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# Interpolating the Musical Text of the Lyric Interpolations: Guillaume de Dole the Trouvere Manuscript Tradition

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# Interpolating the Musical Text of the Lyric Interpolations:

*Guillaume de Dole* the Trouvere Manuscript Tradition

Christopher Callahan

The early 13th century romance of Guillaume de Dole, more properly known as the *Romance of the Rose*, constitutes by its diverse collection of song types the oldest chansonnier that we possess. Written around 1230, it presents the most popular *trouvère* and *troubadour* songs, *chansons de toile*, *pastourelles*, and *caroles* of the day. We observe these lyric pieces, which number 46 in all, as they are performed by and for members of the German imperial court. Not only is the lyric contained in this narrative featured as the expression of a largely oral culture, but the narrative voice engages the reader's participation in such a way as to suggest that the romance itself was intended to be performed. Much more than in any other Old French romance, the discursive features of the narrative text are those of the oral story-teller who addresses not a reader, but an extremely partial audience. Under these conditions, it would be entirely natural for the performer of the story to sing the lyric fragments, which extend to two stanzas at most the courtly songs and to a couplet or a refrain for the less aristocratic genres.

Any modern attempt to reconstitute such a performance requires us to situate the *Guillaume de Dole* within the *trouvère* manuscript tradition. The sole surviving manuscript of the *Guillaume de Dole*, Vatican Reg. 1725, does not include music for any of the lyric insertions. This is not surprising, as the first collections of lyric verse do not appear until the 1260s, at least a generation after the composition of our romance. The manuscript itself, however, dates from the late 13th century, and is the contemporary with the most elaborate *trouvère* chansonniers. In terms their breadth, the contents of Vat. Reg., 1725 most closely resemble those of the *Chansonnier du roi*, which contains Provençal as well as French song, *chansons de toile*, *rondeaux* and *motets* as well as court lyric. The very fact that no provision is made in the *Guillaume* ms. f melody leads us to surmise that it is copied from an original whose roots are in a notationless musical culture.<sup>1</sup> Our evidence indicates the *Trouvère* melodies continued to be transmitted orally after their poet counterparts began to be transcribed, and *Guillaume de Dole* must predate by only a few years the adaptation of courtly lyric to the largely non-mensural notational system which characterize *trouvère* chansonniers.

Any reconstruction of the lyric portion of the *Guillaume de Dole* must turn to the chansonniers, for there we find fully half of the lyric fragments from the *Guillaume*, replete with music. The remainder of the lyric insertions, however, appear only in the *Guillaume de Dole*, while the songs for which we can provide melodies occur in numerous recensions and with considerable variation, making the task of reconstruction delicate. The musicologist is bound by considerations which limit the effectiveness of any performance, while the musician must be free to transcend those bonds in order to create an art form which, if we reasoned and coherent, will suffice to be beautiful. It is our task here to explore the resources available for such a performance, to propose working methodology for its reconstruction, and to focus on the space where musicology and musicianship meet, highlighting the tension necessary for the creation of a successful musical event.<sup>2</sup>

In examining our material evidence, we note the following song including the lines where they occur: first, *trouvère* and *troubadour* songs, followed by *chansons de toile* or *chansons d'histoire*,

and final the rich selection of dance songs. The *chansons de toile* and *chanson d'histoire* as well as three of the courtly songs, which are starred in **Table 1**, are unique to the *Guillaume de Dole*. There is thus extant music for them, and they will be discussed only after we have treated all other lyric samples.

Our search for extant melodies reveals the greatest number of sources for the courtly songs, as **Table 2** shows. These are represented in as many as a dozen manuscripts, which exhibit different regional scriptae, variant poetic readings, and melodies which clearly cluster into several groups, with the occasional isolate. The dance songs, on the other hand, occur in only a handful of sources which represent peripheral scribal traditions. They often occur, moreover, as refrains to songs whose verses are different from those in the *Guillaume de Dole*, and the paucity of variant melodies dictates the use of what we have.

In order to select our melodies for other than purely aesthetic reasons, we require some philological guidelines which will treat the poetic and musical texts as a cogent whole. These guidelines need of course followed only insofar as they ask revealing questions of our texts.

Our working hypothesis focused on the manuscript of the *Guillaume Dole* and on the linguistic features of its texts. A graphemic and text comparison with the chansonniers would allow us to select melodies from those trouvère codices whose language and spelling most closely resembled those of Vat. Reg. 1725. We were thus concerned, at least initially, with melodies which would putatively have been available to the compilers of the *Guillaume de Dole* manuscript. The leap of faith which this requires, extrapolated from a study of trouvère manuscript families and their melodies, is the belief that similar melodies tended to circulate in given scribal areas. That there were localized performance practices in the Middle Ages seems certain, again by extrapolation when one observes folk music in France today. The belief that such localized practices also governed the transmission of trouvère melodies is an important argument in explaining the melodic similarities within the KNPX and TM groups, for example. For it is no longer feasible to ascribe these melodies to a purely written source; assertions by H. Van der Werf and others that musical scribes sang as they noted their melodies are certainly true, as anyone who transcribes music from an oral tradition can attest. Moreover, the extant melodies must be viewed as melodic types, captured "sur le vif," rather than as authoritative forms, or as deviations (i.e., corruptions) therefrom (Van der Werf 1972, pp. 26-34).

Matching poetic and musical texts across manuscripts in this way proves useful to the extent that it offers us some neutral guidelines for evaluating our material. This method offers us a basis for understanding lyric codex production as a principled artistic effort, and serves very well for the first stage of our analysis. It is unsatisfactory from a performance standpoint, of course, as its positivism treats the manuscript sources as ends in themselves rather than as means to an end. Nonetheless, when these guidelines must be superseded, and this is crucial to any coherent system, we will be able to do so with full knowledge of what we are discarding.

Applying our philological considerations first to the three troubadour songs, we turn to the *Chansonnier du roi*, catalogued both as Trouvère ms. M and as Troubadour ms. W. Not only does this the codex contain the greatest number of lyric pieces from our romance, but it is also the only trouvère codex to show all three of the troubadour songs. While this in itself cannot be a reason to select the melodies from ms. M, the common approach of mss. M and Vat. Reg., 1725

to the transmission of these texts makes this a natural choice. Both of these manuscripts present the poems in a language which is a hybrid form of French and Provencal.

CAN VEI LA LAUZETA MOVER (Bernard de Ventadorn)

ROSE Quant voi l'aloete moder  
Ms. M Quan vei l'aloete moder  
Ms. G Quan vei la laudeta mover  
Ms. R Can vei la lauzeta mover

ROSE de goi ses ales contre el rai,  
Ms. M de joi ses ales contre al rai,  
Ms. G de joi sas alas contral rai,  
Ms. R de joi sas alas contral rai,

ROSE que s'oblíe et lesse cader  
Ms. M que s'oblíde et laisse cader  
Ms. G s'oblída e.s laissa cader  
Ms. R que s'oblída laissa.s chazer

ROSE par la doucor q'el cor li vai,  
Ms. M per la doucor qu'el cor li vai,  
Ms. G per la dolcor qu'al cor li vai,  
Ms. R per la dosor c'al cor li vay,

ROSE ensi grant envie m'est pris  
Ms. M he tan granz envide m'en pren  
Ms. G he las corn grand enveia.m va  
Ms. R ai las cal enveia m'en ve

ROSE de ce que voi.....  
Ms. M de co qu'est si en jauzion,  
Ms. G de cui que veia jaucion  
Ms. R de qui q'eu veyá jauzion,

ROSE Miravile est que n'is del sens  
Ms. M Meravill me q'eu n'ies del sen  
Ms. G Meriveillas aí, car de se  
Ms. R Meravillas aí, car desse

ROSE ne coir dont desier non fon.  
Ms. Met cor de desirrier non fon.  
Ms. G lo cor de desirer no.m fon.  
Ms. R lo cor de desirer no.m fon.

These readings hinder intelligibility somewhat but have the laudable goal of making southern songs accessible to a northern audience. This choice also has the advantage of offering the public a change from the oft-heard melody of troubadour ms. G. This kind of mix and match is actually

quite common in modern reconstructions, as performances by the Studio der fruhen Musik and the Martin Best Ensemble, among others, have paired the text of ms. R with the melody of ms. G. (See Van der Werf, 1972, 90-95). Turning now to the manuscripts, we note that the graphemics of Vat. Reg., 1725 show greatest similarity with those of the KNXP group of trouv6re chansonniers. **Table 3** below shows the results of a detailed study made of spelling in the chansonniers several years ago (Callahan 1985). While graphic variants in the *Guillaume de Dole* were not quantified in this way, certain features stand out which place our manuscript within central Old French, and possibly Parisian, scribal practices. The graph e is used in a majority of cases to represent the vowel [ E ], which had simplified from the diphthong [aj] in the course of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (and is spelled ai in French today), as we see in words such as *forfet*, *acheson*, *seson*, *Tessier*. A preference for the sequence eur rather than -our or -or in stressed position (*honeur*) is also characteristic of the central or Francian scripta, as is the preference for o rather than ou in unstressed and stressed, closed syllables (i.e., *doz*, *amorete* as opposed to *douz*, *amourete*). To cite two additional features, etymological accuracy of approximately 85% in the use of final -z and -s, and the near absence of k- as a variant spelling for qu- (as in *ki*, *ke*), lend strong support to placing our copyist solidly within the Francian scribal tradition. If in fact s/he was working from an original written in a northern scripta, and there is some evidence for this assertion (cf. Lejeune, 1936) then s/he has been admirably successful in standardizing and regularizing the spelling.

The variant readings in the poetic text (see **Table 3**) also support this conclusion regarding provenance of the *Guillaume de Dole* manuscript. When significant variation in the text occurs, the readings in Vat. Reg., 1725 concur with those of the K group rather than with those of MT/A or the isolates 0 and U. To justify the selection of melodies from mss. KNXP, then, the philologist need only recognize that melodies of mss. K, N, X and P show remarkable similarity, differing from each other in only minor detail, if at all. It is in fact not unusual for the musical text to be identical in all four. This raises of course important question about the transmission of the melodies, for the case of the KNXP family offers the strongest argument for the (at least partially) written transmission of trouv6re melodies (Van der Werf, op. cit., p. 30; Karp, 1964 pp. 35-36). Fortunately, these questions do not require an immediate answer, and discussion must now turn to concerns other than urtexts an their *stemma*tata. Suffice it to say that the use of melodies from ms. K an related codices to perform the *Guillaume de Dole* is the result of carefully reasoned investigation which treats poetic and musical text as a coherent whole and is sensitive to the manuscript sources and their history.

This is of course not where we should stop, for this method answers purely hypothetical question, i.e., how the scribes and owners/audience of ms. Vat. Reg., 1727 might have heard the *Roman de Guillaume d Dole*. Furthermore, this approach is a very limiting one in the way that it looks at medieval musical texts. We are obliged to deal with a written artifact, which was not, could not have been, the point of departure for composers and performers in the Middle Ages. Rather, the lyric text that we possess must be viewed as records of performance and not as fixed forms which guided performance. In this way, we cannot consider any given melody to be "truer," in the sense of being closer to a hypothetical original, than any other. The clearest idea of how this poetry was performed can thus be gained by considering all of the melodies and their variants at once, for this is only way to asses both the character of the music to which lyric poetry could be set, and the "parameters of individuation" which were available to performers o courtly song.

Even so, we cannot hope to reconstruct music as it was performed in 13th century France. We can only give it yet another interpretation, on which can only allow listeners to glimpse the Middle Ages as we see them, and which requires all the more internal consistency as it becomes idiosyncratic. These limits are both frustrating and liberating to the performer, as the theoretical ground beneath our artifacts has radically shifted since philologists first turned their attention to them. Nonetheless, it is only by remaining faithful to the texts that one can transcend their limits. The space in which the musicologist and musician must work is that governing the tension between the oral and the textual. By remaining focused on the dynamics of production and transmission of song in an oral culture as well as on the nature of the texts which marks the shift of that culture to the valorization of the written word, the musicologist can liberate the text for the musician, and permit the latter to work with it on his/her own terms.

Turning now to the melodies themselves, we will consider two poems which are representative of both style and variation in trouvère graphemics lyric Gace Brulé's "Contrel tens que voi frimer," a song of despair in love set in wintertime, and the Châtelain de Couci's "Li noviaus tens," a combination spring/crusade song. We note first of all the great similarity in the melodies of all but a few sources. Only ms. V in "Contrel tens" and mss. V and R in "Li noviaus tens" show musical texts which are unique, while in all other redactions, the melodies appear to be variants of each other. In accounting for this, one must consider three possibilities: 1) the related melodies derive from the composer while the idiosyncratic melodies are either adapted from another song (i.e. are contrafacts or are scribal inventions; 2) one of the less-frequently recorded melodies is an author/composer melody and all others are contrafacts; 3) none of the melodies is necessarily original, and all may represent accepted ways of performing the song. This last point of view is the most productive because it allows us to evaluate all melodies impartially. Furthermore, in the likely event that a performance tradition at least derived from the original is represented by the frequently recorded melodies, we are spared the arbitrary task of establishing one of them as *urtext*.

A traditional philological approach grants more credibility to the text which appears in the greatest number of sources. While this focuses our attention properly on these melodies, the third point of view mentioned above appeals to current models of variance by allowing us to treat "Contrel tens" as showing two melodies, one in ms. V and the other in mss. K N X P O T M R, and "Li noviaus tens" as showing three, one in ms. R, a second in ms. V, and a third in mss. K N X P L O U M T A a.

In this approach, we view the variants introduced into this melody as variants arising directly from performance practice. The essential melodic structure is unchanged from version to version, and the differences found in them are characteristic of the ornaments introduced into orally transmitted music. These marks of individual style can represent renderings by different singers or successive performances by the same singer.

Any musical tradition which is passed on primarily by example attaches great importance to the performer's improvisational skills, and in this process, melodies are transposed to suit the needs of the singer or instrumentalist. An example of such transposition, which is usually treated as scribal carelessness and regularized (Van der Werf, 1979), is found in "Li noviaus tens." The melodies of mss. M and U are pitched a fifth lower than in the other manuscripts, taking them

out of the tenor 1 range and placing them in the baritone register. Such a change could very well reflect a transposition made in performance, even if it originates with the scribe. For if we consider seriously the scribe's dual role as singer/ recorder of texts, the transposition is still legitimately performance-based.

Looking more closely at the nature and function of ornamentation, we find in "Contrel tens" a musical structure which is characteristic of trouvère lyric. A syllabic melody begins on the basis tone <sup>3</sup> --D, and rises immediately to the dominant, which serves as recitation tone.

Ornamentation is found consistently over rhyme words, drawing attention to them and emphasizing the organization of the poetic text. Decoration within the poetic line can simply show the skills of the performer, or it can serve a tone-painting function, highlighting a particular word in the text.

Examples of simple embellishment are visible over the fourth syllable of line five:

### Image

the second and fourth syllabus of line six:

### Image

and nearly all of line nine. Examples of fioritura which serve a textual function can be found in line one, where the turn E-D-E on the second syllable of *frimer* permits the voice of the singer to shiver in sympathy with nature, now held in the icy grip of winter.

### Image

This trembling is repeated in the step-wise descent over the next rhyme word, *blanchoier*, so that the snow-covered trees match the singer's desolation. The repetition of this falling pattern on every rhyme word, either toward the recitation tone or the basis tone, perpetuates the mood set in the beginning of the song.

In "Li noviaus tens," rising triplets over *violate and amorete* in lines one and three of *the frons*

### Image

proclaim the triumph of spring and establish a contrast with rhyme words later in the poem, where the poet's distress at separation from his lady due to the coming crusade is expressed with a falling melody. Furthermore, the word *lousseignol* (nightingale) at the beginning of line two is richly embellished in a manner befitting this most poetic of songbirds,

### Image

and at the end of line five, the poet's rise to glory in the eyes of God is paralleled by a rising melodic line over the word *monter*.

### Image

These observations are of direct use in evaluating the melodies of mss. R and V.

In "Contrel tens," ms V does not establish a clear recitation tone, and wanders rather aimlessly over an entire octave, in contrast to the other versions, which are largely contained within the pentachord formed by the basis and recitation tones. Moreover, the song ends on F, which is a "leading" tone leaving the melody unresolved. The melody is also much sparer, and is not consistently ornamented on the rhyme word, though line-internal embellishments are frequently found over inconsequential words. Similarly, in "Li noviaus tens," the melodies of mss. R and V lack a clear focus and resolution. They do not appear to have been composed for this poem, particularly as there is no fioritura over the word *tousseignol*, and the melody of R descends step-wise over *monter*, while that of V rises but then falls.

## Image

By examining the interaction of poetic and musical text as well as the structure of the melody itself, we come to prefer the melody of mss. K N X P O M T R to that of ms. V in "Contrel tens," and the melody of mss. K N X P M T O U A a to those of mss. V and R in "Li noviaus tens." This does not, of course, eliminate them from performance. It is conceivable that they be used as part of an instrumental prelude/interlude to one of the melodies from the majority group, or they could be presented as legitimate options, though less felicitous for the internal reasons cited above.

Turning now to the melody of K et al., it is not necessary to choose one of the variants to the exclusion of all others. To reproduce one of them slavishly falls into the old positivist error of according superior status to one version among many, and such a procedure completely misunderstands the nature of the records which are left to us. Rather, having studied all variants in order to distill the essence of the melodic line, the performer should feel free to make any embellishments which fall within the parameters of variation permitted by this style. The performer's personal preferences must guide the end result, for this is what will bring the production of a medieval work of music from the level of craft to the level of art.

The procedures discussed above offer guidelines for reconstituting the *Roman de Guillaume de Dole* from existing melodies. What can be done with those lyric fragments for which no music survives? One of the techniques currently used is to borrow existing melodies which have the same metrical structure as the verses we want to perform. The exhaustive metrical repertory of Molk and Wolfzettel, as well as Schwan's work in this area make such a task feasible for the informed musician. While such a procedure may be branded as heretical in some circles, it is not so if from the outset one harbors no illusions as to its authenticity. In the passage from scholarship to art, faithfulness to one's own system, to the limits the performer sets with regard to improvisation, adoption of folk techniques, and instrumental accompaniment, must take precedence over faithfulness to the Middle Ages. It is not possible to be entirely authentic in the performance of medieval music, and strict adherence to such a goal is a conceit which ultimately yields too sterile a product. The focus must not be on reconstruction but on recreation, and this becomes possible by remaining true at one and the same time to one's sources and to one's muse. The *Roman de Guillaume de Dole* is ideally suited to the merging of modern and



medieval aesthetics, and allows us to view more accurately than almost any other source the medieval lyric in its natural setting.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> My use of this term is based on Van der Werf, 1965.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Gerard Le Vot, musicologist and performer, for hours of enlightening discussion focusing on this critical space where the two disciplines meet.

<sup>3</sup> The standard term "tonic" is avoided due to the inevitable references it makes to modern harmonic practices. Such notions were likely not available in the construction of a monodic line such as that which characterizes *trouvere* music. For a more complete discussion of this issue, see Van der Werf, op. cit., pp. 46-73.

**Table 1:** Courtly Songs in the *Romande Guillaume de Dole*

### I. Trouvère Songs

1. Quand flors et glais et verdure s'esloigne (vv. 846-852) Gace Brule, *Raynaud* 1779
2. Li noviaus tens et mais et violete (vv. 923-930) Chatelain de Couci, *Raynaud* 985
3. Loial amor qui en fin cuer s'est mise (vv. 1456-1469) Renaut de Beaujeu, *Raynaud* 1635
4. Mout me demeure (vv. 1769-1776) Anonymous, *Raynaud* 420
5. Contrel tens que voi frimer (vv. 2027-2035) Gace Brule, *Raynaud* 857
- \*6. Mout est fous que que nus die (vv. 3107-3114) Anonymous, *Raynaud* 1132
- \*7. Quant de la foille espoissent li vergier (vv. 3180-3187) Anonymous, *Raynaud* 1319
8. Je di que c'est granz folie (vv. 3625-3631) Gace Brule, *Raynaud* 1232
9. Por quel forfet ne por quel ochoison (vv. 3751-3759)  
Roger d'Andeli, *Raynaud* 1872
10. Ja de chanter en ma vie (vv. 3883-3890) Renaud de Sabloeil, *Raynaud* 1229
11. Quant la sesons del douz tens s'asseure (vv. 4127-4133) Vidame de Chartres, *Raynaud* 2086
- \*12. Amours a non ciz mauz qui me tormente (vv. 4587-4593), Anonymous, *Raynaud* 754
- \*13. Lors que florist la bruiere (vv. 5232-5252), Gontier de Soignies, *Raynaud* 1322 a

### II. Troubadour Songs

1. Lors que li jor sont lonc en mai (vv. 1301-1307) Jaufre Rudel, *Pillet-Carstens* 262, 2
2. Bele m'est la voix altane (vv. 4653-4659) Daude de Pradas, *Pillet-Carstens* 124, 5
3. Quand voi l'aloete moder (vv. 5212-5227) Bernart de Ventadorn, *Pillet-Carstens* 70, 43

**Table 2:** A Musical Concordance for the *Romande Guillaume de Dole*

### Image

**Table 3:** LI NOUIAUS TENS Le Châtelain de Couci (RS 1779)

### ROSE Li nouiaus tens et mais et violete/ et rossignox me semont de chanter

M nouuiauz tanz / lousseignolz

T noueaus tans / roussignols

K nouuiau / li rosignox

X mays / rosignox

p nouuiau  
V  
O noueax temps maiz / rossignoz semoignent d'amer  
U tens d'este / rosignols semonent d'amer  
R / roussignols mi  
A noueax temps mays uiolette/

**ROSE et mes fins cuers me fet d'une amorete/ un doz present que ge nos refuser**

M fait amorete/ si douz nel os  
T amorete/ ke nel os  
K douz ie  
X ma fait douz ie noz  
V  
O fait si douz nel doit nus  
U fait dolz que nel doi  
R mez mi amorette/ si doulz que ne los  
A

**ROSE or men doit Dex en tel honor monter cele ou j'ai mis mon cuer et mon penserl**

M me lait tele honeur /que  
T le laist diex /ke  
K dont tele  
X me / que-  
P me dont / que  
V  
O me lait -/ que lai- pensey  
U a / que panser  
R mi laist diex tele honnor /que celle

**ROSE q'entre mes bras la tenisse nuete / ainz q'alasse outremer**

M tieigne vne foiz entre mes, braz nuete / ancoiz quail.le.  
T tiegne vne foiz entre mes bras nuete / ains kenaille  
K  
X / q noise.  
P tiengne une foiz entre mes bras nuete / ainz que men doit aler.  
V  
O soit une foiz entre mes braz nuete / que iaille  
U tengne une nuit entre mes braz nuete / que ie uoise oltremer  
soit une foy entre mes braz nuette /ains qie me uoise outremer.

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