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The Poems of "Ch": Taxonomizing Literary Tradition

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CHAPTER 1

The Poems of “Ch”

*Taxonomizing* Literary Tradition.

**Elizaveta Strakhov**

In the late seventies, Rossell Hope Robbins suggested that Chaucer’s earliest literary productions may have been in French. Chaucer’s familiarity with the French *formes fixes* lyric genre is undeniable: in the *Merchant’s Tale*, Damian composes May a love letter “[i]n manere of a compleynt or a lay” (line 1881); the birds in the *Parliament of Fowls* sing a rondeau for which, Chaucer emphasizes, the music “imaked was in Fraunce” (line 677); and Aurelius pours his love for Dorigen into “manye layes, / Songes, compleintes, roundels, virelayes” (ll. 947–48). Most important, when Alceste intercedes for Chaucer before the God of Love in the *Prologue* to the *Legend of Good Women*, she reminds the God of Love that Chaucer has written “many an hymnpe for your halydayes, / That highten balades, roundels, virelayes” (F. 422–23; G. 410–11), while, in his *Retraction*, “Chaucer” speaks of having composed “many a song and many a leccherous lay” (line 1086). It would be surprising, Robbins argued, if a poet with a Francophone wife, working in a Francophone court, and extensively familiar with contemporary Francophone poetry had never written something in French, when his English contemporary and friend John Gower, for example, wrote two whole cycles of ballades as well as an extended narrative poem, all in French. Robbins therefore suggested that “scholars might start looking for texts of anonymous French poems of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries . . . or possible Chaucerian items.”

When James Wimsatt came across a late medieval manuscript of unknown provenance with fifteen lyrics mysteriously marked “Ch,” he saw Robbins’ suggestion as an enticing possibility. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania MS Codex 902 (formerly French 15), a 101-folio, lightly deco-
rated manuscript of unknown provenance, copied by three scribes some­
time between the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, contains 310
formes fixes lyrics. These include works that we know, from other manu­
scripts, to have been authored by Guillaume de Machaut, Oton de Granson,
Eustache Deschamps, Grimace, Nicole de Margival, Philippe de Vitry, and
Jean de le Mote. The manuscript also contains a substantial amount of
anonymous work, much of it found uniquely in this manuscript. In par­
ticular, within fols. 75v to 86r, the manuscript contains fifteen scattered
lyrics of varying formes fixes types, which the scribes identify by name as
ballades, chansons royaux, and one rondeau on various themes—unrequited
love, requited love, bereavement, and betrayal. There is no known attribu­
tion to the lyrics, and they appear in no other manuscripts. There is also no
immediately apparent link between them, except for one: all fifteen lyrics
have the mysterious marking “Ch” next to their rubric, written in a darker
ink and in a hand different from and later than any of the others in the
manuscript. The random placing of the markings—sometimes next to the
rubric, sometimes next to the first line, and sometimes between the rubric
and the first line—further suggests that the markings were not designed
for the original mise-en-page but added later (Figure 1.1).

As James Wimsatt has argued, the contents of this anthology suggest
its compiler’s possible interest in, or even potential connection with, the
Francophone culture of England. The manuscript contains the work of
Oton de Granson, a French speaker from modern-day Switzerland, who
lived in England. It is one of only two manuscripts containing the Philippe
de Vitry–Jean de le Mote ballade exchange in which the French Vitry rails
at Le Mote, a resident of Hainault, for moving to England and writing
French poetry there. The manuscript opens with a set of pastourelles writ­
ten in the Hainuyer dialect containing topical discussions of the ongoing
Hundred Years’ War, and they have several striking literary parallels with
the later, also politically oriented, pastourelles of Jean Froissart, another
Hainuyer who lived in England. Further noting convergences in theme
between some of the “Ch” lyrics and moments in Chaucer’s corpus, such
as Antigone’s song in Troilus and the inset lyric, “Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte
tresses clere,” in the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women, Wimsatt pro­
poses that “Ch” might stand for “Chaucer.”
Figure 1.1. An example showing the “Ch” under the chanson royal, "Venes veoir qu’a fait Pymalion." Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania MS Codex 902, fol. 82r.
Wimsatt’s radical hypothesis speaks to Ardis Butterfield’s later claim, in a different context, that “from a medieval point of view, Chaucer is part of the history of French culture, rather than French culture being part of the history of Chaucer.” Yet Wimsatt’s suggestion is also making an a priori assumption that “Ch” must be an attribution of authorship. Organization by authorship does seem, on first glance, to be a major feature of this collection: a large section of work by Machaut (one-third of the total contents) occupies the core of the manuscript, framed by two discrete sets of lyric by Granson. Positioning Machaut, the reigning master of the *formes fixes* tradition, literally at the heart of this volume, the University of Pennsylvania (hereafter Penn) manuscript’s unknown compiler seems to be emphatically highlighting authorship—Machaut’s authorship—as his collection’s primary focus. The Machaut and Granson sections are, however, repeatedly intercut with other, unattributed lyrics that fragment the author-centered organization. In terms of its rubrics, moreover, the Penn manuscript seems to go out of its way to avoid authorial attributions. A lyric by Granson, on fols. 8v–10r, for example, is known as “La Pastourelle Grandson” in its eight other manuscript witnesses but is here rubricated only as “Complainte de pastour et de pastourelle amoureuse” (love complaint of a shepherd and shepherdess). Similarly, the ballade exchange between Vitry and Le Mote is here shorn of the authors’ names in its rubrics, whereas its other manuscript witness, BnF lat. 3343, makes sure to identify both poets. Instead, the manuscript’s 310 rubrics simply indicate to which specific *formes fixes* sub-type a lyric belongs (ballade, rondeau, chanson royal, etc).

Thus, although reading “Ch” as Chaucer does provide a neat and provocative explanation for the shadowy evocations of England in its contents, Wimsatt’s hypothesis comes up against two significant characteristics of this manuscript: (a) its own ambiguous relationship toward authorship as a mode of categorizing the lyrics; and (b) its predilection for labeling lyric form rather than authorship in the rubrics. Taken together, these elements raise the strong possibility that “Ch” could be standing for something else: a different person’s name, a form (chanson, for example), or a wholly different order of classification altogether. Where Wimsatt has relied on commonalities of theme and imagery in order to posit a relationship between the fifteen “Ch” lyrics, I approach them instead with attention to paleographi-
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critical, codicological, and formal detail, focusing specifically on where and how they appear in the manuscript. I suggest that "Ch," whatever it means, is unlikely to stand for Chaucer because the lyrics' authorship—even if they were all written by the same person—is not the criterion governing their inclusion and emphasis in this anthology.

Although we know next to nothing about the manuscript's provenance nor its compiler, the careful organization of the lyrics within its pages reveals a keen awareness of a significant development within the formes fixes genre that had taken place from the mid-fourteenth to early fifteenth centuries, namely the severing of the ties between formes fixes lyric and music and the adaptation of formes fixes lyric to longer, purely literary forms. I argue that the "Ch" lyrics are singled out in the Penn manuscript because they constitute an integral element in this manuscript's ordinatio, which seeks to represent this significant development within formes fixes lyric. In turn, the Penn anthology's emphasis on developments within formes fixes lyric suggests that, in its quest for an Author, our approach to the study of late medieval anthologies may be overlooking the alternative intentions that motivated compilers of that period to create lyric anthologies. It is the task of this chapter to delineate a few of these alternatives.

Scribal Features of the Copying of the "Ch" Lyrics

The "Ch" lyrics are concentrated within quires 10 and 11 (fols. 75v to 86r) of the twelve-quire codex, and they are the only lyrics to be singled out by marginalia in the whole manuscript. In the absence of shared content or lyric form, however, it is difficult to see what exactly motivated the emphasis on these specific texts. One immediately arresting phenomenon is that some of them seem incomplete or miscopied, in stark contrast to the other 295 lyrics in the collection. Thus, for example, "Ch" lyric "Venez veoir qu'a fait Pymalion" is filled out with extra lines by a different hand on fol. 82v (Figure 1.2). "Ch" lyric, "Entre les biens que creature humainne" on fol. 75v, a chanson royal, is missing the fifth line of its final stanza (as evident
Figure 1.2. Verso of Figure 1, showing added lines. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania MS Codex 902, fol. 82v.
from the rhyme scheme), and its envoy has only two lines, as opposed to the more typical four- or five-line envoy usually found in a chanson royal. For instance, Eustache Deschamps prescribes a four- to five-line envoy for the chanson royal in his *ars poetica, L'Art de dictier* (1392), and the examples of chansons royaux elsewhere in the Penn manuscript are all at least four lines long. Similarly, “Ch” lyric “Je cuide et croy qu'en tous les joieux jours” on fol. 76v has a half-line scratched out and rewritten in what might be the same hand as the one doing the “Ch” markings. Further, the envoy in the next “Ch” lyric, the chanson royal “Aux dames joie & aux amans plaisance,” has only one line, and in “Ch” lyric “Humble Hester, courteise, gracieuse” on fol. 78v, two lines have been scratched out and rewritten in darker ink in the same hand that made the previous correction. That hand reappears to make corrections in another chanson royal, “Ch” lyric “Pour les hauls biens amoureux annoncer” on fol. 79v, where the envoy again has only two lines. Lastly, “Ch” lyric “Mort le vy dire et se ni avoit arne” on fols. 85r–v, a ballade, is also missing its final two lines, as evident from the rhyme scheme.

Thus, of the fifteen lyrics marked “Ch,” three are missing lines, one was left substantially unfinished and completed by another hand, and three more were miscopied and corrected by yet a third hand that may be the same as the one making the “Ch” markings. This situation gives rise to several explanations. The simplest one is that, for whatever reason, the main scribe was doing a rushed job on this section, and, indeed, his hand is a bit messier in these quires than it is in his work elsewhere in the manuscript. Yet none of the other twenty-six lyrics found alongside and between the “Ch” lyrics are missing any of their lines. In the one other instance where a line is skipped in this section, in the anonymous “Dames de pris qui amez vostre honnour” on fol. 81r, the scribe writes it into the margin. Of the other 295 works in the manuscript, there are only three others with missing lines; in all instances those lacunae occur in the middle of stanzas and are most likely the result of eye-skip. Missing final lines are unique to the “Ch” lyrics.

A second possibility is that “Ch” could be some kind of abbreviation indicating an error in the copied text in need of resolution, something like “changer.” This seems unlikely, since eight of the “Ch” lyrics have no evident
scribal faults of any kind, and elsewhere in the main scribe's section there are, instead, Xs in the margins next to lyrics that have been gone over and corrected. A third possibility remains: there was something incomplete about the exemplar specifically for the lyrics marked "Ch." Significantly, the main scribe did not leave any space to come back and write in the missing lines or extensions to the shortened envoys, even though, having by this point copied more than two hundred other lyrics, he surely should have noticed that the works he was copying had unequal stanzas, missing refrains, and oddly short envoys. His decision to leave no room for extra lines probably indicates that he was reproducing his exemplar faithfully and had little opportunity to acquire a better one.

The likelihood of an imperfect exemplar for these lyrics is supported by an instance of extensive correction, the only one in the entire manuscript, which takes place in the "Ch" section. As noted above, a different hand adds an extra line, a stanza, and an envoy to the unfinished "Ch" lyric "Venez voir qu'a fait Pymalion." Since there is no room left by the main scribe, the second scribe's addition runs into the lower margin of the page. Curiously, this emendation perfectly fits the metrics and rhyme scheme of the original lyric, but it hardly matches the content of the actual poem. The whole lyric, with both scribes' contributions, reads as follows (I have italicized the added portion):15

Venez voir qu’a fait Pymalion; Come see what Pygmalion has made;
Venez voir excellente figure; Come see the excellent appearance;
Venez voir l’amie de Jason; Come see Jason’s beloved;
Venez voir bouche a poy d’ouverture; Come see the small mouth;
Venez voir de Hester la bonte; Come see the goodness of Esther;
Venez voir de Judith la beaute; Come see the beauty of Judith;
Venez voir les douz yeulz Dame Helaine; Come see the sweet eyes of Lady Helen;
Venez oir doulce voix de Serainne; Come hear the sweet voice of the Siren;
Venez voir Polixene la blonde; Come see blonde Polyxena.
Venez voir de plaisance la plaine,
Qui n’a de tout pareille
ne seconde.

Avisez bien sa gente impression;
Avisez bien sa maniere seure;
Avisez bien l’imaginacion
De son gent corps a joieuse
estature;
Avisez bien sa lie humilite;
Avisez bien sa simple gaiete;
Avisez bien comment de biens
est plaine;
Avisez bien sa faiture hautaine;
Avisez bien comment elle suronde
En meurs, en sens autant que
dame humaine
Qui soit vivant a ce jour en
c monde.

Ymaginez humble condicion
Qui la maintient en parfaite
mesure,
Si qu’en elle a de tout bel &
tout bon,
Autant que dame ou vaillance
prent cure.
Ymaginez sa gracieuseté;
Ymaginez son sens amodere;
Ymaginez l’excellence hautainne
De son estat que Leesce a
bien mainne,
Et vous direz, “Vela dame, ou
habonde

Come see her who is full of pleasure,
Who has among all no equal nor
second.

Observe well her lovely disposition;
Observe well her confident manner;
Observe well the image
Of her lovely body of delightful
stature;
Observe well her joyful humility;
Observe well her unadorned gaiety;
Observe well how she is full of
goodness;
Observe well her superior form;
Observe well how she abounds
In self-conduct and in reason as
much as any mortal lady
Who might be living today in
this world.

Consider the humble condition
Which maintains her in perfect
moderation
So that in her dwell all things noble
and good
As much as in a lady governed by
virtue.
Consider her grace;
Consider her moderate good sense;
Consider the supreme excellence
Of her state, which Joy guides
towards good,
And you will say, “Here is a lady in
whom abounds
Honnour, savoir, avis, joie mondaine,
Sens, simplesce, bonte & beaute monde.”

C’est ma dame, dont j’atens guerredon;
C’est mon confort; c’est ma pensee pure;
C’est mon espoir; c’est la provision
Des hautains biens en qui je m’asseure;
C’est ma joie, mon secours, ma sante,
Mon riche vuêt de long temps desire
A mon doulx ressort, ma dame souveraine;
C’est celle aussi, qui tous les jours m’estraîne
De la joieuse et tresamoureuse onde,
De qui Penser venant du droit demaine
De Loyaute que Leesce areonde

Dame que j’aim, flower de perfection,
Rousee en may, soleil qui tousdis dure,
Flun de dolcour a cui comparaison

D’autre dame belle ne s’amesure,
Quant a mon vueil, ne a ma voulente,

Si vrayement que mi bien sont ente En vous du tout. Ne soit de vous lointainne

Honor, wisdom, judgment, earthly joy,
Reason, innocence, goodness and flawless beauty.”

This is my lady from whom I await reward;
This is my comfort; this is my only thought;
This is my hope; this is the provision
Of the highest goods, in which I trust.
This is my joy, my aid, my health,
My powerful yearning, long desired,
For my sweet remedy, my sovereign lady;
She it is also who every day offers me a gift
From the joyous and deeply loving tide,
From which Thought coming from the true domain
Of Loyalty that increases Delight

Lady that I love, flower of perfection,
Dew in May, everlasting sun,
River of sweetness, to whom comparison
With no other beautiful lady could ever measure
In terms of neither my yearning nor my desire,
So truly my good is grafted
Completely unto you. May Pity for me not be
Pitie pour moy, donner garison sainne,
Car trop seroit ma tristescese parfonde
S’elle n’estoit de vostre cuer prochainne,
Fuant Danger que Bonne Amour confonde.

Far from you, giving sound protection,
For my sadness would be too profound
If Pity were not near your heart,
Fleeing Danger which destroys Good Love.

L’envoy
Princes de puy, savez vous qui demainne
Ma dame en bien a joyeuse faconde
Et ce qu’elle est? De deduit chievetainne,
Si qu’a la voir les cuers de vices monde

The Envoy
Prince of the puy, do you know who incites
My lady in goodness to joyous eloquence,
And what she is? Mistress of delight,
So that, upon seeing her, the heart of vice cleanses

In both scribes’ parts, the text is clearly garbled in several places. Yet until the second scribe’s addition, the entire lyric is structured around anaphora: “venez veoir” in the first stanza, followed by “avisez bien,” then “ymaginez” and “c’est” in the third and fourth stanzas. The first four stanzas, moreover, constitute a poem of praise for one’s beloved. The final stanza, added by the second scribe, is instead addressed to the lady and begs her for pity, suggesting an unrequited lover’s complaint. It is, of course, possible to have such a thematic turn within a formes fixes lyric, where the final stanza becomes an apostrophe to the beloved, but the suddenness of the turn, combined with the vanishing of that anaphoric structure, suggests that the two parts do not quite fit. In fact, the line with which the second scribe completes the unfinished fourth stanza does not work grammatically with the rest of the lyric because it fails to contribute a main verb for the final clause:16

C’est celle aussi, qui tous les jours m’estraîne
De la joieuse et tresamoureuse onde

She it is also who every day offers me a gift
From the joyous and deeply loving tide,
De qui Penser venant du droit
demain
De Loyaute, que Leesce areonde

From which Thought coming from the true domain
Of Loyalty that increases Delight

The envoy, moreover, makes little grammatical sense, particularly in its final line, as if it might also be unfinished. Some kind of flawed exemplar specifically for the lyrics marked “Ch” would explain why the second scribe’s emendation works metrically but does not quite seem to match the themes or structure of the original lyric.

Formal Features of the “Ch” Lyrics

This evidence pointing to a shared, flawed exemplar for just under half of the fifteen lyrics suggests that these lyrics might, in fact, constitute a discrete corpus, but it does little to explain why they are singled out and grouped at this point in the manuscript. A closer look at those of the “Ch” lyrics that are ballades, however, reveals a specific congruence between them. Of the ten “Ch” ballades, each of which contains three stanzas, only one has a stanza that is eight lines long; the other eight have longer ten-line stanzas, and the ninth features a twelve-line stanza. As Wimsatt pointed out, lyrics with longer stanzas were not usually set to music, and their use suggests the work of a poet who was likely not a musical composer. Indeed, scholars such as Daniel Poirion and James Laidlaw, among others, have shown that the ten-line stanza is extremely rare in the corpus of Machaut or Froissart, who both favored the seven- and eight-line stanza, but that it is commonly found in the work of later poets, namely Deschamps (who preferred this length over other variations) and Granson, as well as the authors of the Livre de cent ballades and early fifteenth-century poets such as Alain Chartier, Guillebert de Lannoy, and Jean de Garancières.

These “Ch” ballades, moreover, all have the same rhyme scheme, ababbcddcd. Though a variety of other rhyme schemes for ballades with ten-line stanzas was available in this period, this rhyme scheme is the very one prescribed by Deschamps in the Dictier for a ballade of this structure, tes-
tifying to its popularity specifically toward the end of the fourteenth century. Machaut, for example, uses this rhyme scheme only twice in his whole corpus, and Froissart uses it only eight times, whereas Deschamps uses it 542 times, or in a striking 45.5% of his lyrics. It is also frequently found in the work of Granson, in the *Livre de cent ballades*, in the 1404 poetic exchange of Lannoy and Jean de Werchin, and in the work of Garancières. The structure of the “Ch” ballades thus suggests that they may have been composed in the later fourteenth or early fifteenth century, precisely around the time that the manuscript was compiled, making them some of the most recent work to have been included in the anthology.

The positioning of these lyrics in the collection now appears to be reflective of their chronological relationship to the rest of the manuscript’s content. Only four other ballades that contain ten-line stanzas and use this rhyme scheme occur in the manuscript before the appearance of the “Ch” lyrics: three of them are by Granson, whose work also appears intercalated among the “Ch” lyrics, and the last one is Jean de le Mote’s response to Philippe de Vitry. However, after the first appearance of the “Ch” lyrics, such longer ballades occur in the manuscript with greater frequency and are grouped close together in the very last pages of the manuscript between fols. 84r and 92v; all of these are unattributed and extant only here. Four of them, moreover, have envoys, dating them definitively to the later fourteenth to early fifteenth centuries. Entirely missing from Machaut’s corpus, the envoy is present in over two-thirds of Deschamps’ ballades, as well as in a substantial number of those by Granson. Deschamps prescribes its use for ballades in his *Art de dictier* in 1392, noting there that adding an envoy is a fairly recent practice. Only three other ballades with envoys occur earlier in the manuscript: Granson’s aforementioned “Salus assez,” located all the way back on fols. 10r-v, as well as two more, the anonymous “De la douleur que mon triste cuer sent” and “Vray dieu d’amours, plaise toy secourir,” found on fols. 72v–73r, where they almost immediately precede the first appearance of “Ch” in the manuscript.

Chaucer’s authorship of the “Ch” lyrics remains a possibility. After all, these lyrics were written later than the manuscript’s other items, and the scribe’s exemplar for them was flawed in some unrecoverable manner, a situation that geographic distance from the original source might well explain.
I contend, however, that the inclusion of these lyrics serves a very different function within the collection as a whole, a function to which their authorship is ultimately of secondary concern, but to which their formal characteristics are paramount. It is no accident that the “Ch” lyrics begin but two folios after the end of the extensive selection from Machaut that comprises the middle third of the compilation. This selection of Machaut’s formes fixes lyric begins with works taken from the Loange des dames, proceeds with a selection from the lyrics that Machaut set to music, and ends with a set of lyrics excised from Machaut’s longer narrative work, Le livre du Voir Dit. This seemingly straightforward grouping, however, offers a sophisticated statement concerning historical formal developments in the formes fixes genre, a statement in which the “Ch” lyrics turn out to play a vital role.

The Penn Manuscript’s Machaut Section: Reorganizing the Loange des dames

A remarkable feature of the Penn manuscript’s Machaut section is the attention that it pays to the formal characteristics of Machaut’s lyrics. This feature is especially observable in the compilation’s rendition of the Loange des dames, with which its Machaut selection opens. The Loange des dames, a free-standing collection of Machaut’s formes fixes lyrics, is notable for its markedly stable internal organization across all major manuscripts of Machaut’s collected works. In fact, of the Loange’s twelve extant witnesses, only the Penn manuscript offers a radically alternate organizational schema.24 The compiler’s choice to reorganize the Loange lyrics in a manner that does not follow other extant manuscripts suggests that he had some larger purpose for making Machaut the centerpiece of the anthology, and the sheer virtuosity of this reorganization makes it indubitable that the compiler was executing a complex and preconceived project.

At first glance, the Machaut lyrics in the Penn codex seem to be randomly ordered, but they turn out to be subordinated to a larger structure
focused on producing intricate formal arrangements. The manuscript’s Loange section opens with a set of lyrics (nos. 81–92 in the compilation), which alternates ballades with rondeaux (Table 1.1). Immediately following, lyrics nos. 93–105 regularly alternate chansons royaux and rondeaux (Table 1.2). The next consecutive set of lyrics, nos. 106–113, provides three complaintes and one ballade, again alternating with a set of rondeaux (Table 1.3). The major Machaut manuscripts already demonstrate some attention to organizing the Loange by its different lyric forms. For example, they all separate the complaintes into a separate section following the Loange; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter BnF), MS français 1584.

Table 1.1 Sequence of Rondeaux and Ballades in Penn’s Loange des dames

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fol.</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Form and Incipit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29r</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Rondeau “Doulce dame, quant vers vous fausseray” —Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29v</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Ballade, “Dame plaisant, nette &amp; pure”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rondeau “Mon cuer, qui mis en vous son desir a”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ballade, “Il n’est doleur, desconfort, ne tristece”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30r</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Rondeau “Cuer, corps, desir, povoir, vie &amp; usage”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ballade, “Trop est crueulz le mal de jalousie”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rondeau, “Blanche com lis, plus que rose vermeille”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30v</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Ballade, “Doulce dame, vo maniere jolie”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rondeau, “Dame, je muir pour vous compris”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ballade, “Nulz homs ne puett en amours prouffiter”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rondeau, “Partuez moy a l’ouvrir de vos yeulx”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31r</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Ballade, “Je ne suis pas de tel valour”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1.2  Sequence of Chansons Royaux and Rondeaux in Penn’s Loange des dames

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fol.</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Form and Incipit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31r</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>Chanson royal, “Onques mais nul n’ama si folement”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31v</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Rondeau, “Par souhaitier est mes corps avec vous”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Rondeau, “Trop est mauvais mes cuers qu’en .ii. ne part”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Chanson royal, “Amours me fait desirer loyaument”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32r</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Rondeau, “Sans cuer dolans je vous departiray”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
<td>Chanson royal, “Cuers ou mercy fait et cruauze ydure”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32v</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Rondeau “Quant madame ne m’a recongneu”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Chanson royal, “Je croy que nulz fors moy n’a tel nature”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33r</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>Rondeau, “De plus en plus ma grief dolour empire”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>Chanson royal, “Se trestuit cil qui sont et ont este”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33v</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>Rondeau, “Pour dieu, frans cuers, soiez mes advocas”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Chanson royal, “Se loyauze et vertus, ne puissance”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34r</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Rondeau, “Certes mon oeil richement visa bel”—Machaut</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
places the chansons royaux in with the separated complaintes in its index (albeit not in the actual manuscript contents); and BnF, MS français 9221 maintains another separate section for the Loange’s rondeaux. But these early glimmerings of subdivision of the Loange by form in the Machaut manuscripts become the Penn manuscript’s driving force. Its version of the Loange transforms into a meticulously heterogeneous collection, emerging, to borrow Hélène Basso’s formulation, as “des exemples d’un maximum de techniques de l’écriture, de ‘manières’ dont composer rondeau, ou ballade” (examples of a maximum array of writing techniques, of “ways” of composing the rondeau or the ballade).

The care with which these formal sequences are arranged suggests an astonishing degree of sophistication behind the organization of the Penn manuscript, which, in turn, bespeaks a profound intentionality. But what does this re-articulation achieve, and what kind of reception and under-
standing of Machaut does it afford? The _Loange des dames_ collection, in which the Penn manuscript compiler is evidently extremely interested, occupies an important place within Machaut's lyric. It is called consistently, with some minor variations from manuscript to manuscript, "les balades ou il n'a point de chant" (literally, the ballades in which there is no music/song) or the works "non mises en chant" (not set to music/not sung).

The manuscripts in which the _Loange_ is described in this manner are the privately owned Ferrell MS 1 (on fol. 1r), BnF, MS français 1584 (prefatory index and fol. 177v), and the aforementioned BnF fr. 9221 (prefatory index). These Machaut codices are important witnesses within the manuscript transmission of his collected works. Ferrell and BnF fr. 1584 were copied within Machaut's lifetime in the 1370s, and BnF fr. 1584 contains the famous index headed by the line "Vesci l'ordenance que G. de Machaut wet qu'il ait en son livre" (here is the order that G. de Machaut wants there to be in his book), the firmest evidence we have of Machaut's personal supervision of his collected-works manuscripts. The _Loange_ is, in other words, a small collection of lyrics, written by Machaut, which are expressly nonmusical and not intended, as a whole, ever to be set to music. Machaut did, however, set a second, different cycle of _formes fixes_ lyrics to music, and his major collected-works manuscripts regularly copy it with musical notation—and separately from the _Loange_. In fact, in almost all of the major Machaut manuscripts, the _Loange_ and this second lyric cycle set to music occur on opposite ends of the codex—this happens in Ferrell; in its copy, BnF, MS français 1585; in BnF fr. 1584, which seems to have been possibly supervised by Machaut; and the later BnF fr. 9221—namely, in three of the very manuscripts that take pains to underscore in their rubrics the nonmusical quality of the _Loange_, as well as in a fourth.

In the Penn manuscript, however, the reorganized lyrics taken from the _Loange des dames_ are immediately followed by lyrics taken from among those that Machaut set to music. This juxtaposition, which places two radically different types of Machaut's _formes fixes_ lyric side by side, appears to be unique among late medieval anthologies excerpting Machaut's lyrics. Of the lyrics taken from the musical section, moreover, only the texts are copied into the Penn manuscript, and the compiler leaves no space for music on the page. In this way, Machaut's two vastly different lyric cycles—one
intended for music and one intended for reading—are presented visually identically in the Penn manuscript, available only for reading rather than for performance.

Of course, the conjoining of these two distinct cycles within the Penn manuscript could be taken as mere accident: the compiler could have simply wanted to gather as many of Machaut’s formes fixes lyrics as possible, so he started with the Loange and proceeded with the lyrics set to music. The potentially arbitrary nature of this juxtaposition, however, is belied by the intricate ordinatio of the Loange sequence in the Penn manuscript, which focuses on the distinct formal qualities of Machaut’s formes fixes lyrics. Furthermore, the way in which the Penn manuscript manages the transition between the two cycles of lyrics plainly demonstrates that this juxtaposition is intentional. As will become clearer below, the compiler of the Penn manuscript appears not only to be acutely aware of the Loange’s nonmusical quality, but is deliberately subverting this aspect of the Loange through his meticulous formal ordinatio. Consequently, his presentation of Machaut becomes not just an example of compulsive attention to formal variety but a meditation on the cultural role of formes fixes lyric.

**The Penn Manuscript’s Machaut Section:**

*Adding to the Loange des dames*

As we have just seen, the Penn manuscript’s compiler arranges lyrics from Machaut’s Loange in precise sequences: the first alternates ballades and rondeaux, the next alternates chansons royaux and rondeaux, the third alternates complaintes and rondeaux, and a fourth alternates ballades with rondeaux again, ending on fol. 39r. Another discrete sequence occupies the next four folios, consisting of unattributed ballades that alternate with virelays and two rondeaux, organized just as precisely as the preceding Loange section (Table 1.4). This new sequence is then followed by a set of just virelays, still all anonymous. The Penn manuscript’s reorganized selection from the Loange thus concludes with a virelay-ballade sequence and a set of virelays, not written by Machaut. This whole arrangement is then followed
by four more Machaut lyrics, two rondeaux and two virelays, that occur before the quire (and first booklet) breaks. The fact that the compiler returns to Machaut on the last page of this booklet, rather than on the first page of the second booklet, makes a strong case against viewing this anonymous sequence simply as an effort to fill the end of a booklet with whatever he had on hand. Rather, the sequence emerges as a deliberate intercalation. Machaut himself included only one virelay in the Loange, and all of his other virelays were set to music, rendering this insertion in the Penn manuscript of unattributed virelays, meaning works not by Machaut, especially provocative. This section thus clearly reflects the compiler’s intention to fill out some kind of taxonomy: having arranged careful sequences of ballades, chansons royaux, and complaintes, interwoven with rondeaux, our compiler apparently felt like he needed to continue with the one remaining formes fixes genre not yet represented—the virelay—and lacking any in Machaut’s Loange, he looked for them elsewhere. This insertion of unattributed work has the effect, then, of a kind of supplement to Machaut, rounding out his own virelay-less Loange with someone else’s lyrics.

This insertion of unattributed work creates, moreover, a bridging effect between the nonmusical Loange selection and the rest of the Machaut lyrics in the manuscript, of which an overwhelming number have been taken from those lyrics that Machaut set to music. From this point on, the forms are not alternated as meticulously; almost all of the Machaut lyrics set to music chosen by Penn’s compiler are ballades, with several scattered lais and rondeaux. Importantly, this “musical” section is also no longer entirely by Machaut but continues to exhibit repeated intercalations of work by other, now unknown authors in a manner that suddenly fragments the manuscript’s presentation of Machaut’s formes fixes lyric œuvre. Virelays, furthermore, are conspicuously absent from this “musical” section of lyric by Machaut (as well as by others) until several folios from the end of the Machaut-dominated middle portion of the Penn manuscript. In these concluding folios, we get a sudden profusion of virelays—sixteen out of the twenty-seven final lyrics, most of which are now taken from a different work by Machaut, the Voir dit. If the Loange section seemed to require a supplement of virelays written by someone else, then this final Voir dit section, in a neatly parallel structure, suddenly proffers us a veritable bou-
Table 1.4 Sequence of Virelais and Ballades at the Conclusion of Penn's Loange des dames

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOL.</th>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>FORM AND INCIPIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40v</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>Virelay, “Fin cuer, tresdoulz a mon vueil”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41r</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>Ballade, “Espris d’amours, nuit &amp; jour me complains”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
<td>Virelay, “Doulz regart par subtil atrait”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41v</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>Rondeau, “Revien espoir, consort aie party”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>Rondeau, “Espoir me faut a mon plusgrant besoin”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Virelay, “Par un tout seul escondire”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42r</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>Ballade, “Un chastel scay es droiz siez de l’empire”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>128</td>
<td>Virelay, “Vostre oeil par fine doucour”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42v</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>Ballade, “Beaute flourist &amp; jeunesce verdoye”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Virelay, “Sans faire tort a nullui”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43r</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>Virelay, “Biaute, bonte et doucour”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Ballade, “L’arriereban de mortele doulour”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43v</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>Virelay, “Je me doing a vous ligement”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>134</td>
<td>Ballade, “Quiconques se complaigne de fortune ...”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44r</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>Virelay, “Onques Narcisus en la clere fontaine”—anonymous</td>
</tr>
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</table>

quet of virelays by Machaut, as if repaying the virelays debt of the opening Loange section.

In rounding out the Loange with those “missing” virelays, then, the Penn manuscript’s compiler has fundamentally altered the program of the Loange by adding a form that seems to have been, at least for Machaut, expressly musical. By adding virelays written by someone else to the
Loange, and by then immediately continuing with other lyrics that Machaut set to music, Penn's compiler overwrites Machaut's treatment of the Loange as a collection of *formes fixes* lyrics never intended to be set to music. As a result, Machaut's authorship of the Loange lyrics is subordinated to a new set of concerns, in which poetic form, particularly in its relation to music, assumes center stage. Here the virelay serves as a point of negotiation between lyric as text and lyric as music in a manuscript that contains no music yet seems to be acutely aware of the musical aspect of the lyrics it anthologizes. Indeed, music seems to emerge in this selection as a veritable genre in its own right, as an invisible but lasting presence on the pages of this purely literary anthology.

**Lyrics for Singing Versus Lyrics for Reading**

This painstaking *ordinatio* thus cleverly highlights the two main performative potentials explored by Machaut in his own engagement with the *formes fixes* tradition: the lyric intended to be read and the lyric intended to be sung. In this way, the manuscript's intricate organization of Machaut lyric appears to be complementing—indeed, illustrating—Deschamps' famous binary that pits "musique naturele" against "musique artificiele" in his *Dictier*. Writing after Machaut's death, Deschamps codifies in his *ars poetica* a rigorous distinction between lyric set to music that is to be sung and lyric that is to be read aloud. By "musique artificiele," Deschamps means what we now traditionally refer to as music, namely the work of producing melodic sound by means of instruments and voice. By contrast, "musique naturele," he explains, is so called "pour ce qu'elle ne peut estre aprinse a nul, se son propre couraige naturelement ne s'i applique" (because it cannot be taught to anyone unless his own thought is naturally inclined to it). He clarifies that it is "une musique de bouche en proferant paroules metrifiees, aucunefois en lais, autrefois en balades, autrefois en rondeaulz... et en chancons baladees" (an oral music producing words in meter, sometimes in lays, other times in ballades, other times in rondeaux... and in chansons baladées [vi-
The Poems of "Ch" | 29

relays)]. "Musique naturele" is, in other words, *formes fixes* lyric. Deschamps goes on to specify how one is to perform this "musique naturele" before the public:

Et ja soit ce que . . . les faiseurs de [musique naturele] ne saichent pas communement la musique artificielle, ne donner chant par art des notes a ce qu'ilz font, toutesvoies est appellee musique ceste science naturele pour ce que les diz et chancons par eulx ou les livres metri­fiez se lisent de bouche, et proferent par voix non pas chantable tant que les douces paroles ainsis faictes et recordees par voix plaisant aux escoutans qui les oyent. 34

[And even though . . . the makers of (natural music) generally do not know artificial music, nor how to provide music with the art of notation for what they make, nonetheless this natural science is called music, for dits and chançons and books in meter are read out loud by them and are produced by a nonsinging voice such that the sweet words thus composed and repeated by the voice, are pleasing to those who hear them.]

As this passage suggests, by the time Deschamps composed this treatise in 1392, the rupture between lyrics for reading and lyrics for singing, the beginnings of which are already evident in the Machauldian corpus and registered in its manuscript transmission, was nearing completion.

The "Ch" lyrics come immediately after this Machaut section, in which the distinction between lyrics for reading and lyrics for singing is emphasized with such virtuosity by an *ordinatio* that analyzes lyric form. The "Ch" lyrics have, we recall, little thematic unity among them, but they are linked by an identical formal structure characterized by the longer stanzas that exemplified a literary turn away from music as outlined by Deschamps in his *Dictier*. True, there are several scattered examples of ten-line stanza lyrics (without envoys) set to music in extant musical repertory manuscripts. Yet the form that unites the "Ch" lyrics happens to be the form most prevalent among those later medieval poets—Deschamps, Granson, the authors of the *Livre de cent ballades* and their successors—who lack the musical back-
ground of, even as they draw inspiration from, the poet-composer Guillaume de Machaut. Indeed, among all of Deschamps’ work, we know of only one lyric ever set to music, fittingly, his lament on Machaut’s death, the music for which was composed not by Deschamps but rather by the late fourteenth-century composer F. Andrieu. The development of the envoy in the ballade effectively severed that form from its musical roots because the structure of the envoy rendered a ballade unsingable within the conventions of music composition of the period.

The dominant taxonomic principle behind the Penn manuscript is, we realize, not authorship but rather the formal characteristics of the lyrics included in the compilation. This manuscript’s overarching arrangement brings into focus the evolution of *formes fixes* lyric away from musical and toward purely literary forms. It is therefore hardly surprising that this history should involve not only a chronological axis but also a geographical one. Wimsatt’s suggestion that “Ch” denotes Chaucer comes from what he perceives to be this anthology’s orientation toward England. But does England really occupy primacy of place for this collection, or might it be only one of the several places in which Francophone culture reigns? In other words, rather than being a focal point of the collection, as Wimsatt suggests, might the evocation of England demonstrate instead the geographic breadth of the *formes fixes*? To be sure, the manuscript includes pastourelles, which seem to have exerted an influence on Jean Froissart, who later lived in England, as well as ballades by Granson, whose peripatetic life sent him back and forth across the Channel, but I question whether the manuscript’s compiler is truly invested in England *qua* England. I propose, rather, that he has simply chosen to incorporate England within a Francophone poetic field in the service of a totalizing enterprise to represent historical developments in fourteenth-century *formes fixes* lyric.

“Ch” might stand for an author’s name, and that name might just turn out to be Chaucer’s. As I have argued, however, the identification of a single author for these lyrics is less significant to the collection as a whole than are their distinctive features that work to illustrate the “literary turn” in *formes fixes* lyric. Coming after the Machaut section, with its vexed negotiations between nonmusical and musical lyric forms, the “Ch” section marks
a decisive shift in the anthology toward collecting later, longer, and purely literary *formes fixes* verse that mirrors chronological developments in the history of this lyric genre.

As Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet reminds us, “le terme recueil peut désigner un acte, celui d’accueillir puis de recueillir, ou un lieu: un objet” (the term “collection” can designate an act, that of collecting and then of recol­lecting, or a place: an object). Medieval compilations are, she suggests, constituted by both the preliminary work of selecting material and the finished articulation of that process, visually represented by the disposition of selections in manuscript. The scholarly insistence on identifying the text of a Machaut or a Deschamps within an anthology often eclipses the anthology’s unattributed pieces. The Penn manuscript is a striking example of a compilation for which authorship is clearly subordinate to a host of other concerns. The presence of “Ch” in this manuscript indicates its compiler’s acquisition of a new exemplar, containing new literary material, in the service of a literary history that tracks the evolution of *formes fixes* lyric away from music to longer literary forms in the final decades of the fourteenth century. Whatever else “Ch” might stand for, what it marks in the Pennsylvania manuscript is, first and foremost, change.

**Notes**

I am indebted to David Wallace, Rita Copeland, A.S.G. Edwards, and A.B. Kraebel for their thoughts on earlier drafts of this piece, to Marco Nievergelt for help on the translations, and to Emily Steiner and Lynn Ransom for first giving me the opportunity to present this work at the Fifth Annual Schoenberg Symposium on Manuscript Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in 2012.


Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the Poems of “Ch”* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009), 3–4, 88–90. A digital facsimile is available through the University of Pennsylvania’s Penn in Hand website. My Ph.D dissertation (University of Pennsylvania, 2014) offers additional evidence to confirm the late fourteenth- to early fifteenth-century dating of the compilation and its possible provenance from the courtly milieu of Charles VI and Isabeau of Bavaria as well as some alternative suggestions as to its compilation and production.

3 For an edition, see Wimsatt, *Ch*, 16–45.

4 It is equally plausible that there were multiple people involved in the planning of the codex, but there is not enough evidence to conclude definitively whether the manuscript is a single or collaborative endeavor; therefore, for the sake of simplicity, I will just use the singular.


8 Wimsatt, *Ch*, 12–14.

9 Ardis Butterfield, “Chaucer’s French Inheritance,” in *The Cambridge Companion*
The other witnesses are: Lausanne, Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire, MS 350, fols. 118v–122v; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter BnF), MS français 1131, fols. 192v–194v; BnF, MS français 24440, fols. 228v–230v; Barcelona, Biblioteca Catalunya, MS 8, pp. 685–91; BnF, MS français 2201, fols. 99r–103r; BnF, MS français 833, fols. 174v–175v; Lausanne, Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire, MS 4254, fols. 17r–21r, and Carpentras, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 390, fols. 69r–72v.


12 The added line has a letter “h” with very similar open lobes to and general shape as the “h” in “Ch,” and the ink is the same darker color.

13 In particular, the very broad “r” looks strikingly similar to the “r” in the previous correction, and the ink is the same darker color.

14 These are the unattributed lyric “Amour vraye en paix seurement” (fol. 25r), Machaut’s “Dame, je muir pour vous compris” (fol. 30v), and Machaut’s “Se trestuit cil qui sont et ont este” (fols. 33r–v).

15 Transcribed from the manuscript with silently expanded abbreviations and added punctuation. Translation is my own, making as much sense of ungrammaticalities as possible.

16 Wimsatt emends “venant” to “avient” in his edition to get around precisely this problem.

17 Wimsatt, Ch, 10.


19 Deschamps, *Dictier*, 72–74.


21 The Granson lyrics are “Salus asses par bonne entencion” (fol. 10r–v), “J’ay en mon cuer .i. eul qui toudiz veille” (fol. 11r), and “Je vous mercy dez belles la plus belle” (fol. 72v).

22 These are “Voir ne vous puis, helas, ce poise moy” (fol. 84r), “Pourquoy virent onques mes yeulx” (fol. 86v), “Vous me povez faire vivre ou mourir” (fol. 87r), “Mon seul vouloir, mon seul bien, ma maistresse” (fol. 89r), “Belle, qui de toutes bonte” (fol. 91v), “A l’eure que bergiers leur pain” (fol. 92r), and “Entre mon cuer & mes yeulx grant descort” (fol. 92v).

23 Deschamps, *Dictier*, 78.

24 Cf. Lawrence Earp’s concordance for the *Loange* lyrics across its major witnesses, including Penn, that effectively demonstrates the overall stability of their order in the various Machaut collected-works manuscripts and their radical rearrangement in the Penn manuscript: *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research* (New York: Garland, 1995), 247–54.

25 Rubrics in the tables follow the ones used in the original manuscript with silently expanded abbreviations and added punctuation.

26 For a list of contents to all complete- and partial-works manuscripts of Machaut, see Earp, *Guide*, 73–128, esp., for BnF, *MS français* 9221, pp. 92–94, and, for the Penn manuscript, pp. 115–18. See also Lawrence Earp, “Machaut’s Role in the Production of Manuscripts of His Work,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 42.3 (Autumn 1989): 461–503, on 482, on the differences between BnF fr. 1584’s index and actual contents, particularly with regard to the *Loange’s* chansons royaux.


28 Alternatively known as the Vogüé manuscript, or sometimes the Ferreii–Vogüé manuscript, this codex, formerly of the private Wildenstein collection in New York, is now privately owned by James and Elizabeth Ferrell and is on loan to the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

29 This kind of rubric also occurs in BnF, *MS français* 843, a late fourteenth- / early fifteenth-century copy representing a 1360s stage in the Machaut manuscript.
transmission; see Earp, Guide, 95, 115–18. For each rubric’s exact wording, see Earp, Guide, 237–38.


31 For the order of the contents in Machaut’s major collected-works manuscripts, see Earp, Guide, 77–97.


33 A detailed discussion of this fascinating section, the specific lyrics by other authors that it contains, and its intriguing textual relationship to other late medieval manuscripts of formes fixes lyric is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this present chapter but will form the object of a future study.


35 For a fascinating argument that Deschamps never intended for this work to be set to music and, in fact, originally wrote it as one half of a six-stanza ballade double that was later—and still is—treated as two separate but linked works so that it could be set to music, see Robert Magnan, “Eustache Deschamps and His Double: ‘Musique Naturelle’ and ‘Musique Artificieele,’” Ars Lyrica 7 (1993): 47–64.