

Anonymous

Tousdis vous voit mon souvenir a 3

Edition and comments by
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July 2024

<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH276.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

Tousdis vous voit mon souvenir 3v · Anonymous

Appearance in the group of related chansonniers:

*Leuven ff. 45v-47 »Tousdis vous voit mon souvenir« 3v

Text: Virelai simple, full text in Leuven.

Tousdis vous voit mon souvenir,
quelque part qu'aler et venir
je puisse, hélas, ainsi m'aist dieux,
il fait l'office de mes yeulx
jusques vous voye au revenir.

Ma pensee et mon desir
n'a loing de moy aultre plaisir
esperant en brief d'avoir mieulx.

*Tousdis vous voit mon souvenir,
quelque part qu'aler et venir
je puisse, hélas, ainsi m'aist dieux.*

Mays lors que je pourray choisir
vo gent oeillet, tant resjoir
voirres mon cueur saillant es cieulx
oubliant le temps angoisseux
ou a present suis sans faillir.

*Tousdis vous voit mon souvenir,
quelque part qu'aler et venir
je puisse, hélas, ainsi m'aist dieux,
il fait l'office de mes yeulx
jusques vous voye au revenir.*

My memory always sees you,
no matter where I may go
or come, alas, so God help me,
it takes over my eyes
until I see you return.

My thoughts and my desire
have far from me no other pleasure
hoping soon to have better.

My memory always sees you,
no matter where I may go
or come, alas, so God help me.

But when I can meet
your noble eye, you will see
such a joy, my heart gushing in the heavens,
forgetting the anguished times
in which I now unfailingly find myself.

My memory always sees you,
no matter where I may go
or come, alas, so God help me,
it takes over my eyes
until I see you return.

Evaluation of the sources:

This unique song was entered with a few errors in the music and none in the text into the Leuven chansonnier by its main scribe. The scribe has been quite careful about the text underlay. In the third line, the word “puisse” must be understood and pronounced as a single syllable, otherwise the line gets one syllable too many. However, below the music, the word is clearly divided into two syllables with a line break in between, and “hélas” starts a new musical segment after a rest (b. 22) preventing a sung elision of the words; so this must have been what the composer wanted. When the line returns as the last in the second couplet, the elided interpretation fits the music better. At the unusual ending of the refrain the scribe has laid the last line of text under tenor as well as under the contratenor; both otherwise have only text incipits. In the contratenor, which contains eight repeated notes in a row, he has like in the tenor indicated the precise placement of the words. Under bars 50.2-54 he placed the words “jusques vous voye”, and below the repeated notes in bars 56-57 he placed “au revenir”, forcing a repeat of the last four syllables. With this simple intervention, it becomes completely clear how the composer wanted the unusual passage to be performed.

This song is closely connected with the next song in Leuven, »Donnez l'aumosne, chiere dame«,¹ for four voices on ff. 47v-50. Probably, the two poems as well as their musical settings have the same author. What connects them above all is their poetic and musical form, which is highly unusual, if not unique, in this repertory. Both are "simples virlais", which Jean Molinet characterizes as a kind of "rondeaux doubles, qui se nomment simples virlais, pour ce que gens lais mettent en leurs chansons rurales", that is, song forms that ordinary people use in their rural songs. He described this form with an example in his *L'art de rhétorique*, which was printed in Paris by Vérard in 1493, but also circulated widely in manuscript copies.² We can name them 'virelais simples' or possibly 'rondeaux doubles' to adapt the terminology to the other *formes fixes*.

When you look at how the songs are notated on two or three openings, they look like bergerettes that are missing some lines in their poems.³ But they are not virelais containing one stanza only, which may be called bergerettes to discern them from multi-stanza virelais. The *bergerette* consists of two contrasting sections: a refrain and two short couplets with new rimes and, in most cases, contrasting music, followed by a tierce of the same length and structure as the refrain and a repeat of the refrain. The *virelai simple* poem also has two sections, but only one couplet of half the length of the refrain, and it continues the pattern of rimes of the refrain; the corresponding text lines of the refrain is used for the repeat of this section. It ends in the same way with tierce and refrain. Its pattern of rimes and repeats does not encourage any pronounced musical contrast between the sections. The poetic form of the simple virelais is then similar to the rondeau, as Molinet remarked, but musically it is closer to the bergerette with its new music for the couplets.

Both poems fit the virelai simple pattern perfectly. "Tousdis vous voit" has a cinquain as refrain with a couplet of three lines with rimes all the way through based on "-ir/-ieux", while "Donnez l'aumosne" has a quatrain with a two-line couplet and rimes "-ame/-ace". The two sections of music are in both songs in *tempus imperfectum diminutum* with a relatively fast beat on the *breves* – there is no contrast in rhythmical structure! A common set up for the bergerette involves a long refrain section in triple time, *tempus perfectum*, and the shorter couplets in diminished double time, *imperfectum diminutum*. This results in a tempo ratio of 3:4 between the sections. Some bergerettes use diminished double time in both sections, see e.g. in Leuven the anonymous »Ha, cueur perdu et desole« (no. 38),⁴ or the two songs by Busnoys, »M'a vostre cueur mis en oubli« or »Soudainement mon cueur a pris«,⁵ which both can be found in the Copenhagen and Dijon chansonniers. In these songs, the contrast between couplets and refrain is achieved with other means.

1 See <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH277.html>

2 Cf. Ernest Langlois (ed.), *Recueil d'arts de seconde rhétorique*. Paris 1902, pp. 231-232.

3 In recent recordings by Sollazzo Ensemble, Ensemble Leones and Blue Heron these songs has been rearranged as bergettes with new text interpolated, and they are mentioned as standard virelais (bergerettes) in recent literature, cf. David J. Burn, 'The Leuven Chansonnier : A New Source for Mid Fifteenth-Century Franco-Flemish Polyphonic Song', *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 9 (2017), pp. 135-158, at p. 149, Fabrice Fitch, 'Spotlight on a Newly Recovered Song: The Anonymous Virelai *Si vous voulez que je vous ame* from the Leuven Chansonnier', *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 12 (2020), pp. 217-230, at p. 217, and Honey Meconi, 'Text and Context in the Leuven Chansonnier', *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 13 (2021), pp. 12-32, at p. 16.

4 Cf. <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH282.html>.

5 Cf. <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH010.html> and <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH023.html>.

Comments on text and music:

This male love complaint in very rich rimes is set for three voices in high and wide ranges ($b-f''$, $d-a'$, $Bb-f$). The upper voices are for much of the time placed a sixth or a third apart. The contratenor mostly moves below the tenor, but lies above it in some passages – and crosses above the superius in bars 20-21.

The music is extremely varied and it is apparently composed with close attention to the words, more to their sound than to their meaning. The two first text lines of the five-line refrain are set homorhythmically, while the extended setting of the third line involves snitches of canonic imitation between the upper voices at the unison (bb. 18-24) and at the octave (bb. 28-34). The middle cadence (b. 37) on the mode's fifth in this virelai simple is similar to what we find in rondeaux – just without any markings of a point to stop. This is a feature that we recognize from several bergerettes. In the fourth line the superius displays the lower half of its range; its melodic curve between c' and g' attracts the interest, while the lower voices progress from long notes with the voices far apart to a curious ornamented ostinato (bb. 43.2-47.1) with the contratenor sounding above the tenor, which prolongs the harmonic standstill and ends bars 48-49 in a double leading note cadence. The last line of text starts as a canonic imitation at the octave between superius and tenor. After a one *brevis* general pause, it rests on a C-triad with the contratenor repeating the last words in smaller note values, dotted and then syncopated, on c' before a standard final cadence.

The couplets continue at the same basic tempo as in the refrain, but with a more compact, syllabic delivery of the words. The two first lines are in strict octave canon between tenor and the highest voice; after a *brevis* general pause the third line is recited in homophony. The cadence to C in bar 85 is followed by an extension that ends with the third sounding in the upper voice. It may have been the composer's intention to form the couplets with two endings, but this is not suggested in the manuscript by any fermatas or repetition signs.

As there were probably no precedents for how a polyphonic setting of a virelai simple should be formed, the composer has felt quite free to experiment and has used a number of features not often encountered in this repertoire, some of which reappear in the following four-part song in the same formal layout.

Despite the very varied course and contrasts in range and timbre, the overall impression is characterized by unity with highly audible motif connections. The opening statement in the upper voice is significant: In an inverted melodic curve it descends from c'' to g' and rises up high to e'' , where it stops on a *longa* with fermata – a display of the g' -hexachord. The tenor shadows it in the c' -hexachord, while the contratenor an octave below supplies the harmonic foundation suggesting the Bb -hexachord (or the combined c - and F -hexachords) with the characteristic alternation of triads on c and on Bb (underscored by the accidental in bar 7). The fermata chord with the third at the top ($c-c'-e''$) is a sound as bright as possible. It is answered by the second line (bb. 10-16) in homophonic recitation touching the song's highest note, f'' , and ending in a standard cadence to C. By this procedure the composer creates a closed musical phrase of the two first lines in disregard of the meaning of the text. The simultaneous use of three different hexachords is definitely the sound world of the Du Fay and Binchois generation and their followers. And this combination characterizes the entire course of the song.

We meet the harmonic effect of a slow alternation of triads on *c* and on *B♭* at the start of the second half of the refrain (bb. 39-43) when the upper voice paraphrases the end of the opening statement an octave lower above first long note values and then an ostinato accompaniment. Also the final cadence of the refrain sounds like a reference to the opening statement.

The couplets paraphrase the song's start in canon and in reverse order: first the movement up to *f''* and back to *c''*, then the song's opening phrase ending on *e''*. The associated harmony (triads on *c* and on *B♭*) is heard thrice in different shapes during these few bars and ending just like the opening line in the refrain, not in a fermata chord, but with a general pause (b. 78). The last line in the couplets is a repeat of their first line reshaped in homophony and nearly identical to the refrain's second line (bb. 10-16) with an extension, which possibly may be interpreted as a first and a second ending (as the first ends perfectly on a C double octave, and the second on octave plus third, we cannot use the designations *ouvert* and *clos* endings). This simple cadential phrase appears so many times in slightly different shapes in the refrain and the couplets that it given the repetitions during the performance of the full form takes on the character of a 'refrain line'. It contributes significantly to the song's unity, especially since all the cadences, regular as well as irregular, are to C except for the middle cadence in the refrain on G.

The use of recurring material, the tendency to create rounded forms, as we hear it in the apparent 'refrain line' or in the couplets' audible ABA' form, and which do not correspond well with the natural patterns of repetition in settings of formes fixes, is not a normal feature in this repertoire. An anonymous, not very accomplished rondeau cinquain »Je ne requiers que vostre bien vueillance«, which appears in the Copenhagen, Laborde and Wolfenbüttel chansonniers,⁶ shows up a rounded form as the setting of its first line of music is reused at the end the rondeau's extended fifth line. Like "Toudis vous voit", it looks like an experiment.

The two general pauses, one in each section (bb. 55 and 78), are also a feature not often encountered in settings of formes fixes. They both serve to draw attention to the closing phrase, the 'refrain line'.

The ostinato passage bars 43.2-47.1 establishes a strong contrast to the first half of the refrain. For the first time the note *b* has to be flattened, and a minor third is sounding for four *brevis* bars in tenor and contratenor. This concord of a third is ornamented by complementary dotted figures, in which the short notes are a step lower than the main notes. This creates a rather special sound with dissonances (seconds and fourths) appearing twice in every bar. Also the superius takes part in this, as the dotted figure in bars 44.2-45.1 produces a seventh against the tenor. Obviously, the composer liked this way of enlivening long notes with dissonant turns, because the effect reappears in bar 58 in the superius and bar 75 in the tenor. It is not a common feature in this repertoire, but can be encountered, but never in such a pronounced form as in this song. See, for example in Leuven chansonnier no. 41, ff. 65v-67 »Quant j'ay au cueur aulcun contraire« bars 6.2-3 and 10.2-3 in the superius and bar 14.2-3 in the tenor.⁷ This rondeau is anonymous in Leuven, but ascribed to Busnoys in the later Italian Pixérécourt MS (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. f.fr. 15123).

6 Cf. <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH015.html>.

7 Cf. <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH284.html>.

And then we have the ending of the refrain, where the countertenor in static harmony repeats the last words in shorter note values - absolutely an original idea.

The many distinctive features, the will to experiment, the mixture of new and old in sound treatment as well as the use of a countertenor functioning both as foundation voice and as a high contra, the general pauses and the simplistic and recurring melodic material indicate that the song was created quite a short time before it was entered into the Leuven chansonnier. That is, in the years around 1470. However, despite the composer's undoubted competence, his setting of a virelai simple sounds less like a chanson and more like a small sacred composition.

Parts of this text are included in my publication *The unica of the Leuven chansonnier - a portfolio of songs by an ambitious young musician*, August 2024.⁸

8 See further at http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Leuven.pdf.

Leuven no. 30

Tousdis vous voit mon souvenir (unique)

Leuven, Alamire Foundation, Manuscript without shelf number, ff. 45^v-47

[Superius] Mensura = 

1.4. Tous - dis vous voit je mon sou - ve - nir,
 3. Mays lors que je pour - ray choi - sir

Tenor

1.4. Tous - dis vous voit je mon sou - ve - nir,
 3. Mays lors que je pour - ray choi - sir

Contraténor

1.4. Tous - dis vous voit je mon sou - ve - nir,
 3. Mays lors que je pour - ray choi - sir

10

quel - que part qu'a - ler et ve - nir je
 vo gent oeil - let, tant res - jo - ir voir -

quel - que part qu'a - ler et ve - nir
 vo gent oeil - let, tant res - jo - ir

quel - que part qu'a - ler et ve - nir je
 vo gent oeil - let, tant res - jo - ir voir -

19

puis - - - se, he - las, ain - - -
 res mon cœur sail - - -

je puis - - - se, he - las,
 voir res mon cœur

puis - - - se, he - las, ain - - -
 res mon cœur sail - - -

28

si m'aist
 lant es

ain - si m'aist
 sail - lant es

si m'aist
 lant es

1) Tenor, bars 2-3, the ligature is c.o.p. (error).

37

dieux, il fait l'of - fi -
 cieulx ou bli - ant le

dieux, il fait
 cieulx ou bli - - - - -

dieux, il fait
 cieulx ou bli - - - - -

43

ce de mes
 temps an - - - - - gois - - - - -

l'of fi ce de mes
 ant le temps an - mes
 gois - - - - -

l'of fi ce de mes
 ant le temps an - mes
 gois - - - - -

49

yeulx jus - ques vous voye
 seux ou a pre - sent

yeulx jus - ques vous voye
 seux ou a pre - sent

yeulx jus - ques vous voye
 seux ou a pre - sent

55

au re - ve - nir.
 suis sans fail - - - - - lir.

au re - ve - nir.
 suis sans fail - - - - - lir.

au re - ve - nir, au re - ve
 suis sans fail - lir, suis sans fail - - - - - nir..
 lir.

2) Superius, bar 45.2 is missing (error).

64

2a. Ma pen - se - e et mon sou - de -
 2b. Tous - dis vous voit mon sou - ve -

2a. Ma pen - se - e et mon sou - de - sir n'a loing de
 2b. Tous - dis vous voit mon sou - ve - nir, quel - que part

2a. Ma pen - se - e et mon de - sir
 2b. Tous - dis vous voit mon sou - ve - nir,

72

sir n'a loing de moy aul - tre plai - sir
 nir, quel - que part qu'a - ler et ve - nir

moy aul - tre plai - sir
 qu'a - ler et ve - nir

n'a loing de moy aul - tre plai - sir
 quel - que part qu'a - ler et ve - nir

79

es - pe - rant en brief d'a - voir
 je puis - se_he - las, ain - si m'aist

es - pe - rant en brief d'a - - - voir
 je puis - se_he - las, ain - si m'aist

es - pe - rant en brief d'a - voir
 je puis - se_he - las, ain - si m'aist

85

mieux.
 dieux.

mieux.
 dieux.

mieux.
 dieux.