

Anonymous

*Ou beau chastel est prisonnier mon cueur a 3*

Edition and comments by  
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<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH283.html>

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This edition is extracted from the online project *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the Loire Valley' chansonniers*, which consists of linked html-files and a great number of single PDF editions. It can be accessed at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/>.

Each html-file about a song contains lists of sources, and edition and translation of the poetic texts, discussion of the main sources and comments on text and music. Separate files hold lists of contents and descriptions of the sources. Other files contain papers and notes on related topics. The online edition offers many cross references and links to online facsimile editions. These links had to be simplified in the present edition.

Each version of a song is regarded as a valid performance by a scribe/musician, and therefore they are published separately. In most cases there will be no attempts to imagine the intentions of the composer or to reconstruct exactly what the composer had written when the music left his pen. Rather the aim is to interpret the written music in largely the same way as 15th century performers may have read it. Many details, which in one source are different from other sources, must be accepted by the editor as valid elements in a performance of the actual source. Sources marked by an asterisk \* are included in the edition.

## Sigla

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

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

*Ou beau chastel est prisonnier mon cuer* 3v · Anonymous

*Appearance in the group of related chansonniers:*

\*Leuven ff. 63v-65 »Ou beau chastel est prisonnier mon cuer« 3v

*Text:* Rondeau cinquain, full text in Leuven.

Ou beau chastel est prisonnier mon cuer  
de celle ou monde ou a plus de douceur,  
beaulté, bonté et courtoisie aussi, 1)  
et toutesfoix ne peult avoir mercy  
n'alegement de sa dure langedeur.

Painne et soussi, tristesse et douleur  
luy sont prochains avecques larmes et pleur,  
pour bien amer seuffre, las, tout cecy.

*Ou beau chastel est prisonnier mon cuer  
de celle ou monde ou a plus de douceur,  
beaulté, bonté et courtoisie aussi.*

A qui donner de ce cas ycy l'erreur  
ne sçaroye, si non a mon malheur  
ou a Fortune qui vieult qu'il soit ainsy,  
car la belle est ung chief d'enpure sans cy  
et gist pour voir la le comble d'onneur.

*Ou beau chastel est prisonnier mon cuer  
de celle ou monde ou a plus de douceur,  
beaulté, bonté et courtoisie aussi,  
et toutesfoix ne peult avoir mercy  
n'alegement de sa dure langedeur.*

In the fair castle my heart is a prisoner  
of her who in the world has the most sweetness,  
beauty, goodness, and courtesy as well,  
and yet it cannot find mercy  
nor relief from its hard despair.

Trouble and worry, sadness and pain  
surround it with tears and weeping,  
for loving well it suffers, alas, all this.

In the fair castle my heart is a prisoner  
of her who in the world has the most sweetness,  
beauty, goodness, and courtesy as well.

On whom to lay the blame for this situation  
I may not know, if not on my ill luck  
or on Fortune who wishes that it shall be so,  
for the fair one is the most refined without fault,  
and in her is found the summit of honor.

In the fair castle my heart is a prisoner  
of her who in the world has the most sweetness,  
beauty, goodness, and courtesy as well,  
and yet it cannot find mercy  
nor relief from its hard despair.

1) Line 3, “beaulte bonte courtoisie aussi”, one syllable short (error)

*Comments on text and music:*

The unique rondeau cinquain was entered into the Leuven chansonnier by its main scribe with a few errors in the text and music. It is a male love complaint in rich rimes and set in music for two nearly equal voices (*a-c''* and *g-bb'*) – the lower voice of the two is named “Tenor” in the MS – and a low contratenor (*G-c'*), which keeps below the upper voices. It is a very varied setting characterised by several two-part passages; both sections of the rondeau start with duos. This feature and a motif, which appear in both sections, prompted Adam Knight Gilbert to point out that “Ou beau chastel” and Ockeghem’s »Fors seullement l’actente que je meure« “... share striking similarities, including the melodic outline of their opening duos, the imitation of the subject in the cantus (bb. 1-7), and the sequential motive in the tenor (bb. 21-28) ...”<sup>1</sup> It is evident that the composer of “Ou beau chastel” knew “Fors seullement” intimately. “Fors seullement” is in Leuven chansonnier on ff. 54v-56, some pages before “Ou beau chastel”, and it is precisely this version of Ockeghem’s song that he knew. The motif that begins the song and appears several times in different

1 Adam Knight Gilbert, ‘Songs that Know Each Other in the Leuven Chansonnier’, *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 12 (2020), pp. 231-261, at p. 234.

contexts, a descending movement rhythmized as a dotted *semibrevis* and two *semiminimae*, appear at the beginning of “Fors seullement” in Leuven and Wolfenbüttel chansonniers, while other sources are slightly different.<sup>2</sup> This version is in A with no hexachordal signatures. “Ou beau chastel” is in the same modality a tone lower in G, as it ends with two-flat signatures in all voices in the second section. In the first section superius and contratenor have only one flat each, which produces a tonal shading between the sections.

It leads nowhere to wonder if Ockeghem or another musician of his rank could be the author of “Ou beau chastel”. The similarities with Ockeghem’s song are immediately audible, but the differences are almost more noticeable. This is not a song where a beautiful, well-articulated tune sounds in the tenor moved up an octave. In “Ou beau chastel” the highest voice is leading, and it is mostly the superius, although the two equal voices often change places, and the melodic material is first presented in the contratenor. A good guess for an author could be the musician who composed at least three of the unique songs in Leuven’s eighth fascicle.

The contratenor presents the first line of text in a melodic gesture that could resemble a recitation formula, and which, with its four repeated notes on *c'*, more associates with the opening duo in the four-part unique virelais simple, »Donnez l’aumosne, chiere dame«,<sup>3</sup> which can be found in Leuven as no. 31 on ff. 47v-50, than with “Fors seullement”. The tenor’s countervoice to this consists of the descending figure alluding to “Fors seullement” and continues in very simple counterpoint in alternating unisons and thirds, ending in a cadence to G. The contratenor tune is then repeated by the superius an octave higher with a new accompaniment in the lower voices, which have to draw the last words of the line far out. The tenor’s adherence to the *c'*-hexachord contrasts with the repeated *e'*-flats in the first presentation.

The start of the second line overlaps the not strongly marked cadence to C in bars 16-20. The tenor starts in bar 20 a unison imitation, which turns into imitation at the fifth, when the music thins out to a duo in parallel thirds. With the contratenor in support, the line is brought to a cadence on C again (b. 37), now in a sound dominated by flats with the tenor changing into the hexachord on *b $\flat$* . The upper voice calmly reaches its highest note *c''* in the third line’s enumeration of the lady’s virtues, and goes back again to a cadence on G prolonged into an open middle point with the notated *b*-natural sounding in the fermata chord.

The oscillation between E-flat and E-natural, which characterized the first section, is in the second section replaced by a signature change into two flats in all voices. An upper voice duo in parallel thirds starting with the small rhythmical motif from the tenor’s opening leads again to a cadence in C. It continues in a new duo between superius and contratenor ending on E-flat, where the upper voice duo comes back in a short unison imitation, and the fourth line of text and firmly ending in E-flat with all three voices sounding. The last line leads to a cadence on G with a final marking of the little motif. In the curious final cadence, where the composer conflates two different cadential formulas, he probably has forgotten that he in the superius had used the old-fashioned under-third formula, when he wrote the confused tenor, which belongs to a song in undiminished *tempus*.

2 See further the edition and comments on “Fors seullement” at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH056.html>.

3 cf. <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH277.html>.

It is probably true that the composer found inspiration in the sound and layout of Ockeghem's "Fors seullement", just as the probably same musician was inspired by Ockeghem in »Si vous voulez que je vous ame« (no. 34, ff. 52v-54),<sup>4</sup> found in Leuven just before "Fors seullement". Like that song, "Ou beau chastel" fulfils all imaginable requirements for *varietas* in the setting of the words, and in contrasts between the sections, and it is quite a successful attempt. However, the use of introductory duos, and the mosaic of duos in the second section combined with the reliance on parallel thirds and simplified counterpoint seem to point more in the direction of a young musician experienced in sacred music in the years around 1470 than a composer of secular music, just as was the case with several of the songs in Leuven's eighth fascicle.

Parts of this text are included in my publication *The unica of the Leuven chansonnier – a portfolio of songs by an ambitious young musician*, August 2024.<sup>5</sup>

4 Cf. <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH280.html>.

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

Leuven no. 40

*Ou beau chastel est prisonnier mon cueur* (unique)

Leuven, Alamire Foundation, Manuscript without shelf number, ff. 63<sup>v</sup>-65

[Superius] Mensura = 

Tenor

Contratenor

1.4. Ou beau chas - tel est pri - son - nier  
 3. A qui don - ner de ce cas y - - - cy

9

1.4. Ou beau chas - tel est pri - son - nier  
 3. A qui don - ner de ce cas y - - - cy

mon l'er

cy mon l'er - - - - - cueur reur

18

mon l'er - - - - - cueur reur de cel - le\_ou mon - - - - - de\_ou a non  
 l'er - - - - - reur ne sça - roy - e, si non

cueur reur de cel - le\_ou mon - - - - - de\_ou a non  
 reur ne sça - roy - e, si non

de cel - le\_ou mon - de\_ou  
 ne sça - roy - e, si non

29

plus de doul - - - - - ceur, beaul -  
 a mon mal - - - - - heur ou

plus de doul - - - - - ceur,  
 a mon mal - - - - - heur

a plus de doul - - - - - ceur, beaul -  
 a mon mal - - - - - heur ou

1) Contratenor, bars 11-16 are notated a third higher (error).  
 2) Tenor, bar 17.1 looks more like a *semibrevis* rest than a dot (error).

38

té, bon - té et cour - toi - si - e\_aus - si,  
a For - tu - ne qui vieult qu'il soit ain - sy,

beaul - té, bon - té et cour - toi - si - e\_aus - si,  
ou a For - tu - ne qui vieult qu'il soit ain - sy,

té, bon - té cour - toi - si - e\_aus - si,  
a For - tu - ne qui'il soit ain - sy,

48

et tou - tes - foix ne peult  
car la bel - le\_est ung chief

et tou - tes - foix ne peult  
car la bel - le\_est ung chief

et toutesfoix peult chief d'en -

58

a - - voir mer - cy n'a - le - ge - ment de  
d'en - pu - re sans cy et gist pour voir la

a - voir mer - cy n'a - le - ge -  
d'en - pu - re sans cy et gist pour

a - - voir mer - cy de  
pu - - re sans cy la

68

sa du - re lan - - - geur.  
le com - ble d'on - - - neur.

ment de sa du - re lan - - - geur.  
voir la le com - ble d'on - - - neur.

sa du - re lan - - - geur.  
le com - ble d'on - - - neur.

3) *Contraténor*, bar 47, the upper note is black.

2a. Pain - ne\_et sous - si, tris - tes - se et  
2b. Ou beau chas - tel est pri - son - nier

2a. Pain - ne\_et sous - si, tris - tes - se et  
2b. Ou beau chas - tel est pri - son - nier

9

2a. Pain - ne\_et sous - si, tris - tes - se et  
2b. Ou beau chas - tel est pri - son - nier

do  
mon

do  
mon - - - - - leur  
cueur

18

do mon - leur cueur luy de sont pro - chains a - - - - vec - a  
mon cueur de cel - le\_ou mon - de\_ou a - - - - vec - a

luy de sont cel - le\_ou pro - chains  
de cel - le\_ou mon - de\_ou

29

- ques plus lar - mes et pleur, pour  
plus de doul - - - - - ceur, beaul -

- ques plus larmes dedoul et pleur, pour  
plus de doul - - - - - ceur, beaul -

a - vec - ques lar - mes et pleur, pour  
a plus de doul - - - - - ceur, beaul -



38

bien a - mer seuf - fre, las, tout ce - cy.  
 té, bon - té et cour - toi - si - e\_aus - si.

pour bien a - mer seuf - fre, las, tout ce - cy.  
 beaul - té, bon - té et cour - toi - si - e\_aus - si.

bien a - mer seuf - fre, las, tout ce - cy.  
 té, bon - té cour - toi - si - e\_aus - si.