

# GENRE IN THE FOURTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH CHANSON: THE VIRELAI AND THE DANCE SONG

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One of the most important of the courtly diversions in the Middle Ages was the dance. Many colorful descriptions in contemporary narrative poems, as well as other sources, attest to this.<sup>1</sup> We can distinguish two manners of dance, dance to the instrumental music of minstrels, and dance song, unaccompanied by instruments. This division, generally clear in the narrative poems that describe dance scenes, also lies behind the formulation in the famous treatise of the Parisian Johannes de Grocheio, written around 1300.<sup>2</sup> Although the source situation for dance music -- both instrumental and vocal -- is poor for the Middle Ages, this gives a misleading impression of dearth, since such popular genres usually remained outside the written tradition. Enough sources survive that it is possible to follow the use of instrumental dance (at least in its outlines) through the fourteenth century, and, in new forms, through the fifteenth century. It is the dance song, the more elusive of the two forms, that is the subject of this study. We have many texts from the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but very few melodies, although the simple

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<sup>1</sup> The most recent discussions are Christopher Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France 1100-1300* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 86-92, chap. 5, and pp. 182-83; Page, *Voices and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Instrumental Practice and Songs in France 1100-1300* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), chap. 6; and John Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama, 1050-1350*, Cambridge Studies in Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), chap. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst Rohloff, *Die Quellenhandschriften zum Musiktraktat des Johannes de Grocheio* (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1972). A thorough discussion of Grocheio and the dance, with relevant bibliography, is Timothy J. McGee, "Medieval Dances: Matching the Repertory with Grocheio's Descriptions," *Journal of Musicology* 7 (1989): 498-517; a recent edition of the instrumental dances is McGee, *Medieval Instrumental Dances* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1989).

rhythmic tunes must have existed in profusion.<sup>3</sup> And their use continued in the fourteenth century, for we have a great deal of literary evidence indicating that simple dance songs were still being performed. Judging from the studies of Christopher Page, simple monophonic tunes continued to be utilized for the dance even into the fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

The structure of the dance song was determined by the poetry, composed in various patterns of rhyme scheme and syllable count, and always involving a refrain. The refrain indeed controlled all aspects of the *rondel*, while more complex patterns, still very flexible in the thirteenth century, resemble more or less what the fourteenth century would distinguish as ballade or virelai.<sup>5</sup> As in instrumental dance music, there was in the dance song a musical distinction between open endings and closed endings - in modern terms half-cadence and full cadence - which helped propel the song forward and also clarified the syntax of the poetry. We hardly need to mention that the rhythmic projection of such a song would have been strictly metrical, something to move the feet to.

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<sup>3</sup> The Anglo-Norman source preserved at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Douce 308, contains over two hundred dance songs (*estampies*, *ballets*, *rondels*) without music. A diplomatic transcription of the dance songs is found in Georg Steffens, "Die altfranzösische Liederhandschrift der Bodleiana in Oxford, Douce 308," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 98 (1897): 343-53 (*estampies*); 99 (1897): 339-88 (*balettes*). For the *rondels*, see Nico H.J. van den Boogaard, *Rondeaux et refrains du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle au début du XIV<sup>e</sup>*, Bibliothèque Française et Romane, sér. D: Initiation, Textes et Documents, 3 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1969), pp. 65-77.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Page, "The Performance of Songs in Late Medieval France: A New Source," *Early Music* 10 (1982): 441-50.

<sup>5</sup> Concerning the taxonomy of the dance song forms, see Pierre Bec, *La Lyrique française au moyen-âge (XII<sup>e</sup> - XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles): Contribution à une typologie des genres poétiques médiévaux*, vol. 1, Publications du Centre d'Etudes Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale de l'Université de Poitiers, 6 (Paris: A. & J. Picard, 1977), chaps. 16 ("Le rondet de carole"), 17 ("La ballette"), 18 ("Le vireli et le virelai") and 19 ("L'estampie"). The variety of poetic forms among the dance songs is studied in Ernest Hoepffner, "Virelais et ballades dans le Chansonnier d'Oxford (Douce 308)," *Archivum romanicum* 4 (1920): 20-40.

Renewed attention to the matter of genre has revitalized recent musicological inquiries into thirteenth-century song.<sup>6</sup> In the thirteenth century, "dance song," or *rondel*, was a genre clearly distinguished from the *grand chant courtois*. Philologists have placed dance songs in what they call a lower register; dance songs have a refrain and were sung in metrical rhythm. The *grands chants* are in the highest register; they lack the popularizing refrain and apparently were performed non-metrically.<sup>7</sup>

In the early fourteenth century, it was the strictly metrical dance songs that lay at the root of an entirely new direction pursued by the clerical composers, in which poetry of a high register is set to fashionable *Ars nova* rhythms. The dance genres were utilized for this innovative poetry and music, because dance forms had traditionally been organized musically in metrical rhythm. Use of the low genre in an elevated context was actually nothing new, since the clerical composers of the thirteenth century had already had a long history of drawing upon dance songs for their polyphonic motets. Because of their rhythmic nature, dance forms could be fitted into the new context without musical difficulty. By 1340, something of a revolution had been accomplished, when the highest level courtly conceits were expressed not by the *grand chant courtois* but by the ballade.<sup>8</sup> The miniature rondeau form also participated in the change,

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<sup>6</sup> Among recent musicologists, Hendrick VanderWerf is notable for his emphasis on the aspect of genre, especially in his review of Hans Tischler and Samuel N. Rosenberg, eds., *Chanter m'estuet: Songs of the Trouvères* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981) in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 35 (1982): 539-54. Genre is an important consideration in the subsequent work of John Stevens and Christopher Page, philologists by training, and in the work of the music historians Timothy J. McGee and Mark Everist.

<sup>7</sup> On the matter of "register", see Bec, *La Lyrique française au moyen-âge*. On the rhythm of the carole, cf. Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, pp. 154 and 243 n. 62; Page, *Voices and Instruments*, pp. 16-17; and Stevens, *Words and Music*, pp. 188, 196-98, and 450.

<sup>8</sup> The change in the priority of genres in the period spanning the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century is studied in Lawrence Earp, "Lyrics for Reading and Lyrics for Singing in Late Medieval France: The Development of the Dance Lyric from Adam de la Halle to Guillaume de Machaut," in *The Union of Words and Music in Medieval Poetry*, ed. Rebecca A. Baltzer, Thomas Cable, and James I. Wimsatt, tape recorded by Sequentia (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), pp. 101-31. Page has noted the effacement of the distinction between high and low styles in the motet, see *Voices and Instruments*, pp. 75-76. The use of the low-style genre in the development of the new polyphonic chanson in the fourteenth century is another aspect of this.

becoming a genre susceptible to word play and highly elegant tricks of rhetoric.

With this fundamental change, as much a characteristic of the *Ars nova* as was the development of the isorhythmic motet, the distinctions of genre so clear in the thirteenth century become more difficult to disentangle. We have plenty of evidence from later fourteenth-century narratives that dance songs were still current. The question is, what kind of songs were courtiers of the late fourteenth century dancing to? Surely one did not stand up in turn and offer a highly sophisticated three- or four-voice polyphonic ballade. The following study is intended as a step towards answering the question of the function of the various lyrical genres in the fourteenth century, an attempt to match occasions when lyrics were sung with the extant repertory of chansons.

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Guillaume de Machaut's narratives with lyrical insertions are particularly valuable witnesses to the function of the lyric genres in the fourteenth century. The *Remede de Fortune*, datable probably in the early-to-mid 1340s, is well known as a work that can be understood on many levels.<sup>9</sup> Besides the narrative account of an amorous story, it can be seen as a poetic and musical *summa* illustrating in didactic fashion all of the lyrical forms of the day. I believe that the story line was contrived to provide a particular context for each of the lyrical insertions, although some of the contexts remain difficult for us to interpret in their fourteenth-century sense.

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<sup>9</sup> An excellent new edition with English translation is now available, ed. James I. Wimsatt, William W. Kibler, and Rebecca A. Baltzer, *Guillaume de Machaut: Le Jugement du roy de Behaigne and Remede de Fortune*, The Chaucer Library (Athens, Ga.: The University of Georgia Press, 1988), pp. 168-409. On the lyrical insertions, see Ernest Hoepffner, *Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut*, Société des Anciens Textes Français, vol. 2 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1911), xxxv-liv; Lawrence Earp, "Machaut's Role in the Production of Manuscripts of His Works," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 42 (1989): 469-70; Margaret Switten, "Guillaume de Machaut: Le Remede de Fortune au carrefour d' un art nouveau," *Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises*, 41 (Mai 1989): 101-116; and Kevin Brownlee, "Guillaume de Machaut's *Remede de Fortune*: The Lyric Anthology as Narrative Progression," in *The Ladder of High Designs*, ed. Doranne Fenoaltea and David Lee Rubin (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), pp. 1-25.

The position of the narrator/lover at the opening of the poem is ambiguous and compromised. The lai "Qui n'aroit autre deport" aptly sets the stage. His inner conflict, afraid to avow his love for the lady openly, which the lai develops at great length, is mirrored in the lai's discordant form.<sup>10</sup> While other lyrics have strophic forms that repeat a more or less modest amount of music, the lai offers dissimilar stanzaic structures and thus dissimilar musical forms for each strophe. The lover's embarrassing failure as a lover is developed in the *complainte* to Lady Fortune, "Tels rit au main." Lyrical-musical consolation is offered by the allegorical figure of Lady Hope, first in a monophonic *chant royal* ("Joie, plaisance"),<sup>11</sup> and later, a situation difficult to interpret, in a polyphonic ballade ("En amer a douce vie"). The highpoint is reached when the lover, alone, himself creates a polyphonic ballade ("Dame, de qui"). The most interesting and unambiguous context, further discussed below, is provided for the monophonic virelai ("Dame, a vous sans retollir"), the sixth of the lyrical-musical insertions. The last of the lyrics, the rondeau "Dame, mon cuer," is treated as a modest "exit aria," a function that the rondeau plays in other narratives as well.<sup>12</sup> This work, presented as if improvised on horseback, is also provided with a polyphonic setting by Machaut.<sup>13</sup>

Let us focus on the virelai, which is fortunately given a clear and simple context in the narrative. The scene at this point in the *Remede*

<sup>10</sup> According to the theoretical definition of "discordia," this is the proper genre to have chosen for this occasion. See Ursula Aarburg, "Lai, Leich," *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 8 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1960), col. 86.

<sup>11</sup> On the aptness of the genre *chant royal* to its context in the *Remede*, see David G. Lanoue, "Music Therapy and Guillaume de Machaut: Hope's *Chanson Royal* in the *Remede de Fortune*," *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 31 (1984): 367.

<sup>12</sup> Another "exit rondeau" (without music) appears as the duke of Berry departs at the end of Machaut's *Fonteinne amoureuse*, vv. 2825-32, ed. Ernest Hoepffner, *Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut*, Société des Anciens Textes Français, vol. 3 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1921). See also Wolfgang Dömling's discussion of Christine de Pizan's *Dit de la rose*, in *Die mehrstimmigen Balladen, Rondeaux und Virelais von Guillaume de Machaut: Untersuchungen zum musikalischen Satz*, Münchner Veröffentlichungen zur Musikgeschichte, ed. Thrasybulos G. Georgiades, 16 (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1970), pp. 18-19.

<sup>13</sup> Contexts involving singing on horseback are discussed for an earlier period in Page, *Voices and Instruments*, pp. 157-58.

provides an excellent description of the *carole*. The narrator approaches a *château*. The courtiers are outside dancing to dance songs, without instruments. The narrator is asked to contribute a song, and "Dame, a vous" is his song.<sup>14</sup> As Machaut repeatedly insisted, it is a *chanson balladée*, a danced song, and thus may provide us with a clue to the "dance song" genre that we have been seeking for the fourteenth century.<sup>15</sup> The first strophe of the poem is given below in Example 1, with an analysis of the rhyme scheme and syllable count for the refrain and the first of the two *pedi*.<sup>16</sup>

Example 1 also provides at least a few details of the rhythm of the musical setting of this monophonic work. The duration of each syllable is indicated with small notes above the text line. The complexity and subtlety

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<sup>14</sup> Wulf Arlt, "Aspekte der Chronologie und des Stilwandels im französischen Lied des 14. Jahrhunderts," in *Aktuelle Fragen der musikbezogenen Mittelalterforschung: Texte zu einem Basler Kolloquium des Jahres 1975*, Forum Musicologicum: Basler Beiträge zur Musikgeschichte, ed. Hans Oesch und Wulf Arlt, 3 (Winterthur: Amadeus, 1982), p. 263, notes some important stylistic characteristics of "Dame, a vous," including syllabic declamation, simple rhythm, clear structure, the many melodic correspondences between sections, clear tonality and texting; see also Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "Not Just a Pretty Tune: Structuring Devices in Four Machaut Virelais," *Sonus* 12 (1991): 16-31.

<sup>15</sup> Throughout the history of the *formes fixes*, the virelai remained the most flexible formally, the one with the closest tie to the original dance-influenced forms. See Hoepffner, "Virelais et ballades dans le Chansonnier d'Oxford," pp. 37-38. Compare Machaut's *Jugement dou Roy de Navarre*, vv. 4184-88, in which--without naming the form--the virelai is described: "...une chanson / De trois vers et un refrain / - Oëz, comment je le refrain - / Qui par le refrain se commense, / Si comme on doit chanter a danse" [a chanson with three strophes and a refrain--hear how I limit it--which begins with the refrain, just as one ought to sing at the dance]. See also Dömling, *Die mehrstimmigen Balladen*, p. 17 n. 39, in reference to Froissart, *Prison amoureuse*, vv. 401ff, and Arlt, "Aspekte der Chronologie," p. 263. The definition in the *Art de Dictier* of Eustache Deschamps makes it clear that in 1392 Deschamps saw no connection between the term "*chanson balladée*" and the dance, relating the term rather to the ballade, with use of a refrain after each strophe and having a three-strophe structure, as in the ballade, thus "balladized chanson"; see Wolf Frobenius, "Virelai" (1985, 10pp.), *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1971-), p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Text in Example 1 from Wimsatt and Kibler, eds., *Le Jugement du roy de Behaigne and Remede de Fortune*, pp. 361-63; translation by Stephen Haynes, from the sound recording *The Mirror of Narcissus: Songs by Guillaume de Machaut (1300-1377)*, Gothic Voices, directed by Christopher Page, Hyperion A66087.

Example 1

Machaut, virelai "Dame, a vous" from the *Remede de Fortune*

Key to symbols: 1, 2 : metrical units  
 → : musical enjambement

A	1                    2                    1                    2		1. Da- me, a vous sans re- tol- lir	A7 Lady, without reservation
	1                    2                    1                    2		2. Doins cuer, pen- se- e, de- sir,	A7 I give my heart, my thoughts, my desires,
			3. Corps, et a- mour,	B4 myself and my love
	1                    2                    1                    2		4. Com-me a tou- te la mil- lour	B7 to you, as the very best woman
			5. Qu'on puist choi- sir,	A4 one might find,
	1                    2                    1                    2		6. Ne qui vi- vre ne mo- rir	A7 the best of all who lived or died
			7. Puist a ce jour.	B4 until now.
b	1                    2                    1                    2		8. Si ne me doit a fo- lour	B7 I should not be thought foolish
	1                    2                    1                    2		9. Tour- ner, se je vous a- our,	B7 if I adore you,
			10. Car sans men- tir,	A4 for truly

of this aspect is astonishing. The declamatory rhythm of the song is cast in a duple meter, *tempus imperfectum major*, the modern 6/8. The higher-level groupings of the compound duple meter are shown in Example 1 by the 1's and 2's above the small notes. Beamed eighth-notes over a syllable show the occasional syllable of text that is set to two or three short notes. But no syllable of the text is extended for a duration greater than three eighth notes, that is, there are no extended melismas, and thus the ear hears the text syllables themselves as providing the musical rhythms indicated in Example 1.

This musical rhythm, with little more behind it than an unpredictable alternation of trochaic and iambic rhythms, can cut across the natural rhythm of the text in a rather striking fashion. Sometimes words are misaccentuated, sometimes words that seem important are given short shrift, and vice versa. But the overall effect is one of great rhythmic vitality and motion. Most interesting is what I am calling musical enjambement, in which the beat units of three eighth-notes cut across a line of poetry, and force the ear to jump ahead. This is indicated in the analysis by an arrow at the end of a line, and is seen in lines 2, 4, 6, and 9. For instance, in line 2, the syllable *-sir* of *desir* is given a duration of only two eighth-notes, completed by the single eighth-note on *corps* in line 3. The poem is thereby given a very palpable forward motion.

Of course the rhythmic analysis in Example 1 leaves out the aspect of melody, which with its well-constructed and easily remembered ups and downs provides further possibilities for toying with our expectations. As an example, I think no one would be able to predict the strong emphasis that the first word of line 6 obtains, a result of purely musical means. The three eighth notes that set the syllable *-sir* of *choisir* at the end of line 5, push ahead musically to the first note of line 6, an amazing moment, which welds the last four lines of the refrain together (see Example 2, mm. 8-9).

Daniel Poirion has described the literary form of both the rondeau and virelai as implying "*encerclement*," encirclement.<sup>17</sup> The virelai, as Machaut set it to music, implies also *virement*, turning. This is the sum effect of the short lines of different lengths, combined with a musical

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<sup>17</sup> Daniel Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince: l'évolution du lyrisme courtois de Guillaume de Machaut à Charles d'Orléans*, Université de Grenoble Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, 35 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1978), chap. 8.



## Example 2

Machaut, "Dame a vous sans retollir"

Dame, a vous sans re- tol- lir Doins cuer, pen- se-

5  
e, de- sir, Corps, et a- mor, Comme a tou- te la mil- lour Qu'on

10  
puist choi- sir Ne qui vi- vre ne mo- rir Puist a ce jour.

setting that features unpredictable longs and shorts that bring about misplaced word accents, and headlong enjambement of lines.<sup>18</sup> It is the basically syllabic rhythmicization of the text that propels the song forward and makes the feet move. It would seem, then, that in the early 1340s, at the beginning of his occupation with the setting of lyrics to music, Machaut had reserved the genre *virelai* as the dance genre.

We are accustomed to differentiating broadly between two styles of music in fourteenth-century France: *chanson* and *motet*. In the *chanson*, melody and accompaniment are set to a preexisting poem. *Motets* are composed on the foundation of a *cantus firmus*, laid out and patterned in long note values. The upper voices interlock and contrast with the structure of the lower voices in a marvelous earthly echo of the *musica mundana*. The Mass music can be derived from one or the other of these two more basic types.

But perhaps we should emphasize another compositional type. One of the most striking characteristics of the *virelai* "Dame, a vous" is its clearly profiled, metrical melody. Its tune, in other words. I do not believe that enough has been made of the fact that of all Machaut's earlier music, the *virelai* is the genre that has the best tunes, wholly unlike melodies that

<sup>18</sup> On enjambement, see the remarks of Robert L. Gieber, "Poetic Elements of Rhythm in the Ballades, Rondeaux and Virelais of Guillaume de Machaut," *Romanic Review* 73 (1982): 1-12, esp. 10-11. It is significant that Gieber is able to distinguish early and late *virelais* based on this characteristic.

set ballade and rondeau verse. By "tune," I mean to characterize a melodic unit that has a clear phrase structure, and a simple, memorable melody. The tune of "Dame, a vous" is sophisticated, but certainly catchy.<sup>19</sup> The early polyphonic ballade and rondeau of Machaut self-consciously represent a very different type of music, a rarified, elegant complement to sophisticated poetry.<sup>20</sup>

Let the early rondeau "Cinc, un trese, huit, neuf d'amour fine" (rondeau 6), given below as Example 3, serve as an example of this other type of chanson.<sup>21</sup> Here Machaut provides a highly melismatic setting for

<sup>19</sup> The tune of another of Machaut's monophonic virelais sticks in the memory rather too readily: "Douce dame jolie" (virelai 4). Compare the comments of Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, pp. 125-26, concerning the melody of the *caroles* in an earlier period: "many churchmen in the Middle Ages knew the vexation caused by a simple melody that lingers in the mind, refusing to go away" (p. 125).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Arlt, "Aspekte der Chronologie," p. 238.

<sup>21</sup> The edition presented here differs in a few details from that of Friedrich Ludwig, *Guillaume de Machaut Musikalische Werke*, Publicationen älterer Musik, 1 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1926; rpt. Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1954), p. 55, and that of Leo Schrade, *The Works of Guillaume de Machaut*, Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century, 3 (Monaco: L'Oiseau-Lyre, 1956), p. 146. In most details, I have followed the earliest source, F:Pn fr. 1586, fol. 203<sup>r</sup>-203<sup>v</sup>, probably copied very near the time of the composition of the rondeau. The letters of the alphabet given numerically in the first line of the refrain, five, one, thirteen, eight, and nine, provide the following letters: E, A, N, H, J. The name "Jehan" is readily apparent, or "Jehanne," if the E and N are doubled. It has been suggested that the work was composed for a special occasion, the February 1352 marriage of Charles, king of Navarre, and Jeanne de France, eldest and favorite daughter of King Jean le bon: see Ursula Günther, "Contribution de la musicologie à la biographie et à la chronologie de Guillaume de Machaut," in *Guillaume de Machaut: Poète et compositeur*, Colloque-table ronde organisé par l'Université de Reims (19-22 avril 1978), Actes et Colloques, 123 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1982), p. 106, revising the date of 1360 proposed by Hoepffner and Ludwig, too late on grounds of manuscript dating and style. Two slightly earlier dates, both consistent with the style of the work, should also be considered as occasions for the rondeau: (1) the February 1350 marriage of Jean, duke of Normandy and Jeanne de Boulogne at Melun (perhaps related to our rondeau is a payment of the duke of Normandy of sixty *livres* of Paris to Robert de Caveron, king of the minstrels, to be distributed to all the minstrels at the fête, as cited in Françoise Lehoux, *Jean de France, duc de Berri: sa vie, son action politique [1340-1416]*, vol. 1 [Paris: Picard, 1966], p. 39 n. 1); and (2) the 8 April 1350 marriage of two twelve-year-olds, the dauphin Charles, the future Charles V, and Jeanne de Bourbon (Roland Delachenal, *Histoire de Charles V*, vol. 1: 1338-1358 [Paris: Picard, 1909], p. 43). Of these three possible occasions, the February 1350 marriage would make the most of the names provided by the text.

Example 3

Machaut, rondeau "Cinc, un, trese, vuit, neuf d'amour fine"

5

Cinc,

10

un, trese, vuit, neuf d'a- mour fi-

15

-ne.

20 25

M'ont es- pris sans de- fi-

30

-ne- -ment.

the few syllables of text. In the most extreme case, twenty-four notes set a single syllable.

The motivic structure in the music of "Cinc, un, trese" is complex and close-knit. For this demonstration I have singled out only two moments, both presented in the course of the first eight measures of the work (see Example 4). These first eight measures, which set the first line up to the caesura, contain a phrase that comes to rest in mm. 7-8 on an *ouvert* cadence. A comparable cadence is used in mm. 17-18 to end the A-section of the rondeau, and the same structure is employed one last time

### Example 4

Machaut, "Cinc, un, trese, huit, neuf d'amour fine"

5 ouvert  
Cinc, un, trese, huit,

17 ouvert  
neuf d'amour fi- -ne.

23 ouvert  
M'ont es- pris sans de- fi-

25 -nement.

near the beginning of the B-section, in mm. 23-24. Interestingly, this cadential segment receives a different texting each time it appears. Unlike the virelai considered above, the text is not the basis for the melody; it would seem rather that the text was adapted to a prior scheme.

The second detail I wish to single out follows immediately after the *ouvert* cadence in m. 24. Note in Example 4 that mm. 25-29, all of which serve for the final melisma of the B-section, actually take up gestures already presented in mm. 1-6. The music loops back on itself. Machaut has constructed a musical circle here, underlining the importance of the poetic image of being without end, *sans definement*.<sup>22</sup>

The melody of "Cinc, un, trese" is the studied product of a refined and subtle ordering of elements, doubtless requiring many calculations and adjustments before the finished product was perfected. It is not a "tune" in the sense that "Dame, a vous" is. Rather, it exhibits a mosaic technique of composition, seen in some other early chansons, for instance "He las! tant ay dolour et peinne" (ballade 2), effectively analysed by Wolfgang Dömling.<sup>23</sup> That song uses techniques in many ways comparable to those demonstrated above for "Cinc, un, trese," but "He las! tant ay dolour" is slightly more complex. There are two short phrases - Dömling effectively dubs them *Bausteine* - that support the work. In some later chansons, Machaut employs a different compositional technique, whereby a contrapuntal structure is subjected to small shifts in one direction or the other, what Gilbert Reaney has called "displacement technique,"<sup>24</sup> which yields a highly dissonant and active surface. Whatever the compositional process, it is apparent that the composition of ballades and rondeaux demanded very sophisticated manipulation of the musical material.

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<sup>22</sup> The inherent circularity of the rondeau form is realized quite literally in Machaut's "Ma fin est mon commencement" (rondeau 14). It is noteworthy that the correspondence I have noted between mm. 1-6 and mm. 25-29 is clearer in the version of F:Pn fr. 1586, the only manuscript that gives the tenor note g in m. 1 (other sources begin in the tenor with the note d).

<sup>23</sup> Dömling, *Die mehrstimmigen Balladen*, pp. 70-71. See also the summary in Arlt, "Aspekte der Chronologie," pp. 229-30.

<sup>24</sup> Gilbert Reaney, "Fourteenth Century Harmony and the Ballades, Rondeaux and Virelais of Guillaume de Machaut," *Musica disciplina* 7 (1953): 143-144; and Reaney, *Guillaume de Machaut*, Oxford Studies of Composers, 9 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 44-45.

In Machaut's chansons of the mid-fourteenth century, then, we have two very distinct functions for the fixed-form chansons. One is a highly contrived successor to the old *grand chant courtois*, the polyphonic ballade and the rondeau. The other is a successor to the old dance song, also contrived and complex, but still in the service of the dance, the virelai. In particular, the twenty-eight virelais transmitted in Machaut MS C (F:Pn fr. 1586, ca. 1350-56) may be considered candidates for virelais that may have functioned as dance songs.

Although the later virelais of Machaut are poetically similar to the earlier ones, it would seem that many are no longer suitable for the dance. Those virelais that were composed in later years have taken on some of the characteristics of the polyphonic fixed forms, the ballade and the rondeau. In particular, they have extended melismas that render the metrical structure of the poetry less clear. In these refined chansons, the rhythmic projection of each syllable of text no longer entirely determines the rhythm and pace of the musical setting. These later works seem more tuneful than ballades and rondeaux from the same period, but also employ in their carefully-crafted structures some of the mosaic technique that we saw in the rondeau "Cinc, un, trese."<sup>25</sup> In fact few virelais were set to music in the later years. We may recall that in the *Voir Dit* (1363-65), Machaut's young correspondent repeatedly asked him to set a particular group of three virelais to music. This task was never fulfilled, and in the narrative the three virelais are introduced as follows: "Ce sont .iij. chansons baladées / Qui ne furent onques chantées" [here are three *chansons baladées* that were never sung].<sup>26</sup>

For this later period, then, were songs still serving for the dance? Is it possible that instrumental dance had largely supplanted the improvised dance song? Later fourteenth-century narrative poems with lyrical interpolations do show a courtly society more oriented towards the written

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<sup>25</sup> The late polyphonic virelais are nevertheless harmonically distinct from the other polyphonic chansons, see Dömling, *Die mehrstimmigen Balladen*, pp. 54-56, and Arlt, "Aspekte der Chronologie," p. 256. Stylistic criteria for the late virelais are discussed in Ursula Günther, "Chronologie und Stil der Kompositionen Guillaume de Machauts," *Acta musicologica* 35 (1963): 109-110.

<sup>26</sup> Paulin Paris, ed., *Le Livre du Voir-Dit de Guillaume de Machaut* (Paris: Société des Bibliophiles Français, 1875, rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1969), p. 36, vv. 829-30.

word.<sup>27</sup> Already in the *Remede*, several of the contexts provided for the interpolation of lyrics indicate that the lyrics were written, not improvised. In addition, many miniatures depict the scraps of parchment rolls upon which the lyrics were written and transmitted.<sup>28</sup> Twenty years after the *Remede*, in the 1360s, Machaut's *Voir Dit* provides valuable references to true-to-life situations that record the use of lyrics in courtly society. Today many philologists believe that the work was wholly invented by Machaut. But even if the story is largely made up, the most skeptical critic must concede that much effort was expended to give the story at least the appearance of truth. Thus, when Guillaume or his correspondent Toute Belle use a particular poem in a certain context, that context is usually a believable one for the contemporary courtly society.<sup>29</sup> And all the *Voir Dit* lyrics are presented as written works.

The transmission by writing of lyrics not set to music is also the most common situation in Froissart (1337?-after 1404). In his *Espinette amoureuse* of ca. 1370, for instance, all fourteen of the interpolated lyrics are transmitted in the context of the poem by writing.<sup>30</sup> But in other poems, we are still able to catch a glimpse of some feasts with dancing.

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<sup>27</sup> This is traced in Jacqueline Cerquiglini, "*Un engin si soutil*": *Guillaume de Machaut et l'écriture au XIVe siècle*, Bibliothèque du XVe Siècle, 47 (Geneva: Slatkine; Paris: Champion, 1985), and Silvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987).

<sup>28</sup> See the facsimiles of the miniatures illustrating the *Remede* in Wimsatt and Kibler, eds., *Guillaume de Machaut: Le Jugement du roy de Behaigne and Remede de Fortune*, pp. 452-68.

<sup>29</sup> Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, p. 138. The historical Péronne identified by Paulin Paris as "Toute Belle," Péronne d'Armentières, may have been known by Machaut. Machaut's association with this branch of Conflans family is assured by his ballade to the sire de Louppy, "Mes dames qu'onques ne vi," ed. Vladimir Chichmaref, *Guillaume de Machaut: Poésies lyriques*, 2 vols. (Paris: Champion, [1909]; rpt. in 1 vol. Geneva: Slatkine, 1973), No. 250, and Nigel Wilkins, ed., *La Louange des dames* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1972), No. 239. See my *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research*, forthcoming from Garland Publishing.

<sup>30</sup> Anthime Fourrier, ed., *Jean Froissart: L'Espinette amoureuse*, Bibliothèque Française et Romane, sér. B: Editions Critiques de Textes, 2d rev. ed. (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972).

There are several in *Meliador*.<sup>31</sup> After dinner, the minstrels play their instrumental dance music and then there is the sung dance, the *carole* (*Meliador* provides evidence that "*carole*" refers only to the sung dance). The contexts for the use of dance lyrics at court ring true, and are not, I believe, to be considered as nostalgic prescriptions of the way one ought to behave at the ideal court.<sup>32</sup>

Froissart informs us in the *Prison amoureuse* (ca. 1372/73) that he supplied several virelais for the magnificent festivities at the court of Amadeus VI of Savoy at Chambéry in May 1368, on the occasion of the passage of Lionel, duke of Clarence and second son of Edward III, on his way to Milan for the tragically short-lived marriage with Violante Visconti, daughter of Galeazzo Visconti. At least one of the virelais was danced to.<sup>33</sup> Finally, continuing use of the dance song at court festivities into the fifteenth century is attested by the anonymous *roman Cleriadus et Meliadice*, expertly elucidated by Christopher Page.<sup>34</sup>

What was being sung on these occasions? It would seem that there was still a practice of popular music-making that is largely lost to us, a repertory of quasi-improvised, unaccompanied dance songs. A few select composers of music were capable of producing highly refined and complex music for entertainment, but the practice of simple music-making continued for everyday functions. Machaut's early dance virelais may resemble this unwritten tradition somewhat, but more probably not: I suspect that they are already far more refined than a popular dance song.

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<sup>31</sup> Auguste Longnon, ed., *Méliador par Jean Froissart*, Société des Anciens Textes Français, 3 vols. (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1895-1899).

<sup>32</sup> There is probably a limit to the amount of deception a fourteenth-century author could exercise. Just as miniature painters did not represent scenes from mythology in settings outside fourteenth-century Europe, I wonder if it occurred to an author to represent tournaments, banquets and feasts in ways that would not communicate directly to the practical experience of the contemporary reader. On the use of literary evidence, cf. Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, pp. 191-92, and Page, "Music and Chivalric Fiction in France, 1150-1300," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 111 (1984-85): 1-27.

<sup>33</sup> Anthime Fourier, ed., *Jean Froissart: La Prison amoureuse*, Bibliothèque Française et Romane, sér. B: Editions Critiques de Textes, 13 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1974), vv. 401-420; see Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, p. 207 n. 58 and p. 216.

<sup>34</sup> See above, note 4.



In the *Remede de Fortune*, after the narrator has sung "Dame, a vous," the following scene is recounted: "Après ma chançon commença / Une dame qui la dança, / Qui moult me sembla envoisie, / Car elle estoit cointe et jolie, / Si prist a chanter sans demeure: / 'Dieus, quant venra li temps et l'eure / Que je voie ce que j'aim si?' Et sa chançon fina ainsi" [After my song a lady, who had been dancing there and who seemed to me very charming, gracious and pretty, began at once to sing: "Dear God, when will the time and hour come that I may see the one I love?" And she finished her song with this refrain].<sup>35</sup> The lady, I submit, was singing the more usual type of dance song, and as usual for popular song before the mid-19th century, the music was left unrecorded. Machaut states that the refrain began and ended the song, and thus the song was presumably a very simple virelai.

It seems that a portion of the "lost tradition" has survived, preserved in the handful of fourteenth-century chansons that are composed over a simple tune stated by the tenor voice. Significantly, all of the examples are preserved in virelais, and none of them are by Machaut. If these virelai tenors do transmit fragments of the dance songs we are looking for, we must again emphasize that they represent the most scattered remains of what must have been an enormous repertory.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ed. and trans. by Wimsatt and Kibler, eds., *Guillaume de Machaut: Le Jugement du roy de Behaigne and Remede de Fortune*, pp. 362-64.

<sup>36</sup> The virelais in question include the following: *Donne moy de ton pain / Alons commenchie / J'oy les clez* (CH:BEb 421, 4; F:CA 1328, 19; ed. Gordon K. Greene, *French Secular Music: Virelais*, Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century, 21 [Monaco: l'Oiseau-Lyre, 1987; hereafter PMFC 21], No. 26; and ed. Willi Apel, *French Secular Compositions of the Fourteenth Century*, vol. 3, Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, 53 [American Institute of Musicology, 1972; hereafter CMM 53/3], No. 190); *Venés a nueches / Vecche l'ermite* (F:CA 1328, 26; ed. PMFC 21, No. 67 and CMM 53/3, No. 233, with a very different reading); *Tant qu'en mon cuer / Sur l'erbette* (I:IV 115, 18; ed. PMFC 21, No. 62 and CMM 53/3, No. 227); *He, tres doulz roussignol / Roussignolet du bois* (attrib. Borlet) (F:CH 564, 89; ed. Gordon K. Greene, *French Secular Music: Manuscript Chantilly, Musée Condé 564, Second Part*, Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century, 19 [Monaco: l'Oiseau-Lyre, 1982; hereafter PMFC 19], No. 89 and ed. Willi Apel, *French Secular Compositions of the Fourteenth Century*, vol. 1, Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, 53 [American Institute of Musicology, 1970; hereafter CMM 53/1], No. 12); *Ma tre dol rosignol / Aluette cryante / Rosignolin del bosgolin* (F:Pn n.a.f. 6771, 106; ed. PMFC 19, No. 89a and CMM 53/1, No. 12a); *Contra le temps et la sason / He! mari, mari!* (F:Pn n.a.f. 6771, 115; ed. PMFC 21, No. 24 and CMM 53/3, No. 188); *Je voy le bon tens* (F:Pn n.a.f. 6771, 140; ed. PMFC 21, No. 38 and CMM 53/3, No. 202). Concerning a hitherto

One last example will provide a sample of the importance of considering genre and function for questions of chronology and analysis. Machaut's "Dame, se vous m'estes" (ballade 37) has seemed very out of place in the general chronological order of the main manuscripts. Why would such a simple monophonic work appear near the end of the series? In effect, I believe that the work belongs to a different genre. It is not necessarily an early work forgotten and left off until its belated incorporation in a later manuscript, but rather may well be a late work, but one composed with a distinctly different function from that of the surrounding ballades. Perhaps it provides a rare example of a fourteenth-century dance ballade.

Most of the work of separating the surviving repertory of fourteenth-century chansons set to music into their various genres and functions remains to be accomplished. The situation for the fourteenth century in Italy is clearer--we know that the production of a musician there was totally dependent on factors of regional patronage and locale.<sup>37</sup> I suspect that the situation in France was similar in ways that we have yet to untangle. In order to accomplish this with a repertory that offers so few characteristics from which to make a judgment, we need to know more about local factors of patronage. Again, the early virelais of Machaut provide a potential scenario for consideration. The repertory offers a strikingly individual genre, each composed for a very specific purpose. Due to Machaut's unshakable *Sammelfreude*, these songs found their place in the manuscripts that display the diversity of Machaut's oeuvre over a fifty-year period. In its day, however, each work must have served a unique occasion.

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unappreciated popular undercurrent in fourteenth-century French courtly poetry, see James I. Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries: Natural Music in the Fourteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 195-204.

<sup>37</sup> See the recent overview by Michael Long, chap. 10 of *Music and Society: Antiquity and the Middle Ages: From Ancient Greece to the 15th Century*, ed. James McKinnon (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1990).

Perhaps the court of Bonne of Luxembourg, duchess of Normandy, was the venue for Machaut's early dance songs. James Wimsatt and William Kibler have marshalled some impressive evidence relating the *Remede de Fortune* to Bonne of Luxembourg, and I am thoroughly convinced that Bonne was Machaut's most important patron in the 1340s, perhaps earlier.<sup>38</sup> The early virelais, most of which have stylistic characteristics absolutely comparable to "Dame, a vous sans retollir," form a special repertory of dance songs, that is *chansons baladées*, to use the term that Machaut himself insisted upon. The style, not seen in other fourteenth-century virelais, may be associated with the court of Bonne of Luxembourg. This was an isolated and local phenomenon, as was the composition and use of most of the sophisticated chansons that have come down to us from the fourteenth century. We have already considered the example of the rondeau "Cinc, un, trese." Even by the late fourteenth century, sophisticated polyphonic chansons were rare and isolated phenomena. The everyday music that most strongly affected the lives of fourteenth-century courtiers has been lost.

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<sup>38</sup> Wimsatt and Kibler, eds., *Guillaume de Machaut: Le Jugement du roy de Behaigne and Remede de Fortune*, pp. 32-36 and 53. See also Lawrence Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research*, forthcoming.