

# Anonymous

## *Si vous voulez que je vous ame a 3*

Edition and comments by  
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<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH280.html>

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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

### *The related 'Loire Valley' chansonniers*

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

*Si vous voulez que je vous ame* 3v · Anonymous

*Appearance in the group of related chansonniers:*

\*Leuven ff. 52v-54 »Si vous voulez que je vous ame« 3v

*Text:* Bergerette, full text in Leuven:

Si vous voulez que je vous ame  
bien et lealment sans changer,  
ne vous vueillez plus estranger,  
car je vous lairoye sur mon ame.

If you wish that I love you  
fairly and truly without deceit,  
you should not any more turn away,  
for I will leave you, upon my soul.

Fait m'avez aler et venir  
trop de foix sans nul bien me faire,

You have made me go and come  
too many times without any joy for me,

mays pensez y pour l'advenir 1)  
g'iray ailleurs ou j'ay affaire,

so think about that in the future  
I will go somewhere else where I am welcome,

si non qu'il vous plaise, ma dame,  
gracieusement vous ranger,  
car vous povez bien sans dangier  
me faire plaisir et sans blasme.

unless it pleases you, my lady,  
to surrender graciously;  
for you could easily without fear  
make me happy, and without reproach.

Si vous voulez *que je vous ame*  
*bien et lealment sans changer,*  
*ne vous vueillez plus estranger,*  
*car je vous lairoye sur mon ame.*

If you wish that I love you  
fairly and truly without deceit,  
you should not any more turn away,  
for I will leave you, upon my soul.

1) Line 7, "Mays pensez pour l'advenir", one syllable short (error)

*Evaluation of the sources:*

The unique bergerette was entered into the Leuven chansonnier by its main scribe with a few errors in the text and music. The underlay of the text in the upper voice is careful with a clear distribution of the words in, for example, the very extended setting of the first line, and in the second couplet we find a written out repeat of the last words "ou j'ay affaire" in order to match the extension in the *2a volta* (bb. 64-75), which is unusual in chansonniers. The fermatas in superius and tenor in bar 62 have in view of these repeated words to be interpreted as markings of the point of repeat.

The song is the last in a series of unique songs consisting of two virelais simples, two rondeaux and a bergerette, which fills out the eighth fascicle in Leuven (ff. 45-54).

*Comments on text and music:*

Unlike the previous ones in this series of unique songs, which all are male love laments, this bergerette is lighter in tone. It is still in artful, very rich rimes, but here the man urges the woman to surrender graciously or he will seek happiness elsewhere. It was composed by the same musician who created the other songs in the series – certainly the two virelais simples, »Tousdis vous voit mon souvenir« and »Donnez l'aumosne, chiere dame«.<sup>1</sup>

1 Cf. <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH276.html> and <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH277.html>.

It is the most ambitious of his songs, all sails are set and he uses a well-known song as his model. The opening is clearly modelled on Ockeghem's bergerette »Ma maistresse et ma plus qu'autre amye«,<sup>2</sup> which since the 1450s had circulated widely and most probable started life as a song notated in *fa*-clefs, that is, not at a fixed pitch – it could be performed at any convenient pitch. Later sources have normalized this notation and fixed it at different pitches and in different combinations of hexachordal signatures.<sup>3</sup>

The composer builds on the version of “Ma maistresse”, which was entered into Leuven as no. 25 on ff. 34v-37. The voices are in similar ranges: superius *c'-e''*, the tenor *g-a'*, and the contratenor slightly lower, *Bb-e'*, as it keeps below the tenor except at the refrain's middle cadence, where it takes the fifth above. The tenor is a bit curious; apart from the beginning and a couple of dips down to *g* (bb. 19-20, 25 and 32), it stays slavishly within the hexachord on *c'*, marching up and down – this says something about the composer's ability in relation to Ockeghem's wide-ranging tenor. Like its model the refrain section is in triple time, *tempus perfectum*, while the couplets are in double time, *tempus imperfectum diminutum*, producing a tempo relation on the *semibrevis* level of 3:4. Also similar to the combination of hexachordal signatures of its Leuven model, it starts out with no signature in the upper voice and one-flat signatures in the lower voices, which disappear in the couplets to further a tonal contrast.

The start is original and quite spectacular. It opens with two *semibrevis*-rests in all three voices, not to prepare an upbeat opening, but in order to place the first stressed note on the third beat of the perfection. This is a phenomenon on paper; in a performance it just begins normally, but then the stressed beat imperceptibly moves back to its normal placement in the pattern, and thus creates a rhythmic fluidity, which can be compared with what Ockeghem obtained in the setting of the second line in “Ma maistresse” (bb. 8-14), which shows up a rising sequence of cadential figures, offset from the normal pattern. The tenor in “Si vous voulez” quotes the opening of the tenor in “Ma maistresse” slightly modified and a fourth lower (see ex. 1a-b, blue boxes). The quote consists of seven *semibreves*; this probably decided the unusual start. Against the tenor the composer in the upper voice set a quote from Ockeghem's contratenor transposed up a fifth and comprising six *semibreves* (ex. ex. 1a-b, red boxes). Both quotes end with a dotted figure descending a third – this figure also appears in an important role in “Donnez l'aumosne” –, which in the superius continues in an ascending sequence shadowed by the contratenor a tenth below, probably inspired by the rising sequence in the second line in Ockeghem's song. At the same time, the tenor imitates the start of the superius at the unison (ex. 1a, red boxes), and with the ‘hidden’ imitations at the fifth between all three voices (ex. 1a, green boxes) it emulates the ‘hidden’ fifth imitation between superius and tenor in “Ma maistresse”.

What helps to make the start of Ockeghem's song memorable is the false relation between *b*-flat and *b'*-natural in bar 2 forced by the imitation at the fifth and Ockeghem's sure

2 Cf. <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH173.html>.

3 Concerning the transmission of Ockeghem's song and the use of *fa*-clefs, see the introduction to the edition at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH173.html> and my article ‘On chansons notated in *fa*-clefs – and the question of pitch in 15th century secular music’ at <http://www.pwch.dk/chansonniers/NOTES/ChansonsFaclefs.html>. The connection between “Si vous voulez” and “Ma maistresse” was pointed out in Adam Knight Gilbert, ‘Songs that Know Each Other in the Leuven Chansonnier’, *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 12 (2020), pp. 231-261 (at pp. 232-234); see also the interesting analysis in Fabrice Fitch, ‘Spotlight on a Newly Recovered Song: The Anonymous Virelai *Si vous vouleuz que je vous ame* from the Leuven Chansonnier’, *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 12 (2020), pp. 217-230.

Ex. 1a “Si vous voulez”, bb. 1-8

Ex. 1b “Ma maistresse” [Ockeghem] bb. 1-6

simultaneous use of the three basic hexachords on *f*, *c'* and *g'* (see ex. 1b). “Si vous voulez” shows that its composer was able to do exactly the same a fifth lower, with the voices in *Bb*-, *f*- and *c'*-hexachords, and with the false relation sounding in bars 3-4 between *e*-flat and *e'*-natural. When the tenor repeats the superius motive in bar 4, he is able to repeat the whole procedure a fifth higher with hexachords on *f*, *c'* and *g'* (see ex. 1a).

The ‘displaced’ opening is accentuated by the black notation in the contratenor, which creates a hemiola double-bar. This vacillation between triple and double time characterizes the entire course of the song.

All of this sets only the first four syllables of the first line to music. The rest of the line “que je vous ame” gets a strong emphasis on “je” that reaches the song’s highest, long sustained note (bb. 9-10). The contratenor continues the double time feeling in black notation. Otherwise, it is as if the composer’s ideas are running out. As mentioned, the tenor gets stuck in the C hexachord, and the originality is replaced by ordinary measures.

At the upper voices’ ascend to *e''* in parallel sixths (bb. 9-10) we experience the sound of a succession of triads based on *c*, *Bb* and *c* in the contratenor, the composer’s favourite harmonization of such passages. He has to hide the parallel fifths with the tenor by interpolating a *d* in bar 9.3. Something similar happens in the couplets bars 54-56, where he has twice to insert *Bs* to disguise parallel octaves. These difficulties indicate that we are dealing here with a relatively young and less experienced composer. “Si vous voules” is probably composed before the two virelais simples.

After the first complete cadence on C, the second line upholds the rhythmic fluidity in a free *canon ad minimam* at the fifth between superius and tenor. In comparison with the first line, it is a quite condensed setting of the words leading to the middle cadence on G. In order to maintain a high degree of *varietas*, the third line is a strict unison canon between the upper voices. The contratenor colours the sound to the flat side (bb. 22-24), but it lands firmly in C. The refrain's final line exposes in the superius another favourite of the composer, the curve down and up again through the *g'*-hexachord, between *g'* and *e''* (bb. 27-29). This is the opening motive of "Tousdis vous voit", which also appears in the couplets of the virelai simple. The characteristic ascendance through the *g'*-hexachord comes again as the final motion of the refrain (b. 30.2) leading to the formal C-cadence, and the tenor imitates it in the penultimate bar.

The motive from "Tousdis vous voit" opens the couplets in the superius followed after one bar by the tenor in octave imitation. The imitative opening is very similar to the corresponding opening of the couplets in "Donnez l'aumosne". The second line of the couplets gets a very extended setting (33 *brevis* bars including the long *secunda volta*), presumably in order to balance the very extended setting of the refrain's first line. It is as if the composer would have preferred to set a cinquain with three-line couplets instead of a quatrain. The first segment "trop de foix" is in imitation at the fifth ending in a cadence to G, which is re-interpreted to a C-chord by the dotted descending third in the contratenor – a reference to the start of the refrain. The upper voice divides at the final longa into a third, *e'-g'* (bb. 50-51). The next segment "sans nul bien" starts as an imitation involving all three voices and becomes a small strict unison canon between the upper voices, which slides into the last segment "me faire", where the tenor and the contratenor take care of the cadence to C, while superius ends on *e'* above. After the musical repeat of the second couplet comes an extension, where the last words are repeated. It begins again as a canonic imitation at the fifth in the upper voices, but runs into an ostinato, in which the same notes are repeated for three bars (bb. 58-60) building up the tension before the cadence. We can find the same phenomenon in "Tousdis vous voit" (bb. 43.2-47.1), where it is even more striking because of the dissonant effects. At the final chord in the *secunda volta*, the upper voice again splits into two with a decorative introduction of the C-chord's major third.

To sum up: It seems that a relatively young musician has strived to imitate Ockeghem's bid on how to compose a bergerette. He has fully managed to live up to the challenge's demand for alluring originality from the start of the song, to the demand for constant variety in the music, a varied presentation of the poem, and balance in the music. Something else is that he has not mastered all details and that his melodic imagination eventually fails and he falls back to standard phrases. "Si vous voulez" must be dated around or maybe before 1470, that is, about a quarter century younger than Ockeghem's "Ma maistresse". It exhibits the same mixture of old and new traits as is present in "Tousdis vous voit" and "Donnez l'aumosne", the same use of recurrent motives and simple melodic material, and also some of the composer's quirks are apparent. It may be older than the two virelais simples; it may in fact be the source for some of the ideas that were unfolded in his ensuing compositions.

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.<sup>4</sup>

4 See further at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Leuven.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Leuven.pdf).



Leuven no. 34

*Si vous voulez que je vous ame* (unique)

Leuven, Alamire Foundation, Manuscript without shelf number, ff. 52<sup>v</sup>-54

[Superius] Mensura =  $\text{♩}$

1.4. Si vous voul  
3. si non qu'il

Tenor

1.4. Si vous vou  
3. si non qu'il

Contratenor

1.4. Si vous vou  
3. si non qu'il

8

lez vous que je vous a  
vous plai - se, ma da

lez vous que plai - je vous a  
vous plai - se, ma da

lez vous que je vous a  
vous plai - se, ma da

14

- - - me bien et le - al - - ment sans  
- - - me, gra - ci - eu - se - - ment vous

- - - me bien et le - al - - ment sans  
- - - me, gra - ci - eu - se - - ment vous

- - - me bien et le - al - - ment sans  
- - - me, gra - ci - eu - se - - ment vous

19

chan - - ger, ne vous vueil  
ran - - ger, car vous po - -

chan - - ger, ne vous vueil  
ran - - ger, car vous po - - lez plus  
vez bien

chan - - ger, ne vous  
ran - - ger, car vous



24

lez plus es - tran - ger, car je vous lai - roye sur  
vez bien sans dan - gier me fai - re plai - sir et

es - tran - ger, car je vous lai - roye  
sans dan - gier me fai - re plai - sir

vueil - lez plus es - tran - ger, car je vous lai - roye  
po - vez bien sans dan - gier me fai - re plai - sir

30

mon sans a - blas - me.

sur mon sans a - blas - me.

sur mon sans a - blas - me.

34 Mensura =

2a. Fait m'a - vez a - ler pour et ve -  
2b. Mays pen - sez y pour l'ad - ve -

2a. Fait m'a - vez a - ler pour et ve -  
2b. Mays pen - sez y pour l'ad - ve -

2a. Fait m'a - vez a - ler pour et ve -  
2b. Mays pen - sez y pour l'ad - ve -

42

nir trop de foix ail -  
nir g'i - ray ail -

nir trop de foix ail -  
nir g'i - ray ail -

nir trop de foix ail -  
nir g'i - ray ail -

50 1)

leurs sans nul bien me fai - -  
ou j'ay af - fai - -

58

re, re, ou  
fai - - - - - re, re, ou j'ay af -  
fai - - - - - re, re, ou

66

j'ay af - - - - - fai - - - re,  
fai - - - - - re,  
j'ay af-fai - - - - - re,

1) *Superius*, bars 50-51, the lower note is black.  
2) *Contratenor*, bars 65.2-66.1, two *semibreves* are missing (error).