become commonly known as the Flemish school to which were later added Johannes Ockeghem and others of the Netherlandish persuasion. DuFay was denominated 'Flemish' not only due to his compositional style but also because he was actually born in Belgium, 'Dufayt' being his mother's name. It is suspected she had had an affair with a priest (who remained unnamed) and so the boy adopted the maternal name which later he shortened to DuFay, oxymoronically allowing a more elongated pronunciation as "Du-fa-ye", which also permits the incorporation of an epigrammatic, "fa" of the musical scale into his signature, which monogram in fact appears with outlined emphasis on the "fa" of his signature quite frequently in his works and which also accounts for a lot of ribbing from Latino and Mexican comics vis-a-vis his sexual orientation, -Maricon-fay-ye.

Apparently, the then Bishop of Cambrai, Pierre d'Ailly, a person of some note within the church, had taken an early interest in the young man and he was therefore enrolled in the chapel school as a 'puer' or singer with an unchanged voice, where he served as an altar boy up until 1413 when

93 I would hate to be the one to have to run the spell-check program on *Finnegan's Wake*.

94 "Finnegan's Wake", James Joyce, Penguin, New Jersey, 1982, p. 163.

95 The Cusanus Society holds yearly meetings at the Conference on Medieval, Studies held each year at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.

his voice broke which puts his actual birthdate closer to around 1399. He was then given a chaplaincy, a common promotion for the more favored among the ex-altos, and thence made part of the personal retinue of d'Ailly, who by then was a central figure in mediating the dispute resulting from the great schism then afflicting the Catholic Church which would result in his attending one of the two most famous mediaeval ecclesiastical gatherings.

The Council of Constance held in that year was supposedly an attempt to heal this schism and as a major 'power-broker' d'Ailly was among those requested to head the concordance and so he and his retinue headed off to the Bodensee, ostensibly as a respected cleric to play umpire but also to provide entertainment to the attendees with his choir. It is widely believed that DuFay traveled with d'Ailly there as part of his retinue and it was there, at the huge convocation held near the border of Switzerland that he would meet his eventual next patron, Carlo Malatesta,⁹⁶ an influential Italian nobleman, patron of the arts and accomplished bartender.

The major bishops attending (of which there were three hundred), it is recorded, sponsored musicales by their various chapels competing to draw the most notables from the crowd, a musicale occurring almost every evening. DuFay must have had a great part in the musical aspect of the council since d'Ailly, as the major figure at the event as such, had perforce a great deal of entertaining to do and expected of him. DuFay then a young musician and composer, under d'Ailly's protection, apparently was prominently featured (now as a composer) in these fetes and must have impressed Malatesta sufficiently for him to invite him back to his court at Rimini in the capacity of court composer.

Lake Constance, known in the German as Bodensee, is located at the point where the Rhine flows into Switzerland from Germany. More importantly for those organizing the conference it was also centrally located with respect to Italy France and Germany as well as Austria and more importantly somewhat equidistant from Avignon and Rome, the two main contending seats of power for the papacy at the time, thereby holding title to an implicate neutrality by virtue of its location. However, this equitability was only nominal as the place was (and is) far more readily accessible to Germany and the Flemish lowlands and parts of Italy than it was to France via the overland route, afforded access by direct navigation from Germany using the more efficient and well traveled water route. This provided not only a greater sense of ease for those traveling from the Flemish lowlands such as d'Ailly but also afforded access to a leisurely and well provisioned series of waystops that had grown up on the river banks, as the Rhine was then just becoming the "Mother Road", the great central highway of Europe.

To provide some background, for those not steeped in Church schismatic lore or, as it is known in Yiddish, schisyidamatizmy (or, feh!?), or (Snoop Dog, 'skizzahmatizzle') the Council of Constance had been convened primarily because, for thirty three years there had been a great division of authority in the church, with one Pope residing in Rome and another in Avignon. An earlier council designed to heal the schism, called in Pisa only had worsened matters by creating yet a third Popelet (not to be confused with popelets which are delicious mini ice creams).

96 It is thought that both Carlo and Pandolpho attended and it is not clear which was to invite Dufay to the court but it is known that first major composition hecreated on reaching Rimini was for Carlo's nuptials. Malatesta would continue as his patron for the years 1420 to 1424.

The Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund was apparently getting ‘fuhrklempt’ from all this and having had enough (feh!) of dealing with two seats of ultimate religious authority, not relishing a third, ordered the church to put its houses in order, so to speak. Probably guessing that what was in store if he didn’t would not be pleasant, Pope John XXIII (rather reluctantly) agreed and called for the meeting of prelates to begin in 1414 at this town called, Constance located on a rather pleasant lake, providing a rather comfortable setting for the participants thereby encouraging a rather lengthy process, a fact which would further addend to John XXIII’s benefit, as he might have correctly intuited.

One of the first acts for the clergy assembled there in 1415, was to declare themselves under the direct authority of Christ and thus superior in authority to any and all of the extant popes. This was not only politically expedient, giving them thereafter the appearance of being a neutral body with their moral authority deriving from this ostensibly impartial status being beholden only to the supreme authority, Christ, but also signaled nobody was going to rush them into anything, not while Club Med at Lake Constance was serving complimentary Mai Tais. Not long after this first act, they turned abruptly away from the contentious issue that ostensibly brought them together.

Early on, it seemed, besides declaring themselves the pre-eminent authority, there was one other issue they could all agree on, without leaving the sauna. It was on quelling the reform movements recently sprouting up in the Eastern precincts most notably in the area of Czechoslovakia or Bohemia as it was then called. It was their common antipathy to these attempts to bring true reform to the church, being propounded at the time most notably and somewhat vociferously by the Bohemian, Jan Hus that bound them together without controversy. In addition to immediately excommunicating and burning Hus, they dug up the bones of John Wycliffe who was Hus’ mentor and burnt them as well. They apparently had not invented the concept of anger management in the 15th century.

The Council itself was not really one meeting per se, but indeed a series of convocations held successively until the year 1418. While there is no extant evidence that Nicolaus von Kues attended the Council of Constance, in the year 1417 he was enroute from his home in Bernkastel to begin his University education in Italy and it would have put the Council directly in his route to Padua. It is hardly likely that a talented young man with such an obvious interest in theology would have bypassed an event like this which was essentially the Woodstock of the Middle Ages. (Hey man, lotta freaks! They closed the Rhine!).

We do know that Nicholas von Kues left his native Moselle region to study at the University in Padua during the years 1417-1423. There is no mention whatsoever among traditional von Kues scholars of his having attended the event at Constance and indeed as a young man without church credentials, there is among them therefore a degree of perhaps justifiable skepticism concerning his possible attendance. However, as we have said, the event was not exclusively ecclesiastical by any means. The percentage of clergy may have been further reduced towards the end of the conference as, not to lose an opportunity for innovation, one of the water sports that developed early on at this event, was tossing clergy who had ‘made errors’ from a high cliff into the lake (from which if they did not survive the bodies were most easily disposed). Apparently ‘erasers’ had not been invented yet either,--(or had they?).

The total number of visitors to the city during the council is estimated, at the lowest end, to have

been fifty thousand; of these, more than one-third were mountebanks, money-lenders, strolling actors and prostitutes (not necessarily in that order). I am not sure exactly what a mountebank is but I am certain they are not offering six month fixed rate CD's. The approximate number of musicians was seventeen hundred, two hundred more than the number of prostitutes attending, which numerical advantage speaks favorably for the refinement of the delegates. The actual number of clergy attending in official capacity comprised perhaps only an eighth of this transient population. The participants in the council apparently also had a lot of free time for pursuing these myriad organized and spontaneous recreational activities (both water and non-water based) available in abundance, many of these, besides the monk tossing and fellatio events, being musical in nature and here is where DuFay had some visible importance and freedom to evolve his compositional style.

To that point in the history of music of Western Europe, it had been the church that governed, at least in *musica sacra* (of which outside of Italy and the Bourbon court there was not much else), not only the position and character of the melody but also what intervals were allowed to sound above it. There were harmonic and melodic intervals denominated as 'sacred', and therefore allowed, such as the sixth and 'diabolic' intervals such as the augmented 4th. DuFay would in the years following become instrumental (no pun intended) in introducing an independence of motion for all the voices, based on compositional rather than religious imperatives.

What distinguishes the Flemish school from the *Ars Nova* and what made it such a powerful influence on the subsequent music of the Renaissance was its introduction of strict and codifiable musical rules to govern the motions of the various polyphonic lines. This was an advance over the what was known as 'discantus', or *cantus firmus* (or *fauxbourdon*) which essentially employed the old Gregorian chant in the bass, as the foundation for any polyphonic, or multi-voice piece, - the chant melody serving as the *firmus* for the 'cantusing', so to speak, and a lot of the 'cantusing' could be pretty well freelanced, with free rhythms and just eventual vocal harmonic 'targets', so to speak, denoted *per se* without all the intervening notes spelled out exactly. (What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas). The correct term of course is not 'cantusing' but 'melismas' and the intervening melodies are generally referred to as melismatic and much like the events in Dufay's own life of which we can confirm only at critical nodes, the intervening parts are up to the individual interpreter. These musical "target events" were in fact certain tonalities or intervals that had been sanctioned by the church and as with the extra-curricular activities at the conference at Bodensee itself, what went on between the 'officially sanctioned' 'target events' was pretty much anybody's business with compositional 'errors' explained largely by the Geraldine-Flip Wilson school of thought but without the attendant involuntary cliff diving.⁹⁷

While there had been a good deal of polyphonic music in secular music before DuFay, as illustrated by the *Ars Nova*, these forms such as the 'caccia' and the motet did not have a formal set of rules governing the relationships of the various musical parts. Indeed it was only a century earlier that a common form of musical notation had been arrived at and musical time signatures were not added until the beginning of the Renaissance. Essentially they were playing from 'Gregorian fake books' whereafter they followed Duke Ellington's dictum, if it sounded good (to Jesus), it was good.⁹⁸ What DuFay did, among other things, was to organize the various extant

97 Mirror or 'crab' canon 'The devil made me do ti (la so fa) it em ed am.

98 Otherwise known as illuminated musical manuscripts.

polyphonic approaches to compositional techniques distinguishable in secular forms such as the canon and fugue into a coherent discipline then introduce these to sacred music as compositional rules (Retro-Cross Pollination). These ‘rules’ emphasized to some extent Dufay’s own predilection toward utilizing mathematical concepts and frameworks as the central directives for the composer⁹⁹ instead of those defined from the concepts of religious rectitude. Indeed, what singularly identifies Dufay’s contribution, is his introduction of the mathematical concepts of symmetry into compositional techniques as exemplified by the canon and the fugue.¹⁰⁰ While symmetry was not yet an identifiable branch of mathematics, the aesthetic value it lends to forms it as a general intellectual construct, were readily appreciated by DuFay and reflected in his compositional techniques long before there was such a ‘science’ per sae.

Just as von Kues was a proto-Renaissance figure, a cleric introducing mathematics and logic well before it was acceptable even outside the clergy as the foundation for scientific and philosophical speculation, laying the basis for the flowering of the sciences, DuFay in the musical realm likewise began by moving away from strictly scriptural and ecclesiastical bases for musical composition relying on codified logical structures based on abstract formal compositional considerations even in his sacred compositions, thus paving the way for Palestrina and eventually the subtle counterpoint of J.S. Bach. Interestingly, Von Kues eventual mathematical works dealt largely with the transmutation of geometrical objects through acquiring laws of proportion, including the prefiguration of projective geometry and in some sense the calculus.¹⁰¹ He is quoted as saying “When we have considered (things) well, then we know there is nothing sure in our knowledge other than mathematics.” a rather unique perspective to say the least for a theologian and confidant of Popes in that era.

Padua was at that time not only a seat of great learning but also of intellectual ferment. As a seat of erudition and home of the well known 14th century composer Marchetto and later Ciconia and others who inherited the secular notation and techniques of the Ars Nova school, Padua would have been an especially compatible and inspiring place for an up and coming musician to spend a leisurely month or so on the way to a new appointment, soaking up the musical influences of the Ars Nova composers and absorbing the ferment and activity there that would soon burst forth as the Renaissance.

99 ‘...this low line is responsible for delineating ‘tonal harmony’ in Franco-Flemish polyphony after about 1400. (Footnote continues) ..According to Besseler this ‘tonal harmony’, native to Italy was adopted by northerners, including. Guillaume Dufay, who played a major, if not the major role in consolidating these elements. There is a lot of speculation of the role mathematics plays in Dufay's music “Haug, who is professor at the Centre for Medieval Studies at NTNU, referring to the polyphonic choral work which the famous Renaissance composer Guillaume Dufay (c. 1400-74) composed for the consecration of the cathedral in Florence in 1436. - Some people have claimed that the form this motet takes mirrors the architectonic number symbolism of the cathedral. They set out to prove that Dufay was portraying the proportions of the church in his music”. The question remains where would Dufay get his predilection for mathematics. Certainly it was not in his upbringing in the chapel school. Dufay is comparable to Haydn, in that both.. took a leading part in stabilizing the formal devices of their respective eras. . Counterpoint and Compositional Process in the Time of Dufay. Edited Kevin Knoll, Garland 1997, p. 28.

100 This was most evidenced in the motet he composed for the dedication of Brunelleschi’s dome which exactly incorporated the architectural ratios of the cathedral as its mensural scheme.

101 Through his investigation of the infinitization of a line in converting a circle to a straight line thereby almost inventing the calculus two centuries before Newton.

As much as Constance was Woodstock for the Middle Ages, Padua was, in short, the ‘Haight Ashbury’. It would have been an almost obligatory stop for a musician before proceeding on to assume his duties as court musician for the Malatestas. Padua,- was Nashville, Rimini,- the Cocoa Lounge at Myrtle Beach.¹⁰²

If Nicolaus von Kues indeed attended the Council of Constance en route to Padua in 1417 (as we have hypothesized), it is also very likely he would have become familiar with the works of a rising musical star there and perhaps even sought to meet him personally. After leaving the retinue of d’Ailly, DuFay, took well over a year to reach Rimini and assume his new post, obviously touring through Italy having probably, as a result of his exposure at the Council, become, though young, a person of some substance with bankable prospects.¹⁰³ If Dufay paused on his way to Rimini in the bustling University town of Padua as is likely, he may have begun musical sketches that would later form the basis for a mass and perhaps encountered von Kues there and renewed a previous acquaintance.

When exactly the mass for St. Anthony of Padua was composed is uncertain and according to noted musicologist Charles Hamm, even the attribution to Dufay is uncertain on several grounds. While it is unquestionably the work of a major artist, according to Hamm, it lacks Dufay’s characteristic stylisms and sense of organization. Secondly, as he points out, the numerous discrepancies in the extant versions are entirely uncharacteristic of any other work of Dufay’s, --it is as if there were two versions of the piece. Speaking of this piece he says, “Some of the many deviations from Dufay’s musical practice may be the work of the scribe, not the composer. But the deviations are so numerous that it seems unlikely... .In all authentic Dufay works, of all periods, an almost obsessive desire to achieve logical and even obvious formal organization by means of orderly patterns of mensuration can be observed. This mass is not organized over a tenor, it is not organized by means of a motto, it is not organized by alternation of chant and polyphony, or “chorus” and “duo” sections, or recurring mensural patterns. The mass is not organized in any way that I can detect and thus I cannot imagine Dufay’s having written such a pieced, at any period of his life.”¹⁰⁴ If one however were to infer the period from the style of the pieces composed, one must assume it was later in his career, and Hamm places it (despite his reservations) in DuFay’s ‘period 6’, somewhere between 1433 and 1445 based on its mensural style. Given the discrepancies in style and accuracy from all his other works of the period, and indeed as Hamm points out, from all his other works, it is entirely possible that, DuFay reworked earlier compositions or sketches that were absorbed by him at this first flowering of his

102 Three datable compositions from the time of 1420-1426 occupy its relations with the Malatesta: the Festmotette “Vasilissa ergo gaude” for the departure of the Cleofe Malatesta after Byzanz (1420), the Ballade “Resvellies vous” for the wedding of Victoria Colonna and Carlo Malatesta d.J. (1423) and the Motette “Apostolo glorioso” for Pandolfo Malatesta, archbishop of Patras (1426). Also probably the Missa Sine Nomine.

103 It is almost certain that DuFay spent a good deal of time in Padua at some (perhaps several) point(s) as he composed one (possibly two masses) for its great basilicas the most notable being the mass for St. Anthony of Padua and who in fact would become DuFay’s patron Saint. Dufay’s single most valuable possession was said to be a relic of St. Anthony’s belt. Dufay returned to Padua around 1450 but it is not known whether the mass was conceived at an earlier visit or at this time. Another mass of Dufay was originally mistakenly denominated St. Anthony’s of Padua. When the mistake was discovered, the status and purpose of this second mass became open to question.

104 “A Chronology of the Works of Guillaume Dufay Based on a Study of Mensural Practice”, Charles Hamm, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1964, p.113.

inspiration, prompted by his contact with the city's inspired architecture in his youth. These may have held such influence on him that he may have reworked into a maturer style for the musical portion of a work commissioned later in life. It is as if this work were inspired not by any of the common organizational conventions of music but on strictly rational mathematical grounds.

Despite Hamm's doubts later scholarship has tended to confirm rather than cast further doubt on the attribution and has pegged the compositional date as probably somewhere around 1450. Works of this magnitude would most likely have been begun as such sketches, in modern terms 'singles', perhaps even secular essays, made years even decades before DuFay would see fit to incorporate them into a major composition like a mass. What we know for certain is that Padua was the hotbed of the mostly secular Ars Nova movement and was inarguably a magnetic pole around which the musical innovations of the day revolved and which consequently exerted a strong influence on DuFay throughout his life and work and even moreso after his return to Cambrai in the 1440s. So this work, despite its motivic disorganization and its religious intent embodies many of the principles of the secular Ars Nova.

Von Kues was in Padua at the latest by 1418, attending the University. Von Kues having by then lived in Padua for two years would have proven a knowledgeable local guide to the wonders of the University Town, perhaps guiding his contemporary and kindred innovator Dufay, the ignorant doctor perhaps even inspiring Dufay to experiment with new musical forms. Had Dufay begun sketches for a mass at this time, it is not surprising that he would be experimenting with incorporated some of the new influences he found there. The mass in its form as Hamm correctly points out, studiously (and for a musicologist frustratingly) defies almost all the norms and conventions that had evolved in sacred music to that point. This however would not be surprising as Padua was aflame with secular innovation as well as the incipient rationalism that Cusanus would come to adopt as a precursor to the Renaissance in the fields of philosophy and natural science. It is therefore not impossible that Dufay would have hesitated to make use of the services of church scribes to transcribe an unconventional piece for fear that it would be condemned as sacrilegious by the authorities, hence accounting for the numerous mistakes in the transcription. Who would have inspired this flight from convention into rationalism and the corresponding irrational attachment that Dufay developed toward it. Crab Man!

If they in fact met and rekindled the friendship started at Bodensee, one based on a common interest in bending and transmuting forms according to fixed rules based more on rational principles and not dictated by Church doctrine or practice, the continuing intrigues between the court of Eugenius and the anti-Pope in which they would both eventually prove instrumental figures becomes a bit more explicable. Indeed this conflict may be the ambient medium in which this incipient rebellion gestated, to provide an excuse to further the bond between the two intellectually kindred spirits, a link and a relationship for which there is abundant though admittedly entirely circumstantial evidence.

While the ascription or inspiration for the piece is entirely unclear as is the supposition of the influence of Cusanus, if any, on its composition, what is clear from the historical record is that both DuFay and von Kues, following Dufay's stint with the Malatesta's Court in Rimini, were both simultaneously in the employ of Pope Eugenius IV. DuFay it appears, may even have functioned as a papal spy of sorts in the court of the Duke of Savoy for Eugenius, who, being a great friend of the Malatestas may have found this use for him particularly delicious,-such things

were common in those days and as a musician (without an apparent ostensible political agenda) he would have been the least suspect and the least likely to arouse suspicion in either place. As a member of both the Papal and Savoy's, (the anti-Pope's) choir, he would, if properly encouraged by Carlo Malatesta, have been in a perfect position to spy on the latter, this perhaps even under the influence or supervision of Cusanus who had inexplicably and suddenly shifted his allegiance to Eugenius following the Council of Basel.

As DuFay had a weakness for anagrams and puzzles and embedding them as musical patterns, even incorporating the architectural ratios of the cathedrals into his compositions, perhaps we can use his own and Cusanus' whereabouts to suggest some evidence of a pattern that links the two of them together in a kind of fugally parallel course.¹⁰⁵ By following timeline of von Kues' whereabouts we can see that his ecclesiastical career and whereabouts seems to eerily echo those of DuFay's, -- in something like the form that Dufay would later popularize, 'the crab canon':

- 1414-1418 -- Council of Constance. DuFay attends in retinue
of Bishop d'Ailly of Cambrai (undocumented but widely supported supposition).
Cusanus is aged 16 and en route to Padua in which, if traveling down the Rhine as was likely would
have carried him directly thru Bodensee and Constance.
- 1420-23 -- DuFay goes to Rimini (near Padua) in service to the Malatesta Family
- 1417-23 -- Cusanus is studying in Padua
- 1423 -- DuFay composes music for the marriage of Carlo Malatesta, his
patron and Vittoria Colonna (of a powerful Roman family)
- 1427 -- Cusanus in Koblenz DuFay in Laon (no apparent communication)
- 1428-30 -- Pope Martin V (a Colonna) is involved with scandals mostly due to his favors
to the Malatesta family (Dufay's former patrons, for whom he had composed the
wedding music between the Colonnas and Carlo Malatesta).
- 1431 -- Martin V convokes Basel mostly to reassert primacy of Rome
- 1431 -- Eugenius becomes the pope and begins vicious attacks on the Colonna Family, he
attempts to dissolve Basel Conference.
- 1431 -- At Cusanus' instigation, using the Council of Constance' previous Bull for
authority, Basel declares itself superior to the Papal authority, it considers itself

105 There is o a theory amongst musical historians and musicologists that DuFay, when commissioned to create a piece for a particular cathedral, would embody and mirror the various mathematical ratios contained in its architecture within the musical structures of the composition

- an extension, continuing the mandate of Constance.
- 1433-35 -- DuFay enters service of Duke Amadeus VIII of Savoy.
Savoy goes to Basel. Sets up musical chapel there.
- 1435-1437-- DuFay leaves Savoy to become member of Papal Chapel
On March 25, 1436, probably because of intrigues in Rome, the pope and the chapel are in Florence. Dedication of the Cathedral in Florence by Eugenius IV who lays a golden rose on the altar. This is the first time a Pope consecrates a cathedral himself and there was a great festival and procession, as much civic as religious, including the Pope with triple tiara, seven cardinals, thirty-seven bishops and archbishops and various political and popular officials. For this occasion DuFay composes the motet, “Nuper Rosarum Flore”
- 1436 -- ***Cusanus unexpectedly and inexplicably changes sides to now support Eugenius IV.*** He leaves Basel to garner support for Eugenius in Constantinople
- 1437-39 -- DuFay re-enters service of Savoy, probably at Basel.
- 1437 -- DuFay even though still officially in service to Savoy
inexplicably goes to Ferrara, (the rival council to Basel) which eventually elects his patron, the anti-Pope, as Pope.¹⁰⁶
- 1437 -- Cusanus goes to Constantinople in 1437 and then back to Ferrara
for the council of Ferrara, which is considered the ecumenical portion of and continuation of Basel. (DuFay may have returned to Ferrara 1438 or may have been in Basel, this is disputed.)
- 1438 -- In May, DuFay composes motet for treaty of Berne & Fribourg and therefore is probably in Basel.
- 1438 -- Duke Amadeus VIII of Savoy, an insipid figure and a layman
and Dufay’s patron at the time, is elected anti-Pope (Pope) in Basel
- 1439 -- Ferrara Council endorses Eugenius IV

106 “Dufay and Ferrara”, Lewis Lockwood, Dufay Quincentenary Conference, Department of Music, Brooklyn College, New York, 1976 p. 3. Dufay’s one certain visit to Ferrara is in 1437.

1439-48 -- Cusanus is “The Hercules of the Eugenians” rallying support in Germany for Eugenius IV. DuFay is in Cambrai in the service of Eugenius IV.

Around 1450, Amadeus Duke of Savoy’s son, Louis, tried to entreat DuFay back to serve as his chapel master but he was unsuccessful, writing a letter to Phillip the Good (previously before being promoted, having been known as Phillip the Mediocre) asking for his release from service in the French court. Evidently, if there had been an intrigue against his (Phillip’s) father when he had assumed the role of anti-pope at Basel, an event which DuFay participated in, (at least musically), it had either never been discovered by Louis as we find DuFay is still even after Amadeus’ death, in good graces of house of Savoy (either that or, they badly wanted to get their hands on him for other reasons).

In any case, it seems certainly more than coincidental in light of his official role, that DuFay should have traveled back to Ferrara in 1437 (and possibly again in 1438), to a hotbed of insurrection against his patron and employer, the seat of a rival council, the latter rival now championed by Cusanus, the former a central figure at Basel and formerly at the Council of Constance, (just as his former patron, Bishop d’Ailly had been the preeminent clerical figure at the Council of Constance). This last visit occurs shortly after Cusanus abandons the council at Basel where DuFay’s talent was in such hot demand that he was for a time, at least nominally, commissioned to head the chapel of both the rival factions. (If you think you are confused now, think how the Catholics felt by 1438.)

It is even possible that DuFay created the aforementioned Mass for St. Anthony, to some degree as a musical tribute to his friend and possible co-conspirator Cusanus. Indeed one of Dufay’s many formal musical inventions was the so called ‘crab’ or retrograde canon. The retrograde (crab or ‘cancrizans’) canon, unlike the fugue, which was based on the ‘round’, does not evolve naturally from earlier naive forms like those associated with the troubadours, but rather requires an abstract intellectual effort of will. In this form, the bass line repeats the melodic line, but in reverse and it must follow therefore, certain strict contrapuntal requirements and rules to make the whole more palatable to the ear. The resultant discipline was codified by DuFay as a precursor to the rules of counterpoint that would be so gloriously exploited centuries later by J.S. Bach.¹⁰⁷

While there is no direct evidence extant of any connection whatsoever between DuFay and von Kues, his use of the word ‘crab’ to describe the form of retrograde canon he invented or indeed any precedent use of the word in a musical context lends even more weight to the interesting series of coincidences linking the two of them, particularly considering the fact that DuFay was well known for embodying the names of his patrons and friends as musical anagrams in his works. Of all the forms that were developed and later carried forward in the Renaissance by others such as Palestrina and Ockeghem, this particular one was developed and promoted almost single handedly by DuFay, and the ‘crab canon’, would be employed extensively in his primarily religious works. Von Kues we have noted, was an adaptation of the family name Krebs, which

107 Bach himself wrote a very well known crab canon and is the basis for his inclusion in the famous palindromic pantheon as the Bach of Godel, Escher, Bach

(hold on to your seats Dobie Gilliss fans) essentially means ‘crab’.

An agile and adaptive mind such as Dufay’s might have even synthesized the rationalist personality of von Kues into the aforementioned mass and provided it as a kind of secondary musical tribute to his intellect, cast into a revolutionary intellectually based musical form, and what is more, through a homely musical pun. Being contemporaries and both eminent men of that time this is of course possible even if they had not known each other personally, but there appears to be sufficient evidence based on the above timeline to suggest that they indeed meet at several points and perhaps were even well acquainted, that indeed perhaps von Kues had formed some deep and lasting impression on Dufay, this, despite the fact that there is no documentation of this occurring. Finally when DuFay was dying in 1474 we have it on good authority that he requested that one of his pieces be played yearly in front of his mausoleum on the anniversary of his death. That piece was the Mass for St. Anthony of Padua.

One further note on compositional styles, (again no pun) DuFay was deeply religious and detested false piety, especially when exercised to gain political or personal status. He occasionally gave vent to his disgust in a whimsical (and sometimes even sarcastic) sense of humor employing his tendency toward musical puns. One example of this is to be found in his mass for St. James the Greater. The word ‘fauxbourdon’ refers to a 10th century compositional technique of mirroring a chant baseline in sixths above the bass. Since often the bass line was not explicitly written out, as it can be inferred by the musicians from the upper lines, this style was called ‘fauxbourdon’, or ‘false bottom’ or ‘false bass’. The ‘bourdon’ however was also a term used to refer to the staff of the religious supplicants who traveled around Europe in an attempt to find religious grace. and it was used in these long pilgrimages as their support. It was traditional for pilgrims to have these staffs blessed at a mass for St. James the Greater. DuFay in his musical setting of this mass, introduced a ‘fauxbourdon’ or (sic false bottom or “False Staff”) passage in his work just at the point in this mass where this blessing would normally occur.¹⁰⁸

If Nicholas von Kues had hailed from Baltimore instead of Bernkastel, he would no doubt likely would have been less reticent to have placed in concert with the actual transliteration of his name, a crab on his crest instead of a lobster, this despite its lack of correspondingly edifying symbolic qualities. Crabs being found in abundance in the Chesapeake Bay are relatively cheap in season but still highly valued and it can be said, without damage to their reputation, that they have provided the *raison d’entrée* of many ‘crab boils’ **taking place** on the Eastern shore of Maryland during lifeboat training conducted at the Marine Engineers training school that was located there. As I learned at one of these events during my life boat training in Easton, when you eat crabs you do not hand out silverware or plates, just newspaper and mallets. Crabs are a percussion/projectile type food, (though I have never shot one out of a cannon) if ever there was one. If I ever have a crest for my own vineyard, that is what it will have on it, not a lobster, or

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Professor Barbara Hagg, (of the University of Manchester) has pointed out the possible further significance of the fact that, following the Mass which they would have attended before departing from the church for Compostela, pilgrims would have had their staffs, or ‘bourdons’, blessed. Thus this final item of ritual before departure would have followed the communion, whose text is set in Dufay’s Mass in the parallel technique known as fauxbourdon. The possible punning significance of the use of this technique in a Mass for the pilgrim saint has not been lost on scholars in the past, but a scenario such as this would give it a powerful extra charge.