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Medieval Musical Iconography of the *Fol'amor* in the Digital Age

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1 Abstract

In this paper, we will show how madness, understood through one of its medieval meanings – fol – is associated in texts and images to music, through the fol'amour, and how this notion can be analyzed in the medieval musical iconography. In order to achieve this task, we shall try to define and organize the musical iconography of the fol'amor, of the fol and its medieval social digressions – tintamarre, charivari – using the iconological methodology developed in the Musiconis project. Then, we will observe how this information can be translated into an web-based ontology in order to determine the relationships between all aforementioned elements (textual references, images, music). This exercise will help us better define the notion of madness related to music and love in the Middle Ages, as we will create an ontology that is open, flexible and reusable, associating elements from literature, visual arts and musical/poetic composition. This paper will also show how an ontology-based tool can be used in any type of scientific investigation in the humanities; and how it may be enriched using the current academic knowledge about the notion of madness, translated from all fields of the arts as well as from social, legal and medical sciences.

Medieval musical iconography of the *fol* and the *fol'amor* in the Digital Ages

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Abstract

In this paper, we will show how madness, understood through one of its medieval meanings – fol – is associated in texts and images to music, through the fol'amour, and how this notion can be analyzed in the medieval musical iconography.

In order to achieve this task, we shall try to define and organize the musical iconography of the fol'amor, of the fol and its medieval social digressions – tintamarre, charivari – using the iconological methodology developed in the Musiconis project. Then, we will observe how these information can be translated into an web-based ontology in order to determine the relationships between all aforementioned elements (textual references, images, music). This exercise will help us better define the notion of madness related to music and love in the Middle Ages, as we will create an ontology that is open, flexible and reusable, associating elements from literature, visual arts and musical/poetic composition.

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Has it has been detailed by Pr. Billiet, the *fol* in the Middle Ages is a complex character that uses a specific instrumentarium, often re-appropriating instruments, being shown as an hybrid of a performer and an object as well as translating a moral notion of digression through its performance. In addition, the adjective *fol* is also used in the medieval Occitan vocabulary within the two notions of *fol'amor* and *fin'amor* to express a medieval conception of sentimental relationship deeply rooted in the chivalry and the Arab- Andalousian tradition. *Fin'amor* and *fol'amor*, are new syntagms, philosophical concepts and social behaviours disseminated by the *troubadours and trouvères* in France during the XIIth and XIIIth c.. They are also deeply linked with vocal and instrumental musical practice. In addition to poetry and music, it is not unusual, therefore, to observe existing medieval images with references to the *fol'amor*; in illuminations, woodcarvings, ivories, sculptures and stained glasses, up until the end of the XVth c.

Fol'amor and *fin'amor* are two interconnected ideas based on the opposition of *fin* and *fol* in Middle French: *Fin* tends to express an element that is perfect in its quality, its completeness, or by the intensity of its properties. On the contrary, *fol* refers to an action of a behaviour that crosses social boundaries. *Fol* might also be a jester attached to a person of high lineage, as well as a performer of the *sottie*. It finally refers as well to an unidentified instrument from the aerophones family¹.

Regarding the *fol'amor*, or *fole amour*, as it appears in literary examples, the expression also has a flexible meaning, often referring to a form of love that would be mainly carnal or a betrayal of the spouse - *Et ne avient pas que l'en soit amy a moult de gens selon parfaite amitié, en la maniere que en fole amour charnel un homme ne aime pas pluseurs femmes*², but also to relationships that would not be approved by common practices such as re-wedding.

¹ *Dont sonnèrent maint cor, maint fol et maint bacin* (God. Bouillon R.B., t.3, c.1356, 270). *Car un soufleur qui commence a soufler En une piau, cornant la turelure, Fait entour lui mainte gent assembler (...), La ne voit on sens, raison ne mesure : C'est de dancier au son des chalemiaux. Sotie est grant d'ainsi gens demener Au son d'un foul* (DESCH., Oeuvres Q., t.5, c.1370-1407, 128).

² ORESME, E.A., c.1370, *Le Livre de Ethiques d'Aristote* [texte]. Publ. from the Text of MS. 2902, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique with a Critical Introd. and Notes by Albert Douglas Menut.- New York : G. E. Stechert, 1940.



FIG. 1: An example of the *fin'amore*. *Roman de la Rose*, Guillaume de Lorris, 1475, Harley MS 4425, f.12v



FIG. 2: A courtly dance, with a fol. *Male dancer, female dancer, dancing jester*. French (Alsace) or German (Upper Rhine), c. 1440-1470. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, Inv. 71.93.



FIG. 3: Castle of love, Angers, Musée-château de Villévêque, Ivory, c. 1300.

The *fol* character bears also quite an important meaning in French Medieval theatre. It is often opposed to the *saige*, in various texts and plays, where he actually shows common sense to people that display vanity through their rank or knowledge:

Le Docteur, son clerc Guillot et les étudiants stulti vont enseigner leurs choses folles dans une prédication folle à Monde, leur hôte, qui se croit sage. (...) Ainsi nous voyons Fol contre Fol : la Folie du monde châtiée par la sagesse du Fol, Le Dialogue du Fou et du Sage, où le prétendu Sage fait l'éloge des biens terrestres et le Fou en montre la vanité, concluant que la fausse sagesse est la vraie folie, ne dit-il pas : « Tel est fol qui pense être sage »³

In that sense, the *fol* is actually the true wise man showing the audience, or the reader, a proper behaviour. The *fol* is therefore a complex character that can both display the crossing of social boundaries and wisdom. He will then be represented on stage as the *Comicus*, keeper of common sense, humoristic in its function, but also carrying an important commentary role:

Comicus, le nom suggère qu'il s'agit du personnage qui garantit essentiellement l'amusement. S'il garde certaines fonctions traditionnelles, comme de commenter la conduite des personnages sur scène, de les accompagner, de faire des réflexions psychologiques, l'auteur du Veterator lui confère une nouvelle tâche : expliquer le sens moral de la pièce, ajouter une moralité. Le procédé est très à la mode mais relève d'une vieille tradition. Voici le Fou-sage devenu enfin professeur à travers le déguisement du Comicus.⁴

³ *Deux moralités inédites, composées et représentées en 1427 et 1428* (n. st.) au Collège de Navarre, publiées par A. et R. Bossuat, Librairie d'Argences, Paris, 1955 ; Petit de Julleville, L., Répertoire du théâtre comique en France au Moyen Age, Rép. n° 105, Slatkine Reprints, Genève, 1967.

⁴ Lebègue, R., *Etudes sur le théâtre français*, t. I, éd. Nizet, Paris, 1977, pp. 119-126

Regarding music, performance and instruments, one of the general attributes of the *fol* is the bell. This instrument from the idiophones family is both an instrument resonating by itself when the performer moves and a metaphor for the *fol*'s mind, which is like a small bell in an empty skull.

The *fol* can also play and dance. He is often displayed with instruments belonging to all families, aerophones (bagpipe), membranophones (tabor), chordophones (rebec), idiophones (claquebois), showing his ability to entertain an audience. The *fol* carries a *marotte*, a form of sceptre showing a head on top of it, in which he can look as if he were looking into a mirror.

For the *fol' amore*, the instrumentarium might be more diverse, as well as used in a different fashion. In scenes such as the *charivari*, music is often used – we of course can refer to the famous *charivari* of *the Roman de Fauvel* as well as to the royal *charivari* of the *Bal des Ardents* – to display criticised attitudes as well as moralistic judgement – playing the tabor and the citole, on the one hand, and professional musician entertaining a ball when dressed up characters make an intrusion with the paramusic of their chains covering the music of the dance, on the other.

The *charivari*, as an act of *folie*, is mentioned in different lexicographical sources, and might be originating in a Roman practice. Its condemnation by the Church is also associated with centuries of literary tradition originating in the IInd c. with the Montanism, and developed by Gregory of Nazianzus. The dogmatic tradition, following canons of the councils of Nicaea, Neocaesarea and Ancyra, clearly places the second marriage as a “tolerance” for which a period of prayer and fasting is required⁵.

The *fol* is linked to religious and aristocratic practices since the XIIIth c., period, from which he appears during specific celebrations and becomes an attribute of the prince. His appearance is often associated to animal features, such as the donkey's, showing a direct link to the practice of the *charivari*:

La Fête des fous était d'abord une fête qui avait lieu à l'intérieur de l'église. Du début du XIIIe siècle nous est connu l'Officium stultorum de l'archevêque de Sens, Pierre de Corbeil. L'âne Brunellus du Speculum stultorum de Nigel de Longchamp est la personnification d'un dérèglement moral : la vanité. La figure de l'âne était devenue familière par les fêtes de l'âne et ses oreilles décorèrent longtemps l'habit du Fol. Le dérèglement moral en amour est déjà appelé folie. Mais il y a aussi le Fol dément, le dervé du Jeu de la Feuillée, et les personnages comiques du charivari aux oreilles d'âne. Hainselin Coq et Guillaume Fouel, fous en titre de Charles VI et d'Isabeau de Bavière, vivaient « en personne » à la cour, tout comme le Fol vivait « en figure » — comme on disait alors — dans les Ordres et Chevaleries de fous, version laïque de la fête d'Eglise, pour passer bientôt sur la scène d'un nouveau théâtre. (...) Il est devenu après la ruse de Renart, à l'âge des ânes Brunellus et Favellus et après Fauvel, cette autre créature factice symbolisant l'hypocrisie au début du XIVe siècle, un nouveau miroir où se reflète l'homme. Symbole à corps humain, humanisation du symbole.⁶

⁵ Charles Joseph Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church: from the Original Documents, to the close of the Second Council of Nicaea A.D. 787*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007, p. 299.

⁶ Margarete Newels, « Le Fol dans les moralités du Moyen Age », *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises*, 1985, vol. 37, n°1, pp. 23-38.

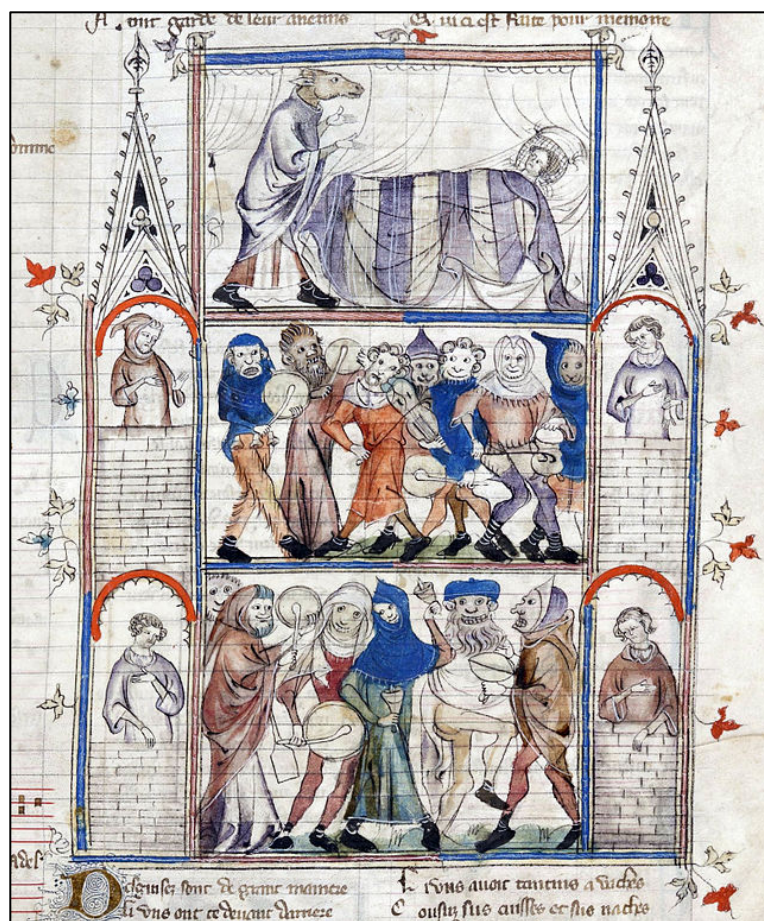


FIG. 4: Charivari of the *Roman de Fauvel*, 1316, Raoul Chaillou de Pesstain, MS BnF, Paris, Fr. 146



FIG. 5: The Bal des Ardents, Maître d'Antoine de Bourgogne, Bruges, c. 1470-1475. Paris, BnF, MS fr. 2646, f. 176

As we see, there's a strong connection between images, texts and music when we try to investigate the question of the *fol* and/or the *fol'amore* and the *fin'amore*.

As musicologists, a few questions are of importance in this investigation on the place and role of music in understanding these notions. They could, for instance be:

- *Is there a musical link between the fol and the fol'amour?*
- *What differentiates fin'amour and fol'amour in relations with music?*
- *What instruments are associated with the fol?*
- *What musical images can be found about the folamour?*
- *What are the instruments of the charivari?*
- *Does this instrumentarium change over time? According to places?*

In order to try to answer those questions, we could also ask ourselves how Digital Humanities might help us along the way. Indeed, recent development in the representation of knowledge have helped researchers in the humanities both manipulate their data, as well as exploit it in various manners: interrogation, organisation, dissemination, etc.

Has we've developed a joint approach in the Musiconis project, of developing theoretical tools for musical iconography and technical tools for data management in the humanities, we have, over the last few years experimented with the development of ontologies for musicological data.

In the case at hand, an ontology might indeed help us define the quality and relationships existing within our diverse data types, as well as show us new relationships the might be inferred from our analysis.

In computer science, the ontology could be defined in connection with the term vocabulary:

On the Semantic Web, vocabularies define the concepts and relationships (also referred to as “terms”) used to describe and represent an area of concern. Vocabularies are used to classify the terms that can be used in a particular application, characterize possible relationships, and define possible constraints on using those terms. In practice, vocabularies can be very complex (with several thousands of terms) or very simple (describing one or two concepts only).

There is no clear division between what is referred to as “vocabularies” and “ontologies”. The trend is to use the word “ontology” for more complex, and possibly quite formal collection of terms, whereas “vocabulary” is used when such strict formalism is not necessarily used or only in a very loose sense. Vocabularies are the basic building blocks for inference techniques on the Semantic Web.⁷

On a more practical aspect, ontologies could be defined in different ways, regarding their content; they are a specification of a vocabulary definition, of links and relations, of structures of the domain and its interpretations. Therefore, they can be a set of logical axioms designed to account for the meaning associated with a vocabulary⁸. They can be summarized as a conceptualization common to all that is represented in a knowledge database⁹ and elements built cooperatively by different people¹⁰. They are the skeleton of a knowledge base¹¹ that can be reused and shared amongst people and applications. Their objective is to capture a consensual knowledge generically¹².

⁷ « W3C » Standards » Semantic Web » Ontologies », Web. 24 Sep. 2015. <http://www.w3.org/standards/semanticweb/ontology>

⁸ Nicola Guarino, Some Ontological Principles for Designing Upper Level Lexical Resources, First International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation, Granada, Spain, 28-30 May 1998

⁹ Bernaras (A.), Laresgoiti (I.) and Corera (J.), 1996: Building and Reusing Ontologies for Electrical network Applications. Proceedings of the 12th ECAI, p. 298-302

¹⁰ Asuncion Gomez-Perez, Oscar Corcho-Garcia, and Mariano Fernandez-Lopez. 2003. Ontological Engineering. Springer-Verlag New York, Inc., Secaucus, NJ, USA.

¹¹ Swartout, B., Patil, R., Knight, K. and Russ, T. (1997). Toward Distributed Use of Large-Scale Ontologies. Symposium on Ontological Engineering. USA, Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence - AAAI.

¹² Gomez-Perez et al, 2003.

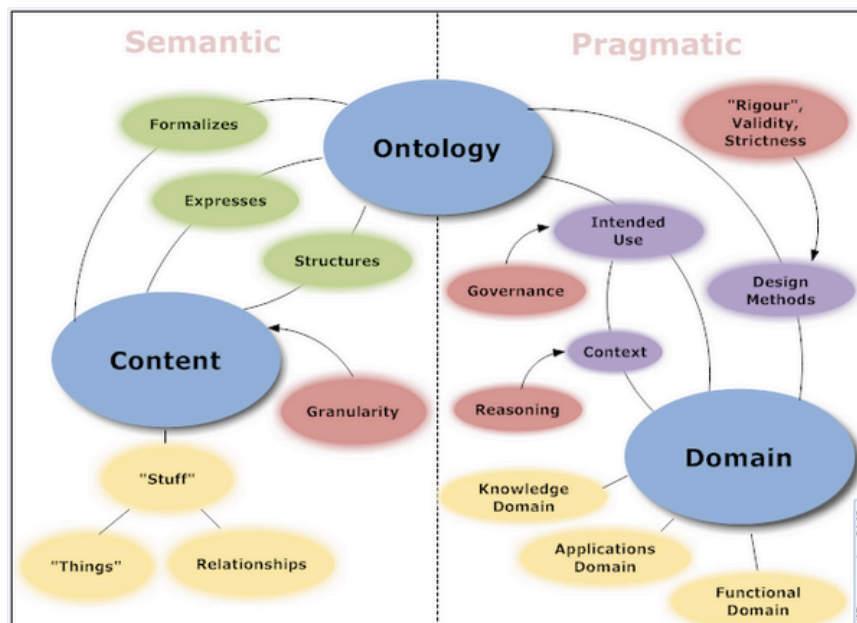


FIG. 6: Ontology dimensions map¹³

When defining the ontology of the *fol* and its soundscape, we will first use the basic element of the ontology, the RDF triplet¹⁴. Indeed, each ontology is based on multiple sets triplets made of the following construction "element_x \rightarrow relation_y \rightarrow element_z ». We can then develop as many elements and relations as we need, and any and every element can be linked to any number of other elements, as long as the relationship allows it. Indeed, each element and relationship can be defined and précised in order for it to be as pertinent as possible.

For instance, a few triplets we could create might be :

- *Bedon* \rightarrow *Is a* \rightarrow *Membranophone*
- *Fol* \rightarrow *Is a* \rightarrow *Human performer*
- *Fol* \rightarrow *Plays a* \rightarrow *Bedon*
- *Etc.*

Within the ontology, each element, called concept, has a specific architecture of characteristics. It refers to terms, a definition, possible extensions, and iconic symbols. Using the example of the *bedon*, the terms that it might be linked to are the one associated with its signifier: the drum, the *kettledrum*, *Trommel*, *tambor*, etc. The *bedon*'s definition is what helps us identify it:

¹³ "Ontology, Notation 3, and SPARQL", <http://www.codeproject.com/Articles/156888/Ontology-Notation-and-SPARQL> Web. 24 Sep. 2015.

¹⁴ The Resource Description Framework (RDF) is a framework for representing information in the Web. This document defines an abstract syntax (a data model) which serves to link all RDF-based languages and specifications. The abstract syntax has two key data structures: RDF graphs are sets of subject-predicate-object triples, where the elements may be IRIs, blank nodes, or datatyped literals. They are used to express descriptions of resources. RDF datasets are used to organize collections of RDF graphs, and comprise a default graph and zero or more named graphs.
<http://www.w3.org/TR/2014/REC-rdf11-concepts-20140225/> Web. 24 Sep. 2015.

*Drum, described by Pierre Trichet (Traité des instruments de musique. F-Ps, 1070, cl640) as cylindrical with laced heads; earlier the term designated a kettledrum. The bedon de Biscaye is described by Mersenne (Harmonie universelle, 1636–7) as a tambourine.*¹⁵

Its possible extensions might be performers that play it in images, the bedon makers, the different bedons depending on dates or locations, etc. Finally, its iconic symbols are images that could represent this instrument. All these elements are used to define a concept within our vocabulary, and help create a more precise ontology.

In order to create elements of this ontology we could start for instance by studying a specific image, and then detailing its components. For instance a woodcarving from Beverley dated 1520¹⁶.



FIG. 7: Beverley Minster, Yorkshire (UK), 1520, Misericord NH-21

Using RDF triplets to describe the information located in this image, we can now decompose the following elements:

- *Image* → *hasPerformer* → *Fol*
- *Fol* → *hasInstrument* → *Tabor*
- *Fol* → *hasInstrument* → *Flute*
- *Image* → *hasdate* → *1520*
- *Image* → *hasCity* → *Beverley*
- *Beverley* → *hasCountry* → *UK*
- *Etc.*

The same description could be done with literary elements, in order to create a system of relationships taking into consideration the type of performance (courtly entertainment, charivari), the performers (musician, *fol*, man, woman, king), the type of

¹⁵ "Bedon." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press. Web. 24 Sep. 2015. <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/L2274981>>.

¹⁶ Fou jouant du flûtet-tabor et danse des fous
<http://www.musiconis.paris-sorbonne.fr/fiche/168/Fou+jouant+du+fl%C3%BBtet-tabor+et+danse+des+fous>

relationship (*fin'amore, fol'amore*), as well as the visual or textual references within a given example.

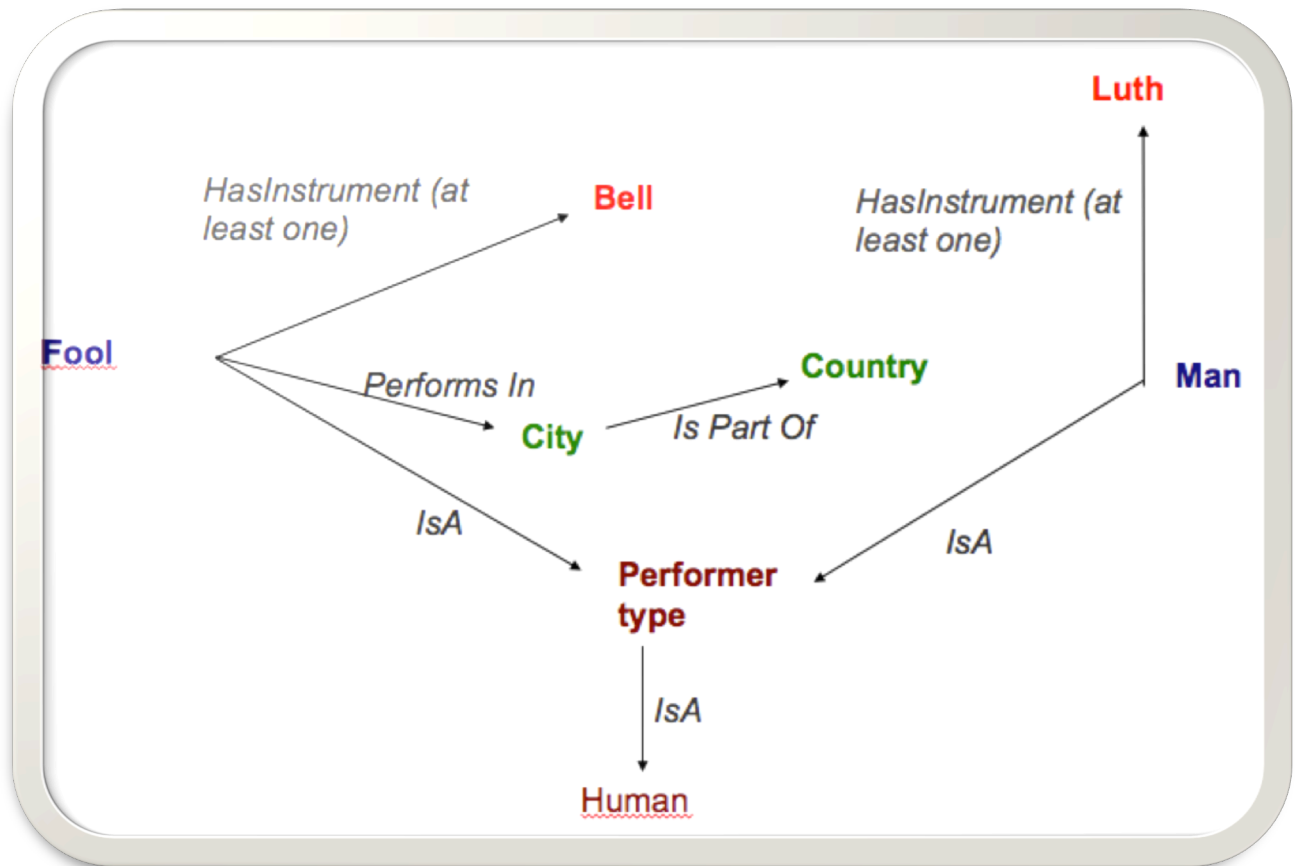


FIG. 8: Elements of the *fol* soundscape

We now begin to visualize how our ontology is going to be organized.

Each element, a character – a *fol*, a musician, a man, a woman – is going to be linked to several other elements – musical instruments, visual sources, literary references – to create a system designed to answer our specific questions.

Using software called Protégé¹⁷ to build our ontology, we now can create various elements – classes, individuals, properties – that will be organized in this system.

¹⁷ WebProtégé is an ontology development environment for the Web that makes it easy to create, upload, modify, and share ontologies for collaborative viewing and editing. WebProtégé fully supports the latest OWL 2 Web Ontology Language. The highly configurable user interface creates the perfect environment for beginners and experts alike. Collaboration features abound, including sharing and permissions, threaded notes and discussions, watches and email notifications. RDF/XML, Turtle, OWL/XML, OBO, and other formats available for ontology upload and download. Protege provides a graphic user interface to define ontologies. It also includes deductive classifiers to validate that models are consistent and to infer new information based on the analysis of an ontology. Like Eclipse, Protégé is a framework for which various other projects suggest plugins. This application is written in Java and heavily uses Swing to create the user interface. Protégé recently has over 200,000 registered users. According to a 2009 book it is "the leading ontological engineering tool". Protégé is being developed at Stanford University in collaboration with the University of Manchester and is made available under the Mozilla Public License 1.1.

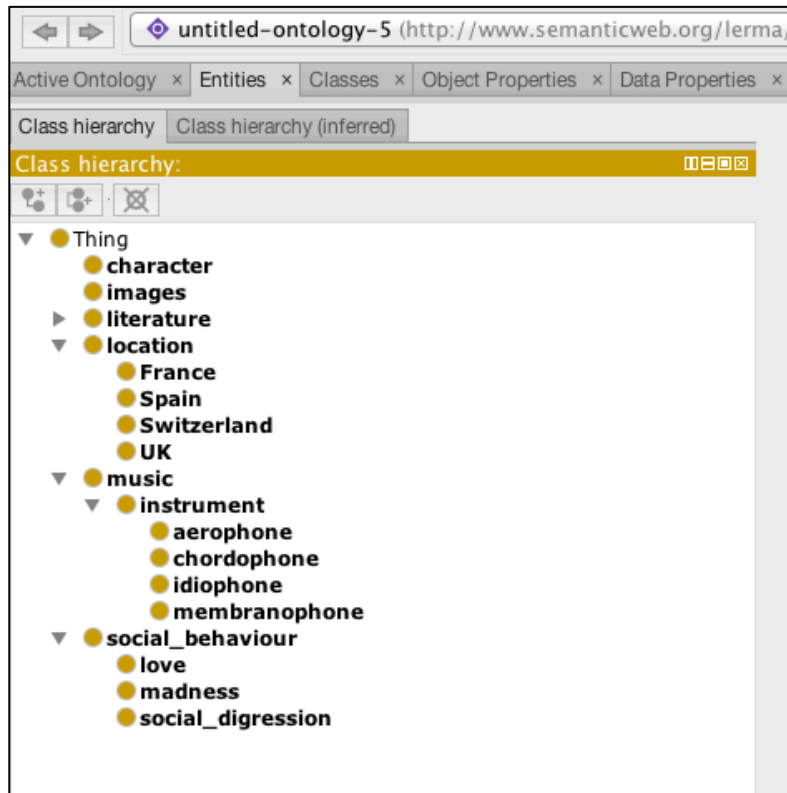


FIG. 9: Visualizing classes in Protégé

In the « fol » ontology, we created 6 main classes in which our entities will be located: characters, images, literature, location, music and social behaviour.

Each class can be divided in subclasses. For instance the class « music » can be divided in « instruments », that can themselves be subdivided into four families: aerophones, chordophones, membranophones and idiophones.

In each class we may add individuals. For the characters class, they are for instance the animal, the *fol*, the knight, the man, etc.

We here also have the possibility of linking any individual to another class. For instance, the *fol* will belong to the character class, the aerophone class, and the adjective class, as this word specifically refers to these diverse vocabularies.

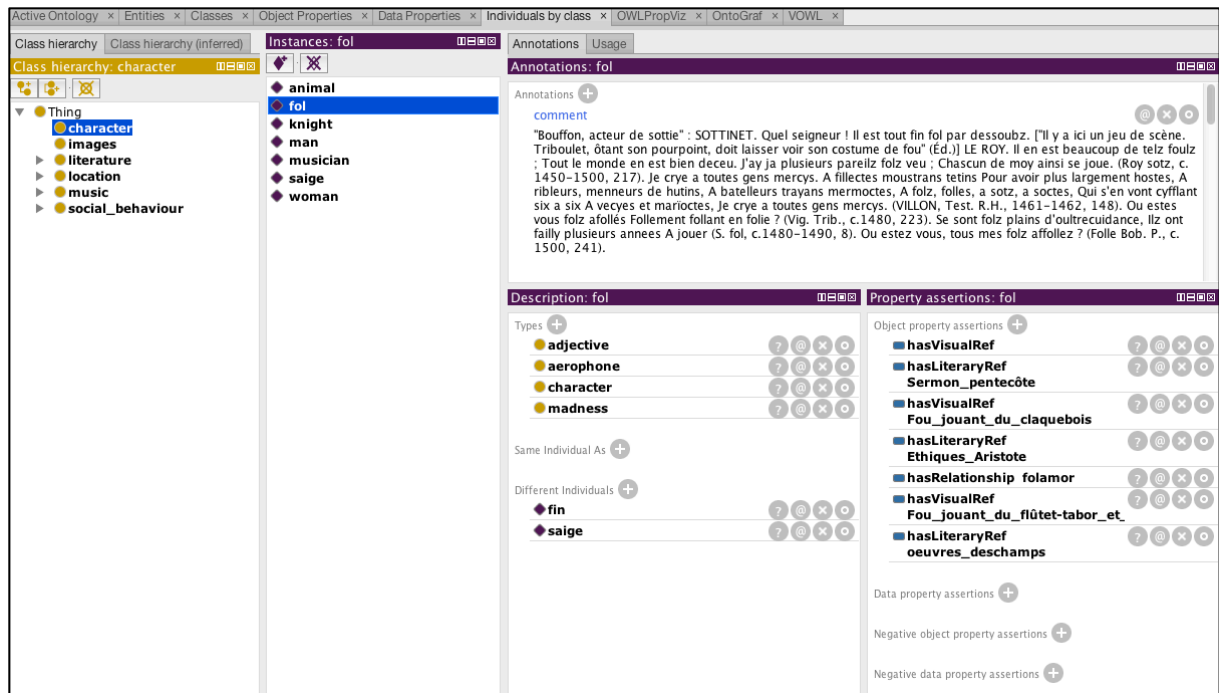


FIG. 10: View of the individual « fol », its classes and properties

We now are able to create various properties to link our elements together. These properties are directional, in the way that they link an element to another, but, they can also be defined in a very comprehensive way, using functionality, transitivity, reflexivity or symmetry. They can be equivalent to another property and have a range of elements as well as domains to which they intersect.

Examples of properties we have created are: “has an instrument”, “has a literary reference”, “has a performance type”(for the charivari for instance), “has a performer”, “has a visual reference”, etc.

We are now able to model our ontology, add elements, classes, individuals, properties, connect elements, and visualise our advancement along the way.

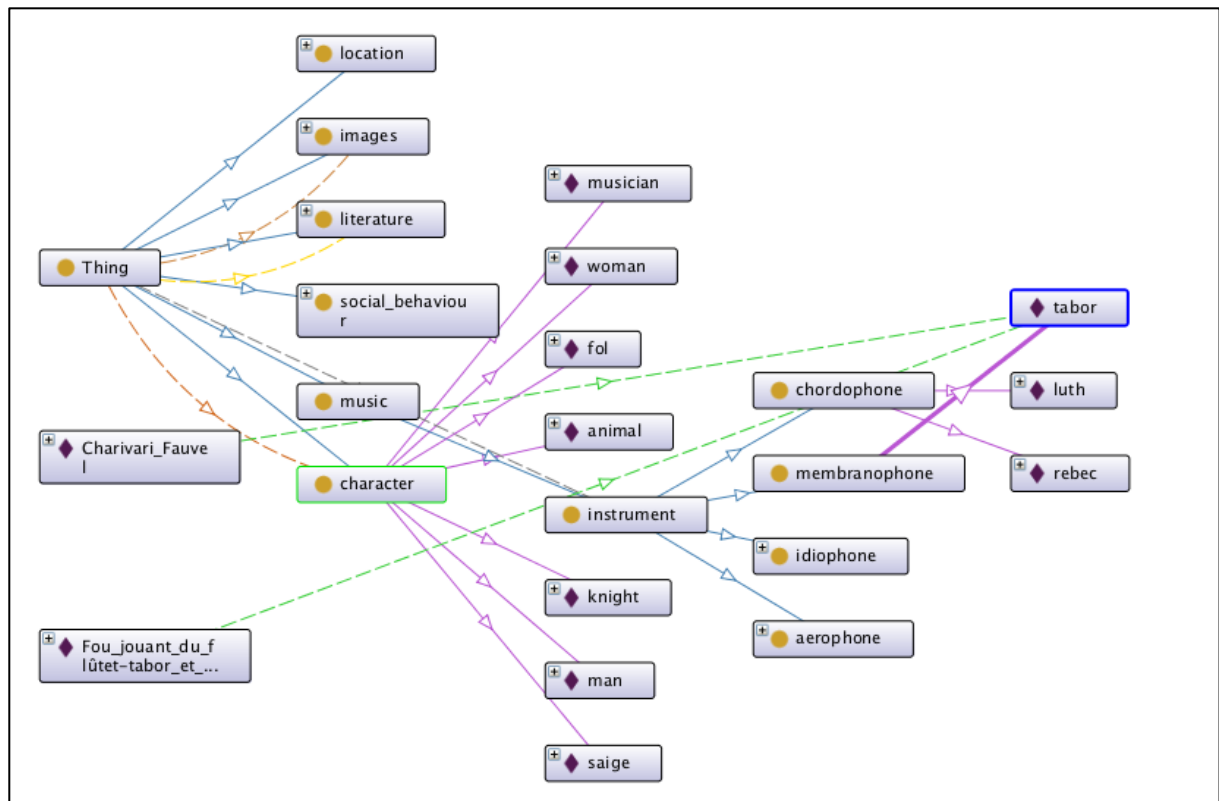
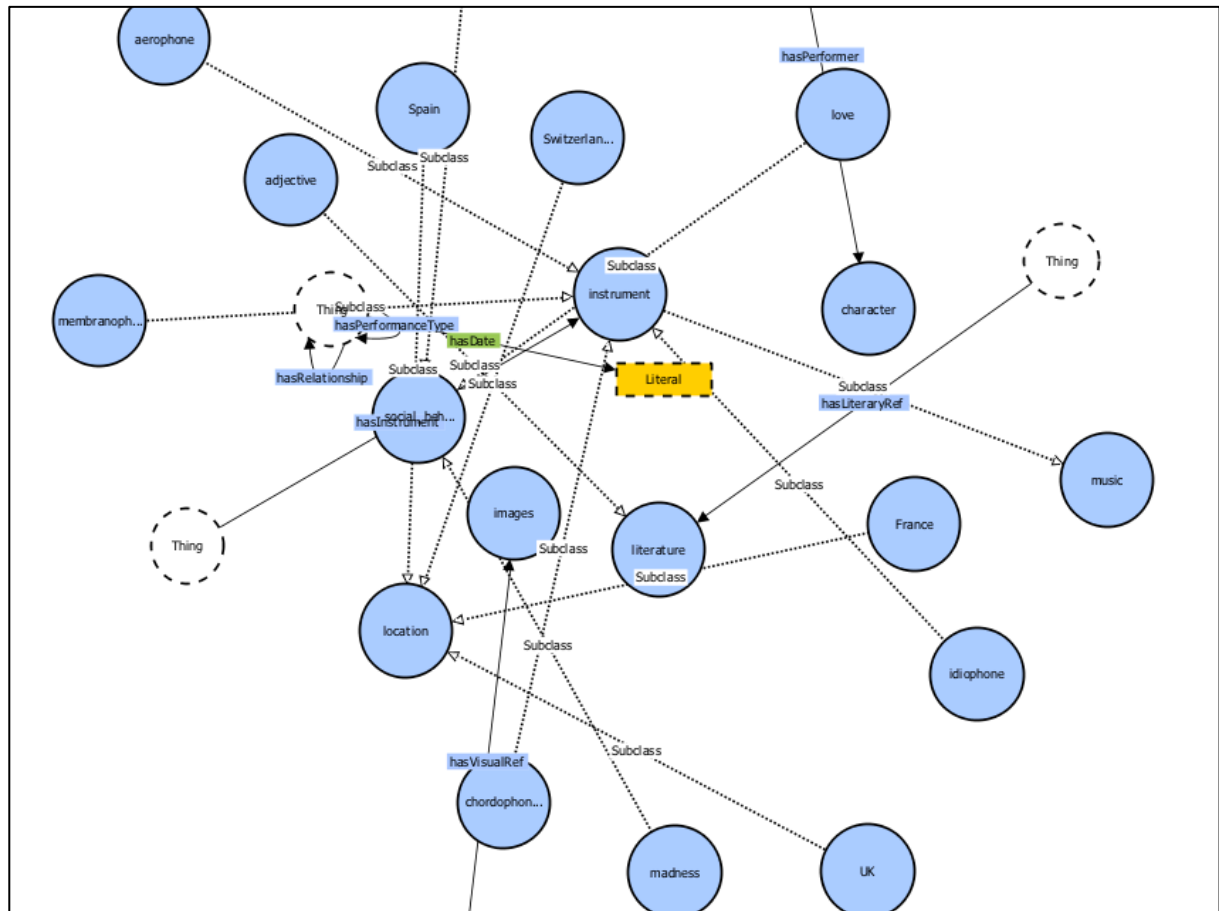


FIG. 11: A visualisation of elements within Protégé

As a researcher in the humanities, building an ontology bears three main levels of interest: heuristic, investigative and collaborative.

The creation and development of an ontology is an exercise that's helpful to build the ontology in order to visualize the element we are investigating, and see how we can define these elements. From a musicological perspective, the links with instruments, playing techniques, organological variations, performance types and the relationships that unite them help us design a unique ontology that's helpful to relate to our specific questions. It would certainly be a different structure if the ontology were built by an historian, an art historian or a linguist. New properties and individuals would arise, helping the scientific community better define this notion.



Visualisation of classes and properties using VOWL

The investigative perspective of the ontology resides in the fact that now we built a few blocks, we can use the logical resonator of the software to infer new elements within ontology.

The way we first built our structure, the classes, ranges, domains, equivalencies, properties we created can logically be extrapolated by the software to show us new relationships, as well as logical justifications for it. From them, we can adjust our ontology (depending a the justification, we could see that we mis-defined an element) or also deduce new interesting links between our elements:

A reasoner checks for hierarchies (subsumption), domains, ranges, conflicting disjoint assertions, and the like. In addition to these checks, the reasoner also calculates the resulting inferred hierarchy and other properties.

A simple example is when a property also has an inverse property. You need only assert the first property; the reasoner will add an inferred assertion for the inverse. It is in this manner that a relatively few specific assertions in the ontology can "spread out" to infer connections throughout the entire ontology structure.¹⁸

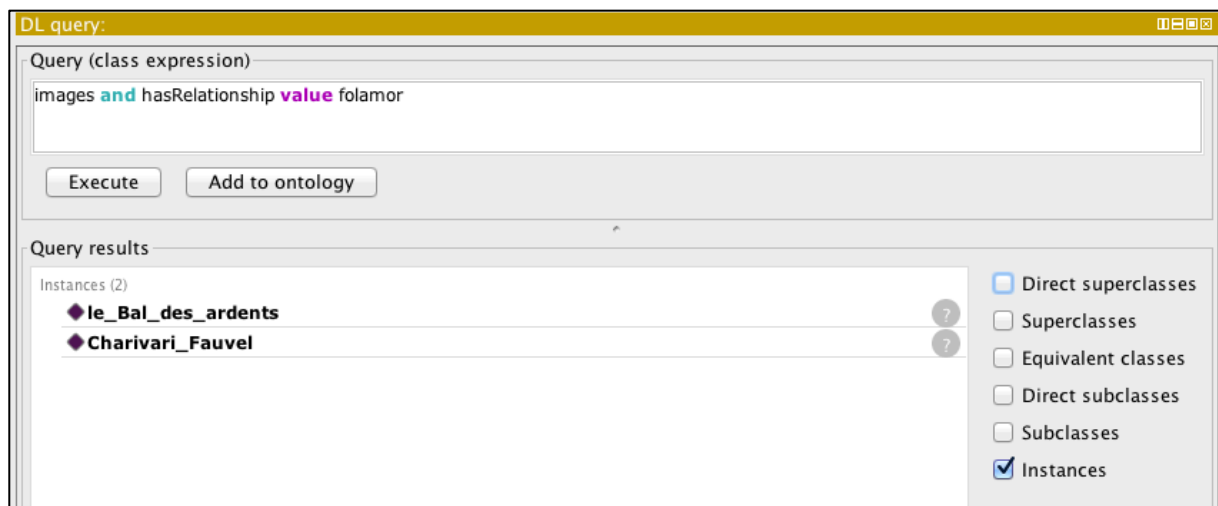
¹⁸ http://wiki.opensemanticframework.org/index.php/Inferencing_with_Prot%C3%A9g%C3%A9 Web. 24 Sep. 2015.

Using Protégé, we can also interrogate our ontology, in order to answer the questions we defined earlier.

To perform this task, we shall try to convert our own language into a dedicated query understandable by the software.

Let's take the following example: What musical images can be found about the *folamour*? We want to select all the individuals of the class «images» that are located in the ontology, select the relationship named *folamour*, and only show the images that have this type of relationship.

1. *What musical images can be found about the folamour?*
2. *(images) are (associated with the folamour)?*
3. *(images) AND hasRelationship (folamour)*
4. *images AND hasRelationship value folamour*



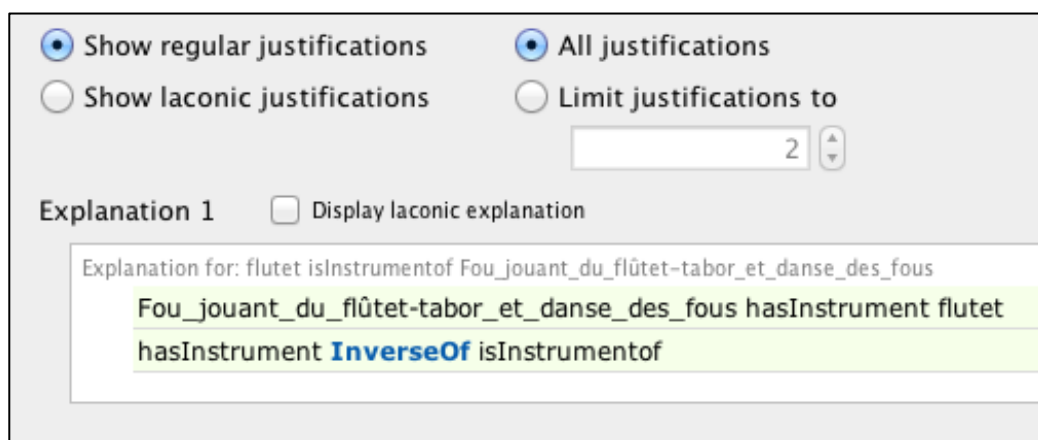
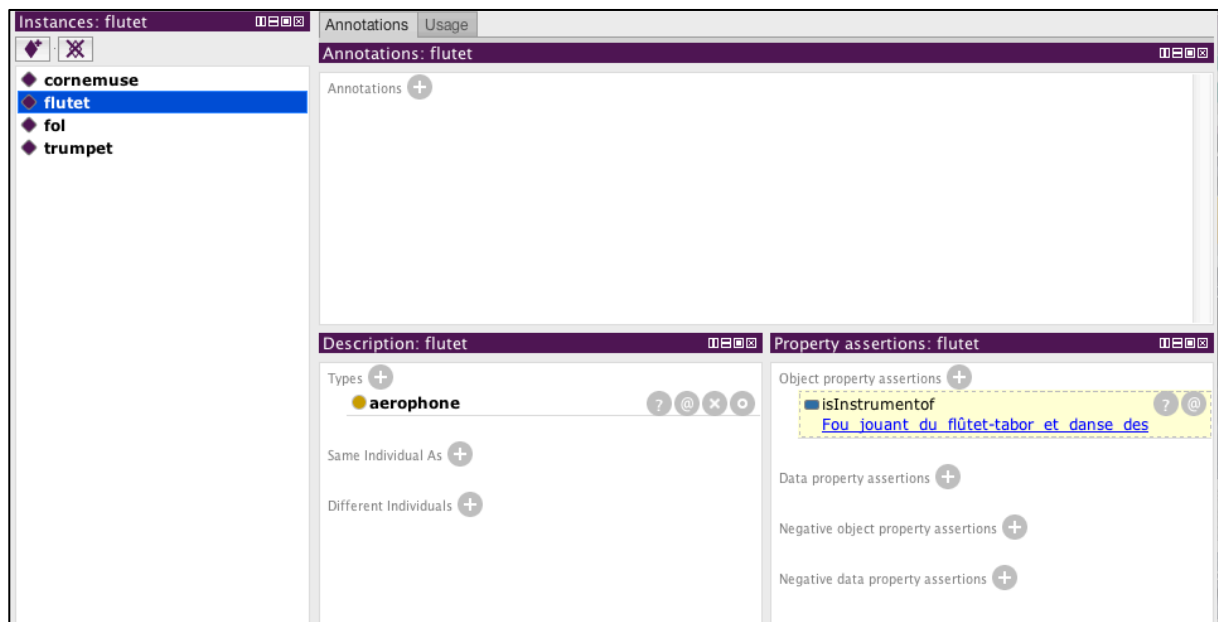
The result of such a query shows us that 2 individuals have these specific value within the class « images ».

From this simple example, we can now see how, with more data entered in the ontology, we can provide very specific answers to our musicological questions, querying individuals, classes and properties in order to select the appropriate elements within the dataset.

The second interesting feature of the resonator is the possibility of looking at inferences. Indeed, when we create classes, individuals and properties, we also give them specific characteristics.

For instance, the property «hasInstrument» which is used to link a source to a particular instrument, also has an opposite property: «isInstrumentof». It seems logical, that for each source that has an instrument, the very same instrument would also refer to this source. For us, while entering the description of the sources, we can provide the property assertions list with the description of which instrument is present in the text of the image.

When we use the resonator, the software creates inferences for this specific property, and marks automatically the listed instrument with the proper opposite property. As you can see on the example listed below, it is also possible to look at the justification given by the logical resonator in order to verify that the assertion is correct.



An example of inference using the « hasInstrument » property

To conclude, we've tried here, through the small example of *fol*, *folamor* and music, to show how an ontology can help us manage our investigation, organize our data, and make new interesting links between our sources and our interpretation.

But the most important feature of the ontology resides in its openness. Indeed, the ontology, as part of the semantic web can be enlarged, improved, completed, but also linked to other ontologies – the Music Ontology¹⁹ for musicale features, Geonames²⁰ for

¹⁹ <http://musicontology.com/> Web. 24 Sep. 2015.

²⁰ <http://www.geonames.org/> Web. 24 Sep. 2015.

locations, DBpedia²¹ for descriptions, etc. – in order to make it part of a larger system of semantic elements available on the web.

In this ontology we've only tried to realise a description relevant to musicologists, but the same sources could be used by historians, art historians, epistemologists, jurists, in order to link to the anthropological construction of the *fol*, another specific knowledge that might help us better define this character.

It might be the next step of the investigation: opening this ontology for researchers to implement new elements and properties onto it, which would result in a more complex object. The flexibility of the semantic technology allows for such types of endeavour, that we've tried to develop for music within the Musiconis project. It is our goal now: to create a fully functional database for musical iconography that would be fuelled by ontologies related to medieval interdisciplinary investigation. Notions such as madness, crossing of social boundaries, urban soundscapes, celestial music, and so many others, could then be constantly precised and interconnected using the complementary knowledge of the growing community in digital humanities and social sciences.

²¹ <http://wiki.dbpedia.org/> Web. 24 Sep. 2015.