

Antoine Busnoys

Soudainement mon cueur a pris a 3

Edition and comments by
Peter Woetmann Christoffersen

May 2009, revised October 2022

<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH023.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 |

Text sources

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Berlin 78.B.17 | Berlin, Staatsliche Museen der Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, Ms. 78.B.17 (Chansonnier Rohan) |
|----------------|--|

Literature

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Löpelmann 1923 | M. Löpelmann (ed.), <i>Die Liederhandschrift des Cardinals de Rohan</i> (Gesellschaft für romanische Litteratur, Band 44) Göttingen 1923 |
|----------------|--|

Soudainement mon cuer a pris 3v · Busnoys, Antoine

Appearance in the five chansonniers:

*Copenhagen ff. 27v-29 »Soudainement mon cuer a pris« 3v

*Dijon ff. 121v-123 »Soudainement mon cuer a pris« 3v

*Nivelle ff. 35v-37 »Soudainement mon cuer a pris« 3v Busnoys

Text: Bergerette; full text in all three sources; also in Berlin 78.B.17 f. 72v (no. 92), ed.: Löpelmann 1923, p. 97.

After Copenhagen:

Soudainement mon cuer a pris
parti de douloureux affaire,
mais se bref ne s'en sçait deffaie,
pensez qu'il n'est point bien appris.

Car il ne peut rien conquerir
si non paine, mais savez quelle?

Il ne s'en fault ja enquerir,
onques n'en fut point veu de telle.

Je voi bien qu'il a entrepris (1)
de servir jusques a la mort traire;
si vous lui disiez du contraire,
vous le verriez de deul espris.

*Soudainement mon cuer a pris
parti de douloureux affaire,
mais se bref ne s'en sçait deffaie,
pensez qu'il n'est point bien appris.*

Suddenly my heart has decided
on a dolorous affair,
and if it does not care soon to disengage,
remember that it is not at all well informed.

For it can win nothing
but pain, and do you know which?

You do not have to enquire,
because until now no one has seen the like of it.

I understand that it has chosen
to serve until the advent of death;
if you will tell it the contrary,
you will see it beset by sorrow.

Suddenly my heart has decided
on a dolorous affair,
and if it does not care soon to disengage,
remember that it is not at all well informed.

1) Copenhagen and Dijon, line 9 "... a entepri".
– Some differences of spelling in the sources.

Evaluation of the sources:

The bergerette by Antoine Busnoys was copied by two scribes, Dijon and Nivelle. The two copies by the Dijon scribe in the Copenhagen and Dijon chansonniers are identical including errors (see bb. 6, 41 and 47-52), while the Nivelle version was copied from a slightly different exemplar, which may have contained small differences in cadential figures (S bb. 17.2-18 and 72.2-73.1), melodic details (S b. 11.2; T bb. 38.2-39.1), ligatures (T bb. 20.2-22.1 and 68; C bb. 31-33), and coloration (S bb. 16.2-17.1; T b. 43.3; C b. 33) – all of them could be such variations as often are generated during the copying process.

The main difference between the sources lies in their use of hexachordal signatures: Copenhagen/Dijon has none, while Nivelle has flats in the lower parts. However, in performance this difference is only really audible in the last line of the *refrain* and *tierce* (bb. 30-39), where the punch lines of the poem suddenly changes to a colouring of minor thirds in the Nivelle version when the imitation between tenor and superius provokes b-flats in both voices. In the *couplets* (bb. 47 ff) the Nivelle scribe dropped the flat signature in the contratenor and thereby also imposed the use of a natural in the tenor

(b. 50), all of which supports a tonal contrast with the end of the *refrain*. The critical flat affecting the *b* in the tenor in bar 18 would probably during a performance have been sung as a natural in view of the tenor's circling around the note *e* during the preceding six bars.

The Dijon scribe's exemplar could very well have been quite similar to the Nivelles scribe's. In several cases we have concluded that the Dijon scribe often analyzed the music, heard it (for his inner ear?) and performed it in writing according to his own taste. Realizing that the flats are kind of optional in a piece in D-Dorian (only a visual guide to which choices within *musica recta* are proper) and that some of the song's charm depended on a fluid state of the scale's variable step, he decided not to put in hexachordal signatures – maybe in order to ensure a correct performance of the contrasting *couplets* (the cancellation of the b-flat in the contratenor could easily be overlooked). He did put in the important flat before *B* in the contratenor in bar 25, and the usual rules for choosing between high and low B's would automatically produce the intended turn to the flat side at the end of the *refrain*. The resulting performance is completely predictable but slightly different from Nivelles' without in any way changing the song's identity.

Perhaps there were flats in the Dijon scribe's exemplar. He placed a one flat signature in the second staff of the superius part, which does not make sense; maybe it came up inadvertently by looking at the B's in his exemplar. Maybe he also inadvertently sang the voices, which participate in the three-part imitation at the beginning of the *couplets*, in triple time, something which the music nearly asks for, and then wrote the introductory rests as two and four *brevis*-bars, exactly what would be needed in *tempus perfectum*.

A *signum* in the tenor bar 43 in the Copenhagen version could represent some thoughts by the Dijon scribe on how to perform the end of the *refrain* considering that its music has to be sung three times: Maybe the final extension (bb. 43-46) is only appropriate the last time?

Most likely the two chansons by Busnoys in Copenhagen nos. 23-24 also were placed close to each other in the Dijon scribe's exemplar because they appear in the Dijon chansonnier as nos. 100 and 98. Between them stands the anonymous three-part bergerette "S'il vous plaist [bien] que je vous tiegne" (no. 99), which Leeman L. Perkins proposes as a possible chanson by Busnoys¹ – this chanson is also found in Nivelles (as no. 10).

Comments on text and music:

Antoine Busnoys' setting of a bergerette about a sudden, hopeless infatuation, a poem in rich *rimes léonines*, is masterly done in flexible alternation between declamation in parallel movement, free flowing polyphony and imitation between the voices, and in its timing of the words. See for example the slowing down of the text delivery at the start of the couplets where the three-part imitation in octaves is played out to the words "Car il / Il ne" and creates a tension, which is intensified by the continuation in staggered declamation. This ends without any cadential gestures but leads into the nexus of the sentences in imitation *al unisono* in tenor and superius "si non paine ... / onques n'en fut ...". Another masterly choice is the concatenation of the poem's first two lines into one thought also in

1 Cf. comments and edition in Leeman L. Perkins, 'Conflicting Attributions and Anonymous Chansons in the 'Busnoys' Sources of the Fifteenth Century' in Paula Higgins (ed.), *Antoine Busnoys. Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music*. Oxford 1999, pp. 317-358 (at pp. 334 ff).

the music. This produces a flow fitting for the more extended formal layout of the bergerette, in which the primary contrast is placed in the *couplets*, and which differentiates it from a rondeau. It is seldom heard as elegant as here in the declamation in parallel sixths in superius and tenor (bb. 7-10).

»Soudainement mon cueur a pris« seems closely related to the rondeau by Busnoys, which follows it in Copenhagen and is placed near it in Dijon. For a summary of their similarities, see »Quant vous me ferez plus de bien«.²

The peculiarity that most convincingly connects them is the general pauses preceding the homorhythmical upbeat beginnings, which consist of a *brevis* rest and one or two *semibrevis* rests according to the mensuration. These general pauses probably do not have any function during a performance (the first whole-bar *brevis* general pause is therefore not included in the count of bars) and seems to be devices meant to insure absolute notational clarity when a song starts with an upbeat in all voices. Something analogous appears in Michelet's rondeau »S'il advient que mon dueil me tue«, which is placed near the two Busnoys chansons in the Copenhagen chansonnier (no. 26); see further my note 'On chansons starting with a general pause'.³

2 At <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH024.html>.

3 At <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/NOTES/GeneralPause.html>.

Copenhagen no. 23

Soudainement mon coeur a pris [Busnoys]

Copenhagen, The Royal Library, MS Thott 291 8°, ff. 27V-29

Dijon no. 100

Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 517, ff. 121V-123

[Superius] Mensura = $\frac{C}{2}$

1) 1.4. Sou - dai - ne - ment mon coeur a pris par -
3. Je voi - bien qu'il a en - tre - pris

1.4. Sou - dai - ne - ment mon coeur a pris par -
3. Je voi - bien qu'il a en - tre - pris

8 ti de dou - lou - reux af - - - fai - - -
de ser - vir jus - ques_a la mort trai -

ti de dou - - - lou - reux af - - - fai - - -
de ser - vir jus - ques_a la mort trai -

ti de dou - lou - reux af - - - fai - - -
pris jus - ques_a la mort trai -

17 re; mais se bref ne s'en
re; si vous lui di - siez

re; mais se bref ne s'en
re; si vous lui di - siez

- - - re; mais se bref ne
- - - re; si vous lui di -

1) All voices, the introductory *brevis* rest is not to be performed and therefore omitted in the count of bars.

2) Copenhagen and Dijon: *Superius*, text 3, bar 6.2, "entepri" (error).

3) Copenhagen: *Superius*, the second staff (bb. 13-32) has a signature of one flat; this could affect only the *b*' in bars 15.2 and 17.1, but it seems rather unlikely and is probably an error.

25

sçait def - fai - - - re, pen - sez qu'il
du con - trai - - - re, vous le ver -

sçait def - fai - - re, pen - sez qu'il n'est
du con - trai - - re, vous le ver - riez

s'en sçait def - fai - - re, pen - sez qu'il
siez du con - trai - - re, vous le ver -

34

n'est point de bien deul a - - -
riez de bien deul es - - -

point de bien deul a - - -
de bien deul es - - -

n'est point de bien deul a - - -
riez de bien deul es - - -

42

- - pris. pris.
- - pris. pris.

- - pris. pris.
- - pris. pris.

- - pris. pris.
- - pris. pris.

- 1) Dijon: *Tenor*, bar 37, the *d'* is split into a *semibrevis* and a *minima* owing to a change of staff.
- 2) Copenhagen and Dijon: *Contratenor*, bar 41.2, two *semiminimae f-g*; corrected in accordance with Nivelles.
- 3) Dijon: *Tenor*, bar 43.1, no *signum*.
- 4) Copenhagen and Dijon: *Contratenor*, bar 46 is a *longa*.

47

1)

2)

2a. Car
2b. II

2a. Car
2b. II

il ne s'en

il ne

ne s'en

56

3)

4)

il ne s'en fault rien con que rir,

ne s'en fault rien con que rir,

peut fault rien ja en que rir,

64

si non pai - ne, mais sa - vez quel -

on - ques n'en fut point veu de tel -

si on non pai - ne, mais point sa - vez quel -

on ques n'en fut point veu de tel -

74

5)

1.

2.

le?

le.

le?

le.

le?

le.

- 1) Copenhagen and Dijon: *Superius*, bars 47-52 are only 4 *brevis* rests.
- 2) Copenhagen and Dijon: *Tenor*, bars 47-49 are only 2 *brevis* rests.
- 3) Dijon: *Superius*, text 2a, bar 59 "riens".
- 4) Dijon: *Contratenor*, bars 57-59, the ligature has been split into two (b. 57 and bb. 58-59) because of a change of staff.
- 5) Copenhagen and Dijon: bar 74, *1a volta* consists in all voices of the first note (*minimae* and a *semibrevis*) followed by a repetition sign.

Nivelle no. 29

Busnois, *Soudainement mon cuer a pris*

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Vmc. ms. 57, Chansonnier

Nivelle de la Chaussée, ff. 35^v-37

[Superius]

Mensura = $\frac{6}{8}$

1) 1.4. Sou - dai - ne-ment mon cuer a pris par -
 3. Je voy bien qu'il a en - tre - pris

1.4. Sou - dai - ne-ment mon cuer a pris par -
 3. Je voy bien qu'il a en - tre - pris

1.4. Sou - dai - ne-ment mon cuer a pris par -
 3. Je voy bien qu'il a en - tre -

8

ty de dou - lou - reux af - - - fai - - -
 de ser - vir jus - ques_a la mort tray -

ty de dou - lou - reux af - - - fai - - -
 de ser - vir jus - ques_a la mort tray -

ty pris de dou - lou - reux af - - - fai - - -
 jus - ques_a la mort tray -

17

- - - re, mais se brief ne s'en
 - - - re; si vous luy di - siez

re, mais se brief ne s'en
 re; si vous luy di - siez

- - - re, mais se brief ne
 - - - re; si vous luy di -

25

sçet def - fai - - - re, pen - sez qu'il
 du con - trai - - - re, vous le veoi -

sçet def - fai - - - re, pen - sez qu'il n'est
 du con - trai - - - re, vous le veoi - riez

s'en sçet def - fai - - - re, pen - sez qu'il
 siez du con - trai - - - re, vous le veoi -

1) All voices, the introductory *brevis* rest is not to be performed and therefore omitted in the count of bars.

34

n'est riez point de bien dueil a es - - -

point de bien dueil a es - - -

n'est riez point de bien dueil a es - - -

42

- - pris. pris.

- - pris. pris.

- - pris. pris.

2)

2) Contratenor, bar 46 is a longa.

47

1)

2a. Car
2b. II

2a. Car
2b. II

il ne

il ne

ne s'en

ne s'en

56

il ne puet rien con- que- - - - - rir

ne s'en fault ja en- que- - - - - rir,

ne puet rien con- que- - - - - rir

s'en fault ja en- que- - - - - rir,

puet fault rien ja con- que- - - - - rir

fault ja en- que- - - - - rir,

64

si non pei- ne, mais sça- vez de quel- - - -

on- ques n'en fut point veu de tel- - - -

si non pei- ne, mais sça- vez de quel- - - -

on- ques n'en fut point veu de tel- - - -

si non pei- ne, mais sça- vez de quel- - - -

on- ques n'en fut point veu de tel- - - -

74

1.

2.)

le?

le.

le?

le.

le?

le.

1) *Superius*, bars 47-52 are only 5 *brevis* rests.

2) bar 74 *1a volta* consists in all voices of the first note (*minimae* and a *semibrevis*) followed by a repetition sign.