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“Du Chemin and The Chansons of Claude Goudimel”

Goudimel and Du Chemin

Claude Goudimel was a musician of remarkable versatility. He is best remembered today for his polyphonic settings of the Psalms in French, many of which are based upon the texts and tunes of the Psalter as it was edited for Jean Calvin’s followers in France and Geneva during the middle years of the sixteenth century. Goudimel’s settings of these sacred melodies embrace a wide range of musical styles, from free, motet-like interpretations of the Psalms to arrangements in which the Genevan melody appears as a tenor or superius *cantus firmus*.¹ But Goudimel was also active as a composer of Latin sacred music, including five Masses and three Magnificat settings, based on texts from the Catholic liturgy.² Over seventy secular chansons comprise yet another important part of Goudimel’s output. Roughly half of these chansons appeared in the first eleven books of Du Chemin’s *Chansons nouvelles* series. Viewed in the context of his other works, and in the context of changing musical aesthetics in sixteenth-century France, these early chansons are particularly instructive for what they reveal about Goudimel’s growth as a composer during this part of his career.

Goudimel’s association with the Du Chemin firm began with the very first volume of the *Chansons nouvelles*, which was issued in 1549, while our composer was a student at the Université de Paris.³ He remained a regular contributor to these chanson collections--two or three of his chansons appeared in each of the first eleven volumes of the series. Goudimel and Du Chemin apparently developed a close working relationship during this time. Following the dissolution of the partnership of Du Chemin and his first musical editor, Nicolas Regnes, in March of 1551, Goudimel gradually took over editorial responsibility for the musical aspects of Du Chemin’s printing business. By 1553, this new partnership was so well established that Goudimel and Du Chemin were listed together as printers on the title pages of books of

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- 1 · Modern editions of Goudimel’s Psalm settings can be found in Goudimel, *Premier, second, tiers fascicules des 150 Pseaumes*, ed. Henry Expert, 3 vols., *Maîtres musiciens de la renaissance française*, 2, 4, and 6 (Paris; 1895-97; reprint edn. New York: Broude Trust, 1963) and Goudimel, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Henry Gagnebin, et al, 14 vols. (New York: Institute of Medieval Music, 1967). Goudimel’s place in the history of the Huguenot Psalter is considered in Laurent Guillo, “Le Psautier de Paris et le Psautier de Lyon: à propos de deux corpus contemporains du Psautier de Genève (1549-1561),” *Bulletin de la Société de l’histoire du Protestantisme française*, 136 (1990), 361-420 and Pierre Pidoux, ed., *Le Psautier huguenot du XVI^e siècle. Mélodies et documents*, 2 vols. (Basel: Bärenreiter, 1962).
- 2 · Modern editions of the motets and other Latin sacred music appear in Goudimel, *Oeuvres complètes*. Some of these works were first published in volumes that Goudimel himself helped to produce. See the bibliographic descriptions of these books in François Lesure and Geneviève Thibault, “Bibliographie des éditions musicales publiées par Nicolas du Chemin,” *Annales musicologiques* 1 (1953), 269-373; 4 (1956), 251-53; and 6 (1958-63), 403-06. Goudimel’s Latin sacred music is contained in Items 36 and 37 of this catalogue.
- 3 · Goudimel’s early career is documented in François Lesure, “Claude Goudimel, étudiant, correcteur, et éditeur parisien,” *Musica disciplina* 2 (1948), 225-30. Further on Goudimel, see Michel Brenet [Marie Bobillier], *Claude Goudimel. Essai bibliographique* (Besançon, 1898; reprint ed, Tours: Librairie Ars Musicae, 1982).

Magnificats and motets they produced. (As it happens, Goudimel's music appears in each of these projects, too).⁴ Goudimel advertised his own diligence as a proofreader in yet another motet book that Du Chemin issued in 1554. In a prefatory poem to this publication, Goudimel urged readers to "buy this book with money, you will see (believe me) no uncorrected work."⁵ The volumes of the *Chansons nouvelles* series that were issued during the time of Goudimel's partnership with Du Chemin (that is, the *Neufiesme*, *Dixiesme*, and *Unziesme livres*) make no mention of his editorial role in the production of these particular books. But these volumes mark some important points of departure with the editorial principles used in the eight books of *Chansons nouvelles* prepared under Regnes' supervision. Goudimel, for instance, abandoned Regnes' practice of organizing the chanson books according musical mode. On the other hand, Goudimel inaugurated a number of new stylistic currents in the series, and began the practice of listing the surname of composers over the music of each composition, instead of just on the title page. After August of 1555, when Goudimel and Du Chemin ended their collaboration, the representation of Goudimel's music in the printer's offerings drops off sharply: only two further chansons by Goudimel are found among the remaining five books of the *Chansons nouvelles*.

Goudimel's Literary Interests

Goudimel worked closely with a number of important humanists and poets of his day. Among the most famous of these collaborations was his contribution to the musical *Supplement* to Pierre de Ronsard's *Amours*. This print, issued by Du Chemin 1552 (no doubt with Goudimel's guidance), consisted of strophic settings by Goudimel, Clément Janequin, Pierre Certon, and Marc-Antoine de Muret of some of Ronsard's odes and sonnets.⁶ These musical settings exemplified a new current of interest by Ronsard and his circle in a declamatory, often chordal, style of musical delivery tailored carefully to the rhyme and versification of Ronsard's lyrics. It apparently was Ronsard's intention that the musical settings offered in this volume would serve in part to revive the ancient practice of declaiming poetry to the accompaniment of the lyre. Inasmuch as the poems found in the musical *Supplement* correspond to four principal rhyme schemes used frequently in the *Amours* cycle, it is plain that these strophic pieces were meant to serve quite literally as models to which many of the poems found in the *Amours* could be sung.

Considered from the standpoint of the remainder of Goudimel's career, his contribution to the *Supplement* (a setting of "Quand j'apperçoy ton beau chef jaunissant") seems important in two ways. First, it affords an interesting contrast with some of the chansons he composed prior to 1552, which do not always attend to norms of versification with the care that this composition manages (see below). Second, the collaboration with Ronsard also reminds us

4 · The title pages are transcribed in Lesure and Thibault, "Bibliographie des éditions musicales publiées par Nicolas du Chemin," Items 29 and 30.

5 · The original text, from a poem by Goudimel that appears at the outset of the *Moduli undecim festorum* of 1554, reads "ut emas hunc aete libellum, non incorrectum (crede) videbis opus." Text and translation quoted from a recent modern edition of the entire print (which includes several of Goudimel's own motets): *Moduli undecim festorum*, ed. J. Heywood Alexander, *Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance*, 56 (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 1983), pp. xxiv-xxv (Document II).

6 · Further on Goudimel and the *Supplément*, see Jean-Pierre Ouvrard, "Le Sonnet ronsardien en musique: du *Supplément* de 1552 à 1580," *Revue de musicologie* 74 (1988), 149-64; and Ouvrard, *La Chanson polyphonique française au XVI^e siècle: Guide pratique*, 2nd ed., ed. Jacques Barbier (Tours: Centre de musique ancienne, 1997), pp. 92-93. The later history of Ronsard's poetry and music are considered in Jeanice Brooks, "Ronsard, the Lyric Sonnet and the Late Sixteenth-Century Chanson," *Early Music History* 13 (1994), 65-84.

of Goudimel's several other connections with humanist thinkers and writers of his day. Not long after the dissolution of the partnership between Goudimel and Du Chemin in 1555, the composer moved from Paris to the Huguenot city of Metz. Here he met the poet and playwright Louis des Masures, a connection that has prompted some writers to credit Goudimel with the polyphonic music found in des Masure's *Vingt-six cantiques*, a collection of Psalm settings in French that was issued in Lyons in 1564.⁷ Some time after 1567, Goudimel moved to Lyons, where he eventually took up a correspondence with the humanist poet Paul Schede (alias Melissus) that lasted up until the week before Goudimel's murder during the anti-Protestant violence of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacres in the last days of August 1572.⁸ During his time in Lyons, Goudimel apparently continued some of his editorial work, culminating in the posthumous publication there of an edition of chansons by Arcadelt for which Goudimel had provided spiritual texts in place of the original secular ones. (As it happens, the music of Arcadelt was among Goudimel's new contributions to the volumes of *Chansons nouvelles* he edited for Du Chemin in the early 1550's).⁹

Goudimel's Chansons

Taken in the context of this varied musical career, the thirty-two chansons by Goudimel found among the books of the *Chansons nouvelles* reveal that our composer was well-aware of the formal and literary conventions of mid-century chanson composition. These works, however, also show that Goudimel did not confine himself to those conventions, but extended and revised them in important ways. His setting of "Au moins mon Dieu," from the *Huitiesme livre*, can serve as good example of this tendency. The chanson is notable for the ways in which it attends to the formal and expressive aspects of the text it sets. This piece, like many other chansons of this period, uses the same pair of musical phrases for the first two couplets of the poem, creating a balanced musical reflection of the rhyme scheme of the opening quatrain of the text. Also like many lyrical works found in the *Chansons nouvelles*, the middle section of "Au moins mon Dieu" is less regular in its formal design. But, throughout the piece, Goudimel remains sensitive to the meaning of the poetry as well as its design. In measures 21 and 22, for instance, the words "mon coeur est mort" are set to a series of somber chords culminating in an incomplete cadence. A striking phrygian cadence (between the contratenor and bassus in measure 33) serves both an expressive and a rhetorical purpose. It aptly reflects the sense of sadness ("douleur") at this point in the poem, even as it leads the listener directly into the final line of the poem, with its expressive exclamation: "Hélas mon Dieu." This is a masterful touch, showing how tradition and convention can serve expressive aims.¹⁰

7 · Frank Dobbins cites Goudimel as the likely composer of this music. See Dobbins, *Music in Renaissance Lyons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 206-07. Laurent Guillo has recently doubted the ascription of this music to Goudimel, which is based upon the composer's friendship with des Masures rather than any evidence from the the *Vingt-six cantiques*. See Guillo, *Les Éditions musicales de la Renaissance lyonnaise (1525-1615)*, Domaine musicologique (Paris: Klincksieck, 1991), pp. 320-22.

8 · For references to the correspondence and to near contemporary accounts of Goudimel's death, see Dobbins, *Music in Renaissance*, pp. 206-07.

9 · The print in question, *L'excellence des chansons musicales*, was first issued in 1572, although it survives today only in a reprint edition issued in Geneva in 1586. On the contents and history of this publication, see Guillo, *Les Éditions musicales*, pp. 336-37 and 353-55.

10 · Sixteenth-century musicians heard cadences in which the lowest voice of a contrapuntal pair descends by semitone (in this case from E-flat to D in the bassus) as evoking feelings of pathos or suffering. Further on this expressive device, see Chapter 2, above.

Goudimel and the “Response” Tradition

Goudimel’s “Au moins mon Dieu” is also important for what it reveals about the composer’s close connection with works by his contemporaries. In the *Huictiesme livre*, Du Chemin’s typesetter notes that Goudimel’s “Au moins mon Dieu” is a “responce” to another chanson beginning “Hélas mon Dieu.” The work in question is a setting of this text ascribed variously to his fellow Université student Clément Janequin (in a chansonnier issued by Pierre Attaignant in 1545) or to Jean Maillard (first credited to him in Du Chemin’s *Second livre du recueil* of 1549).¹¹ In this instance, the relationship between the two pieces is both poetic and musical: the first line of the poem “Hélas mon Dieu” reappears as the last line of “Au moins mon Dieu.” Goudimel’s chanson echoes this correspondence, for its closing phrases quote all four polyphonic voices of the chanson by Janequin or Maillard in ways that point out the literary connection between the poems.

EXAMPLE 5.1

Poste esgaré Goudimel

Superius
 Pos - te_es - ga - ré par trop ad - ven - tu - reux, par trop, par trop ad -
 Et de de - voir trop pront, et de - si - reux, trop pront, trop pront, et

Contratenor
 Pos - te_es - ga - ré par trop ad - ven - tu - reux, par trop, par trop ad - ven - tu -
 Et de de - voir trop pront, et de - si - reux, trop pront, trop pront et de - si -

Tenor
 Pos - te_es - ga - ré par trop ad - ven - tu - reux, par trop ad - ven - tu - reux, par
 Et de de - voir trop pront, et de - si - reux, trop pront, et de - si - reux, trop

Bassus
 Pos - te_es - ga - ré par trop ad - ven - tu - reux, par trop ad - ven - tu - reux, par
 Et de de - voir trop pront, et de - si - reux, trop pront, et de - si - reux, trop

4 —
 ven - tu - reux, Pour es - mou - voir li - ber - té de cou - rai -
 de - si - reux, Au man - de - ment du pe - tit Dieu vo - lai -

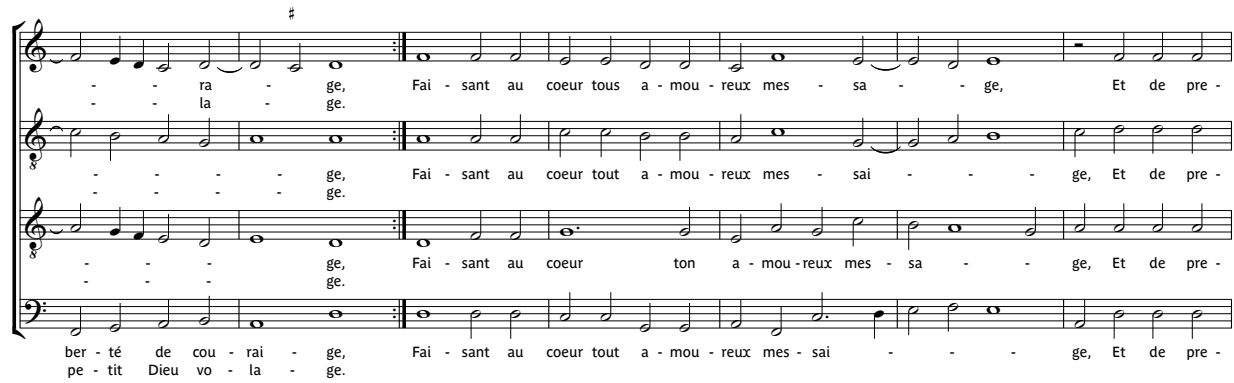
- reux, ad - ven - tu - reux, Pour es - mou - voir li - ber - té de cou - rai -
 - reux, et de - si - reux, Au man - de - ment du pe - tit Dieu vo - lai -

trop ad - ven - tu - reux, Pour es - mou - voir li - ber - té de cou - rai -
 pront, et de - si - reux, Au man - de - ment du pe - tit Dieu vo - lai -

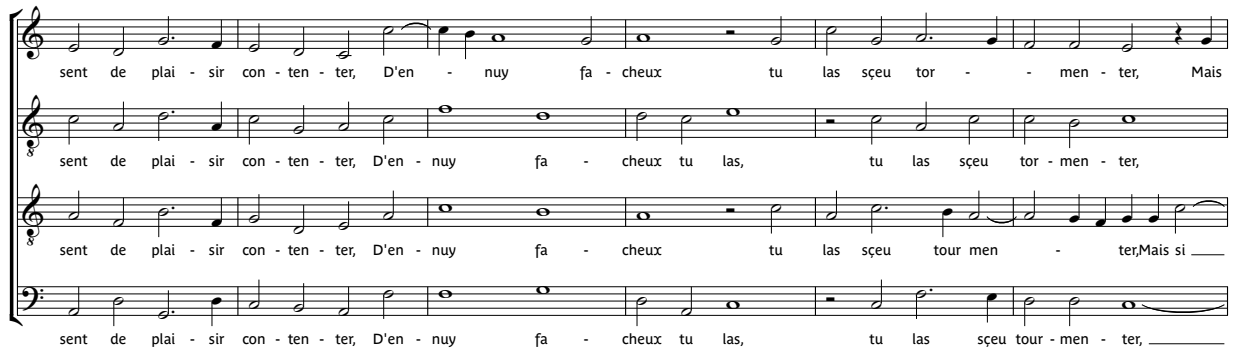
trop ad - ven - tu - reux, Pour es - mou - voir li - ber - té, li -
 pront, et de - si - reux, Au man - de - ment du pe - tit, du

11 · For modern editions of “Hélas mon Dieu,” see Janequin’s *Chansons polyphoniques*, ed. A. Tillman Merritt and François Lesure, 6 vols. (Monaco: Editions de l’Oiseau lyre, 1965-71), III, 193-95 and Jean Maillard, *Complete Chansons*, ed. Jane Bernstein, *The 16th-Century Chanson*, 18 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1990) pp. 128-31. Goudimel’s chanson is transcribed in his *Œuvres complètes*, XIII, 253-56. The relationships between the original chanson and its response are discussed in Mâire Egan-Buffet, *Les Chansons de Claude Goudimel: Analyses Modales et Stylistiques* (Ottawa: Institute of Medieval Music, 1992), pp. 211-25 and 759-60. The ascription of the work to Maillard was subsequently repeated by Le Roy et Ballard and other publishers of the second half of the sixteenth century. There is, however, no reason to doubt the original attribution of the piece to Janequin. The text of “Hélas mon Dieu” is ascribed to the Protestant writer Guillaume Guérault in Du Chemin’s 1568 edition of Didier Lupi’s *Premier livre de chansons spirituelles*. See Lesure and Thibault, “Bibliographie des éditions musicales publiées par Nicolas du Chemin,” Item 95.

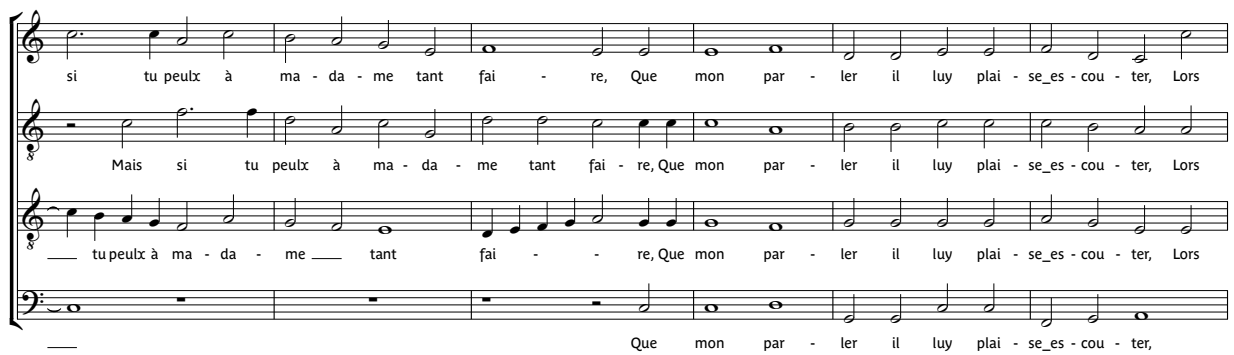
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ra la ge, ge. Fai - sant au coeur tous a - mou - reux mes - sa - ge, Et de pre -
ge, ge. Fai - sant au coeur tout a - mou - reux mes - sai - ge, Et de pre -
ge, ge. Fai - sant au coeur ton a - mou - reux mes - sa - ge, Et de pre -
ber - té de cou - rai - ge, Fai - sant au coeur tout a - mou - reux mes - sai - ge, Et de pre -
pe - tit Dieu vo - la - ge.

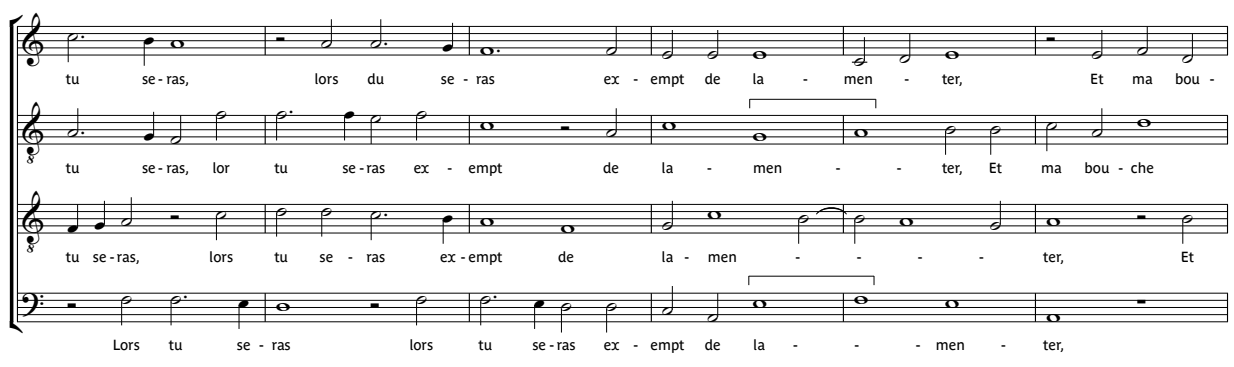


sent de plai - sir con - ten - ter, D'en - nuy fa - cheux tu las sçeu tor - men - ter, Mais
sent de plai - sir con - ten - ter, D'en - nuy fa - cheux tu las, tu las sçeu tor - men - ter,
sent de plai - sir con - ten - ter, D'en - nuy fa - cheux tu las sçeu tour men - ter, Mais si
sent de plai - sir con - ten - ter, D'en - nuy fa - cheux tu las, tu las sçeu tour - men - ter,

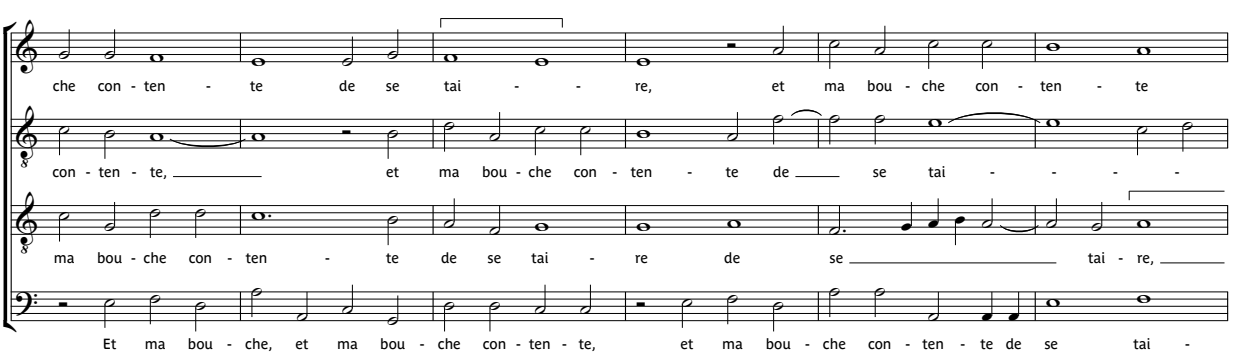


si tu peux à ma - da - me tant fai - re, Que mon par - ler il luy plai - se es - cou - ter, Lors
Mais si tu peux à ma - da - me tant fai - re, Que mon par - ler il luy plai - se es - cou - ter, Lors
tu peux à ma - da - me tant fai - re, Que mon par - ler il luy plai - se es - cou - ter, Lors
Que mon par - ler il luy plai - se es - cou - ter,

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tu se - ras, lors du se - ras ex - empt de la - men - ter, Et ma bou -
tu se - ras, lor tu se - ras ex - empt de la - men - ter, Et ma bou - che
tu se - ras, lors tu se - ras ex - empt de la - men - ter, Et
Lors tu se - ras lors tu se - ras ex - empt de la - men - ter,



che con - ten - te de se tai - re, et ma bou - che con - ten - te
con - ten - te, et ma bou - che con - ten - te de se tai - re,
ma bou - che con - ten - te de se tai - re de se tai - re,
Et ma bou - che, et ma bou - che con - ten - te, et ma bou - che con - ten - te de se tai -

Such pairs and even cycles of related poems were not uncommon in the chanson repertory of the day. As we will discover in our discussion of Goudimel’s editorial selections for Du Chemin’s *Neufiesme livre*, the “responce” tradition enjoyed a special vogue among composers active in Northern France and the Netherlands, particularly in the works of Thomas Crequillon. Many of these related pieces were published together by Tielman Susato of Antwerp during the 1540’s.¹² In France, perhaps the most famous pair of such related pieces were Pierre Sandrin’s *Douce memoire* (to a poem attributed to François I) and Pierre Certon’s *Finy le bien*.¹³ The two works were frequently printed together in sixteenth-century musical anthologies.¹³ To judge from his contributions to the *Chansons nouvelles*, Goudimel himself was apparently a connoisseur of the genre. Here we find several such pairings from Goudimel’s pen, such as the twinned settings of “Amour long temps” and Si l’on donnoit” (from the *Unziesme livre*, the last volume of chansons he edited for Du Chemin), or as well as the sequence formed by “Jamais amour” and “Telz menus plaidz” (published adjacently in Du Chemin’s *Cinquiesme livre*).¹⁴ In the *Premier livre* of 1550, Goudimel’s “La volunté” appears beside Nicolas De Marle’s “Vive sera.” The first line of one poem here serves as the last line of the other (and vice versa). What is more, each of the polyphonic settings was were themselves modeled directly upon a similar musical pairing of the same poems composed by French colleagues Pierre Sandrin and Etienne Du Tertre (and printed by Pierre Attaignant in 1543).¹⁵ Clearly, Goudimel was a composer keenly aware of the rich literary and musical tradition around him, armed with a sense of the past, and how to extend it, too.

Melody and Versification in Goudimel’s Chansons

In her recent studies of Goudimel, Maire Egan-Buffet has shown that, viewed from the perspective of his later efforts with Ronsard’s poetry, our composer’s earliest chansons do not always observe the conventions of French versification with the greatest care.¹⁶ Of particular interest, in her view, is Goudimel’s treatment of what French literary theorists of the sixteenth

- 12 · Futher on this tradition, see A. Cutler Silliman, “‘Responce’ and ‘replique’ in Chansons Published by Tylman Susato, 1543-1550,” *Revue belge de musicologie* 16 (1962), 30-42, which considers nearly two dozen “sets” of such related pieces.
- 13 · Concerning Sandrin’s chanson and its many echoes, see his *Collected Works*, ed. Albert Seay, *Corpus mensurabilis musicae*, 47 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1968), p. xvi and pp. 5-7.
- 14 · For modern editions of these pieces, see Goudimel’s *Œuvres complètes*, XIII, 92-99.
- 15 · Du Chemin himself reprinted the Attaignant volume in question in 1549 as the *Premier livre du Receuil*. For modern editions of Goudimel’s chanson, see his *Œuvres complètes*, vol. XIII. For a modern edition of Sandrin’s setting of “La volunté,” see his *Collected Works*, ed. Albert Seay, *Corpus mensurabilis musicae*, 470 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1968), 44-46. On Du Tertre’s setting of Vive sera and its relationship to the Sandrin chanson, see Cunningham, “Estienne du Tertre and the Mid-Sixteenth Century Parisian Chanson,” 139.
- 16 · Her findings are reported in Egan-Buffet, «The French Chanson in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century: Claude Goudimel’s Treatment of the Decasyllabic Line,» in *Orlando Lassus. Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium of the International*

century described as the *coupe feminine reformée* (an innovation credited to Clément Marot) whereby a mute “e” was permitted in conjunction with the medial caesura (or coupe) typically found after the fourth syllable in decasyllabic verse.¹⁷ As Egan-Bufferet observes, in chansons by Goudimel issued prior to 1552 (the time of his project with the musical *Supplement* to Ronsard’s *Amours*), our composer often fails to observe the elision between the silent syllable and the following vowel when such patterns fall at the caesura of a decasyllabic line.¹⁸ Goudimel’s treatment of a line from “Tant de beaulté” (from the *Huitiesme livre*) can serve as a good example of his unusual approach to the *coupe feminine*, in this case as it appears in a poem that uses eight-syllable. Goudimel’s treatment of the fifth line of this poem is thus very curious, since he seems to have taken special effort to force a caesura where none was normally required and, indeed, where the rules of versification would suggest that none was possible. As set by Goudimel, this line reads “Elle est douce elle est humaine,” which ought, in principle, to consist of eight syllables (with elisions between all adjacent vowels), but which Goudimel treats as nine by giving the second syllable of “douce” its own note. The distinction at first seems a minor point. However, viewed in the context of what we have observed of Goudimel’s careful attention to both form and meaning, we may understand his treatment of this line as one that points out the hidden parallelism among the three references to the beloved and her attributes: “Elle est douce, elle est humaine, Elle ha tant bons partis en soy.”¹⁹ In brief, Goudimel here contravenes musical and literary conventions in order to craft a chanson that does not only follow the form and scansion of his poetry, but also shows its meanings. This same approach, in which stereotypical gestures are exploited in unusual ways, can also be heard in works such “Poste esgare” (from the *Tiers livre*).

While in this composition we find the same music for each of the first two couplets of the poem, here Goudimel also extends each of those two verses across three musical phrases, pausing to repeat the second half of both the first and third lines of text (“par trop aventureux” and “trop prompt et desireux”) before moving on to the second and fourth. This same habit of treating a couplet as a tercet is also at work in his “Du jeu d’aymer” (*Tiers livre*), while “Comme le feu” (*Tiers livre*), with its long melodic lines and imitative textures, favors the sense of its lyrics over the symmetry of rhyme. Goudimel was not alone among his contemporaries in treating texts in this unusual way, or in exploiting ambiguities of versification or syntax for convincing effect. But his choices reveal a musical reader of subtle and often refined sensibility.

Goudimel’s Narrative Chansons

Another small but significant portion of Goudimel’s earliest published chansons are those that set narrative texts, especially ones that rehearse the often ridiculous behavior of ill-suited couples, or of clerics. In chansons such as “Du jeu d’aymer” (from the *Tiers livre*) and “Robin vouloit sa femme battre” (from the *Quart livre*), Goudimel uses melodies that are often

Musicological Society, Antwerp, August 26-28, 1994 (Peer, Belgium, 1995), pp. 315-25. See also the monograph by Egan Bufferet cited in Note 11, above.

17 · For a detailed discussion of the coupe and of problems of textual underlay, see Chapter 2, above.

18 · Examples of this failure include lines in “D’amour me plainctz” (from the *Quart livre*) and “Or a ce jour” (from the *Sixiesme livre*). See Egan-Bufferet, “The French Chanson in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century,” pp. 315-23.

19 · For Egan-Bufferet’s analysis of this work, see *Les Chansons de Claude Goudimel*, pp. 226-30. Here she compares Goudimel’s setting with one by Symon, which follows the rules of versification more closely, but lacks the rhetorical flair of Goudimel’s reading of the poem.

more speech-like than lyrical, along with rapid changes of pace and musical texture. In this respect, his music shares much with that of contemporaries such as Clément Janequin, who treated these sorts of poems in similar ways. Even Etienne du Tertre, a Parisian composer and arranger whose melodies are (as a rule) lyrical and extremely regular in their phrasing, responded to these sorts of comic narratives with a musical style very different from his usual habit. It is interesting to compare Du Tertre's setting of one of these poems, "Ce disoit une jeune dame," (from the *Huitiesme livre*) with Goudimel's treatment of the same text (from Du Chemin's *Cinquiesme livre*). Although not directly related in any musical sense, both pieces share imitative textures, a great deal of rhythmic energy, and the frequent repetition of small melodic fragments. The frequent repetition of poetic lines and part of lines serves well to capture the humor and energy of the text, which relates the dialogue between a young woman and the man who attempts to seduce her. In this sense, we can recognize how Goudimel and his contemporaries approached narrative pieces such as these in a common spirit.²⁰

Ce disoit une jeune dame	<i>So said a young lady</i>
A un viellard vous my faschez	<i>To the codger: you enrage me,</i>
Et vous tuez le corps, et l'ame	<i>Kill me, body and soul.</i>
Pour neant a ce que taschez	<i>No disrepute to fear—</i>
Allez faire ailleurs noz marchez	<i>Let's make then our bargain,</i>
Mal vous siet ceste mignotise,	<i>For poorly you suit this trickery.</i>
Quant est de moy je suis promisee	<i>When it is of me, I am already promised,</i>
Pas ny voyez cler a demy	<i>And so clearly know:</i>
Je ny leveray ma chemise	<i>I will not lift my shirt—</i>
Cela se garde pour l'ami.	<i>It's reserved for the beloved.</i>

A Canonic Chanson

8 — Goudimel's setting of "La terre, l'eau," from the *Second livre* of 1549 is certainly the most striking of his early works: a five-voice chanson that includes a canon by inversion. Five-voice textures and canonic pieces are rare in the chanson repertoires published by Attaingnant and Du Chemin, as they were instead cultivated by Northern editors such as Tielman Susato. In order to realize the fifth canonic voice of "La terre, l'eau," an additional singer must read the tenor part upside down from across the table (transposing the clef to what would appear to him as the lowest line of the staff) while the tenor sings it from the normal position. As we have come to expect from Goudimel, the canonic procedure is not simply a musical novelty, but instead can be understood as a reflection of the poetic text.

La terre, l'eau, l'air, le feu et les cieulx	<i>The earth, water, air, fire and the heavens—</i>
Tous les espritz et supreme archetippe	<i>All the spirits and supreme model,</i>
Font nuict et jour en accord gracieulx	<i>make (night and day) gracious harmony</i>
Que tout discord son contraire dissippe	<i>that all discord (its oppostie) disperses.</i>
De tel accord, est ce livre le type,	<i>Of such harmony is this book the sort</i>
Car l'Universe au dedans, et dehors,	<i>that the universe here and there</i>
Tous les espritz, ensemble tous les corps	<i>all the spirits, together all the forms,</i>
Sont composez par certaine harmonie	<i>are comprised of a certain harmony,</i>
Aussi les voix par chansons et accords	<i>as well voices by songs and chords</i>
Sont comme l'umbre a l'universe unie.	<i>are as shade to the universe united.</i>

20 · A modern edition of Du Tertre's setting of the same text appears in Egan-Buffet, *Les Chansons de Claude Goudimel*, pp. 621-26. Janequin also composed an independent setting of the same text.

The act of “inversion” performed by the singers, for instance, can be taken as corresponding to each of a series of opposites mentioned in the poem: earth/water; air/fire; night/day. And throughout, the canonic imitation produces an aural impression of seamless continuity that mirrors the idea of “un accord gracieulx” that is the poet’s vision. The tenor part (and thus its canonic inversion) suddenly falls silent at the words “sont composez par certaine harmonie,” allowing Goudimel to conduct the remaining voice parts in a passage of simultaneous declamation and a tentative cadence to *F*. As the canonic voices begin again, the text at last turns to acknowledge its own orality: “voices, too, by songs and harmonies,” it reads, are drawn into this universal accord. This is a remarkable work, in many ways the equal of Orlando di Lasso’s famous setting of Joachim du Bellay’s similarly vivid “La nuit, froide et sombre,” which was first published during the 1560’s.²¹

Taken together, Goudimel’s early chansons reveal much about both their composer and the many stylistic threads that made up the fabric of the mid-century chanson as it was known in Paris through the books issued by Du Chemin. Goudimel emerges from the *Chansons nouvelles* as a musician who acknowledged conventions, but did not confine himself to them, preferring instead to experiment with musical forms and ideas in ways that yielded music that is worth hearing--and singing--even today.

21 · For a modern edition of Goudimel’s work with the canonic part realized in score, see his *Œuvres complètes*, XIII, 127-31. For a modern edition of Lasso’s chanson, see Dobbins, *The Oxford Book of French Chansons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 238-40.