

Anomymous
(Ockeghem? / Du Fay?)

Il sera pour vous combatu / L'omme armé a 3

Borton

Lom arme a 4

Edition and comments by
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<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH561.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' 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

| | |
|--------------|--|
| New Haven 91 | New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 91 (Mellon Chansonnier) |
| Rome 2856 | Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, Ms. 2856 |

Il sera pour vous combatu / L'omme armé 3v · Anonymous
(Ockeghem? / Du Fay?)

Sources:

*New Haven 91 ff. 44v-45 »Il sera pour vous combatu / L'omme arme« 3v

*Rome 2856 ff. 156v-157 »Lom arme« 4v (+B; arrangement) Borton

Text: Rondeau quatrain in the superius combined with a popular stanza in tenor and contratenor; full text in New Haven 91.

Superius:

Il sera pour vous combatu 1)
le doubte Turcq, Maistre Symon,
certainement ce sera mon,
et de crocq de arche abatu.

He will be attacked by you
the feared Turk, Master Symon,
– certainly this will surely happen –
and put down by hook or crook.

Son orgueil tenons abatu,
s'il chiet en voz mains, le felon.

We hold that his pride will be humbled,
if he falls in your hand, the felon.

*Il sera pour vous combatu
le doubte Turcq, Maistre Symon.*

He will be attacked by you
the feared Turk, Master Symon.

En peu de heure l'ares batu
au plaisir Dieu, puis dira on:
"Vive Symonet le Breton
que sur le Turcq s'est enbatu!"

In a short time you will have beaten him
to God's pleasure, then it will be said:
"Long live little Symon le Breton
who has fallen upon the Turk!"

*Il sera pour vous combatu
le doubte Turcq, Maistre Symon,
certainement ce sera mon,
et de crocq de arche abatu.*

He will be attacked by you
the feared Turk, Master Symon,
– certainly this will surely happen –
and put down in every way.

Tenor and contratenor:

L'omme armé doibt on doubter
– et l'omme armé.
On a fait partout crier
– a l'assault –
que chescun se doibt armer
d'un haubregon de fer.
L'omme armé doibt on doubter.

The armed man is to be feared
– and the armed man .
Everywhere the cry is raised
– charge! –
that everyone must protect himself
with an iron shirt.
The armed man is to be feared.

1) Line 1, the intended meaning must be "par vous"

Evaluation of the sources

This three-voice double chanson can be found in the Mellon chansonnier (New Haven, Breinecke Library, MS 91), which was made in Naples in the mid 1470s. Here it appears without any indication of its creator, but it is very carefully copied with a couple of small insecurities in the contratenor only and with a complete text underlay in all voices including repetitions. Obviously, it was important that the subtle interplay of the words in the different voices was presented accurately.

In an Italian source from the 1480s, Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, ms. 2856, the song appears in a four-voice arrangement without text, “Lom arme”, ascribed to the unknown “Borton”. It retains the original’s three voice parts with a few changes forced by a newly composed “Bassus” (see the editions). The name on the top of the page has led many scholars to ascribe the original double chanson to Robert Morton who served in the Burgundian chapel in the years 1457-1476. It is difficult to understand why this elegant chanson composer should be associated with Borton’s clumsy arrangement. Only a fast tempo can disguise its infelicities.

Comments on text and music

The poem sung by the upper voice is a rondeau quatrain in artful rich rimes, very close to *equivokes*. It is making fun at the aging singer of the Burgundian chapel, Simon le Breton. He is expected to go to war against the Turks who had overrun Constantinople in 1453 – and beat them to the delight of everyone and God. Tenor and contratenor present a popular song, a call to weapons against the “l’homme armé / armed man”, a song that during this period became a touchstone for every musician to use in composing polyphonic masses – in fierce competition. The tune is carried by the tenor – with a short shift to the contratenor in bars 9-11. Its fanfare motives are constantly imitated between the two low voices, which gives the setting an enormous rhythmic drive.

The tempo is fast, and the text declamation is fast too and mostly syllabic with many syllables placed on *minima* note values – the beat being on the perfect *semibrevis*. Great care has been taken to make the words heard, the rondeau’s as well as those of the popular song. For stretches the staggering of motives cause the repeated words “l’omme” and “a l’assault” to produce a carpet of sound above which the rondeau text soars.

The “l’homme armé” tune is in simple ABA form. The rondeau’s first section is coupled with its A-section (bb. 1-7). In the second section the third rondeau line is delivered very fast (bb. 8-9) making its continuation (bb. 10-12) proceed without text – just sung on “mon / -ton” – in order to make space for the important lines in the popular song’s B-section: “que chescun se doibt armer / d’un haubregon de fer”. In accordance with the returning A-section of the popular tune, the last line of the rondeau refrain mirrors the opening line.

The joke has been constructed with finesse and precision. By integrating its three voices in a rhythmically sparkling triple time enlivened by hemiola effects it creates a sound picture unforgettable when heard only once.

In the vast literature on the “l’omme armé” complex of compositions it has often been remarked that the poor Simon – driven forward by the repeated shouts of “a l’assault” inserted into the song – was further ridiculed by attacking the Turks with a stalk of celery.

This, however, is a misunderstanding of the rondeau's fourth line "et de crocq de arche abatu". The meaning of the phrase "de croq et de hanche" as used by Martin le Franc and Charles d'Orléans is simply "by any means".

There has been much speculation about who among the colleagues of Simon le Breton composed this witty piece. Obviously, it is the work of a first-rank composer. The song has long been known under Robert Morton's name, a younger colleague of Simon le Breton in the Burgundian chapel, but also Antoine Busnoys has been promoted as its composer. Alejandro E. Planchart prefers Guillaume Du Fay as the most credible creator of the song.¹ He was contemporary with Simon le Breton, and since the 1430s both men were canons at the cathedral in Cambrai. From the 1440s Simon had a house near Du Fay in Cambrai, where he often spent time until he in 1464 retired from the Burgundian court and moved permanently to Cambrai. Du Fay had many opportunities to entertain his old friend with a new playful song on a theme that was becoming like a craze in the most ambitious mass music in the years around and after 1460. Its musical style, poetic language and technical perfection fits perfectly into Du Fay's known works.

Leeman L. Perkins has pointed out the close relationship between "Il sera pour vous / L'homme armé" and Ockeghem's »L'autre d'antan l'autrier passa«. ² Ockeghem's three-part rondeau is stylistically modelled on the double chanson as a sort of response:³

- It turns the poetic text and the situation described upside-down. Instead of a mock attack and victory over the fearsome Turk "L'autre d'antan" sings of a defeat in a mock battle against a woman.
- It clearly alludes to the "L'homme armé" tune in its rhythmically distinct signals, and Ockeghem creates an illusion of the tune's ABA form by quoting the opening imitation in the rondeau's last line.
- Both chansons have a bright Mixolydian sound with the voices keeping entirely to hexachords on G and C.
- Both use the unusual mensuration "C3": in "Il sera pour vous" on the *tempus* level designating *tempus imperfectum* with two perfect *semibreves* in each *brevis* and in "L'autre d'antan" on the *modus* level designating *minor modus* with two perfect *breves* in each *longa* and doubled speed. If "Il sera pour vous" had been notated in double note values their similarity would have been visually more striking (see ex. 1-2).

In fact, the two songs are so close that one could suspect that Ockeghem was the author of both. This could explain the use of "C3" in "Il sera pour vous". In his early *Missa L'homme armé* Ockeghem had used the tune in the same shape notated in *tempus imperfectum cum prolatione perfecta*, C.⁴ In the mass this sign means that the notes has to be augmented or sung in doubled note values. To avoid any ambiguities, he may have chosen the equivalent "C3" for the chanson setting of the tune, which does not evoke any associations with augmentation.

1 Alejandro Enrique Planchart, "The Origins and Early History of *L'homme armé*", *The Journal of Musicology* 20 (2003), pp. 305-357.

2 At <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH048.html>.

3 Cf. Leeman L. Perkins, "The *L'homme armé* Masses of Busnoys and Ockeghem: A Comparison", *Journal of Musicology* 3 (1984) pp. 363-396 (at pp. 372-275).

4 J. Ockeghem (ed. Dragan Plamenac), *Collected Works I-II*. New York 1959-1966, vol. 1, pp. 99-116; Johannes Ockeghem (ed. Jaap van Benthem), *Missa L'homme armé* (Masses and Mass Sections, fascicle II,2). Utrecht 1999.

Of course, the two songs may have been brought forth more or less simultaneously. For example, when Ockeghem in June 1462 or in February-March 1444 visited Du Fay in Cambrai and stayed in his house.⁵ Who knows what the two musical dignitaries discussed over bottles of fine Burgundian wine.

Much has been made of the song belonging to the Burgundian court circles with references to the call for a crusade against the Turks late in the 1450s. It could just as well be a French creation making fun at the Burgundian craze for crusade. We must not overlook the fact that the aging, serving in the Burgundian chapel for ages, Simon le Breton, may have been chosen as its target just because “Breton” and “Simon” rimes and is easy to fit into a short-lined rondeau.

Still, no firm evidence can support any ascription to Ockeghem or Du Fay, so we must let the song remain anonymous.

Mensura = \bullet

1.4. Il se - ra pour vous con - ba - tu
3. En peu de_heu - re l'a - res ba - tu

L'om - me, l'om - me, l'om-me_ar - mé, l'om-me_ar-mé,

L'om - me, l'om - me_ar - mé, l'om-me_ar - mé, l'om -

Ex. 1, “Il sera pour vous conbatu / L'omme armé” (in doubled note values).

Mensura = \bullet

1.4. L'au - tre d'an - tan l'au - trier pas - sa
3. Puis a - pres nos - tre_a - mour ces - sa,

1.4. L'au - dre - tan - tan l'au - trier pas - sa
3. Puis a - pres nos - tre_a - mour ces - sa,

1.4. L'au - tre d'an - tan l'au - trier pas - sa
3. Puis a - pres nos - tre_a - mour ces - sa,

Ex. 2, Ockeghem, “L'autre d'antan l'autrier passa”.

5 Cf. Craig Wright, ‘Dufay at Cambrai: Discoveries and Revisions’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 28 (1975) pp. 175-229 (att pp. 108 and 117). See also my introduction to Johannes Ockeghem, *Missa Quinti toni*. Edited with an introduction by Peter Woetmann Christoffersen (June 2021 – at http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma_Ock01.pdf).

New Haven 91 no. 34

New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 91
(Mellon chansonnier), ff. 44^v-45

Il sera pour vous conbatu / L'omme armé (Anonymous)

[Superius] Mensura = ♩

1.4. Il se - ra pour vous con - - -
3. En peu de_heu - re l'a - res

L'om - me, l'om - me, l'om - me_ar -

¹⁾ L'om - me, l'om - me_ar -

3
ba - - - tu le doub - - -
ba - - - tu au plai - - -

mé, l'om - me_ar - mé, l'om - me_ar - mé doit

mé, l'om - me_ar - mé, l'om - me_ar - mé doit on

5
te Turcq, Mais - tre Sy - mon,
sir Dieu, puis di - ra on:

on doub - ter, et l'om - me_ar - mé. On a

doub - ter, l'om - me_ar - mé. a l'as - sault

8
cer - tai - ne - ment ce se - ra mon,
"Vi - ve Sy - mo - net le Bre - ton

fait par - tout cri - er, a l'as - sault, d'un

et a l'as - sault, que ches - cun se doit ar -

1) *Contratenor*, text, bars 2-3, "L'omme, l'omme, l'omme armé" (error).

11

hau - bre - gon de fer.

mer. a l'as - sault, a l'as - sault,

13

et de que sur crocq le de Turcq

L'om - me, l'om - me, l'om - me_ar - mé,

L'om - me, l'om - me, l'om - me_ar - mé, l'om - me_ar -

15

ar - s'est che_a en - ba - tu. s'est en - ba - tu!

l'om - me_ar - mé, l'om - me_ar - mé doit on doub - ter.

mé, l'om - me_ar - mé doit on doub - ter.

2) *Contratenor*, bar 14.1-2, *minima f'* – *semibrevis f'* – *minima g'* (error).



2a. Son or - gueil te - - - nons a - - -
 2b. Il se - ra pour vous con - - -

L'om - me, l'om - me, l'om - me_ar -

L'om - me, l'om - me_ar -

3
 ba - - - tu, s'il chiet
 ba - - - tu le doub - - -

mé, l'om - me_ar - mé, l'om - me_ar - mé doibt

mé, l'om - me_ar - mé, l'om - me_ar - mé doibt on

5
 en voz mains, le fe - lon.
 te Turcq, Mais - tre Sy - mon.

on doub - ter, et l'om - me_ar - mé.

doub - ter, l'om - me_ar - mé.

Roma 2856 no. 109

Borton, *Lom arme*

Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, ns. 2856, ff. 156^v-157: Borton

[Superius] Mensura = ♩

Lom arme lom arme

Tenor Lom Arme

Altus Lom arme

Bassus Lom Arme

The first system of the musical score consists of five staves. The top staff is for the Superius voice, with a mensural sign and a tempo marking 'Mensura = ♩'. It begins with a treble clef, a C-clef on the third line, and a 3/8 time signature. The lyrics 'Lom arme lom arme' are written below the staff. The second staff is for the Tenor voice, with a C-clef on the second line and the lyrics 'Lom Arme'. The third staff is for the Altus voice, with a C-clef on the third line and the lyrics 'Lom arme'. The fourth staff is for the Bassus voice, with a C-clef on the first line and the lyrics 'Lom Arme'. The music is written in a mensural style with various note values and rests.

5

The second system of the musical score consists of four staves. The first staff is for the Superius voice, with a treble clef, a C-clef on the third line, and a key signature change to one sharp (F#). The lyrics 'Lom arme lom arme' are written below the staff. The second staff is for the Tenor voice, with a C-clef on the second line and the lyrics 'Lom Arme'. The third staff is for the Altus voice, with a C-clef on the third line and the lyrics 'Lom arme'. The fourth staff is for the Bassus voice, with a C-clef on the first line and the lyrics 'Lom Arme'. The music continues with mensural notation.

9

The third system of the musical score consists of four staves. The first staff is for the Superius voice, with a treble clef, a C-clef on the third line, and a key signature change to one sharp (F#). The lyrics 'Lom arme lom arme' are written below the staff. The second staff is for the Tenor voice, with a C-clef on the second line and the lyrics 'Lom Arme'. The third staff is for the Altus voice, with a C-clef on the third line and the lyrics 'Lom arme'. The fourth staff is for the Bassus voice, with a C-clef on the first line and the lyrics 'Lom Arme'. The music concludes with mensural notation.

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Roma 2856 no. 109, p. 2". The score is arranged in four staves, each beginning with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The first staff starts at measure 13 and contains a melodic line with various note values, including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, and rests. The second staff begins at measure 8 and features a similar melodic line with some rests. The third staff starts at measure 8 and contains a more rhythmic line with many eighth and sixteenth notes. The fourth staff begins at measure 13 and continues the rhythmic pattern. The music concludes with a double bar line at the end of the fourth staff.