

Anonymous

Sur mon ame, m'amyé a 3

Edition and comments by
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<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH030.html>

This edition is extracted from the online project *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers*, which consists of linked html-files and a great number of single PDF editions. It can be accessed at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/>.

Each html-file about a song contains lists of sources, and edition and translation of the poetic texts, discussion of the main sources and comments on text and music. Separate files hold lists of contents and descriptions of the sources. Other files contain papers and notes on related topics. The online edition offers many cross references and links to online facsimile editions. These links had to be simplified in the present edition.

Each version of a song is regarded as a valid performance by a scribe/musician, and therefore they are published separately. In most cases there will be no attempts to imagine the intentions of the composer or to reconstruct exactly what the composer had written when the music left his pen. Rather the aim is to interpret the written music in largely the same way as 15th century performers may have read it. Many details, which in one source are different from other sources, must be accepted by the editor as valid elements in a performance of the actual source. Sources marked by an asterisk * are included in the edition.

Sigla

The related 'Loire Valley' chamsonniers

Copenhagen	Copenhagen, The Royal Library, MS Thott 291 8° http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/702/dan/0+recto/
Dijon	Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 517 http://patrimoine.bm-dijon.fr/pleade/img-viewer/MS00517/viewer.html
Laborde	Washington D.C., Library of Congress, MS M2.1 L25 Case (Laborde Chansonnier) https://www.loc.gov/resource/ihas.200152631.0/?sp=1
Leuven	Leuven, Alamire Foundation, Manuscript without shelf number (Leuven Chansonnier) http://depot.lias.be/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE9381778
Nivelle	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Vmc. ms. 57 (Chansonnier Nivelle de la Chaussée) http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55007270r/f1.image
Wolfenbüttel	Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Codex Guelf. 287 Extravag. http://diglib.hab.de/wdb.php?dir=mss/287-extrav

Sur mon ame, m'amyie 3v · Anonymous

Appearance in the five chansonniers:

*Copenhagen ff. 35v-36 »Sur mon ame, m'amyie« 3v

*Dijon ff. 58v-59 »Sur mon ame, m'amie« 3v

Text: Rondeau cinquain, full text in both sources:

Sur mon ame, m'amyie,
je ne sçay nulle vie
qui tant face a amer
que vous; a brief parler:
Qui veult, s'en ait envie.

Car qui a tel partie,
il a plus que partie
de ce qu'il veult penser.

Sur mon ame, m'amyie,
je ne sçay nulle vie
qui tant face a amer.

De riens ne se soussie
fors faire chiere lie
et esbatre et jouer;
pour vous tel temps mener
vueil je plus qu'a soussie.

Sur mon ame, m'amyie,
je ne sçay nulle vie
qui tant face a amer
que vous; a brief parler:
Qui veult, s'en ait envie.

By my soul, my girlfriend,
I don't know any other being
more worthy of loving
than you; in short:
Who wants to, may be envious.

For he who has such a match
has more than part
of what he might wish for.

By my soul, my girlfriend,
I don't know any other being
more worthy of loving.

He worries about nothing
but to enjoy life
and have fun and revel.
For you, I want to live such a life
rather than in worry.

By my soul, my girlfriend,
I don't know any other being
more worthy of loving
than you; in short:
Who wants to, may be envious.

Except for some differences in spelling the sources have the same version of the poem. In line 4 Dijon has "de vous", which probably is a writing error.

Evaluation of the sources:

Also in this case the version of the Copenhagen chansonnier is the more careful and considered copy of the exemplar, which the scribe had used also for the chanson in the Dijon chansonnier. In Dijon he forgot to put the B-flat in the hexachordal signature of the tenor part. It is essential here as the song uses B-flat as *finalis*. In bar 53 he wrote the first note in the superius as a *semibrevis* followed by a rest of the same duration and thereby broke up the musical line on the word "envie". It is conceivable that this could be copied from the exemplar, but the phrasing looks illogical as the tenor imitates the line an octave lower and has a *brevis* in the same position. In Copenhagen the scribe did put these things right just as he was generally more careful with the placement of the text.

This rondeau cinquain is in principle a courtly poem, but its content is not quite courtly. Neither in language, meaning or music does this song fit completely within the courtly sphere – it has a touch of the “anticourtly”.¹ The poet addresses “m’amyé”, not a lady, a princess or a goddess, but just a female “friend”. This woman is more worthy of love than any other woman, just like the lady in the preceding song in Copenhagen “La plus bruiant”,² but she probably does not belong to the high nobility. The poem exudes untrustworthiness: “Sur mon ame” (By my soul) – you do not start like that, if you really mean what you are saying. Charles d’Orléans only used the expression once in his rondeaux, and it was precisely in the playful rondeau speaking of “la haulte game” (cf. “La plus bruiant” and rondeau no. 317).³ A love displayed for everyone in order to make them envious (line 5) is not nobly concealed, and the lover “worries about nothing but to enjoy life and have fun and revel” – in short, the poem does not describe a relationship according to the rules of *fin’amour*. It is likely to be about a relation involving a girl of lower social standing than the speaker, and most probable the poem is a parody of the not very credible, effusive assurances by which the man tries to find a way to the girl’s heart.

The music is of the same kind, absolutely untrustworthy. The song is not only *ficta* throughout having its *finalis* on the note B-flat, an unstable scale degree usually not found in this role, but its initial three-part imitation is also clearly sung in a slow triple time even though the music is notated in *tempus imperfectum diminutum*; that is, three *breves* of the notated mensuration are used for a whole bar in *tempus perfectum*. In order to be musically effective, the song has to start in a quicker tempo that the notation seems to indicate. In this way the song is in disguise. The last line of the refrain “Qui veult, s’en ait emvie” goes in an even faster tempo, *tempus perfectum diminutum*, corresponding to *proportio sesquialtera*; this means that the triple time now only takes up one of the *breves* heard at the start, a tripling of the tempo. There can be no doubt about the tempo relations as the parts overlap (from b. 41) and only fit together in one way. In connection with the discussion of the tempo relations in “La plus bruiant” it is quite funny to point out that the change from *tempus imperfectum diminutum* to *tempus perfectum diminutum proportio sesquialtera* just like the relation between the notated *breves* and the sounding

1 Howard Garey used this term to characterize part of the repertory in the so-called Mellon chansonnier (New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 91), which ‘undermines’ the courtly with irony or ‘turns it upside down’, cf. Leeman L. Perkins and H. Garey (eds.), *The Mellon Chansonnier I-II*. New Haven 1979, vol. II, p. 75; this topic was developed in P. Woetmann Christoffersen: *French Music in the Early Sixteenth Century. Studies in the music collection of a copyist of Lyons. The manuscript »Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2°« in the Royal Library, Copenhagen I-III*. Copenhagen 1994, vol. I, ch. 7.1 ‘Rondeaux between the courtly and the popular traditions’, pp. 143-155.

2 At <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH029.html>.

3 Claudio Galderisi, *Le lexique de Charles d’Orléans dans les «rondeaux»* (Publications romanes et françaises ccvi), Genève 1993. Rondeau 317 “Trop entré en la haulte game” is published in Charles d’Orléans (ed. Pierre Chanpion), *Poésies*, Paris 1923-24, p. 473.

Even if Charles d’Orléans only used this expression once, “Sur mon ame” was quite common in the courtly poetry. However, it nearly always appears as a filler in the end of lines, because “ame” is a highly useful rime word meaning “soul” as well as “love” and riming on “dame” and “lame” (tombstone) and so on; cf. for example the anonymous songs »Le joly tetin de ma dame« (<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH017.html>), »Tant est mignonne ma pensee« (<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH019.html>) or Binchois’ famous »Je ne vis oncques la pareille« (<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH189.html>). I know of no other example, where this banality opens a poem.

rhythm in the introductory imitation demands equivalence between the *semibreves*, else it would be superfluous to put the “3” in the mensuration sign! This is the opposite of the theoretical position of the preceding song, which demands equivalence at the *brevi*s level.

The music is evidently composed close to the meaning of the text, especially in the refrain. At the start of the second part of the refrain (line 4) the important words “que vous” appears, which by enjambment ends not only the sense of line 3 but the sense of the whole first section, but they are not included in the half refrain! These words are set homorhythmically in parallel thirds between tenor and superius, with the tenor on top (bb. 33-35) – they are virtually hammered out, “than you”, and the shouting does not exactly add to the credibility. Before that, the word “amer” is treated in a slightly grotesque melisma in the tenor over an organ point in the contratenor (bb. 27-30). At “a brief parler” (bb. 37-41) – again an ironical statement because the rondeau having lines of only seven syllables is nearly as brief as possible – the colon, which you automatically add during the text edition, can be heard in the music by the change of mensuration and by the upper voices’ virtuoso, freely canonic, roulade through the full range of the parts (bb. 41 f).

The low tessitura for three male voices, the many slightly awkward details (see for example the old-fashioned cadence embellishments (bb. 6, 9, 12, 20, 30 and 57), the parallel final cadence, or the first motive with its octave leap), and the sudden change of tempo give the whole a comical, jaunty stamp. The song is an antithesis to “La plus bruiant”: High tessitura against low, high style against low style, a somewhat strained use of music theory as metaphors in text and music against a direct sensuality in rolling virtuoso music with a lopsided tension between triple time in disguise and double time.

In addition to the meanings, which the poet and the composer has worked to give the individual chanson, we seem to find an extra overlying layer of meaning, associations, contrasts, and comments that appears in the work of art, the chansonnier, which the compiler or scribe created by his choice of repertory. I interpret the juxtaposition of “La plus bruiant” and “Sur mon ame” as a conscious artistic intervention, which puts the erotic atmosphere of both chansons in a new light; they cannot avoid the reciprocal influence.⁴

Knud Jeppesen did not think that the miniatures in the chansonniers had any connection at all with the texts of the chansons.⁵ I cannot agree as regards the two chansons in the Copenhagen chansonnier. The book painter clearly understood what these chansons were about. At the beginning of “La plus bruiant” we meet a beautiful lady in courtly dress “celle qui toutes passe” apparently singing or reciting, while the “S” in “Sur mon ame” shows a stout kneeling person with the hands together in an appealing gesture (see the facsimile) – dressed in a hood, socks, bare ass, and a furtive smile!⁶

4 The observation that certain musical sources and independent sections of complex sources often prove to be carefully composed selections of repertory was presented in Christoffersen, *French Music* (1994), vol. I, especially ‘Part Two: Genesis and function’ pp. 49-108, and in the analysis of the printed chansonniers by Pierre Attaignant, pp. 217 ff.

5 Knud Jeppesen (ed.), *Der Kopenhagener Chansonnier*. Copenhagen 1927, p. XXVII: “Bemerkenswert ist, dass sich die Miniaturen in keinem der 5 Manuskripte näher an der Text anknüpfen, also illustrierenden Charakter ganz entbehren.”

6 On the relations between text, music and decoration, and on the chansonniers as works of art, see the three articles by Jane Alden, ‘The Scribe’s Role in the Production of 15th-Century Chansonniers: New Perspectives’, *Revue belge de Musicologie* LIX (2005) pp. 43-64; ‘On the Aesthetics of 15th-Century Chansonniers’, *Danish Yearbook of Musicology* 33 (2005) pp. 17-30; ‘Reading the Loire Valley Chansonniers’, *Acta Musicologica* 79 (2007) pp. 1-32.

Copenhagen no. 30

Sur mon ame, m'amy [Anonymous]

Copenhagen, The Royal Library, MS Thott 291 8°, ff. 35V-36

[Superius] Mensura = 

Tenor

Contratenor

1.4. Sur mon a - me, m'a - my
3. De riens ne se sous - si - e, m'a - my
e, sous - si - e, fors fai - re nul - le vi - - - - -

10

me, m'a - my e, je ne sçay nul - le vi - - - - -
se sous - si - e e fors fai - re chie - re li - - - - -

e, je ne sçay nul - le vi - - - - -
e fors fai - re chie - re li - - - - -

e, m'a - my e, je ne sçay nul - le vi - - - - -
e, sous - si - e, fors fai - re chie - re li - - - - -

21

e qui tant fa - - - - - ce_a a jou - - - - -
e et es - ba - - - - - tre_et jou - - - - -

e qui tant fa - - - - - ce_a a jou - - - - -
e et es - ba - - - - - tre_et jou - - - - -

e qui tant fa - - - - - ce_a a jou - - - - -
e et es - ba - - - - - tre_et jou - - - - -

31

mer; que vous; a brief par - ler:
er; pour vous; tel temps me - ner

mer; que vous; a brief par - ler:
er; pour vous; tel temps me - ner

mer; que vous; a brief par - ler:
er; pour vous; tel temps me - ner

42

Qui veut, s'en ait
veuil je plus qu'a

Qui veuil
veult, je
s'en ait plus qu'a

Qui veuil
veult, s'en
je plus

50

em - vi
sous - si
e.
e.

em - vi
sous - si
e.
e.

ait qu'a
em vi e.
sous si e.

2a. Car qui a -
2b. Sur mon a -

2a. Car qui a - tel par - ti -
2b. Sur mon a - me, m'a - my -

2a. Car qui a - tel par - ti - e, par - ti -
2b. Sur mon a - me, m'a - my - e, m'a - my -

10
tel par - ti - e, il a plus que par - ti -
me, m'a - my - e, je ne sçay nul - le vi -

e, il a plus que par - ti -
e, je ne sçay nul - le vi -

e, par - ti - e, il a plus que par - ti -
e, m'a - my - e, je ne sçay nul - le vi -

21
e de ce qu'il veult pen -
e qui tant fa - ce_a a -

e de ce qu'il veult pen -
e qui tant fa - ce_a a -

e de ce qu'il veult pen - ser.
e qui tant fa - ce_a a - mer.

31
ser.
mer.

ser.
mer.

Dijon no. 49

Sur mon ame, m'amyé [Anonymous]

Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 517, ff. 58V-59

[Superius]

Mensura = \circ

1.4. Sur mon a - me, m'a - mi -
3. De riens ne se sous - si -

1.4. Sur mon a - me, m'a - mi -
3. De riens ne se sous - si -

1.4. Sur mon a - me, m'a - mi -
3. De riens ne se sous - si -

10
me, m'a - mi - e, je ne sçais nul - le vi -
se sous - si - e fors fai - re chie - re li -

e, je ne sçais nul - le vi -
e fors fai - re chie - re li -

e, m'a - mi - e, je ne sçais nul - le vi -
e, sous - si - e, fors fai - re chie - re li -

21
e qui tant fa - ce_a 1) a -
e et es - ba - tre_et jou -

e qui tant fa - ce_a a -
e et es - ba - tre_et jou -

e qui tant fa - ce_a a -
e et es - ba - tre_et jou -

31
mer; 2) que vous; a bref par - ler:
er; pour vous; tel temps me - ner

mer; que vous; a bref par - ler:
er; pour vous; tel temps me - ner

mer; que vous; a bref par - ler:
er; pour vous; tel temps me - ner

1) From this point the text is closely written below the superius; bars 28-37 has the text "de vous ... qui veult".

2) Text: Dijon has "de vous" – probably an error; changed in accordance with Copenhagen no. 30.

42

Qui vuet veult, je s'en ait plus qu'a

Qui vuet veult, je s'en ait plus qu'a

Qui vuet veult, s'en ait plus qu'a

50

em - vi sous - si e. e.

em - vi sous - si e. e.

ait qu'a em sous vi si e. e.

2a. Car qui a -
2b. Sur mon a -

2a. Car qui a - tel par - ti -
2b. Sur mon a - me, m'a - mi -

2a. Car qui a - tel par - ti - e, par - ti -
2b. Sur mon a - me, m'a - mi - e, m'a - mi -

10

tel par - ti - e, il a plus que par - ti -
me, m'a - mi - e, je ne sçais nul - le vi -

e, il a plus que par - ti -
e, je ne sçay nul - le vi -

e, par - ti - e, il a plus que par - ti -
e, m'a - mi - e, je ne sçay nul - le vi -

21

e de ce qu'il veult pen -
e qui tant fa - ce_a a -

e de ce qu'il veult pen -
e qui tant fa - ce_a a -

e de ce qu'il veult pen - ser.
e qui tant fa - ce_a a - mer.

31

ser.
mer.

ser.
mer.