

Loyset Compere

Au travail suis sans espoir de confort a 3

Edition and comments by
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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 of the related 'Loire Valley' chansonniers

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

Other sources:

Copenhagen 1848	København, The Royal Library, MS Ny Kgl. Samling 1848 2°
Florence 2794	Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ms. 2794
Rome 2856	Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, Ms. 2856

Text sources:

Lille 402	Lille, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 402 (new call no. 308)
Jardin 1501	<i>Le Jardin de plaisance et fleur de rethorique</i> , Paris, [Antoine Verard, 1501]

Literature:

Françon 1938	Marcel Françon (ed.), <i>Poèmes de transition (xve-xvie siècles): Rondeaux du Ms 402 de Lille</i> . Paris & Cam. Mass. 1938
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Au travail suis sans espoir de confort 3v · Loyset Compere

Sources:

*Copenhagen 1848 p. 106 »Au travail suis sans espoir de confort« 3v
*Florence 2794 ff. 51v-52 »Au travail suis sans espoir de confort« 3v
Rome 2856 ff. 4v-5 »Au travail suis« 3v Loyset compere

Text: Rondeau cinquain, quodlibet; full text in Florence 2794; also in Lille 402, no.22, ed.: Françon 1938, p. 135, and Jardin 1501 with different *couplet* and *tierce*, f. 117v.
After Florence 2794:

Au travail suis sans espoir de confort, presque transsy, ung peu moins qu'estre mort 1) par le regart d'une de tous biens plaine; d'une aultre amer, s'elle m'estoit certaine, malheureulx cueur, certes tu avoyes tort. 2)	I am in such trouble with no hope of consolation, nearly gone, only a little bit from being dead by the glance from one perfect in all virtues; to love another, if she was surely mine, doomed heart, you will certainly be wrong.
De la servir je feray mon effort, s'il luy desplaist, ce poyse moy au fort, je ne puis fors y employer ma peine.	To serve her I exert my effort, if it displeases her, it will weigh me strongly down, I cannot do more than employ my care.
<i>Au travail suis sans espoir de confort, presque transsy, ung peu moins qu'estre mort par le regart d'une de tous biens plaine.</i>	I am in such trouble with no hope of consolation, nearly gone, only a little bit from being dead by the glance from one perfect in all virtues
Combien que c'est ung dangereulx deport amer en lieu ou loyaulte s'endort et ou douceur est dure et inhumaine, doubtant cela, en moy n'a nerf ne vaine qui ne tire par cruel desconfort.	As much as it is a dangerous venture to love in a place where loyalty sleeps and where sweetness is harsh and inhuman, fearing this, I have neither nerve nor vein that does not wrench in cruel discomfort.
<i>Au travail suis sans espoir de confort, presque transsy, ung peu moins qu'estre mort par le regart d'une de tous biens plaine; d'une aultre amer, s'elle m'estoit certaine, malheureulx cueur, certes tu avoyes tort.</i>	I am in such trouble with no hope of consolation, nearly gone, only a little bit from being dead by the glance from one perfect in all virtues; to love another, if she was surely mine, doomed heart, you will certainly be wrong.

1) Cop 1848 and Jardin 1501, line 2, "... et vaulx a demy mort"; Lille 402, "... et vaulx que demy mort".

2) Line 5, the word "cueur" is missing in Florence, and the last word is "fort"; Cop 1848, "malheureulx cueur, certes tu avoyes tort"; Jardin 1501, "malheureux cueur, certes tu auroyes grant tort"; Lille 402, "malheureux cueur, certes tu aurois tort".

Evaluation of the sources:

This rondeau is made up from quotations of chansons, which all can be found in the “Loire Valley” chansonniers. It was entered into the French chansonnier MS 2794 in Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence, by the main scribe of the chansonnier. This copyist along with the second scribe in Florence 2794 also added chansons by Fresnau and Compere to the Laborde and Dijon chansonniers, probably during the later years of the 1470s.¹ It was copied without any errors except for a slight misreading of the last line in the poem’s refrain (see above).

It appears without text (only incipits) in the a few years younger North-Italian chansonnier, Rome 2856, with only a few musical variants, and the composer’s name is very clearly given as “Loiset compere”. That the song became widely known is testified by its appearance in the much later French MS from Lyons in the Royal Library of Copenhagen, Ny kgl, Samling 1848 2°. Here it is as part of the collection’s earliest repertory, which was copied just around 1520. It has only the rondeau’s refrain as text in the upper voice, and – considering a temporal distance of about four decades – musically it is surprisingly similar Florence 2794. Copenhagen 1848 contains only a single significant variant, which seems to be a modernization: Bar 14 in its tenor has a *semibrevis*, a *minima*-rest and three *minimae* – all *d*’; it speeds up and puts a spotlight on the tenor’s entrance with “par le regard”.

Comments on text and music:

As it stands on the page, the poem is a courtly love song in rich *rimes léonines*. But it is not a run-of-the-mill sad rondeau. It was created by the composer while he shaped the music as homage to two older masters.

The beginnings of each of the refrain’s five lines quote songs by Ockeghem and Du Fay, songs that were well known in the Loire region – we may safely assume that the first song is by Ockeghem, and not by Barbingant. It is most probable that “Au travail suis sans espoir de confort” was created when Compere in or after 1475 returned from his service in Milan to take up a position in the French court chapel, where Ockeghem was its celebrated leader. Du Fay, the most famous composer of the century, had just died, and Compere had earlier honoured him in his singer’s motet “Omnium bonorum plena”, which builds on the tenor from Hayne van Ghizeghem’s song “De tous biens plaine”.² In “Au travail suis” Compere resumed the connection made earlier by letting Hayne’s “De tous biens plaine” continue Du Fay’s “Par le regart d’une” and thus complete line three of the poem.

The technique of borrowing to create new music was well known. It forms part of all the music, sacred or secular, which builds on existing tunes or voice-parts extracted from compositions, or that uses parody technique or strings together dissimilar quotes in a quodlibet over a given tenor. Compere’s song is something new. It strings together slices of polyphonic songs as a tribute to revered music masters, and in most cases he quotes or alludes to several voices in the original songs. We find the closest parallel to this

1 See further my article ‘The French musical manuscript in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ms. 2794, and the ‘Loire Valley’ chansonniers’ at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/NOTES/Flo2794art.html> or http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Florence2794.pdf.

2 Cf. Joshua Rifkin: ‘Compere, “Des Pres”, and the Choirmasters of Cambrai: *Omnium bonorum plena* Reconsidered’, *Acta Musicologica* LXXXI (2009), pp. 55-73.

procedure in a poem by his friend, the Burgundian court chronicler Jean Molinet. In Molinet's prayer to the Virgin *Oroison a Nostre Dame* beginning "Tout a par moy affïn qu'on ne me voye" every stanza quote in their first and last lines songs from the repertory of the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers. Molinet used the idea again in the first line of every speech in his irreverent *Le debat du viel gendarme et du viel amoureux*.³

Compere keeps his setting within strict confines: the upper voice moves within an octave (*c'-c''*) and tenor and contra share a range an octave lower (*c-f'*) – the musical cast is the same as in most of his models. The first and the second sections of the rondeau open with octave imitations between superius and tenor over material by Ockeghem. Else the musical structure is determined by the quotes and Compere's ingenious continuations.

The opening imitation is lifted from superius and tenor in Ockeghem's »Au travail suis que peu de gens croiroient« transposed down a tone.⁴ Compere's tenor includes the model's movement to the octave, and this is taken up by the contra (ex. 1a-b; the colour markings indicate quotes from or allusions to the model's upper voice (red), tenor (green) or contratenor (blue)).

Ex. 1a Compere, bars 1-3

Ex. 1b Ockeghem / Barbingant in Dijon, bars 1-3

3 Published in Jean Molinet, *Les faictz et dictz de Jean Molinet publié par Noël Dupire*. Tome II, Paris 1937, pp. 468 and 616.

4 <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH080.html>.

Compere brings the first line to an end with the words “sans espoir de confort”, which might be a quote from a today unknown song. But then in the upper voice only, as the lower voices plunge into the lively drive to the cadence characteristic of a Compere chanson. The second line cites complete the opening line from Ockeghem’s bergerette »Presque transi ung peu moins qu’estre mort«.⁵ Musically he quotes more than three bars from the upper voices and three notes from the contratenor, all transposed up a fourth; he makes them his own by lightly rearranging and paraphrasing (ex. 2a-b).

Ex, 2a Compere, bars 8-11

Ex. 2b Ockeghem in Dijon, bars 1-4

All three voices of the opening of Du Fay’s »Par le regart de vois beaulx yeulx« are quoted in the form in which the song might have been sung as suggested by the MSS Munich 9669 and Sevilla 5-I-43 (Ex. 3a-b; ex. 3b is a reconstruction based on the Wolfenbüttel chansonnier – see further the comments on Du Fay’s song).⁶ Compere completes the sentence by citing Hayne van Ghizeghem’s »De tous biens plaine est ma maistresse« (ex. 4a-b);⁷ only the highest part is quoted, and in accordance with the relation between the *tempus imperfectum diminutum* in Hayne’s song and the triple *tempus perfectum* in Compere’s the note values has been halved in order to retain its tempo.

5 <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH077.html>.

6 <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH204.html>.

7 <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH005.html>.

Ex. 3a Compere, bars 14-16

14
par le re - gart d'u - ne

le re - gart d'u - ne de

le re - gart d'u - ne de tous

Ex. 3b Du Fay in Wolfenbüttel, bars 1-3

1.4. Par le re - gard de

1.4. Par le re - gard de vos

1.4. Par le re - gard de vos

Ex. 4a Compere, bars 17-19

17
de tous biens plai - ne;

tous biens plai - ne;

biens plai - ne;

Es. 4b Hayne van Ghizeghem in Dijon, bars 1-5

1. 4. De tous biens plai-ne_est ma mais - tres

1. 4. De tous biens plai-ne_est ma mais - tres

1. 4. De tous biens plai - - - ne_est ma

The rondeau's second section begins with an imitation between tenor and superius based on a free rendering of the tenor opening in Ockeghem's »D'un autre amer mon cuer abesseroit«;⁸ also this one in halved note values, and allusions to snatches of the contratenor and superius may also be perceived (ex. 5a-b).

Ex. 5a Compere, bars 19-23

19 d'u - ne_aul-tre_a-mer, s'el - le m'es - toit cer - tai - ne,

d'u - ne_aul-tre_a-mer, s'el - le m'es - toit cer - tai - ne,

ne; d'u - ne_aul - tre_a-mer, s'el - le m'es - toit cer - tai -

Ex. 5b Ockeghem in Laborde, bars 1-8

1.4. D'ung aul - tre_a - mer mon cuer s'a - bes - se-roit,

1.4. D'ung aul - tre_a - mer mon cuer s'a - bes - se - roit,

1.4. D'ung aul - tre_a - mer mon cuer s'a - bes - se - roit,

8 <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH028.html>.

The last quote is also quite free. It hints at the first words in Du Fay's »Malheureux
 cueur que veulx tu faire« transposed up a tone (Ex. 6a-b).⁹

Ex. 6a Compere, bars 24-26

24
 mal - heu - reulx cueur,
 mal - heu - reulx cueur,
 mal - heu - reulx cueur,

Ex. 6b Du Fay in Laborde, bars 1-2

1.4. Mal - heu - reulx cueur
 1.4. Mal - heu - reulx cueur
 1.4. Mal - heu - reulx cueur

The free continuations in lines 1, 4 and 5 all include in the superius, whether they contain further unknown quotes or not, an upward leap of a fourth *g'-c''* (bb. 5, 22 and 29), which activates the rush towards the cadence. Along with the lively lower voices this grants the setting a sense of unity in style and elegance in expression in spite of the diverse models.

9 <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH183.html>.

Florence 2794 no. 44

Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ms. 2794, ff. 51V-52

Au travail suis sans espoir de confort [Compere]

[Superius] Mensura = ♩

1.4. Au tra - vail suis sans es - poir de con -
 3. Com - bien que c'est ung dan - ge - reulx de -

Tenor

1.4. Au tra - vail suis sans es - poir de con -
 3. Com - bien que c'est ung dan - ge - reulx de -

Contra

1.4. Au tra - vail suis sans es - poir de con -
 3. Com - bien que c'est ung dan - ge - reulx de -

6

- - - fort, pres a - que trans - sy
 - - - port mer en lieu

11

ung ou peu moins qu'es - tre mort par le re -
 ou loy - aul - te s'en - dort et ou dou -

15

gart d'u - ne de tous biens plai -
 ceur est du - re_et in - hu - mai -

re - gart d'u - ne de tous biens plai -
 dou - ceur est du - re_et in - hu - mai -

19

ne; d'u - ne_aul - tre_a - mer, s'el - le m'es -
 ne, doub - tant ce - la, en moy n'a

23

toit cer - tai - ne, mal - - - heu - reulx
 nerf ne vai - ne, qui he ne ti -

26

cueur, cer - tes tu a - voyes
 re par cru - el des con - - -

30

reulx - - - - - fort.
 ti - - - - - fort.
 - - - - - fort.
 - - - - - fort.

2a. De la ser - vir je fe - ray mon ef -
2b. Au tra - vil suis sans es - poir de con -

2a. De la ser - vir je fe - ray mon ef -
2b. Au tra - vil suis sans es - poir de con -

2a. De la ser - vir je fe - ray mon ef -
2b. Au tra - vil suis sans es - poir de con -

6
- - - fort, s'il luy des - plaist,
- - - fort, pres que trans - sy

- - - fort, s'il luy des - plaist, ce
- - - fort, pres que trans - sy ung

- - - fort, s'il luy des - plaist, ce
- - - fort, pres que trans - sy ung

11
ce poy - se moy au fort, je ne puis
ung peu moins qu'es - tre mort par le re -

poy peu - se moy au fort, je ne puis
peu moins qu'es - tre mort par le re -

poy peu - se moy au fort, je ne puis
peu moins qu'es - tre mort par le re -

15
fors y em - ploi - er ma pei - ne.
gart d'u - ne de tous biens plai - ne.
ne. ne.

fors y em - ploi - er ma pei - ne.
gart d'u - ne de tous biens plai - ne.
ne. ne.

puis fors y em - ploi - er ma pei - ne.
re - gart d'u - ne de tous biens plai - ne.
ne. ne.

[Superius] Mensura = ♩

1.4. Au tra - val suis sans ex - poir de con -
 3. Com - bien que c'est ung dan - ge - reulx de -

[Tenor]

11.4. Au tra - val suis sans ex - poir de con -
 3. Com - bien que c'est ung dan - ge - reulx de -

[Contra]

1.4. Au tra - val suis sans ex - poir de con -
 3. Com - bien que c'est ung dan - ge - reulx de -

6

- - - fort, pres - que mer trans - sy lieu
 - - - port a - mer en sy lieu

11

et vaulx a de - my mort par le re -
 ou loy - aul - de te s'en - mort dort et ou doul -

2)

vaulx a de - my mort par le re -
 loy - aul - de te s'en - mort dort et ou doul -

15

gard d'u - ne de tous biens plain -
 ceur est du - re_et in - hu - mai -

3)

gard d'u - ne de tous biens plain -
 ceur est du - re_et in - hu - mai -

1) Contra, bar 5.2-3 are missing (error).

2) Tenor, bar 11.1-2, c'-c' (error).

3) superius, bar 17.1-2, the two 1st notes are a semibrevis with punctus.

19

ne;
ne, d'ung aul - tre_a - mer, c'el - le moy m'es -
doub - tant ce - la, en moy n'a

23

toit ser - tain vai - ne, mal - - - heu - reulx
nerf ne vai - ne, ne qui heu ne ti -

26

cueur, cer par - tes tu a - voyes
re par cru - el des con - - -

30

tort.
fort.

tort.
fort.

5)

tort.
fort.

4) Contra, bar 22.2, d (error).

5) Contra, bar 30.1, the rest is missing (error).

2a. De la ser - vir je fe - ray mon ef -
 2a. Au tra - val suis sans ex - poir de con -

2a. De la ser - vir je fe - ray mon ef -
 2b. Au tra - val suis sans ex - poir de con -

2a. De la ser - vir je fe - ray mon ef -
 2b. Au tra - val suis sans ex - poir de con -

6
 - - - fort, s'il luy des - plaist,
 - - - fort, pres que trans sy

11
 ce poy - se moy au fort, je ne puis
 et vaulx a de - my mort par le re -

15
 fors y em - ploier ma pei - ne.
 gard d'u - ne de tous biens plain ne.
 fors y em - ploier ma pei - ne.
 gard d'u - ne de tous biens plain ne.