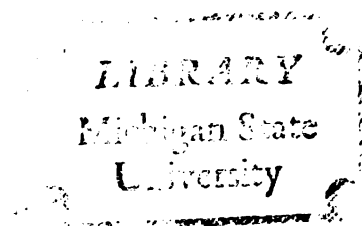


THE VIRELAI

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
CHARLES STEPHEN LARKOWSKI  
1974

THESIS





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# ABSTRACT

## THE VIRELAI

By

Charles Stephen Larkowski

A compendium of research in the general area of medieval secular song forms does not yet exist. This has resulted in considerable difficulty for students and scholars, especially because many of the "standard" works published on the subject have been the targets of much disagreement and debate. Some, such as the pioneering writings of Friedrich Gennrich and Pierre Aubry, are significantly outdated.

The virelai especially seems to have suffered in this respect. It is generally included with the rondeau and ballade among the formes fixes, and so one is led to believe that it was a form which was (a) relatively inflexible and (b) contemporary with the rondeau and the ballade. However, those examples most often encountered in anthologies are apt to show a baffling diversity of forms and dates of origin.

It is hoped that, by presenting a chronological development, and especially by examining the views of some writers whose works are unavailable in English, this paper will help to remove some of the obscurity now surrounding the virelai. The emphasis is primarily on form, but style must also be taken into account in many instances. Where disagreement exists, the various views are presented with little attempt made at value judgements. As many examples as practically possible are given here in their entirety, thereby avoiding



the necessity on the reader's part of obtaining scores for himself.

This paper will include (a) a discussion of the formes fixes and their origins, (b) a scrutiny of the virelai in chronological sequence, and (c) conclusions and summary.

THE VIRELAI

By

Charles Stephen Larkowski

A THESIS

Submitted to

Michigan State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Music

1974



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1974

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. The Refrain Forms in Medieval French Secular Song	1
II. The Virelai	11
A. The Cantiga and the Lauda in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries	11
B. The Virelai in the Late Thirteenth Century	24
C. The Virelai in the Fourteenth Century	35
D. The Virelai in the Fifteenth Century	80
III. Conclusions and Summary	110
Bibliography	116



## I. The Refrain Forms in Medieval French Secular Song

The important song forms of the Middle Ages which utilized refrains are the rondeau, the virelai and the ballade, often referred to collectively as the formes fixes. For the purposes of this discussion the rotrouenge will also be introduced, although this form apparently had a much smaller impact than did the other three.

The rondeau, generally of one stanza, is characterized by the appearance of a part of the refrain within the stanza, and (usually) by the close correspondence of music and text. The form is represented by the diagram ABaAabAB, in which the capitals indicate the refrain, and the letters a and b refer to the two different melodic segments as well as to the rhyme scheme of the text. Many examples, especially early ones, are without the initial statement of the refrain, thus resulting in the six-line form aAabAB. Example 1 is a rondeau by Guillaume d'Ambiens which dates from the late thirteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

### Example 1

1.4.7. Vos n'a-ler mi-e si com je faz 2.8. Ne vos, ne vos  
3. Bele A-a-liz par main se le-va 6. Bon jor ait ce-  
5. Biau se ves-ti et mieuz se pa-ra  
n'i sa-vez a-ler, Ne vos, ne vos n'i sa-vez a-ler.  
le que n'os no-mez So-vant m'i fait e-le sou-pi-rer.

1. Davison, Archibald T. and Apel, Willi, eds., Historical Anthology of Music, revised ed., 1949, p. 17.

Many rondeaux show an expanded form of up to twenty-one lines, especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This expansion allowed for much variation; these several types have been thoroughly examined by Gennrich.<sup>2</sup> One example will illustrate, this being an anonymous eleven-line rondeau from the Manuscript Paris, Bibl. nat. franc. 844, as transcribed by Gennrich (Example 2).<sup>3</sup> The piece may be diagrammed:

A<sub>7</sub>B<sub>8</sub>B<sub>8</sub>a<sub>7</sub>A<sub>7</sub>b<sub>8</sub>b<sub>8</sub>A<sub>7</sub>B<sub>8</sub>B<sub>8</sub>.<sup>4</sup>

Example 2

Another variation of the basic eight-line rondeau is occasionally found, in which the two musical phrases do not differ except at their

2. Gennrich, Friedrich, Das Altfranzösische Rondeau und Virelai, 1963, pp. 79-86.

3. \_\_\_\_\_, Rondeaux, Virelays und Balladen, I, 1921, 266.

4. The subscripts indicate the number of syllables per line. In this example and many of the virelais given below, the piece is to be performed according to the numbering of the text. The generally accepted format for a rondeau is:

$$\left\| \begin{array}{l} 1.4.7. \\ 8. \\ 6. \end{array} \right\| \left\| \begin{array}{l} 2.8. \\ 6. \end{array} \right\|$$

Likewise, the format for a virelai is:

$$\left\| \begin{array}{l} 1.5. \\ 4. \end{array} \right\| \left\| \begin{array}{l} 2. \\ 3. \end{array} \right\|$$

When the stanza contains more than the minimum number of lines, the form must of course be adjusted accordingly.

cadences. In these cases, the text often has only one rhyme. The following example is the contratenor of a three-voice work of Adam de la Hale.<sup>5</sup>

Example 3

1.4.7. A-mours et ma Dame aus-si, 2.9. Join-tes mains vous proi mer-chi.  
 3. Vo-tre grant biau-té mar-vi 6. Vo-tres grant biau-tés mar-vi  
 5. Se n'a-vez pi-té de mi

Thus: A7A7 a7A7a7 A7A7.

An extra degree of cohesiveness is obtained here in the great similarity of lines 3 and 6. This is a technique which figures prominently in French poetry of the period, and which will be especially germane to our discussion of the *virelai*.

The *virelai*, like the *rondeau*, has an initial refrain, usually of two lines. This is followed by a rhymed couplet set to a repeated new phrase of music, often with ouvert and clos endings. Then comes a couplet rhyming with and set to the music of the refrain, and finally the refrain is repeated. This may be diagrammed ABccabAB; more common, however, is the simplified scheme AbbaA. It is understood here that the letters of the diagram do not indicate parts of equal length.

Unlike the *rondeau*, the *virelai* generally had more than one stanza, so that the form AbbaAbbaA . . . resulted. As in the *rondeau*, expansion of the form often occurred, resulting in stanzas of more than eight lines.

The *ballade* differs from the *rondeau* and *virelai* in that it has no initial refrain. Here the chief characteristic is the repetition of the first section of the music, with a text retaining the initial rhyme

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5. Coussemaker, H., Oeuvres Complètes du Trouvère Adam de la Hale, 1872, 220-221.

scheme. There are then several lines, ending with the refrain. The form *ababcdE* is representative of many ballades. Musically, the refrain may be a repetition of the previous line; *ababcdD* or *ababcdeE*. Since the number of lines after the repeated first section is variable, no single diagram will fit all examples; but the form *aabC* or *aabcC* will usually suffice, with the understanding that again the letters of the diagram do not signify equal parts of the stanza.

The ballade is illustrated by the following example, from the Roman de Fauvel, from which it can be surmised that, like the *virelai*, the ballade is a multi-stanza form.<sup>6</sup>

Example 4

A - y, A - mours, tant me du - re le mal  
que j'oi a - por - ter et me grieve ou - tre me -  
su - re sans nes - un con - fort trou - ver.  
Quant vous m'en po - ez sa - ner et je de par  
vous l'en - du - re pour quoi m'es - tes vous si  
du - re?

6. Gennrich, Rondeaux, Virelays und Balladen, I, 292-294.

Et vous, dame nete et pure,  
 qui n'avez ou monde per,  
 qui veez qu'en tele arduress  
 m'estuet pour vous demourer,  
 done autre desesperer  
 se pourroit par aventure,  
pour quoi m'estes vous si dure?

L'en voit toute creature  
 naturellement encliner  
 par reson et par droicture  
 a tout ce qui l'aime amer.  
 Et vous, que je n'os nommer,  
 helass de moi n'avez cure,  
pour quoi m'estes vous si dure?

Though the *rotrouenge* is of lesser importance, it is presented here because of its relevance to our later discussion. Reese includes it among the "litany-type" forms because it involves a great deal of repetition.<sup>7</sup> It consists basically of an indefinite series of musical repetitions, ending with a refrain. Often the penultimate line is set to the refrain music: aaa...(b)B.<sup>8</sup>

There are varying theories concerning the origins of the medieval song forms. For many years the pioneering work of Friedrich Gennrich (especially Grundriss einer Formenlehre des mittelalterlichen Liedes, 1931) was generally accepted. Gennrich begins with the Latin rondellus, a form consisting of several four-line stanzas, each with the form aAbB. Several of these are preserved in manuscripts of the Notre Dame School, dating from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. A few have the six-line form aAabAB; this could have easily been derived from the four-line rondellus. The eight-line *rondeau* is then arrived

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7. Reese, Gustave, Music in the Middle Ages, 1940, 220-221.

8. See Gennrich, Die Altfranzösische Rotrouenge, 1925.

at by placing the refrain at the beginning as well as at the end. Meanwhile, with the rise of courtly life, the form was transferred to use in vernacular settings.<sup>9</sup>

Gennrich then postulates that lines 2 and 3 of the eight-line rondeau were replaced by a new rhymed couplet, resulting in AbccabAB, the virelai. From this Gennrich goes further to derive three types of ballade. In the first, the music of the refrain within the stanza is replaced by new material, giving ABccdeAB or ABcdedefAB. The second type retains the inner refrain melody but also inserts a new section: ABcdedefabAB. The third type omits the initial refrain, but is otherwise identical to the first type: cdcdefAB or ababcdE(F).<sup>10</sup>

The main challenge to Gennrich's theory has come from Willi Apel, who has raised several objections.<sup>11</sup> First, Gennrich seems to derive the simple from the complex, a process which Apel finds highly unlikely. Second, no examples of ballades have been found which we can be sure were performed with the initial refrain, as in Gennrich's first two ballade types. Gennrich simply assumed that this was intended, but that they were left unwritten in the manuscripts, since the initial refrain was supposedly a tradition already established in the rondeau and virelai. Apel goes so far as to say, "Gennrich's 'balade' is entirely fictitious."<sup>12</sup> Also, Apel claims that the virelais in

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9. The rondellus, like the conductus, was often neither clearly sacred nor secular in nature.

10. Reese uses this theory almost verbatim in op.cit., 221-4.

11. Apel, Willi, "Rondeaux, Virelais and Ballades in 13th-Century Song," Journal of the American Musicological Society VII, 1954, 121-130.

12. Apel, Willi, review in Journal of the American Musicological Society IV, 1951, 262.



Rondeaux, Virelays und Balladen are all either manipulated by Gennrich to fit his theory or are hypothetically reconstructed from incomplete sources.<sup>13</sup>

It is pointed out that in the thirteenth-century chansonniers there are no examples of rondeaus or virelais in their "standard" forms. Forms which are at least similar to the ballade (all lacking the initial refrain) abound; only the trouvère examples consistently utilize refrains, the troubadour pieces generally being simple aab stanzas musically, with little or no textual repetition.

Apel admits the derivation of the rondeau from the Latin rondellus. However, since it is found only in secondary sources (especially motets), he concludes that it was a form of the jongleurs, who were generally of a lower social station than the trouvères, and who seldom if ever wrote down their compositions. Examples of virelai in the chansonniers are almost nil. Virelai-type forms are numerous among Italian laude and Spanish cantigas of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but are not found in abundance in France until the fourteenth century.

To summarize, Apel holds the view that, of the three formes fixes, only the ballade is truly a trouvère song form, while the rondeau was in the province of the itinerant professional musician (jongleur), and the virelai was not a part of the thirteenth-century repertoire at all. He therefore maintains that Gennrich's process of derivation is invalid.

Gilbert Reaney seems to occupy a middle-of-the-road position in this argument. In one article, he presents many of the conflicting

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13. Such as motet tenors. Many rondeaux have also been salvaged in this form.



ideas on the origins of the refrain forms, and comes to no definite conclusions.<sup>14</sup> With regard to the rondeau, he recognizes the influence of the Latin rondellus, but also considers the possibility of an earlier, secular dance form from which the rondeau may have evolved. On the virelai he seems to agree with Apel that it arose from the laude and cantigas, but still leaves open the possibility of derivation from the rondeau, since the two are so apparently similar. Likewise, Reaney sees the ballade as coming from the non-refrain troubadour chanson; but he parts with Apel in saying that the inclusion of a refrain may well have been due to the influence of the rondeau, the virelai, or both.

It is highly interesting that these more recent opinions, which consider the virelai as outside the mainstream of troubadour and trouvère music, agree in essence with the work of an earlier expert on the subject, Pierre Aubry. In Trouvères and Troubadours,<sup>15</sup> which first appeared in 1917, a chapter is devoted to the song forms. The virelai is not mentioned, and even the rondeau and ballade are hardly presented as the predominant forms of the period.

One of the obvious problems here is the difficulty of establishing even an approximate chronology. Many of the manuscripts are undated; even those which do bear dates give no evidence of the dates of the compositions they contain. We are at an especial disadvantage in the cases of those songs which survive only in secondary sources and must be reconstructed.

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14. Reaney, Gilbert, "Concerning the Origins of the Rondeau, Virelai and Ballade Forms," Musica Disciplina VI, 1953, 155-166.

15. Translated by Claude Aveling, New York, Cooper Square Publishers, 1969.

Also, there is considerable doubt as to the actual extent to which the music, as opposed to the text, determined form.<sup>16</sup> Comparatively few scholars until recently have sought to attack the problem from both aspects. It must be realized that hybrid forms existed in which the text was in one form and the music was in another.<sup>17</sup> Music and text were perhaps not so intimately connected as in later eras, as can be seen from the numerous contrafacta which exist, as well as texts which have been found with more than one setting.<sup>18</sup>

Many of these problems have undoubtedly arisen from the musicologist's desire to codify, a desire which is not completely reconcilable with the diversity which is always a factor in art. It is perhaps unfortunate that we have inherited the term formes fixes, which results in a serious misapprehension of medieval secular song, and especially that of the thirteenth century. The term arose in the fourteenth century; it cannot be accurately applied to the music of earlier times.

The rondeau, virelai and ballade did become more or less fixed in the Ars Nova, notably in the works of Guillaume de Machaut. Textually, certain metric patterns emerge as standard, and subject matter is more stereotyped. Both musically and textually, the three forms are more distinct; fewer hybrids exist, although cross-influences are

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16. See Reaney, op. cit., 155ff.

17. Such examples will be examined below.

18. See also Perrin, Robert H., letter in Journal of the American Musicological Society VIII, 1955, 77-78.

never entirely absent. Thus, we do have formes fixes at this time, but the application of the term to earlier music is not justified by the music that has survived.

In the fifteenth century these forms continued to be important, although new variations appeared. The rondeau seems to predominate, especially among the works of the Burgundian composers. With the rise of Renaissance styles, however, the through-composed chanson began to assume greater importance. The Italian frottola preserved a form akin to the rondeau in the sixteenth century, and the Spanish villancico retained characteristics of the virelai; but for the most part the dawn of the Renaissance marked the end of the formes fixes.

## II. The Virelai

### A. The Cantiga and the Lauda in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

The cantigas of Spain are among the earliest examples of the virelai form in secular music. Approximately four hundred of these pieces were collected under the guidance and patronage of King Alfonso X (El Sabio) of Castile and Leon, who ruled from 1252 to 1284; these are collectively known as the Cantigas de Santa Maria. Alfonso, while not distinguished for his handling of governmental matters, was known as a patron of the arts, and was himself a writer and musician. He had in his employ several Provençal musicians (troubadours), and to these men he assigned the task of collecting as many known cantigas as possible, as well as composing new ones. Although Alfonso undoubtedly contributed some himself, there is little information available which would allow a determination of the actual extent of that contribution.

Textually, most of the cantigas are semi-sacred in nature and are concerned with the Virgin Mary. Many are folk legends concerning miracles or certain holidays; others are simply songs of praise. A few of the cantigas contain allusions to contemporary historical events, or concern members of the royal household.

Since the compilers were troubadours, the notation is that of the Provençal chansonniers. With regard to rhythm, the old six modes are essentially preserved, but with certain freedoms and idiosyncrasies; these perhaps can be accounted for by remembering that many of the cantigas may well be considerably older than the manuscripts

in which they are preserved, so that the notation had to be "stretched" somewhat in order to accommodate certain rhythms.

One of the earliest researchers into the cantigas was Julián Ribera y Tarragó, whose study La Música de las Cantigas appeared in 1922.<sup>1</sup> Ribera held that the cantigas, and indeed all of the Spanish secular music of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were directly influenced by Moorish/Arabian music and poetry. In particular, he cites the zajal, an Arabian form which probably originated in the ninth century. This form originally consisted of a refrain of two lines plus several four-line stanzas, the final line of which rhymed with the refrain:

AAbbba(AA)ccca(AA)...<sup>2</sup>

This is similar to the virelai, and later the zajal became even more like the later French form. Here is an example from the cantigas, the music of which corresponds to the diagram AA'bb'aa"AA' etc. The text is in the zajal form AAbba, all lines being of fourteen syllables.<sup>3</sup>

Example 5

Co-mo Deus fez vy-nno d'a-gua ant'ar-che-te-cry-  
 nno, ben as-si de pois sa Madr'a-crc-cen-tou o vi-

1. Translated as Music in Ancient Arabia and Spain by Eleanor Hague and Marion Leffingwell, Stanford University Press, 1929.

2. Ribera, op. cit., 125.

3. Anglés, Higinio, ed., La Música de las Cantigas de Santa Maria, 1943, III, 31. For complete text, see Marques de Valmar, Las Cantigas de Santa Maria, 1889.

## Example 5 (cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for Example 5 (cont'd.). The score is written on five staves in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The word "fine" is written above the first staff. The lyrics are written below the staves. The second staff has a double bar line at the beginning. The third staff has a double bar line at the end. The fourth staff has a double bar line at the end. The fifth staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature, and ends with a double bar line. The word "D.C. al fine" is written below the fourth staff.

fine

nno. D'es-to di-rei un mi-ra-gre que fez, en Bre - ta -

nna, San-ta Ma-ri-a, por hũ-a do-na mui sen sa -

nna, en que mui-to bon cos-tum' e mui-ta bõ-a ma -

nna Deus po-se-rã, que quis d'e-la se-er seu re-zy -

D.C. al fine

nno.

Ribera also theorized that the cantigas are rhythmically akin to Arabian music. He includes a table showing a comparison between Arabian rhythms and the French modes.<sup>4</sup> His transcriptions are apparently an attempt to realize these Arabian rhythms, but with modern time signatures. In the original edition, many of the cantigas are even harmonized.

Under the scrutiny of later scholars, Ribera's ideas have not found acceptance. Higinio Anglés published a new edition of the cantigas in 1943, in which the notation is transcribed according to the Provençal

4. Ribera, op. cit., 195.

tradition.<sup>5</sup> More importantly, Anglés discovered, in a manuscript of the Catalanian monastery of Ripoll, a number of conducti which, in form, are closely akin to the cantigas, and which antedate them by a century. Thus we have the possibility that the actual origin of the cantigas, and perhaps of the virelai, lies in music of the Church.

A convincing case can be made for this. Isabel Pope has found strong similarities between earlier Spanish secular songs, which are often structured in paralled strophes with a refrain, and the Mozarabic Preces, or penitential hymns.<sup>6</sup> The Preces are in many ways similar to sequence hymns, though they seem to have developed independently; however, they all utilize refrains, and retain the same pattern for each strophe throughout.

Reese and others have therefore concluded that Ribera's theories cannot be accepted as fact. Reese also makes the sensible observation that similar forms may well have developed simultaneously in different locales.<sup>7</sup>

The term "cantiga" is a generic term much like "Lied" or "Chanson," and so they display a variety of forms. The great majority are multi-stanza works with refrains which appear at the beginning and again at

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5. Anglés, op. cit., 195.

6. Pope, Isabel, "Medieval Latin Background of the Thirteenth-Century Galician Lyric," Speculum IX, 1934, 3-25.

7. Reese, Op. cit., 246.



the end of each stanza. Many are identical to the virelai, musically, but most of these do not have texts which fully conform to the musical structure. The following example has the musical form ABccabAB (or ABb'b'abAB), but the text follows the zajal pattern AAbbbaAA.<sup>8</sup>

Example 6

Tor-to se-ri-a grand'e des-me-su-ra de  
 pren-der nial da Vir-gen ssa fi-gu-ra. fine Ond'  
 a-vê-o en San Mi-guel de Tom-ba, un  
 mō-es-tei-ro que jaz so-bre lom-ba d'ũ-a gran  
 pe-na que já quant' é com-ba, en que co-ris-co  
 fe-riu noit'es-cu-ra.

Expanded forms are frequently encountered among the cantigas, as in this example which has a four-line refrain and lines of double length within the stanza.<sup>9</sup>

8. Anglés, *op. cit.*, III, 47.

9. *Ibid.*, 50.

Text: A<sub>8</sub> B<sub>7</sub> A<sub>8</sub> B<sub>7</sub> c<sub>15</sub> c<sub>15</sub> c<sub>15</sub> b<sub>15</sub> A<sub>8</sub> B<sub>7</sub> A<sub>8</sub> B<sub>7</sub>

Music: A B A' B' cd cd ab ab' A B A' B'

### Example 7

A Vir-gen mui gro-ri-o-sa, Re-y-nna es-pi-ri-  
 tal, das que a-ma é ce-o-sa, Ca non quer que fa-çam  
 fine  
 mal. D'est' un mi-ra-gre fre-mo-so, ond' a-ve-re-  
 des sa-bor, vos di-rey, que fez a Vir-gen Ma-dre  
 de nos-tro Sen-nor, per-que ti-rou de gran fa-lla  
 a un mui falss' a-ma-dor que a mñ-u-de cam-  
 D.C. al fine  
 bia-va seus a-mor-es d'un en al.

While the preceding example simply doubles the length of the form, irregular variations also occur. Most of the texts consist of lines of equal length, but Example 8 is much more complex in this respect. The stanza has a six-line text set to five lines of music, so that an

internal rhyme results.<sup>10</sup>

Text: A<sub>8</sub> A<sub>8</sub> b<sub>7</sub> c<sub>5</sub> b<sub>7</sub> c<sub>5</sub> a<sub>2</sub> a<sub>8</sub> A<sub>8</sub> A<sub>8</sub>

Music: A A' b c d a" a' A' A'

### Example 8

Por Deus tal Se-nhor mui-to val, que to-da do-or  
toll' e mal. Es-ta Sen-nor que dit' ei é San-  
ta Ma-ri-a, que a Deus seu Fi-llo Rey ro-  
ga to-da vi-a seu al que nos guar-de do  
yn-fer-nal.

*fine*  
*D.C. al fine*

Another common formal feature is the variation of the refrain melody in the second part of the stanza, as in Example 9. A new musical phrase (d) appears where there is normally a repetition of the first line of the refrain.<sup>11</sup>

10. Ibid., 89.

11. Ibid., 18.

Text:  $A_9 A_{10} b_{10} b_{10} b_{10} a_{10} A_9 A_{10}$

Music: A B c c d b A B

Example 9

Ro-sa das ro-sas et Fror das fro-res, Dona das  
do-nas, Se-nnor das se-nno-res Ro-sa de bel-dad'e  
de pa-re-cer et Fror d'a-le-gri-a et de pra-  
zer; Do-na en mui pi-a-do-se se-er,  
Se-nno-en to-ller coi-tas et do-lo-res.

*fine*  
*D.C. al fine*

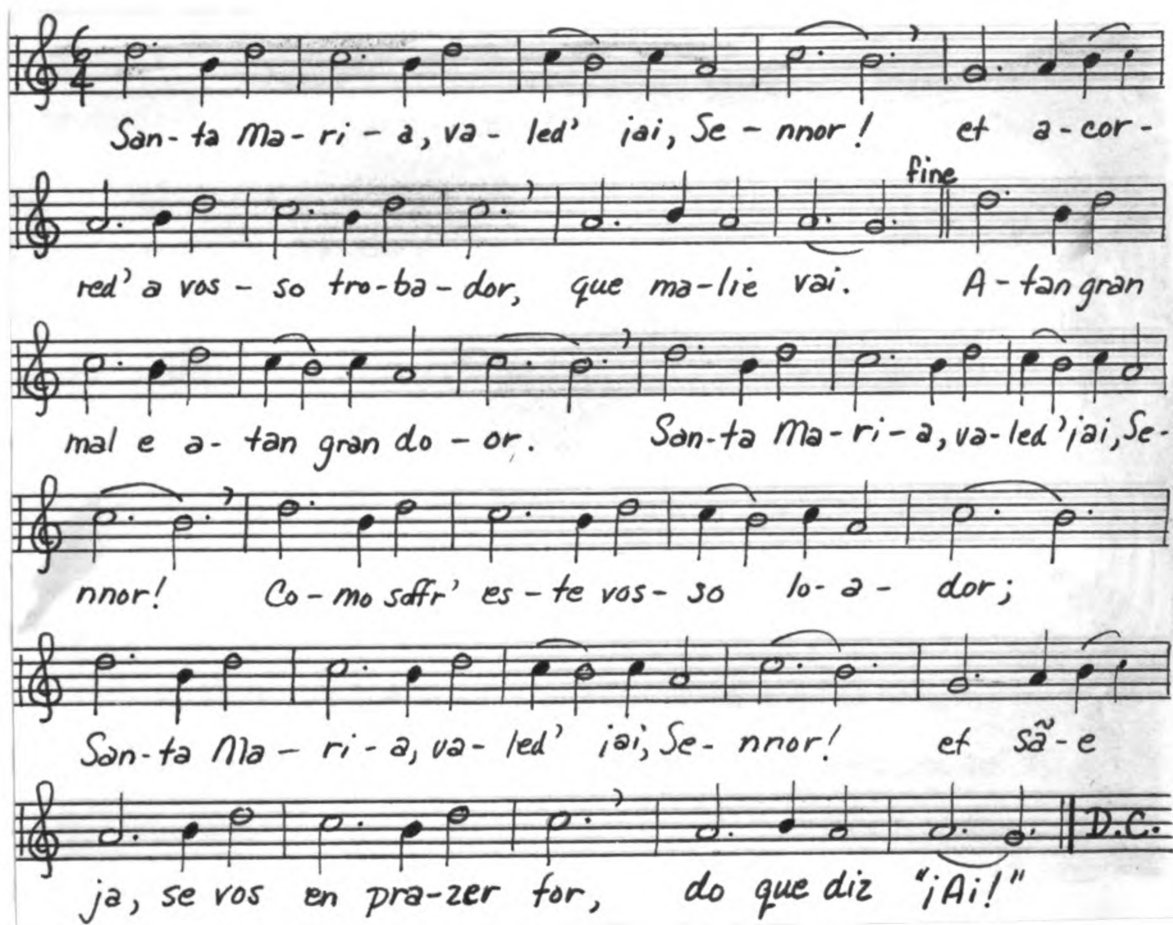
One of the cantigas (Example 10) is unique in that the refrain reappears within the stanza, as in the rondeau.<sup>12</sup> A similarity to the rondeau is also evident in the music, although it is difficult to imagine any direct influence here. Perhaps the antiphonal singing of Psalms and litanies in the Church is the most plausible precedent.

Text:  $A_{10} A_{10} B_4 a_{10} A_{10} a_{10} A_{10} a_{10} b_4 A_{10} A_{10} B_4$

Music: A B C a a a a b c A B C

12. Ibid., 310.

## Example 10



San-ta Ma-ri-a, va-led' iai, Se-nnor! et a-cor-  
red' a vos-so tro-ba-dor, que ma-lie vai. A-tan gran  
mal e a-tan gran do-or. San-ta Ma-ri-a, va-led' iai, Se-  
nnor! Co-mo soffr' es-te vos-so lo-a-dor;  
San-ta Ma-ri-a, va-led' iai, Se-nnor! et sã-e  
ja, se vos en pra-zer for, do que diz "iAi!"

It seems reasonable to suggest that the cantigas possibly represent an inextricable mixture of Arabian, Provençal and Church influences. The zajal form is undoubtedly present, but this hardly necessitates that one assume with Ribera that all aspects of these pieces are traceable to Moorish prototypes. To proceed a step further, there is little evidence that the French virelai is a direct product of the cantiga. Unless many more manuscripts and much more historical documentation come to light, these problems are quite unsolvable for the present.

The laude, which were penitential songs associated with bands of flagellants and pilgrims in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, constitute an important body of medieval Italian music. We have approximately 135 of these, preserved mainly in two manuscripts, MS Cortona 91 and MS Florence Magl. II, I, 122. About a dozen are in a form similar to the virelai.

Chaytor has documented the activities of troubadours in Italy in the late twelfth century.<sup>13</sup> Provençal was in fact the language of the noble classes for a time. It has therefore been suggested that the virelai was introduced into Italy by the troubadours. This view is not now widely held, because, as previously mentioned, the Provençal chansonniers are nearly devoid of songs with refrains.

The lauda was essentially sacred in character, but non-liturgical. Its secular counterpart was the ballata, which is mentioned by Dante and others; however, the absence of surviving examples suggests that they were popular in nature and therefore not preserved in notation.<sup>14</sup> The form was described in terms which had been used in connection with earlier dance music. The three parts were the ripresa or refrain, generally of two lines; the piedi, two rhymed lines often set to a repeated melody; and the volta, a new two-line section often set to the music of the refrain. When the piedi are musically identical and the volta is set to the refrain melody, we have the form of the

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13. Chaytor, H.J., The Troubadours, Cambridge University Press, 1912, 95ff.

14. The ballata was widespread in the fourteenth century as a polyphonic form; see below.

virelai. There has been some disagreement over whether the ripresa was repeated after each stanza (it undoubtedly occurred at the beginning); more recent scholars tend to argue in the affirmative.

The following example shows piedi with different melodies and the volta set to the refrain music. The form is thus ABcdabAB, very close to the virelai. The text consists of fourteen stanzas.<sup>15</sup>

Example 11

Handwritten musical notation for Example 11, a virelai. The notation is in treble clef and includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The lyrics are written below the notes. The form is ABcdabAB, very close to the virelai. The text consists of fourteen stanzas.

Ve-ni-te a lau-da-re, per a-mo-re cau-ta-re l'a-mo-ro-sa ver-ge-ne Ma-ri-a. Ma-ri-a glo-ri-o-sa bi-a-ta, sem-pre si' mol-to lau-da-ta; pre-ghiam ke ne si' a-ro-ca-ta al tuo fi-liol, vir-go pi-a.

The next example exhibits the standard virelai pattern, AbccabAB, and consists of five stanzas.<sup>16</sup>

15. Liuzzi, Fernando, La lauda e i Primordi della Melodia Italiana, I, 1935, 257ff.

16. Davison and Apel, HAM, 19.



## Example 12

1. 5. A tut-ta gen-te fa-cio pre-gho e di-co Che lau-di  
 4. An-ci pren-de-ste la fe-de cri-sti-a-na Che sea-cia  
 me-co Mar-ga-ri-fa au-len-te. 2. O ver-gi-ne, che'n pic-co-la  
 va-na let fa a Dio Ser-ven-te. 3. Et non vo-le-ste per no-bi-  
 e-ta-de A Di-o vi de-ste e fo-ce-vi sua spo-sa  
 li-ta-de Che foss' en vo-i es-ser del mon-do ro-sa.

Liuzzi was of the opinion that the laude were primarily in binary meter, and his transcriptions were made with that in mind. However, the notation is not noticeably different from that of Gregorian plain-song; Apel's transcriptions are therefore unmetered.<sup>17</sup> It is also worthy of note that the tonality tends toward a major-minor feeling.<sup>18</sup>

Whereas the virelai pattern was apparently arrived at in Spain through a mixture of influences coming from Arabian music, the Church and the troubadours, the only clear influence on the laude is dance music, as shown in the terms used to describe the form. The secular term "ballata" would tend to support this, but the actual manuscripts which would confirm it are lacking. Troubadour influence here cannot be demonstrated. All indications point to a tradition of laude from the early twelfth century, while the troubadours were only active in

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17. *Ibid.*, 19.

18. Reese, *op.cit.*, 238.



Italy approximately fifty years later, and then only for a relatively short time. Furthermore, the troubadours had contact mainly with the upper classes; the penitential movement which gave rise to the laude was of an entirely different social level. We also have scant evidence that either the lauda or the ballata made any substantial impact in France before the fourteenth century, if at all.

## B. The Virelai in the Late Thirteenth Century

Secular music in twelfth- and thirteenth-century France was largely carried on by the troubadours in the South and the trouvères in the North. These men were musicians as well as poets, whose compositions were almost entirely concerned with chivalry and courtly love. Thus, as in the case of the Elizabethan sonnet, the texts tend to be stereotyped; themes of unrequited love or comparisons of the beloved to the Virgin are common. Most of these songs belong to two types: through-composed, or having a repeat of the initial section of music. (These were called respectively vers and canzo by the troubadours.)<sup>1</sup> Songs with refrains were relatively rare, and are found almost exclusively in the repertoire of the trouvères. The ballade is most common, but the rondeau occasionally is found; there are a handful of pieces which may be considered virelais.

Gennrich maintains that the term "virelai" is derived from "virer," meaning to turn or veer, plus "li," the third person singular of the personal pronoun. This form of the word, "vireli," appears in a few texts, such as the refrain "Faites ainsi ce vireli,/Faites ainsi,"<sup>2</sup> According to Gennrich, this was an earlier form, later corrupted to "virelai."<sup>3</sup>

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1. But see Apel, JAMS VII, 124.

2. Gennrich, Rondeaux, Virelays und Balladen, II, Refrain 636.

3. Gennrich, "Die einstimmige Virelai," Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, XIII, 1808.

Another theory has been advanced by Manfred Bukofzer.<sup>4</sup> He presents the possibility that the virelai was derived from the lai, which in its simplest form was constructed in strophes of parallel lines: aa bb cc etc. From this could have come the form aabB (which, incidentally is a type of ballade) . If the refrain is also performed at the beginning of the stanza, we have BaabB; or, by reversing the letters of the diagram, AbbaA, the virelai. Thus the term would indicate a lai with the melody "turned back" into a refrain.

Latin etymologies have also been proposed, but this is unlikely, as the word seldom appears in a Latinized form even in Latin treatises.<sup>5</sup> Gennrich indicates an origin in dance music. He proposes as one hypothesis the idea that the term "vireli" denoted a dance, while "virelai" meant the song which was composed for the purpose of dancing.<sup>6</sup> This at least seems plausible in that "rondeau" and "ballade" are generally thought to be dance terms as well.

One of the few thirteenth-century virelais which has been preserved in manuscript as a monophonic piece is "C'est la fins" by Guillaume d'Amiens (Example 13).<sup>7</sup> This piece has received much

4. Bukofzer, Manfred, "The First English Chanson on the Continent," Music and Letters, XIX, 1938, 130.

5. Gennrich, Das Altfranzösische..., 16.

6. Ibid., 20.

7. Davison and Apel, HAM, 17.

attention because it serves as the cornerstone for Gennrich's belief that the virelai was derived from the rondeau.

### Example 13

1. 5. C'est la fins, koi que nus di - e, j'a - me - rais.  
4. Jus et baus i a le - ves, bele a - mie ai.  
2. C'est la jus en mis les prés,  
3. C'est la fins, je veul a - mer,

The form is diagrammed  $A_{11}b_b a_{11}A_{11}$ , which indicates a clear-cut virelai. Closer inspection, however, reveals that the third line has much in common with the refrain. Thus we have at least a hint of the inner refrain which characterizes the rondeau. If we consider the refrain as consisting of two lines, the text may be diagrammed  $A_8B_3C_7C_7C_7b_4A_8B_3$ .<sup>8</sup> This shows a further complexity in that the caesura within line four of the first diagram is misplaced relative to the refrain. Also, an internal rhyme in lines two and three is revealed.

Remarkably, we have here a form very close to the zajal form of the Spanish cantigas! Since the cantigas also include one example which utilizes an inner refrain (see above), this raises the possibility that "C'est le fins" bears the mark of a direct Spanish influence. Unfortunately, biographical information on Guillaume d'Amiens is slight.

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8. This is basically Gennrich's diagram. See Das altfranzösische..., 114.

It is unknown whether he traveled to Spain, and so any further proof is impossible.<sup>9</sup>

Example 14 is from the Manuscript Oxford, Douce 308, which dates from approximately 1300.<sup>10</sup> Here we have a piece which is perhaps more regular in form, but which represents an expansion of the virelai. Unlike "C'est la fins," the musical structure of this song does not correspond closely to the poetic structure.

Text: A<sub>6</sub>B<sub>5</sub>A<sub>7</sub>B<sub>4</sub> c<sub>7</sub>c<sub>7</sub>a<sub>6</sub>c<sub>7</sub>c<sub>7</sub>a<sub>6</sub> a<sub>6</sub>b<sub>5</sub>a<sub>7</sub>b<sub>4</sub> A<sub>6</sub>B<sub>5</sub>A<sub>7</sub>B<sub>4</sub>

Music: A B A C d e f d e f a b a c A B A C

#### Example 14

1.5. E, da-me jo-li-e, Mon cuer sans fau-ceir Met  
 4. Si fur-ment m'a-gri-e, Li doulz malz d'a-meir Ke  
 en vos-tre bai-li-e Ke ne sai vo peir.  
 par sa si-gno-ri-e Me co-vient chan-teir.  
 2. Su-vant me voix con-plai-gnant Et an mon cuer  
 3. Dont tous li mous an a-mant Doit a-voir le  
 do-lo-sant D'u-ne ma-lai-di-e  
 cuer jo-iant Cui teilz malz mais-tri-e.

The form has been expanded to eighteen lines, and there is a considerable diversity to line-lengths. Note-worthy here is the fact that lines seven and ten are rhymed with the first line of the refrain,

9. Gennrich analyzes the piece in detail in *Ibid.*, 113-116. Though aware of the cantigas, he does not point out the similarity.

10. Davison and Apel, *HAM*, 17. For complete text see Gennrich, *Rondeaux, Virelays und Balladen*, I, 129ff.

a procedure which is not found earlier, but which is common in virelais of the fourteenth century.

Many secular songs of this period survive only because they were borrowed for use as tenors of motets. Because the tenor was probably not sung, only the first phrase of the text was generally recorded in the manuscripts (perhaps for purposes of identification). Thus we can reconstruct the complete song only if the text is preserved elsewhere. One such example, for which the text is unfortunately lacking, is found in the Montpellier Codex.<sup>11</sup>

Example 15

A

RIENS NE VOUS VAUT

A'

b

b

a

11. Rokseth, Yvonne, Polyphonies du XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, III, 246-248.

## Example 15 (cont'd.)



The melody is readily recognizable as a virelai. Conjecture must suffice as to the form of the missing text.

Another virelai which was a motet tenor is "Je la truis" from the same manuscript.<sup>12</sup> The text was not included in the manuscript, but has been reconstructed from other sources. As in the previous example, the poem shows an irregular pattern of line-lengths:

A<sub>7</sub> B<sub>2</sub> A<sub>7</sub> c<sub>8</sub> c<sub>8</sub> b<sub>8</sub> b<sub>2</sub> a<sub>7</sub> A<sub>7</sub> B<sub>2</sub> A<sub>7</sub>.

In line six we have another anomaly. The rhyme should match the corresponding portion of the refrain, a; however, it rhymes b, with the two-syllable interjection.

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12. Ibid., 173-174.

## Example 16

1.5. Je la truis trop as-pre-te, voir, voir! A  
4. De ceu ke n'a-ve-rai des mois, Oix, oix! C'est  
ce u k'elle est sim-ple - te. 2. Trop por ou-tre cui-  
ce u ke plus me bles - ce. 3. Cant je cu-doie es-  
diés me tains,  
tre cer-tains

Musically the form is more regular, although a three-line refrain is relatively unusual at this time:

A B A' c c a b a' A B A'.

If the two-syllable second line were removed along with its counterparts elsewhere, a fairly "normal" eight-line virelai would remain:

A A' c c a a' A A'.

Among the works of Adan de la Hale (c. 1230-c. 1288) is found one piece which is a curious hybrid of forms (Example 17).<sup>13</sup> The composer called the piece a *rondeau*, but formal analysis reveals traits of the virelai. Musically the piece is a *rondeau*: *abaaabab* (musical repetitions are somewhat altered, but these changes are merely ornamentation.) But the text follows the form

A<sub>7</sub>A<sub>8</sub>b<sub>7</sub>b<sub>7</sub>b<sub>7</sub>a<sub>7</sub>A<sub>7</sub>A<sub>8</sub>.

13. Coussemaker, H. de, ed., op.cit., 211-212.



Again we see the form of the Moorish zajal. Thus we have neither a rondeau or a virelai, but a piece which includes features of each. In addition, the predominance of the middle voice was something of an innovation, a fact which gives strength to the idea that there was at that time no firmly established convention with regard to the virelai, or indeed any of the song forms.

Example 17

Handwritten musical score for Example 17, a Moorish zajal. The score is written on three systems of three staves each. The first system contains the lyrics "Fi - nes a - mou - re - tes ai; Dieu! si ne" and the second system contains "soi quant les ver - rai. 1. Or mon - de - rai m'a - mi -". The music is in 3/4 time and features various melodic lines with triplets and a "fine" marking.

## Example 17 (cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for Example 17 (cont'd.). The score is written on three systems of staves, each with a treble and bass staff. The lyrics are in French. The first system contains the lyrics "e - te, Qui est cointe et jo - li - e - te Et s'est". The second system contains the lyrics "si sa - ve rou - se - te C'as - te - nir ne". The third system is labeled "(3rd stanza al fine)" and contains the lyrics "m'en por - rai.". The music features various note values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are several triplets marked with a "3" and a slur. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C).

e - te, Qui est cointe et jo - li - e - te Et s'est

si sa - ve rou - se - te C'as - te - nir ne

(3rd stanza al fine)

m'en por - rai.

2. Et sele est de moi enchainte,  
Tost devenra pale et tainte;  
S'il en est esclandele et plainte,  
Deshonnerée l'arai.

Fines amouretes....

3. Mieus vaut que je m'en a tiengne  
Et pour li joli me tiengne  
Et que de li me souviengne,  
Car s'onnour li garderai.

Fines amouretes...

An important literary source from the late thirteenth century is the Dit de la Panthère of Nicole de Margival.<sup>14</sup> This is an extended narrative poem into which short lyric poems were inserted by the author, thus anticipating a fairly common practice of the fourteenth century. No music accompanies these texts, but Reaney is of the opinion that musical settings were intended.<sup>15</sup> Several poems by Adam de la Hale are included, for which music exists elsewhere.

Two poems in particular are germane to this discussion. One, "Pour ennuy ne por contraire,"<sup>16</sup> is a rondeau with three strophes. It is apparently the only one of its kind in French, although several exist in Latin.<sup>17</sup> The result is a form resembling the virelai:  
A B B a A a b b A B B a A etc. A setting in which the music for lines four and five differs from that of the refrain would produce a piece very much like the previously-discussed "C'est le fins."

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14. Todd, Henry, ed., Le Dit de la Panthère d'Amours par Nicole de Margival, 1883.

15. Reaney, "The Development of the Rondeau, Virolai and Ballade Forms from Adam de la Hale to Guillaume de Machaut," Festschrift Fellerer, 1962, 423.

16. Todd, op. cit., 83.

17. Reaney, op. cit., 424.

One other poem is included in the Dit de la Panthère which is not a rondeau, yet begins with the refrain: "J'ai eü commendement."<sup>18</sup> Called "rondel" in the manuscript, it has two strophes of different lengths, falling in the pattern A B B a b A B B a b b A B B. Since there are only two rhymes, this is akin to the rondeau. The characteristic inner refrain is absent, however, and so perhaps the poem could be viewed as a shortened virelai.

Most of these interpolated lyrics are either ballades or chansons royales (the latter being a non-refrain form, generally of five strophes, which had its highest popularity at the time of Machaut in the fourteenth century). One regular rondeau and a handful of free "chansons" are also included. If one agrees, with Reaney, that the Dit de la Panthère "is an anthology of the forms of lyric poetry in use at the time of Nicole de Margival,"<sup>19</sup> then one must conclude that the fixed virelai was not among those forms.

To summarize, the virelai does not seem to occupy an important place in the output of the trouvères in the thirteenth century. Those compositions which can be considered virelais are markedly diverse in form. Many show musical or textual features (or both) of the rondeau, which was by that time a popular and standardized form. Though this can be taken in support of Gennrich's views of formal development, the presence of features also found in the cantigas of Spain cannot be denied. Whether this is by coincidence or design is, at this time, pure speculation.

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18. Todd, op. cit., 95.

19. Reaney, op. cit., 424.

### C. The Virelai in the Fourteenth Century

The second decade of the fourteenth century ushered in something of a revolution in musical style, a change which affected form, rhythm and harmony. Some of these innovations are evident in the Manuscript Paris, Bibl. Nat., fr. 146, dated 1316. This is a source of two-fold importance, in that it contains the famous copy of the Roman de Fauvel with its musical interpolations, as well as a number of works by Jehannot de l'Escurel (d. 1303?). The latter comprises thirty-one compositions, of which five are virelais. The arrangement is essentially alphabetical, but stops with G, thus suggesting that it is an incomplete collection. Two of the virelais are especially noteworthy for their striking similarities of structure (Examples 18 and 19).<sup>1</sup>

#### Example 18

1.5. Douce A - mour, con - for - tez moi, Do - lente  
4. me het et me fait a - noi. C'est très  
et des - con - for - té - e; Hum - ble -  
pes - me des - ti - né - e; Quant je  
ment je vous en proi, Ou de malle en - re fui  
l'aim en bon - ne foi, Lasse! et pointe ne li a -

1. Wilkins, Nigel, ed., The Works of Jehan l'Escurel, 1966, 12-13 and 18.

## Example 18 (cont'd.)

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains a melody with a fermata over the final note, marked 'fine'. The bottom staff also begins with a treble clef and contains a melody with a fermata over the final note, marked 'D.C.'. The lyrics are written below the staves. The first line of lyrics is 'né - gre - e. 2. Car par vous je sui es - pri - se'. The second line is '3. Ce - li tout a sa de - vi - se'. The third line is 'D'a - mer loi - al - ment ieu - se - ment.'. The fourth line is 'Qui cru - ment.'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fermatas.

né - gre - e. 2. Car par vous je sui es - pri - se  
3. Ce - li tout a sa de - vi - se  
D'a - mer loi - al - ment ieu - se - ment.  
Qui cru - ment. D.C.

2. Chascuns amans celle prise  
et proie humblement,  
qu'il aime; ne sui requise  
ains couvient souvent  
que le proie, et, quant le voi,  
pour dire li ma pensée  
vers li vois; lors, par desroi,  
s'en tourne; ainsi sui menée.

Douce Amour...

3. E! mort, qui touz cors joustice,  
prends moi li present;  
c'est mon miex, et sanz faintise  
le fai. temprement;  
car mon cuer compere en soi,  
dont je sui prés forsenée,  
l'orgueil de la gent, ce croi,  
qui bien aime et n'est emée.

Douce Amour...

## Example 19

1. 5. Dis tans plus qu'il ne fau- droit flours A -  
4. Ne senz gric-tés, mes granz dou- çours Dés  
faire un mont jus-ques és ciex  
que vous re-mir de mes iex;  
Mont a vous sa-lus et dou- çours Et  
En moi croit tout ain-si a-mours Loi - fine  
veil d'a-mer moi vous doit Diex.  
aus puis par vous ai biens tiex.  
2. Jeune et belle et gra-ci-eu-se, En  
3. Ho-neur et joie a-mou-reu-se, Ai-  
vous ez, ai franz tout cuer mon cuer mis; DC.  
dous, tou-dis.

2. En fais et dix savoureuse,  
sage dame au cors faitiz,  
car soiez douce et piteuse  
vers moi qui sui voz amis.  
Raisons veut quu soie touz jours  
en vous servant cois et doutiex,  
larges, courtois, si grans honours  
vient de vous; pour ce, cuer gentiex,

Dis tans plus...

3. Or proi amour que soigneuse  
 vers vous, doucete au cler vis,  
 soit pour moi et curieuse  
 si que vo cuer soit espris  
 aussi com sui et par tieux tours;  
 lors serai celans at soutiex  
 vers vous plus qu'ore et nuis et jours  
 et pour ce, pour plaire vous miex,

Dis tans plus...

These two compositions are nearly identical in form. Each has a four-line refrain rhyming abab, each has three strophes, and each preserves the same rhyme throughout: cdodabab. The one significant difference lies in the musical structure of the refrains. The refrain of "Douce Amours" has the form  $a\ b^1\ a\ b^2$ , while that of "Dis tans Plus" introduces a third melodic segment, resulting in abac. But even here the fourth line has some melodic material in common with the second line, so that the music is not entirely new. In earlier examples we have seen widely diversified forms; the remarkable formal similarity here seems to bring closer the concept of the virelai as a fixed form. None of the previous examples had both music and text which closely corresponded to the diagram ABccacAB. With little difficulty, both of the above examples could be so construed (considering every two lines of text as a single unit of the diagram).<sup>2</sup>

One of the virelais exhibits considerable formal freedom (Example 20).<sup>3</sup> One obvious difference from the previous examples is that there

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2. Mention should be made of the acrostic formed by the first letters of the lines "Dis tans plus:" DAME, JEHAN DE LESCUREL VOUS SALUE.

3. Wilkins, op. cit., 20.



is but one strophe. The refrain here is again of four lines, but rhyming aabb. The next section has also been expanded, but there is no four-line section set to the refrain music; this has been abbreviated to a single line rhyming with the first line of the refrain. Finally, the last statement of the refrain has been rearranged and rhythmically altered. The following diagram indicates the structure.

A B c c (ab) A B

Text: A<sub>5</sub>A<sub>7</sub>B<sub>6</sub>B<sub>6</sub> c<sub>6</sub>d<sub>4</sub>c<sub>6</sub>d<sub>4</sub>c<sub>6</sub>d<sub>4</sub>c<sub>6</sub>d<sub>4</sub> a<sub>5</sub> A<sub>7</sub>B<sub>6</sub>A<sub>7</sub>B<sub>6</sub>

Music: A B C C d e d e d' e' d' e' a B C B C

### Example 20

a b  
 Gra - ci - eu - set - te, La très dou - ce gil - le - te,  
 c c  
 Dex vous doint très bon jour, Dex vous doint très bon  
 d' d'  
 jour. A - mé vous ai en foi Et a - me - rai; A - mé  
 e' d<sup>2</sup>  
 vous ai en foi Et a - me - rai Se je sai qu'en - vers moi  
 e<sup>2</sup> d<sup>2</sup> e<sup>2</sup>  
 Ai - ez cuer vrai, Se je sai qu'en - vers moi Ai - ez cuer vrai.

## Example 20 (cont'd.)

*a* Pour ce, dou-cet-te, La *b* très plai-sant gil-let-te,  
*c* Dex vous doit très bon jour; La *b* très plai-sant Gil-  
 let-te, *c* Dex vous doit très bon jour.

"Bien se lace" (Example 21)<sup>4</sup> also has only one strophe, but otherwise is highly regular. In the diagram AbbaA, each unit consists of three lines. Only four- and seven-syllable lines are used. The repeated section following the initial refrain has ouvert and clos endings. This piece well illustrates the highly melismatic style that was coming into vogue, in contrast to the essentially syllabic settings of the thirteenth century.

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4. Ibid., 5.

## Example 21

1. 5. Bien se la- ce Qui em- bra- ce  
4. Si tant fa- ce A- mour par gra- ce fine

D'A- mours la jo- lie tra- ce:  
Qu'il baise sa dou- ce fa- ce.

2. C'est la bouche, Et quant a- mis Son cuer a-  
3. Fai- te de cors et de vis A son de-

mis En de- sir- rer a- mi-  
vis, Voir, il n'est plus de vi-

11. 12. D.C.

The one remaining virelai of Jehannot de l'Escurel is even more formally strict (Example 22).<sup>5</sup> This piece, with its eight-line stanza (counting both statements of the refrain), precisely fits the scheme ABccabAB both musically and textually. Also, we have again three strophes. This is the first example we have seen in which the simple virelai is clearly an independent form, free from the influence of the rondeau, the cantiga or other forms.

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5. Ibid., 13.

## Example 22

1.5. Da-me, va re-gars m'ont  
4. Si très' plai-sant qu'en quel  
mis en la voi - e, De vous a -  
lieu que je soi - e, m'es-teut a  
mer et ser - vir et lo -  
vous du tout en tout pen -  
er. 2. Loi - al a-mour ait très bonne a - ven -  
ser. 3. Qui m'a nav-ré d'u-ne dou-ce poin -  
tu-re  
tu-re .

2. Dont doi je bien estre en envoiseure,  
car bonne estes et de gente faiture.  
Li souverains me tient touz jours en jole  
et tout aussi de merci esperer.

Dame,...

3. Amour graci, par qui j'ai mis ma cure  
en vous amer, très noble creature,  
james de vous partir ne me querroie,  
si vraiment me vieilliez vous amer.

Dame,...

Among the interpolations of the Roman de Fauvel manuscript are motets, liturgical pieces (including alleluias, sequence hymns and

responsories), and several secular (vernacular) songs and refrains. All were carefully labelled by the scribe, and none are called "virelai." Most of the secular compositions are rondeaux, ballades or lais, but two are worthy of our attention because they feature the initial refrain, yet avoid the inner refrain.

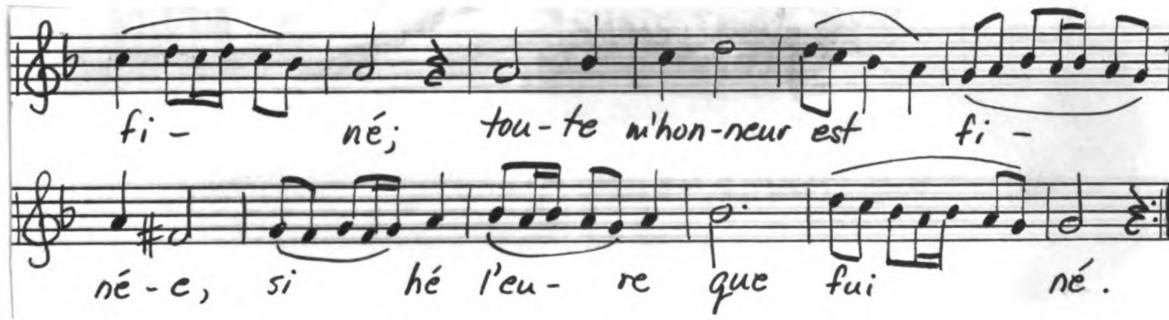
"Providence le senée" is called a ballade in the manuscript, but is actually a virelai (Example 23).<sup>6</sup>

Example 23

Pro - vi - den - ce la se - né - e a poin -  
 nes m'a en - cli - né a sa - voir que des -  
 ti - né - e m'a des - ques ci des - ti -  
 né 1. For - tu - ne par mon des - roy si m'a  
 en - ha - i, ne voust que soi - e mes roy,  
 fa - te m'a tra - hi. Vain - ne gloi - re m'ont  
 don - né - e, donc je voi que sui

6. Gennrich, Rondeaux, Virelays und Balladen, I, 295-297.

## Example 23 (cont'd.)



2. Forment me doi doulouser  
de ce qu'envay  
tele dame d'espouser.  
Des adonc chay.  
Trop me vint fole pensee,  
quant ce chemin cheminé;  
j'eusse fait mellieur journée  
d'avoir mon clos rebiné.

Providence...

3. C'est merveilles a conter  
de ce qu'envayr  
l'osay; de trop haut monter  
doit l'en plus chair.  
Cele en est vers moi irree,  
de ce le chief enclin é,  
prest d'endurer tel hachlée  
com par li yert terminé.

Providence...

As George A. Harrison has pointed out,<sup>7</sup> the piece would necessarily be considered a ballade were the initial statement of the refrain not included. Harrison proceeds to suggest that this is evidence that the

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7. Harrison, George Alexander, jr., The Monophonic Music in the Roman de Fauvel, diss., Stanford University, 1963, 95.

virelai evolved from the ballade. The fact that these two forms are closely related has long been recognized. German musicologists in particular often describe the virelai in terms of the Minnesinger barform, which most likely developed from the ballade. The bar was generally a one-strophe composition in the form aab, in which the a sections are called the Stollen, and b is called the Abgesang. Related to this terminology is Gennrich's practice, in which the parts of the virelai are called Refrain, Stollen, Gegenstollen, and Strophenabschluss.<sup>8</sup> However, there are exceedingly few ballades which show the unexpanded form aabB; most have stanza structures considerably more complicated. Furthermore, most ballades and virelais before the fourteenth century show a difference in musical treatment, the virelai being generally more syllabic and simple. Also, the virelai tended to intermix lines of various lengths, while the ballade is much more often isometric.<sup>9</sup> These facts would seem to indicate separate origins.

At any rate, "Providence le senée" is remarkably similar to the two virelais of Jehannot de l'Escurel, "Douce Amours" and "Dis tams Plus," discussed above. Once again we have found a four-line refrain rhyming abab, three strophes, and the same rhyme scheme in each strophe. Reaney admits the possibility that some of the Fauvel pieces were by l'Escurel, a supposition supported by comparison of details of poetic and musical construction.<sup>10</sup>

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8. e.g., in Das Altfranzösische..., 113.

9. Apel, JAMS VII, 1954, 123.

10. Reaney, "The Development...", Festschrift Fellerer, 424-425.



The other piece from the Roman de Fauvel which is of interest here is "Douce et de tout noble affaire," given as Example 24.<sup>11</sup>

Example 24



Douce et de tout noble affaire,  
n'assentez.  
qu'en languissant mon cors s'uze en vous servir.

Long temps de cuer sanz meffaire  
ai serai par douleur traire  
ja tempte,  
s'amant doit par ce nul jour bien deservir.

Douce...

Onques ne vous diigna plaire  
moi oir n'a vous atraire,  
et plus sui par tel contraire  
tourmentez,  
quant vers vous me veul oncor plus asservir.

Douce...

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11. Gennrich, Rondeaux, Virelays und Balladen, I, 301-302.



De vous prier, debonnaire,  
 de secours ne me puis tairs,  
 s'en priant sanz faus tour faire  
 ne sentez  
 pour grace enquierre endurant sanz messervir.

Douce...

This is another example of a hybrid form. The text may be diagrammed  $A_8^B C_{10} a_8^a a_8^b c_{10} A_8^B C_{10}$ . Since the fourth and fifth lines are to be sung to the music of the beginning of the refrain (this is the only line which fits metrically), we have here a rondeau with the refrain expanded to three lines. However, there is no inner refrain, and the piece has three strophes. Also, the heterogeneous metrical structure is more characteristic of the virelai than of the rondeau.

The rondeaux, ballades, virelais and lais of Guillaume de Machaut are in a certain sense an anachronism. In theme and content they are similar to the compositions of the trouvères, and in that respect result in a somewhat nostalgic atmosphere. This seems to apply especially to the Lais and virelais. All of Machaut's rondeaux are polyphonic, as are all but one of the ballades; on the other hand, twentyfive of the thirty-three virelais, as well as most of the lais, are monophonic.<sup>12</sup> Of the eight polyphonic virelais, seven are written in only two parts; this in an era in which three-voice polyphony was established as the norm. As in previous times, the virelais are more syllabic than the rondeaux and ballades. When melisma does occur, it is most often at cadence

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12. This is problematic, because it has recently been discovered that groups of three strophes of Lay 19 combine to form three-part polyphony. Others of the lays are canonic. See Hasselman and Walker in Musica Disciplina XXIV, 7ff.

points, a practice reminiscent of the twelfth-century conductus.<sup>13</sup> Thus the virelais are written in a style which is generally much simpler than that of the rondeaux and ballades.

It should be noted that Machaut, in his Remede de Fortune, re-christened the virelai "chançon balladée." This was, according to Machaut's pupil Eustache Deschamps, because of the great similarity of the ballade. The new term never gained acceptance; apparently not even the loyal pupil used it consistently.

The use of first and second endings became widespread in the Ars Nova, and the nature of the virelai allowed for much utilization of this device. Since all of the refrains in Machaut are expanded to three lines or more, this expansion also appeared in the other parts of the form. Later examples, however, tend to limit the use of first and second endings to the Stollen.<sup>14</sup>

Formally, Machaut's virelais exhibit more variety than do his rondeaux and ballades, though all have three strophes. Among the monophonic ones, refrains consist of from three to eight lines, with four- and six-line refrains in the majority. All of the eight-line refrains<sup>15</sup> and some of those of six lines are produced by a repeat with first and second endings. This is illustrated in Example 25.<sup>16</sup>

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13. Reaney, Gilbert, Guillaume de Machaut, 1971, 35.

14. Ibid., 36.

15. Nos. 7, 12, 19 and 27 of Schrade's edition.

16. Schrade, Leo, Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century, III, 1956, 177.

The text follows the scheme  $A_8 A_4 B A_4 B A_4 B c c b c c b_7 a_8 a_4 b a_8 a_4 b_7 A_8 \dots$   
 This includes a favorite device with Machaut, that of utilizing a rhyme common to both the refrain and the Stollen. This device eliminates some of the form's similarity to the ballade; only Virelai 1 has completely new rhymes in the Stollen.<sup>17</sup> "Helas! et comment" also uses the old second rhythmic mode almost exclusively, another conservative element which is present in many of the virelais.

Example 25

1. 5. He-las! et comment  
 Quant fai-re ne puis  
 Bici ne joi-e, Ne dont me  
 Ne que 12. j'oy-e  
 Cour? 2. Par n'a-me, je ne le scay Ne sa-  
 3. Pour ce qu'a-des, sans de-lai, A l'es-  
 ray, son, Lon-Sui teins de vous que j'a-our,  
 d'a-voir tou-te do-lour;  
 4. Car loing de vous tout m'a-mor- noi-e Et des-voi-e  
 Dont pour vostre a-mour 12. roi-e, Se j'es-toi-e  
 Mon cuer et tient en i-rour.  
 Lon-que-ment en telle ar- dour. D.C.

17. Ibid., 167.

2. Nonpourquant tant com vivray,  
 Vous seray  
 Loyaus, sans penser folour,  
 Et vostre gentil corps gay  
 Serviray  
 Humblement et a s'onnour;  
 Si que durer ne porroie,  
 Se n'avoie  
 Confort de vostre valous  
 Contre desir qui guerroie  
 Et maistroie  
 Mon cuer et tient en langour

Helas! et comment...

3. Las il tient en tel esmay  
 Mon cuer vray  
 Que je ne scay le plour  
 Eslire des mans que tray:  
 Tant en ay,  
 Et tent desir le retour  
 Ver vous, dame simple et coie,  
 Or n'est voie  
 Que puisse trouver ne tour,  
 Et dou pis qu'Amours m'envoie,  
 C'est que soie  
 Loing de vo faitis atour.

Helas! et comment...

Thirteen of the monophonic virelais use only two rhymes; the same is true of all of the polyphonic ones. While this is a feature reminiscent of the rondeau, no gesture toward an inner refrain is made.

One such piece is Example 26.<sup>18</sup> The text proceeds in the pattern

A<sub>4</sub>A<sub>4</sub>A<sub>4</sub>A<sub>4</sub>B<sub>7</sub> a<sub>7</sub>a<sub>4</sub>a<sub>4</sub>b<sub>7</sub>a<sub>7</sub>a<sub>4</sub>a<sub>4</sub>b<sub>7</sub> a<sub>4</sub>a<sub>4</sub>a<sub>4</sub>a<sub>4</sub>b<sub>7</sub> A<sub>4</sub>.... Here we have a favorite metrical scheme, the exclusive use of four- and seven-syllable lines. This feature also appears in Virolais 16, 24, 26, 29 and 33, thereby pointing out another contrast with the rondeaux and ballades,

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18. Ibid., 184.

in which Machaut prefers a decasyllabic line. Evident in this example is the newer duple time and prolation, found as well in nine other of the virelais.

Example 26

1.5. Tuit mi pen-ser Sont sans ces-ser En vous a-  
 4. Ce fait dou-bler Et em-bra-ser Et a-vi-  
 mer Et hon-nou-rer, Tres dou-ce cre-a-tu-re.  
 ver Par de-si-rer Mon a-mou-reuse ar-du-re.  
 2. Non-ques mes yeus sa-ou-ler De re-gar-der Et  
 3. Ne pas ne mon cuer os-ter D'a-des pen-ser A  
 re-mi-rer Vo gen-te pour-trai-tu-re  
 vo vis cler Et a vo bon-te pu-re.

2. Mais, tant com porray durer,  
 La weil porter  
 Et undurer  
 Humblement, sans laidure.  
 Ne ja ne vous quier rouver  
 Guerredonner  
 Ne demoustrer  
 Que je la tiengne a dure;  
 Car trop parler  
 Puet moult grever,  
 Et refuser  
 Feroit crever  
 Mon cuer de sa pointure.

Tuit mi penser...

3. Si que, tres belle sans per,  
 Que voy passer  
 Et sormenter  
 Teute oeuvre de Nature,  
 On ne me doit pas blasmer,  
 Se mon penser  
 Ay sans fausser  
 Mis et toute ma cure  
 En vous loer,  
 En vous garder,  
 En vous celer,  
 En vous douter,  
 Car C'est ma norreture.

Tuit mi penser...

Virelais 13 and 14 are formally irregular. Their musical form is aBaBaB.<sup>19</sup> Textually they seem to be ballades, but they are missing the repetition of the refrain music which is normal in Machaut's ballades (aabB). Stylistically they are closer to the virelais with their predominantly syllabic settings. Example 27 is Virelai 14, "J'aim sans penser."<sup>20</sup>

Example 27



1. J'aim sans pen-ser lai - du - re et ay long temps a - mé celle  
 ou Dieus et Na - tu - re ont mis tant de bon - te que tou - te cre - a -  
 tu - re d'on - neur a sour - mon - té. R. Or n'est du - re sans me - su - re  
 de l'ar - du - re que j'en - du - re

19. It is difficult to account for Reaney's remark (in Machaut, p. 37) that "Musically, they are just like the other virelais." Perhaps this is intended to refer only to stylistic treatment.

20. Schrade, op. cit., III, 174.

## Example 27 (cont'd.)



2. Sa maniere seure,  
douce et simple, a mon gre,  
et la riche faiture  
de sa plaisant biaute  
par leur douce pointure  
rem'ont conquis et outre.

Or M'est dure...

3. Mais ce n'est pas droiture  
qu'einsi pour loyaute  
soie a desconfiture,  
car j'ay sans faussete  
ma dame nette et pure  
servi et honnore.

Or m'est dure...

It is perhaps surprising that isorhythm plays a very small part in Machaut's polyphonic rondeaux, ballades and virelais. Of all these compositions only one ballade is isorhythmic.<sup>21</sup> Many of the two-voice virelais are similar in texture to the thirteenth-century motet, with long note-values predominating in the tenors, as in Example 28.<sup>22</sup>

21. Reaney, Gilbert, "The Ballades, Rondeaux and Virelais of Guillaume de Machaut: Melody, Rhythm and Form," Acta Musicologica, XXVII, 1955, 53.

22. Schrade, op. cit., III, 187. Virelais 24, 29, 32, and to a lesser extent 26 are similar in this respect.

## Example 28



All of the polyphonic virelais have six- or seven-line refrains, and all utilize only two rhymes. Reaney has theorized that the longer strophes are found in the later compositions,<sup>23</sup> and so we may conclude that the polyphonic virelais are, generally speaking, mature products.

Example 29 is Virelai 32,<sup>24</sup> with the verse pattern  $A_8 A_8 B_5 B_5 A_8 B_5 b_7 b_7 a_6 b_7 a_6 a_8 a_8 b_5 b_7 a_8 b_5 A_8 \dots$ . Though the tenor of this piece contributes very little to the rhythmic activity, the descending stepwise motive of the opening four bars is used prominently in both voices. The piece is also remarkable for the cadences, which are like dominant-tonic progressions, in measures 26 and 30. This is a technique not in general use until the early fifteenth century.

## Example 29

23. Reaney, Gilbert, "The Poetic Form of Machaut's Musical Works," *Musica Discipline* XIII, 1959, 35.

24. Schrade, *op. cit.*, III, 191.



## Example 29 (cont'd.)

hos - te - lé - e Tri - ster - se n'es - may  
te, es - plou - ré - e Es - té lonc temps ay.

8 En mon cuer, ain - cois a - ray Lie et jo - li - e pen -  
Mais je me con - for - te - ray Et ce - lui qui tant m'a -

8 sé -  
gré -  
Tant com  
Sur tous

je vi - vray. 2. Bien faire et a - voir cuer  
a - me - ray. 3. Dont lie et loy - aulz se -

8 gay, C'est tout; plus n'em - por - te - ray, Quant se - ray fi -  
ray Et le con - trai - re fe - ray

## Example 29 (cont'd.)



2. Si que gaye me tenray  
 Ne ja ne le guerpiray  
 Heure me journées,  
 Car en ceste pel morray,  
 Fors tant que je maudiray  
 Longue demourée;  
 S'onneur et sa renommée,  
 Qui "tout passe" est appelée,  
 Toudis garderay,  
 Et tant com durer porray  
 Plus que creature née  
 Li obeyray.

De tout sui si confortée...

3. Ainsi riens ne soufferray  
 N'a chose ne penseray  
 Qui me desagrée  
 Et le temps oublieray.  
 Tant que revenir verray  
 D'estrange contrée  
 Li qui trop plus m'amée,  
 Servi, gardée, honnourée  
 Que nulz; bien le scay.  
 Pays et foy li porteray,  
 Pour ce qu'a li sui donnée  
 De fin cuer et vray.

De tout sui si confortée...

It is apparent that in the works of Guillaume de Machaut we can at last speak accurately of three formes fixes in French secular music. The three forms were essentially established prior to Machaut, but it was he who, at least in a quantitative sense, raised the virelai to an importance equal to that of the rondeau and the ballade.<sup>25</sup> Machaut also established the practice of setting these forms polyphonically.<sup>26</sup>

There are stylistic features which distinguish the virelais from the other secular compositions, so that it may be said that the virelais are generally simpler, and include fewer of the innovations of Machaut's era. Also, they display a greater variety with regard to poetic technique than do the rondeaux and ballades.

The late fourteenth century after Machaut produced an amazingly large number of French secular music, almost exclusively polyphonic. The Papal court at Avignon was a particularly active center of music and poetry. Interestingly enough, sacred music plays a lesser role in this period, even at Avignon. Apel has divided the period into three styles: the Machaut Style, 1350-1370; the Manneristic Style, 1370-1390; and the Modern Style, 1390-1400.<sup>27</sup> These dates are of course approximate and overlap a great deal.

The Machaut Style is characterized chiefly by rhythmic unity:

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25. Domling, Wolfgang, Die Mehrstimmigen Balladen, Rondeaux und Virelais von Guillaume de Machaut, 1970, 11.

26. Apel, Willi, French Secular Compositions of the Fourteenth Century, I, xxiii.

27. Apel, Willi, French Secular Music of the Late Fourteenth Century, 1950, 9-14.

"There never is any radical departure from the rhythmic formulae presented in the initial measures."<sup>28</sup> One of the composers whose works clearly typify the Machaut Style is Solage, who may indeed have been a pupil of Machaut.<sup>29</sup> Example 30 is from Solage's "Tres gentil cuer."<sup>30</sup> The conservative use of long note-values in the tenor and contratenor is shown in Example 30.a. The end of the refrain and end of the Stollen are unified by musical rhyme (30.b. and c.), a device common in Machaut's virelais.<sup>31</sup>

Example 30.a.

The musical score for Example 30.a consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in tenor clef, and the bottom in contratenor clef. The time signature is 3/6. The lyrics are written below the staves: "Qu'a vous a-mer, hon-nou-rer et che-rir,". The tenor and contratenor parts feature long note-values, illustrating the conservative style mentioned in the text.

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28. Ibid., 10.

29. Ibid., 10.

30. Ibid., 60\*-61\*.

31. Reaney, "The Ballades, Rondeaux and Virelais....," 50.

## Example 30.b.

Musical score for Example 30.b, featuring a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The score is written in 7/8 time and includes a key signature of one sharp (F#).

The vocal line (treble clef) contains the lyrics: "Nôu - tre de-sir a- voir je ne pour-roi -". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (bass and tenor clefs). The bass line features a steady eighth-note accompaniment, while the tenor line provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

## Example 30.c.

Musical score for Example 30.c, featuring a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The score is written in 7/8 time and includes a key signature of one sharp (F#).

The vocal line (treble clef) contains the lyrics: "Et mi re - tour." The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (bass and tenor clefs). The bass line features a steady eighth-note accompaniment, while the tenor line provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

Example 31 is an anonymous virelai from the Codex Ivrea, Bibl. capitulare 115.<sup>32</sup> On first glance there is a decided similarity to Example 25, especially in the simple two-voice texture and the use of modal rhythms.

Example 31

1.5. Be - sier e a - co - ler qui me froit Au - cun par  
 4. Las! j'ay per - du joy - e — — — Si n'ay so -

grant for - tu - ne De la be - le plus que lu - ne  
 cours de vos. a - mi - e. Plus ne puet du - rer ma vi - c :

Ay per - du par fous re - port.  
 Ai - és de moy pi - tié par droit.

2. Ne je ne fas fors que pan - Ser Co - mant je  
 3. Ne soir ne main ne puis le - ver Que grant sou -

32. Apel, French Secular Compositions..., III, 7.

## Example 31 (cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for Example 31 (cont'd.). The score is written on two staves, treble and bass clef. The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a simple accompaniment. The lyrics are in French. The first system is marked with a first ending bracket (1.) and the second system with a second ending bracket (2.).

First system (marked 1.):

puyssse a li par-ler En au- cun lieu se-cre-te-ment.  
 cy n'ay-e pen-ser, Quant

Second system (marked 2.):

ay per- du l'o-nor d'a-mant.

The Manneristic Style is primarily known for its extreme complexity, especially rhythmic. Apel has commented on the similarity to twentieth-century rhythmic techniques.<sup>33</sup> In the same paragraph he writes, "If rhythmic independence of the single line is considered the main prerequisite for true polyphony..., one will have to concede that the polyphonic ideal was never more fully approximated than in the late fourteenth century." The Manneristic Style is especially strong in French works of Italian composers at Avignon, such as Matheus de Perusio and Anthonello

33. Apel, French Secular Music..., 11.

de Caserta. Example 32 shows the opening of a virolai by the former.<sup>34</sup>  
 Example 32

Of course, French composers also wrote in the Manneristic Style, and there was much activity in Spain as well. For example, Jacob Senleches was a composer who worked at the court in Barcelona. The beginning of the Stollen of his virolai "En gracieux tamps" is given as Example 33,<sup>35</sup> in which the rhythmic organization is clearly

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34. Ibid., 9\*.

35. Apel, French Secular Compositions...., I, 175.



manneristic.

Example 33

Handwritten musical score for a virelai by Senleches. The score is written on two systems of three staves each. The top system contains the lyrics "Mais d'au-tre part il y a-voit Un oy-" and the bottom system contains "sel que tou-dis cri-oit". The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines, with some lyrics written below the notes.

Another virelai by Senleches appears in manuscript as a puzzle canon in the shape of a harp (Example 34).<sup>36</sup> Canon was certainly nothing new in the fourteenth century. The chace, in France and the caccia in Italy were constructed canonically. The device,

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36. Ibid., 176.

however, lent itself particularly well to the Manneristic Style.

Example 34

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Example 34, consisting of three systems of music. Each system has three staves. The first two systems are in 6/8 time, and the third is in 4/4 time. The lyrics are in French and are written below the staves. The first system has the lyrics "la har - pe de". The second system has the lyrics "me - lo - di - e". The third system has the lyrics "pai - te". The music is written in a simple, clear style, with notes and rests clearly visible. There are some triplets marked with a '3' above the notes.

Apel defined the Modern Style in terms of an abandonment of manneristic intricacies in favor of simplicity and "naturalness of expression."<sup>37</sup> Though this is often similar to the earlier Machaut Style, the groundwork is here laid for the music of the Burgundian School. A feeling for

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37. Apel, French Secular Music..., 13.

chordal progression begins to emerge, and the rondeau takes precedence as the preferred vernacular form. Later works of Matheus de Perusio, for example, show this stylistic change. There are often instrumental preludes, interludes and postludes set off by rests, and short points of imitation are occasionally found.<sup>38</sup> Example 35 is a virelai of Perusio which has an instrumental prelude, and an interlude in measures 25-28; note also the imitation in measure 29.<sup>39</sup>

Example 35

Handwritten musical score for Example 35, a virelai by Matheus de Perusio. The score is written on two systems of staves. The first system shows measures 1-4 with lyrics "Ne me chaut ma vos - foy". The second system shows measures 5-8 with lyrics "tre j'ay mau - par - ler, tres plus chier". The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and a 3/4 time signature. There are various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

38. Apel, French Secular Compositions..., I, xxv.

39. Ibid., 115-116.

## Example 35 (cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for Example 35 (cont'd.), featuring five systems of music with French lyrics. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

**System 1:**

Di-tes au piz que vous sa-  
Que vous au- tres tels me blas-

**System 2:**

ves.  
més,  
Car  
Quar

**System 3:**

je veuil bien que vous sa- chés  
hom co- nois - tra bien as- sés

**System 4:**

Que je ne vous pris  
Que je ne suy pas

**System 5:**

un ras - di-ner tre per. 2. Vous au- tres che-  
3. Ne me lou- és

## Example 35 (cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for Example 35 (cont'd.), featuring three systems of music with lyrics in French. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various notes, rests, and accidentals. The lyrics are: "tif pas", "mes-dis-sant tant ne quant, De Cor fou-tes ne ver-suis", "fus e-ne-mis. pas", and "vostre a-mis."

The *virelais* of the late fourteenth century often tend to be much more folkish or pastoral than the other forms. Regular four-bar phrases in the musical settings often contribute to this general tone. A large number, mostly from northern France, incorporate onomatopoeic devices, especially bird-calls; these are known as "realistic *virelais*." One such piece is "Par maintes foy" by Johannes Vaillant, active in Paris in the 1360's. The use of bird-calls is illustrated in Example 36.<sup>40</sup>

40. *Ibid.*, 222-223.

Realistic virelais were also composed by Borlet, about whom we know little more than that he composed for the court in Aragon. Thus this was not entirely a phenomenon peculiar to the North.

Example 36.a.

Example 36.a is a three-part musical setting in 6/8 time. The top staff features a melody with lyrics: "Cu-cu", "Cu-cu", and "cu-cu tou-te sa vi-". The middle and bottom staves provide harmonic accompaniment. The piece consists of four measures.

This musical fragment shows three staves with a single measure of music. The top staff has a melody, the middle staff has a single note, and the bottom staff has a single note. The fragment is likely a continuation or a separate section related to the example above.

Example 36.b.

Example 36.b is a three-part musical setting in 6/8 time. The top staff features a melody with lyrics: "tu-e et o-ci-e," and "Tu-e tu-e tu-e tu-". The middle and bottom staves provide harmonic accompaniment. The piece consists of four measures.

## Example 36.b. (Cont'd.)

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a vocal melody with lyrics: "e o-ci o-ci O-ci o-ci o-ci o-ci o-ci fi-de-li fi de li fi-de li". The melody features several eighth-note runs, some marked with a "2" indicating a second ending or a specific rhythmic pattern. The middle staff is also in treble clef and contains a second vocal line or instrumental accompaniment. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a third line, likely for a lute or another instrument. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be common time (C).

Though the stanza forms of the late fourteenth century virelai differ little from those of Machaut, the three-strophe pattern is most often shortened to one. Machaut's syllabic writing had given way to a more melismatic style, especially in manneristic works; in addition, the frequent use of textual repetition, notable in realistic virelais, tended to make the pieces much longer. Thus multiple stanzas resulted in an unwieldy length. Some scholars have suggested that additional stanzas were omitted from the manuscripts by the scribes, in the



interest of conserving space. This seems unlikely, because additional stanzas have not been discovered elsewhere. Only one virelai in Apel's late fourteenth-century collection has three strophes ("Tres gentil cuer" by Solage), and there are a handful having two strophes.<sup>41</sup>

The virelai form is shortened in several pieces by omitting the third section (Abgesang), thus resulting in AbbA. Such a work is "S'en vos por moy" by J. Alanus (Jean Alain, ca. 1370-1437, Example 37).<sup>42</sup> Most of the fourteenth-century examples of this abbreviated form are anonymous, so it is impossible to determine whether this practice had a localized origin.

Example 37

1.4. S'en vos por moy pi-tié ne truis,

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41. Apel, French Secular Music..., 6.

42. Apel, French Secular Compositions..., I, 1.



## Example 37 (Cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for Example 37 (Cont'd.). The score is written on three systems of staves, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4.

**System 1:**

Dou - che da - me, fleur de biau - té, Plus

**System 2:**

vi - vre ne du - rer ne puis.

2. Car a des - court sont main et  
 3. Por tant que ne vous puis re

**System 3:**

soir En mon cuer de - sir, res - mon jo - ir, En De  
 oir Tant so - vent com - me

## Example 37 (Cont'd.)

pen- sant a vos corps gent, si- re tres ar- da- ment.

One manuscript stands somewhat apart from the rest of the fourteenth-century repertoire, the MS Turino, Blbl. Naz., J.II.9. Compositions of a group of French composers who were active on the island of Cyprus are included, and several of the texts contain local references. The *vir-elais* and *rondeaux* occupy the fourth section of the manuscript, and all were copied by the same scribe, who did not work on the other sections. All of the *vi-relais* have only one strophe. Hoppin rejects the idea that this was simply a matter of space, because a few pages do have unused space for additional text.<sup>43</sup> It is also perhaps noteworthy that no realistic *vi-relais* are included here.

While those *vi-relais* that were set to music in the late fourteenth century tended toward a folk-like simplicity and even playfulness, the *vi-relai*, along with the *rondeau* and *ballade*, became a purely literary

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43. Hoppin, Richard H., ed., The Cypriot-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino, I, 1960, ix.

product in the hands of some writers. Machaut left a few examples of lyric verse which he did not set to music, and an increasing musical complexity made it more difficult to master both poetry and music in the trouvère tradition. These purely literary virelais retained the three-strophe pattern of Machaut. Many, such as Example 38 by Christine de Pisan,<sup>44</sup> repeat only the first line or lines of the refrain after each strophe. This was perhaps merely an abbreviation, but such poems occasionally appear side by side with virelais in which the entire refrain has been written out.

Example 38

En ce printemps gracieux  
 D'estre gai suis envieux  
 Tout a l'onour  
 De ma dame, qui vigour  
 De ses doulz yeulz  
 Me donne, dont par lesquielx  
 Vifs en badour  
  
 Toute riens fait son atour  
 De mener joye a son tour,  
 Bois et prez tieulx  
 Sont, qu'ilz semblent de verdour  
 Estre vestus et de flour  
 Et qui mieulx mieulx.  
  
 Oysiaulx chantent en maint lieulx;  
 Pour le temps delicieux  
 Et plein d'edour  
 Se mettent hors de tristour  
 Joennes et vieux;  
 Tous meinent et ris et jeux  
 Ou temps paschour,  
  
 En ce printemps gracieux.

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<sup>44</sup>. Wilkins, Nigel, ed., One Hundred Ballades, Rondeaux and Virelais from the Later Middle Ages, 1969, 93-94.

## Example 38 (Cont'd.)

Et moy n'ay je bien coulour  
 D'estre gay, quant la meilleur,  
     Ainsi m'aïst Dieux,  
 Qui soit, je sers sanz erreur,  
 N'a autre je n'ay favour,  
     Car soubz les cieulx

N'a dame ou biens soient tieulx;  
 Si doy estre curieux  
     Pour sa valour  
 D'elle servir sanz sejour,  
     Car anieux  
 Ne pourroit estre home mortieulx  
     De tel doulcour

En ce printemps gracieux.

Example 39, by Machaut's pupil Eustache Deschamps, is unique.<sup>45</sup>

The stanza, including two statements of the refrain, is only five lines long. The fourth line is only a "Slant rhyme" (that is, there is assonance but not full rhyme) with the refrains. Most striking is the use of two alternating refrains. There are eleven strophes, so that each refrain appears six times. In the last three strophes a full rhyme is finally made between the refrain and the previous line.

## Example 39

Sui je, sui je, sui je belle?

Il me semble, a mon avis,  
 Que j'ay beau front at doulz viz

Et la bouche vermeillette;

Dittes moy se je suis belle.

J'ay vers yeulx, petis sourcis,  
 Le chief blont, le nez traitis,

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45. Ibid., 79-80.

## Example 39 (Cont'd.)

Ront menton, blanche gorgette;

Sui je, sui je, sui je belle?

J'ay dur sain et hault assis,  
Lons bras, gresles doys aussis

Et par le faulz sui greslette;

Dittes moy se je suis belle.

J'ay bonnes rains, ce m'est vis,  
Bon dos, bon cul de Paris,

Cuisses et gambes bien faictes;

Sui je, sui je, sui je belle?

J'ay piez rondes et petiz,  
Bien chaussans, et biaux habis,

Je sui gaye et joliette;

Dittes moy se je suis belle.

J'ay mantiaux fourrez de gris,  
J'ay chapiaux, j'ay biaux proffis

Et d'argent mainte espinglette;

Sui je, sui je, sui je belle?

J'ay draps de soye et tabis,  
J'ay draps d'or et blans et bis,

J'ay mainte bonne chosette;

Dittes moy se je suis belle.

Que .xv. ans n'ay, je vous dis;  
Moult est mes tresors jolys,

S'en garderay la clavette;

Sui je, sui je, sui je belle?

Bien devra estre hardis  
Cilz qui sera mes amis,

## Example 39 (cont'd.)

Qui ara tel damoiselle;  
 Dittes moy se je suis belle.  
 Et par Dieu je li plevis  
 Que tresloyal, se je vis,  
 Li seray, si ne chancelle;  
 Sui je, sui je, sui je belle?  
 Se courtois est et gentilz,  
 Vaillans apres, bien appris,  
 Il gaignera sa querelle;  
 Dittes moy se je suis belle.

Italian secular music of the fourteenth century, like that of France, had three predominant forms: the madrigal, caccia and ballata. The ballata was discussed above, and fourteenth-century examples tend to be quite regular in form, corresponding to the scheme AbbaA. Most are written in two or three voices, but there did not seem to be any strong tradition governing the number of stanzas; the majority have only one. While the French polyphonic virelais occasionally had texts in the tenor or contratenor, this is extremely rare in the ballata. Many ballate show a melismatic style which may indeed have some historical relationship to chant or melismatic organum.<sup>46</sup>

Example 40 is a work of Francesco Landini, notable in that it has

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46. Reese, op. cit., 371.

four strophes.<sup>47</sup> The style here is relatively plain, avoiding the heavy use of syncopation which was so predominant in contemporary French music. There does appear to be a hocket-like effect in the cadences of the piedi, and this is perhaps a French influence.

Example 40

1.5. Per - 4. Chi

chè vir - tù - fa l'uom co-stan-te e con-tro a tai ru-

for - i - te, A vir-tù cor-ra chi vuol fug-gir ne Più tost' è vin-to e più s'ap-press'a

mor - mor - te. te.

2. Che 3. Cor' val fug-gir quel che sem- pre s'a- re la no-stra vi-ta e mai non

47. Schrade, op. cit., IV, 42.

## Example 40 (cont'd.)

The musical score for Example 40 (cont'd.) consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 7/8.

**System 1:**

- Vocal line: *pre-* / *ces-* / *sa E che ci qui-d'bn -* / *sa In fin che giugne all'*
- Piano line: Accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes.

**System 2:**

- Vocal line: *gnor' a mor-tal* / *ul - ti - mo con-* / *fi -*
- Piano line: Accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes.

**System 3:**

- Vocal line: *ne?* / *fi -* / *ne;*
- Piano line: Accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Example 41, from "I' piango, lasso!" by the same composer, shows a much more elaborate setting.<sup>48</sup> In 41.b., note the syncopation which creates a poyrhythmic effect.

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48. Ibid., 61.



## Example 41.a.

Handwritten musical score for Example 41.a. The score consists of two systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are in Italian: "I' pian- go, las-so'l ten-po ch'è pas- sa - to,". The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. There are triplets indicated by a '3' over the notes in the first system. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

## Example 41.b.

## Example 41.b.

Handwritten musical score for Example 41.b. The score consists of two systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are "[chia] - to". The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

#### D. The Virelai in the Fifteenth Century

The year 1400 marks a division here only for purposes of convenience. Of course, some of the composers discussed previously were active well into the fifteenth century; conversely, some men whose works are discussed below composed before the end of the fourteenth century. Moreover, as we have seen, the last decade of the fourteenth century brought with it stylistic changes which foreshadowed techniques of the mid-fifteenth century.

Few clear-cut examples of the virelai are to be found in the first half of the fifteenth century. The great majority are found in the Manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canonici Misc. 213, which contains ten virelais, five of which are anonymous. Reaney has conjectured that the dates of the pieces contained in this source range from 1380 to 1430, so any precise chronology is difficult.<sup>1</sup> The only virelai which is orthodox in form and whose authorship can definitely be ascribed is "Se j'estoye aseürée" by Haucourt (Johannes de Alte Curie), who is known to have been in the service of the Papal court at Avignon. This piece is unremarkable formally, having a five-line refrain and three-line Stollen. There is one strophe, a procedure which was common by this time. The tenor is very simple, and the contratenor provides rhythmic interest only briefly. The texture is very close to the treble-dominated style of the Burgundian School (see Example 42<sup>2</sup>). There is some rhythmic

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1. Reaney, Gilbert, "The Manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canonici Misc. 213," Musica Disciplina IX, 1955, 74 and 77.

2. Reaney, Early Fifteenth-Century Music, II, American Institute of Musicology, 1959, 36-37.

complexity in that the treble often has triplets set against duple divisions in the lower voices, but this is mild compared to the manneristic polyrhythms in others of Haucourt's compositions (e.g., the rondeaux, "Se doit il plus"<sup>3</sup>).

Example 42.a.




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3. Ibid., II, 34-36.

## Example 42.b. (Cont'd.)

A musical score for a three-part setting. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a melody with lyrics "e- u- ré" and a measure with a "c?" annotation. The middle staff is in bass clef and provides harmonic support. The bottom staff is also in bass clef and features a simple bass line. The music is written in a medieval style with square neumes on a four-line staff.

A continuation of the musical score from the previous block. It shows the final measures of the three parts. The top staff ends with a half note, the middle staff with a half note, and the bottom staff with a half note. The notation is consistent with the previous block, using square neumes on a four-line staff.

Three unusual pieces survive among the secular works of Guillaume le Grant, about whom almost nothing is known. All are in the form ABB. The manuscripts of the time are extremely varied in the notation of repeats, and so perhaps the first section was meant to be repeated, resulting in Abba, a shortened virelai form of which many fourteenth-century examples exist. Many of the rondeaux of contemporary composers are preserved with incomplete texts, and so the possibility also exists that these are actually incomplete AbbaA forms. Nevertheless, Reaney does not dismiss the possibility that the intended form is ABB, and

therefore has little if any connection with the virelai.<sup>4</sup>

One of these chansons, "Or avant, gentilz fillettes," has the text in all three voices. Especially interesting is the use of rhythmic imitation almost throughout, with the contratenor following the homorhythmic tenor and treble. Harmonically, the piece belongs to the Middle Ages, but the texture is more akin to Renaissance styles (see Example 43<sup>5</sup>).

Example 43

Or a-vant, gen-tilz fil-let-tes,

Or a-vant, gen-tilz fil-let-

Or a-vant gen-tilz fil-let-tes,

de quoy fe-rez-vous cha-peaux? Car ce mars de ses mar-teaux

tes, de quoy fe-rez-vous cha-peaux? Car ce mars de ses mar-

de quoy fe-rez-vous cha-peaux? Car ce mars de ses mar-teaux

4. Ibid., II, iv.

5. Ibid., II, 50-51.

## Example 43 (Cont'd.)

a tu-é les vi-ol- let- tes: mort soit- il de  
 a tu-é les vi-ol- let-tes: mort soit- il de  
 a tu-és les vi-ol- let- tes: mort soit - il de

frois cou- teaux! En cest a-vril es jours beaux,  
 et pour ou-ir oy-se - aux  
 En cest a-vril es jours  
 et pour ou-ir oy-se

a-lés au bois par trou- peaux pour cueil-lir d'au-tres flour-ret- tes  
 chan-ter ba-la-des, ron-deaux  
 beaux, a-lés au bois par trou- peaux pour cueil-lir d'au-tres flour-ret-tes  
 aux chan-ter ba-la-des, ron-

## Example 43 (Cont'd.)

et de bel-les chan-son-net-tes.

deaux et de bel-les chan-son-net-tes.

et de bel-les chan-son-net-tes.

By some indeterminate date before 1450 the *virelai* lost its former stylistic distinction from the *rondeau* and the *ballade*. Line-lengths were no longer so varied within the stanza, for example. The decasyllabic line which had been established by Machaut in his *rondeaux* and *ballades* became predominant in the *virelai* as well. The verse structure of one of the anonymous *virelais* of the MS Oxford is representative:

$A_{10}B_{11}B_{10}A_{11}c_{10}c_{10}c_{10}c_{10}a_{10}b_{11}b_{10}a_{11}A_{10}...$ <sup>6</sup>

Also, the subject-matter was no longer clearly differentiated, nearly all secular songs falling into predictable amorous themes.

The composers of the so-called Burgundian School devoted more of their creative energies to sacred music than had fourteenth-century composers, and consequently secular music is less important in the whole corpus of works we possess. Giles Binchois is an exception, and although

6. See *Ibid.*, IV, 60-61.

virelais are among his works, rondeaux and through-composed chansons are much more numerous. We also have virelais of Grenon, Busnois, Dufay and others of lesser fame. The form gradually became known as the bergerette, which is generally defined as a one-strophe virelai. The term itself indicates a pastoral association, but this is apparently only an echo of the form's previous character, inasmuch as the texts show little differentiation from those of other genres. Apel raises the possibility that earlier bergerettes are simply virelais, two stanzas of which have not been preserved.<sup>7</sup>

Treatises of the late fifteenth century treat the bergerette (as well as the rondeau) rather differently from those of earlier times. They generally speak of the parts of the form as separate stanzas, so that the refrain, Stollen and Abgesang constituted three stanzas, and the repetition of the refrain constituted a fourth. This was also done with respect to the rondeau. The bergerette thus was spoken of as a variant of the rondeau in which the second stanza departed from the rhyme scheme and musical setting of the rondeau, omitting the internal refrain.<sup>8</sup> This view is essentially identical to Gemrich's method of deriving the virelai from the rondeau.

Example 44 is a bergerette of Nicole Grenon, who composed both in

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7. Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music, 2nd ed., 1969, 91.

8. See Linker, Robert and McPeck, Gwynn S., "The Bergerette Form in the Laborde Chansonnier," Journal of the American Musicological Society, VII, 1954, 113-120, and Perle, George, "The Chansons of Antoine Busnois," Music Review, XI, 1950, 89-97.



Italy and at Cambrai, where he may have taught Dufay.<sup>9</sup> Insofar as verse structure is concerned, Grenon seems to have reverted to a technique of Machaut, that of using only two rhymes:

A<sub>9</sub> A<sub>9</sub> B<sub>9</sub> B<sub>9</sub> A<sub>9</sub> b<sub>9</sub> b<sub>9</sub> a<sub>9</sub> b<sub>9</sub> b<sub>9</sub> a<sub>9</sub> a<sub>9</sub> a<sub>9</sub> b<sub>9</sub> b<sub>9</sub> a<sub>9</sub> A<sub>9</sub>....

Example 44

The image shows two systems of handwritten musical notation. Each system consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in alto clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The time signature is 3/2. The first system of staves contains the lyrics "1.5. La plus belle et douce" with musical notes and rests. The second system contains the lyrics "fi-gu-re, la" with musical notes and rests. There is a sharp sign (#) above the fourth measure of the second system.

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9. Marix, Jean, Les Musiciens de la Cour de Bourgogne au XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle, 1937, 4-5.

## Example 44 (Cont'd.)



Handwritten musical score for Example 44 (Cont'd.), consisting of three systems of music. Each system features a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (bass clef). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

**System 1:**

Vocal: plus no- ble gen- te fai- tu - re, c'est ma chie-

Piano: Accompaniment with a bass line and chords.

**System 2:**

Vocal: re dame et mes- tres - se. Bon an, bon

Piano: Accompaniment with a bass line and chords.

**System 3:**

Vocal: jour, joye et li- es - se li

Piano: Accompaniment with a bass line and chords.

## Example 44 (Cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for Example 44 (Cont'd.), consisting of three systems of music. Each system features a vocal line (treble clef), a bass line (bass clef), and a piano accompaniment (bass clef).

**System 1:** The vocal line begins with the lyrics "doinst, dieux, et bone a-ven-tu-". The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand and a melody in the right hand.

**System 2:** The vocal line continues with "re!". The piano accompaniment features a more complex melody in the right hand, including a sharp sign (#) and a fermata.

**System 3:** The vocal line begins with the lyrics "2. C'est tout mon bien, c'est ma de-es-". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand and a melody in the right hand.

## Example 44 (Cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for Example 44 (Cont'd.), consisting of three systems of music. Each system features a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (bass clef). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

**System 1:**

Vocal: se, Cel- le par qui ma do- lour ces -

**System 2:**

Vocal: - se, En qui je preing ma no - re -

**System 3:**

Vocal: tu - re, 1. 2.

The piano accompaniment consists of a single melodic line in the bass clef, providing harmonic support for the vocal melody. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals (sharps and flats).

## Example 44 (Cont'd.)



3. Qui servir rueil sans nul destresse  
De cuer tant que voglie mes leste:  
N'en ce monde d'autre m'ay cure.
4. Former la sut dieux de nature  
Balns, blons, tout par mesure,  
Playsamment, y jouta jesnesse,  
Largesse, honneur, toute noblesse  
En fais, en dis et eu parleure.

La plus...

The bergerettes of Busnois and Dufay, unlike the above example, all use new rhymes in stanza two (Stollen). One of the four written by the latter lacks the text for stanza three, and so possibly we have here the form Abba which had been relatively common in the late fourteenth century.

"De me haulte" seems to be unique among fifteenth-century virolais. Here Dufay returns to the earlier style of metric variety:  $A_9 B_5 B_9 A_{10} A_5 B_9$   $c_9 d_4$  etc. Also, the form is expanded by the inclusion of two extra stanzas, one corresponding to stanza two (Stollen), and the other to

stanza three (Abgesang). The form is thus AbbabbaA. The entire piece is given as Example 45.<sup>10</sup>

Example 45

1.8. De ma haul - te et bon-ne a-ven- tu- re

Est ma doul - ces- se, Je mer-cye a-vec ma

prin - ces - se A - mour, qui m'a par -

10. Dufay, Opera Omnia, ed. Heinrich Bessler, VI, 1964, 41-42.

## Example 45 (Cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for Example 45 (Cont'd.), consisting of three systems of music. Each system features a vocal line (treble clef) and two piano accompaniment lines (bass clef). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

**System 1:**

Vocal line: *pi - tie pu - re fait ou - ver - tu -*

**System 2:**

Vocal line: *- re De l'es - parg - ne de sa ri - ches -*

**System 3:**

Vocal line: *se. 2. A -*

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals (sharps, flats), and dynamic markings. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in the left and right hands.

## Example 45 (Cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for the first system of Example 45. The system consists of three staves: a treble staff and two bass staves. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The notes are handwritten, and there are some corrections or markings above certain notes, such as a flat sign above the 'nuy' and 'que' notes.

pres l'en- nuy de lon- que at-ten-

Handwritten musical score for the second system of Example 45. The system consists of three staves: a treble staff and two bass staves. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The notes are handwritten, and there are some corrections or markings above certain notes, such as a flat sign above the 'ble' note.

- te Sous fei - ble es-pair

Handwritten musical score for the third system of Example 45. The system consists of three staves: a treble staff and two bass staves. The notes are handwritten, and there are some corrections or markings above certain notes, such as a sharp sign above the final note in the treble staff.



3. Ce plaisir me paist et contente  
Sans decevoir.
4. J'ai confort doux pour douleur dure;  
Choix de maistresse  
Et secours de plaisant iosnesse,  
Oubiens de grace et de nature  
Sont sans mesure  
Es pars d'outrageuse largesse.
5. Bel acueil entier se presente  
A mon vouloir
6. Et pour vieil dueil joye presente  
Me fait avoir
7. Esperance n'est pas parjure  
De sa promesse,  
Car j'ay nompareille deesse  
Et des biens a tel desmesure  
Que je vous jure  
Qu'aulre amer me seroit rudesse.

The works of the Burgundians reflect the rapidly rising importance of the through-composed chanson. This was a natural corollary of the movement toward a seamless texture which was inherently unsympathetic to the refrain forms. The bergerette occasionally appeared among works of Flemish composers of the late fifteenth century, but was no longer a form of central importance. Many of these bergerettes are difficult to identify as such except by examining the text alone, because the music is often not closely governed by the poetic form. One such piece is Example 46, found in one of the first printed collections of music and attributed in one manuscript to "Raulin," an otherwise unknown composer.<sup>11</sup>

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11. Hewitt, Helen, Ottaviano Petrucci: Canti B, Numero Cinquanto, 1502, 1967, 111-113.

## Example 46

Handwritten musical score for Example 46, first system. The score is written on four staves (treble and bass clefs) in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and common time (C). The lyrics are: "Je suis trop jeu-net-te". The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the staves.

Handwritten musical score for Example 46, second system. The score continues from the first system, written on four staves (treble and bass clefs) in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and common time (C). The lyrics are: "net-te pour fair-cung a-my, Si suys-". The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the staves.

## Example 46 (Cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for Example 46 (Cont'd.), first system. The score is written on four staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The third staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: je bien pres-te d'en fai-re un jo-

Handwritten musical score for Example 46 (Cont'd.), second system. The score is written on four staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The third staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: ly. S'il est à ma pos-te, il au-

## Example 46 (Cont'd.)



Handwritten musical score for Example 46 (Cont'd.). The score is written on four staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 7/8 time signature. The second staff is in treble clef. The third staff is in treble clef. The fourth staff is in bass clef. The lyrics are: "Et lai - ray mon pé-re, ma ra mon cœur,". The music features a melody in the first staff, a harmonic accompaniment in the second and third staves, and a bass line in the fourth staff.



Continuation of the musical score for Example 46 (Cont'd.). The score is written on four staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff is in treble clef. The third staff is in treble clef. The fourth staff is in bass clef. The lyrics are: "mè-re, mon frè-re, ma soeur, Et y - ray seul-". The music continues with a melody in the first staff, a harmonic accompaniment in the second and third staves, and a bass line in the fourth staff.

## Example 46 (Cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for the first system of Example 46. The system consists of four staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and contains the lyrics "let - te au bois a- vec luy Cueil - lir". The third staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features various note values, including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and accidentals.

Handwritten musical score for the second system of Example 46. The system consists of four staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and contains the lyrics "ri - o - let - te pour pas - ser en - nuy.". The third staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features various note values, including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and accidentals.

## Example 46 (Cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for Example 46 (Cont'd.), first system. The score is written on four staves. The first three staves are in treble clef, and the fourth staff is in bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 8/8. The lyrics are: "Je suis trop jeu-net-te pour fai-". The music features various note values including half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes, with some notes beamed together. There are also rests and accidentals (sharps and flats) throughout the system.

Handwritten musical score for Example 46 (Cont'd.), second system. The score is written on four staves. The first three staves are in treble clef, and the fourth staff is in bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 8/8. The lyrics are: "re-ung a-my, Si suys-je bien pres-te". The music continues with various note values and rests, maintaining the 8/8 time signature and one-flat key signature.

## Example 46 (Cont'd.)

Handwritten musical score for Example 46 (Cont'd.). The score is written on five staves. The first four staves are in treble clef, and the fifth staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 8/8. The lyrics "d'en fai- re ung jo- ly." are written under the third staff. The music consists of various note values, including quarter, eighth, and half notes, with some rests and accidentals.

The text is in the old eight-line form, but varied to AAbbaaAA, consisting of two strophes. The piece is based on a pre-existing melody,<sup>12</sup> but the cantus moves between two voices. In measure 28 the opening melody should return, according to the dictates of the form, but it is significantly varied. The second stanza should begin in measure 16, but there is no indication of exactly how this should be done. Hewitt has concluded that the piece was not intended to be sung at all, having noted that aside from the obvious problems of underlaying the text, there are few adequate breathing places for the singers.<sup>13</sup>

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12. Ibid., 33.

13. Ibid., 32.

The anonymous "Aquis dir'elle sa pencee" is found in the same source.<sup>14</sup> Again we have a cantus firmus in virelai form, but the effect is of a through-composed piece. The text is quite irregular, because an extra line occurs at the beginnings of the second and third strophes. Since these lines coincide metrically with the second (final) refrain line, they are apparently intended to be sung to that music. This, in addition to an irregular rhyme scheme, produces a curious formal diagram:

Text: AB/cac/cd/AB/efef/gd/AB/hihi/jb/AB.

Only the final refrain of each strophe is clearly distinguished by phrasing, and so the loose virelai structure becomes a very esoteric element in the piece.<sup>15</sup>

"Adieu mes amours," a chanson by Josquin des Pres, has its tenor in the form AABBA (Example 47).<sup>16</sup> Reaney suggests that this is a bergerette without the repetition of the refrain, which would produce AAbbaA.<sup>17</sup> This is an arguable point. It would seem that there is no possibility that we have here another case of omitted repeat signs; the music has no final cadence at the end of the "refrain." Also, the bergerette in the fifteenth-century most often had a refrain of four or more lines, though shorter refrains are not entirely absent. But

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14. Ibid., 134-137.

15. See also Heldt, Elisabeth, Französische Virelais aus dem 15. Jahrhundert, 1916, 99-100.

16. Josquin des Pres, Werken, ed. Smijers, Deel II, Bundel IV, 1-3.

17. Reaney, "Das mehrstimmige Virelai," Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, XIII, 1807.



the most obvious argument here is that this is simply a somewhat expanded ABA form. The tenor seems to be a cantus firmus, and very likely a popular or folk melody, in which case ABA would not be an unusual form. Even if one accepts Renaey's opinion, it is apparent that the form has been so eroded as to be nearly unrecognizable.

Example 47

mand, A-dieu je vous dy jus-quez au prin-temps.

Je suis en sou-ci je quoy je vi-vray,

la rai-son pour-quoy je le vous di-ray: Je n'ay plus d'ar-

gent, vi-vray je du vent, Se l'ar-gent du Roy

ne vient plus sou-vent.

Among the very few formally regular bergerettes of the late fifteenth century are those of Alexandir Agricola, of which there are eight known at present.<sup>18</sup> One of these is a motet-chanson, with a Latin text included for the tenor of the refrain only.<sup>19</sup> Though the form is recognizable here, the stanza has been expanded to twenty-nine lines:

AAABBEA cccdcdd aaabbba AAABBEA.<sup>20</sup>

No liturgical melody has been identified as the cantus of this piece, and the other bergerettes are apparently free of borrowed melodies as well. A fully imitative texture is very close here, as is illustrated in Example 48, taken from the three-voice bergerette "Se je vous eslonge."<sup>21</sup>

Example 48.a.

18. A ninth is of doubtful authorship, See Agricola, Opera Omnia, ed. Lerner, V, lxxxiv.

19. "L'eure est venue - Circumdederunt me," Agricola, Opera Omnia, IV, 54-57.

20. Reaney, MGG, XIII, 1807.

21. Agricola, op. cit., V, 13-15.

Example 48.b.

Musical score for Example 48.b, featuring three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle staff is in treble clef with a '3' below it, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The lyrics are in French: "Si n'en se-ra ja" (top), "Si n'en se-ra ja" (middle), and "Si n'en se-ra ja" (bottom). The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat).

Example 48.c.

Musical score for Example 48.c, featuring three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle staff is in treble clef with a '3' below it, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The lyrics are in French: "He-las, de vous" (top), "He-las, de" (middle), and "He-las, de vous me" (bottom). The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score is labeled "Example 48.c." at the top left.

The Italian ballata, somewhat altered, survived in Spain in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as the villancico. The refrain, called estribillo, was sung at the beginning, and then it alternated with several stanzas (coplas). As in the ballata, each copla consisted of two sections, midanza and vuelta, which were identical to the piedi and volta of the ballata. Many of these were written in a chordal, or at least homorhythmic, style. Apel suggests that those exhibiting a more polyphonic texture are probably earlier.<sup>22</sup> A large number of villancicos display the strict virelai form, but, like the cantigas of three centuries earlier, they were capable of a certain amount of formal variety. Some examples lack a textual refrain completely, though the music of course recurs. One of the most prolific and important composers of villancicos, Juan del Encina, often utilized an ABBA form in which the refrain was merely the final line of the A section. Example 49 is such a composition, the text of which is in the form abba edcd abba.<sup>23</sup>

Example 49

1. Pues que ja- más ol- vi-  
4. Mas si vos, por bien a-

22. Apel, Harvard Dictionary, 903.

23. Davison and Apel, op. cit., 100.

## Example 49 (Cont'd.)

da- nos No pue- de mi cor-a- zon  
ma- ros, Que- reis dar me ga-lar- don,

Si me fal- ta  
No di- ra mi ga- lar- don i Ay, que mal  
co- ra- zon

tal vis- ta co- brar Gran do- lor y gran tris-  
tal vis- ta pe- nar, Si me fa- lle- ce ven-

## Example 49 (Cont'd.)



Musical score for Example 49 (Cont'd.). The score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 2/4. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are: hi-ce en mi-ra- - ros! 2. Se - ra 3. Se - ra. The word "Fine" is written above the staff at the end of the first measure of the second system. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.



Musical score for Example 49 (Cont'd.). The score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 2/4. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are: tu- tu- - ra. ra. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. Below the staff, the instruction "D.C. al Fine" is written.

Contemporary with the villancico was the Italian frottola, which retained the terminology of the ballata; however, the piedi were sung to the refrain music, and "volta" indicated the final refrain, which consisted of all or part of the original refrain, plus a coda. Thus, the musical similarity was weak. Like the villancicos, frottole were often written in a chordal style, and harmonically they helped to bring the major-minor tonality a bit closer.<sup>24</sup>

By the first quarter of the sixteenth century the virelai, as well as the rondeau and ballade, was no longer a current form in France and the Flemish areas. Refrain forms persisted in Spain and Italy, but eventually died out there too with the rise of the imitative madrigal and motet. Though the villancico and frottola preserved some aspects in common with the virelai, both were really independent forms. In actuality, the bergerettes of the late fifteenth century can be considered the last virelais.

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24. See examples in Davison and Apel, op. cit., 97-98.

### III. Conclusions and Summary

Apel concluded twenty years ago that the virelai was not a song form of the thirteenth-century trouvères, as had previously been supposed. Unfortunately, the older view persists in many more recent books, especially general history texts, even though most authorities on the medieval song forms now agree with Apel. There is also a general consensus that it was Machaut who established the virelai as one of the "formes fixes." However, there is still a degree of doubt as to the origin of the virelai and the subsequent development of related forms. Perhaps the virelai finds its roots in the Arabian zajal; perhaps the lauda and the cantiga developed from the same or similar precedents in music of the Church; perhaps the earliest bergerettes were simply virelais with additional stanzas omitted from the manuscripts. This list of possibilities is long, and the questions are unlikely to be resolved on the basis of the documents we now possess.

It can be said that the virelai and its related forms have a history extending roughly from the twelfth century into the sixteenth century. The Ars Nova, however, is the period in which that version we now think of as the "strict" form was used consistently. This is true especially of the works of Machaut and his immediate successors in France, as well as those of the trecento composers of ballate in Italy. While the strict virelai is found both earlier and later, this is usually among works of great formal variety, both musical and poetic.



In the Ars Nova the virelai was characterized by a close correspondence of musical and poetic forms. Three stanzas became standard, and the verse almost always featured a great deal of metric variety. Even here, however, a variety within uniformity exists; the diagram AbbaA could represent almost any number of lines, because each part constituted a small form in itself. Soon after the period of Machaut's activity variants began to appear frequently. Abba was common, and the number of stanzas was no longer standardized. In the fifteenth century the bergerette emerged, but this was at a time when the through-composed chanson was already becoming the preferred genre in French secular music.

The three formes fixes required a musical setting with clearly articulated phrases in order to be intelligible. The polyphonic styles of the Renaissance hastened their demise because this requirement was no longer met. Perhaps a humanistic desire for subjective expression also helped to account for the eventual decline of more complex poetic forms, but this argument seems untenable when one considers that many Renaissance composers subjected themselves to other types of restrictive formal complexity. Thus it seems that the change of musical style is the chief reason for the disuse of refrain forms in French music of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

In conclusion, a list of the virelai and related forms is given here along with a chronological diagram, in the hope that they will assist the reader toward a clearer perception of these forms.

1. Ballade: A French form which probably originated in the thirteenth century in the *trouvère* tradition. The initial musical section is repeated and is followed by an indefinite number of lines, ending with a refrain. By the fourteenth century, the ballade consisted of three stanzas, each of seven or eight lines: ababcdE or ababcdEF.

2. Ballata: An Italian secular polyphonic form of the fourteenth century. It perhaps also existed earlier as a monophonic form, but examples are lacking. The ballata corresponds to the basic diagram AbbaA, in which A is the ripresa, b is the piede (plural piedi), and a is the volta. The poetic structure does not always exactly match the musical form, the most common occurrence being the reversal of the rhyme in the volta. Thus the poetic scheme is often ABbbbaAB or AbccbaAB.

3. Bergerette: The fifteenth-century designation for a one-stanza *virelai*. Because each section of the form consisted of (usually) three or four lines, they were often thought of as separate stanzas.

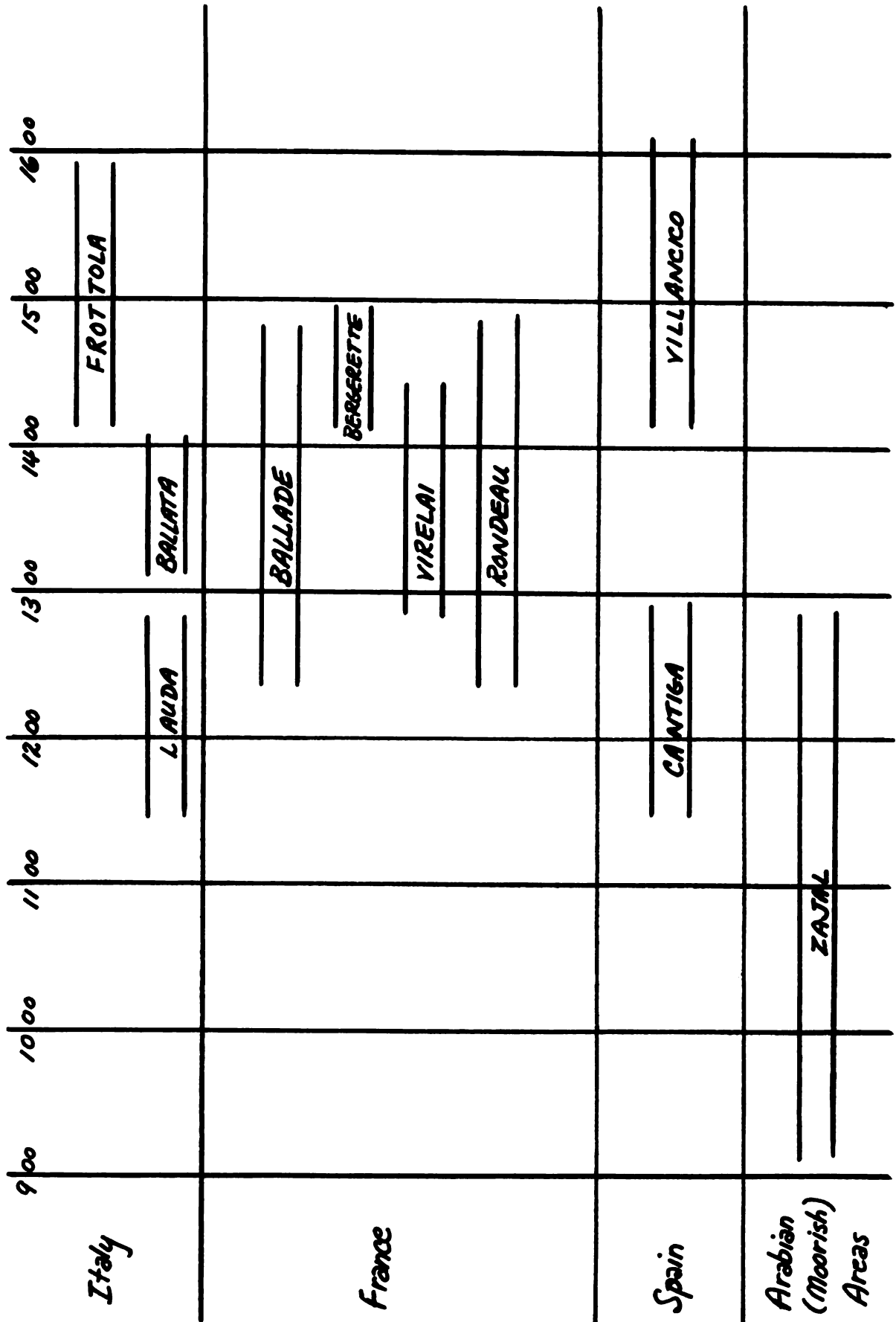
4. Cantiga: A Spanish monophonic song. The term refers especially to those songs of the thirteenth century, almost exclusively Marian in nature, which have been preserved in a collection supervised by King Alfonso X. The *virelai* form ABccabAB exists in many of these, but many variants are also found, such as ABccdbAB. The poetic structure often differs from the musical structure. AAbbaAA is a common textual scheme, and this is perhaps a direct descendent of the Arabian zajal.

5. Frottola: An Italian form of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, many examples of which approach a homophonic texture. The form is basically AB aab A- aab A- etc. The recurrence of the refrain includes an extension or coda, and is called volta. The sections of the diagram represented by a were called piedi. The form was derived from the ballata as the terminology suggests. There were many variants, the above form being the most common.
  
6. Lauda: An Italian devotional song, usually Marian. These flourished in Italy from the twelfth century to the nineteenth century. Thirteenth century laude show a certain French influence, and a few have the virelai form ABccabAB, though only the underlined portions of the diagram were in any sense constant. The terms ripresa, piede, and volta were apparently used in connection with laude, and so a direct line to the fourteenth century ballata is likely.
  
7. Rondeau: The simplest form dates from the thirteenth century and consists of eight lines: ABaAabAB. The repetition of part of the refrain within the stanza is the outstanding characteristic here, and rondeaux were almost always of one stanza only. The form retained its popularity well into the fifteenth century, but usually in forms of eleven, thirteen, sixteen or twenty-one lines. The rondeau was probably derived from the Latin rondellus of the Notre Dame School (aAbB). Its importance in the trouvère repertoire has been greatly exaggerated.
  
8. Villancico: A Spanish form of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, similar in musical treatment to the Italian frottola, but closer to the ballata: AbbaAbbaA etc. The poetic form found in the

earlier cantigas is often found here: AAbbbaAA. In sixteenth-century examples the refrain often comprises only the last line or lines of the opening section: aBccaBccaB etc.

9. Virelai: A fourteenth-century French form represented by the diagram AbbaAbbaAbbaA. Thus, the normal length is three stanzas. The parts are often described with German terms corresponding to another version of the formal diagram, ABccabAB: AB = Refrain, cc = Stollen, ab = Abgesang. Examples before 1400 exist, but they are few and extremely varied in formal details. Though the strict form appears among the works of Jehannot de l'Escurel, it was Machaut who established the virelai as a fixed form. The virelai was probably derived from the Spanish cantiga, and so perhaps ultimately from the Arabian zajal (or zejel).

10. Zajal: An Arabian (Moorish) musical and poetic form dating from about the ninth century. The scheme is AbbbaAcccaA etc. or ABcccaBdddAB etc. This is thought to be the form which gave rise to the cantiga in Spain, and therefore may be an ancestor of the virelai as well.



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