

Anonymous

Henri Phlippet, le vert me fais porter a 3

Edition and comments by
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April 2024

<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH290.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

Henri Phlippet, le vert me fais porter 3v · Anonymous

Appearance in the group of related chansonniers:

*Leuven ff. 80v-81 »Henri phlippet le vert me fais porter« 3v

Text: Rondeau quatrain, full text in Leuven:

Henri Phlippet, le vert me fais porter
pour ton douls vir que je vis si plaisant, 1)
tu me samblois estre leal amant,
dont mon amour te vauls du tout donner.

Car tu nès pas home pour refuser,
en fais, en dis, tu te portes vaillant,

Henri Phlippet, *le vert me fais porter
pour ton douls vir que je vis si plaisant.*

Couvertement, sans nul samblant monstrier,
mon povre cuer nuyt et jour va pensant
contre Fortune, qui ne va che gardant, 2)
pour nous tous deux en ses las attrapper.

Henri Phlippet, *le vert me fais porter
pour ton douls vir que je vis si plaisant,
tu me samblois estre leal amant,
dont mon amour te vauls du tout donner.*

Henri Phlippet, you make me wear green
by the sweet sight of you that I find so pleasant,
you seemed to me to be a loyal lover,
and therefore I want to give you all my love.

For you are not a man to turn down,
in deed, in word, you behave boldly.

Henri Phlippet, you make me wear green
by the sweet sight of you that I find so pleasant.

Covertly, without showing anything,
my poor heart night and day schemes
against Fortune, who does not care about it,
to put both of us in her bonds.

Henri Phlippet, you make me wear green,
by the sweet sight of you that I find so pleasant,
you seemed to me to be a loyal lover,
and therefore I want to give you all my love.

1) Line 2, "... vir que que je vis ..." (error)

2) Line 11 has one syllable too many, "Fortune" must be said as two syllables (4+6 syllables)

Comments:

A later hand added this unique rondeau to the Leuven chansonnier on empty pages after the manuscript was finished and bound. The copying was done without errors, and it probably happened during the last quarter of the fifteenth century – maybe closer to 1500 than to 1475.

The poem is a declaration of love to a man named Henri Phlippet (possibly a variant of the more common family name Philippet). Its tone is intimate. The name of the speaker's beloved is mentioned, which in itself is highly unusual for a courtly poem; moreover, his name is exposed as the poem's opening words and repeated twice with the recurring refrain. He is all the way through addressed in an informal way as "tu" instead of the formal "vous" – obviously, the speaker and the beloved were close and of similar social standing. However, in form and language the poem keeps to the prescripts of the *Rhétoriqueurs*, the rondeau form with a strict adherence to the internal caesura after four syllables, the rich rimes and the appearance of an allegorical figure, the unpredictable Fortune.¹ Its

1 The poem has been commented on in two recent articles as being in a female voice and "bawdy" (Honey Meconi, "Text and Context in the Leuven Chansonnier", p. 31) and showing "a peculiar mixture of courtly and popular registers" (Sigrid Harris, 'Fortune and Injustice in the Leuven Chansonnier', p. 50; both articles appeared in *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 13 (2021), pp. 12-32 and 33-52 respectively). The "bawdy" and "popular" stem from a misreading of the word "vir" (voir – sight, appearance) in the poem's second line as "vit" (cock).

spelling of French is like the name of the beloved, Phlippet, strongly influenced by Picard dialect.

The music is for male voices with an upper voice ranging from *g* to *c''* that forms a duet with the tenor (*Bb-eb'*) and occasionally crosses below it (bb. 15 and 18). They are accompanied by a low contratenor (*G-c'*), which keeps below the tenor except for a few crossings above (bb. 7, 24-25 and 35-36). The voices are quite agile with many leaps and often traversing most of their ranges. The descending fifth ending the opening motive (*f'-bb*) reappears at different positions (*a'-d'*, *d'-g*) lending a feeling of coherence to the first half.

The setting is varied: The first line is a canon at the octave between superius and tenor (bb. 1-12) with the characteristic opening motive skilfully handled by both voices; in the second line (bb. 13-23) the tenor “fakes” a pre-existing tune in slow triple time, rising up a fifth and slowly sinking back to its point of departure, with the outer voices functioning as counter voices in *cantus firmus* setting. The second section is more subdued, all voices more in stepwise motion, with the superius in the front as an almost hymn-like melody floating on the polyphonic web of the lower voices, which often move in parallel thirds and drive the motion forward by chains of syncopated dissonances. The setting of the words is also quite careful. Except for the introductory canon and the mostly lively polyphony towards the end, it is possible to have the core voices pronounce the syllables simultaneously. It is remarkable how well short phrases and note repetitions in the contratenor fit the text, see for example the second line bars 15-23.

In spite of the composer's careful fulfilment of the requirements for setting a *rondeau* with much variation, setting of the words and contrast between the two sections, his creation does not sound as a *rondeau* in the courtly tradition.

The copying of the song was very careful, but it lacks any marking of the medial cadence, an important feature in a *rondeau* destined for performance with the repeated couplets. More significant, the first section keeps stubbornly to endings on *G*, and twice imperfecting the cadences by letting the contratenor go to the third below the *finalis* – the prolonging of the cadence to *G* in bars 20-23 does not add to the excitement. Only in the second section a movement towards *B-flat* comes into play and with it a stronger tonal colouring. A full performance of the *rondeau* would be in danger of becoming a bit boring.

The style of this setting seems more like a small three-part motet of the type found in French provincial music during the decades where four- or five-part motets had become the norm in the leading musical centres. Examples of three-part provincial motets can be found in the French music collection of c. 1520 in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, MS Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2°. ²

It has been proposed that an owner of the Leuven chansonnier might be female, and that this owner was also the author and composer of “Henri Phlippet”.³ The composer may very well be the person who made the careful copy of the song, but then it is remarkable that he left out the *signum congruentia* or the fermata, which normally indicates the medial cadence. The composer was surely a professional musician with some experience from sacred music, and he might have been entrusted with the setting of the words of a

2 Cf. 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 (http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Cop1848.pdf), vol. I, pp. 278 ff.

3 Cf. Harris, ‘Fortune and Injustice’, p. 49.

female poet. But something is not quite right. The name, the intimate approach, the motet-like style, the sound of the male singers' voices – all seem to indicate that this is a male love song or – possibly – an elaborate male joke at somebody's expense, and that the owner recognized the unusual character of the song and therefore wanted it added to the chansonnier.

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 2024.⁴

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

24

tu me sam - blois es - tre le - al a -
con - tre For - tune, qui ne va che gar -

tu me sam - blois es - tre le - - - al
con - tre For - tune, qui ne va che

tu me sam - blois es - tre le - - - al
con - tre For - tune, qui ne va che

31

mant, dont pour mon nous a - mour te en
dant, pour nous tous deux en

a - mant, dont pour mon nous a - mour te en
gar - dant, pour nous tous deux en

a - mant, dont pour mon nous a - mour te en
gar - dant, pour nous tous deux en

37

vauls du tout don - - - ner.
ses las at - trap - - - per.

vauls du tout don - - - ner.
ses las at - trap - - - per.

vauls du tout don - - - ner.
ses las at - trap - - - per.

2a. Car tu n'es pas
2b. Hen ri Philip pet,

2a. Car tu n'es
2b. Hen ri Philip

5
ho le me vert pour re fu
le me vert pour re fais por

pas
pet, ho le me vert pour re fais

le ho vert me me pour fais re

11
ser, en fais, en douls dis,
ter pour ton douls vir

fu ser, en fais, en douls dis,
por ter pour ton douls vir

fu ser, en fais, en douls dis,
por ter pour ton douls vir

17
tu te por tes vail lant,
que je vis si plai sant.

tu te por tes vail lant,
que je vis si plai sant.

tu te por tes vail lant,
que je vis si plai sant.